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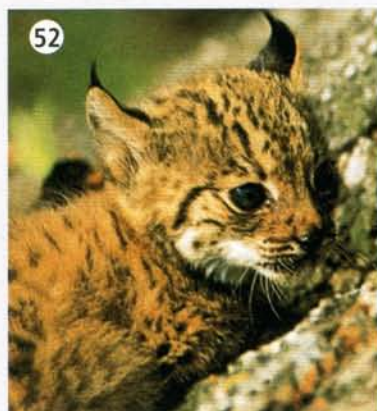
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The *Ecologist* has won two awards – General Excellence in Magazines, and Best Science and Environment Magazine – at the 2001 Alternative Press Awards. In the awards, run by the 225,000-circulation magazine *Utne Reader*, and voted on by readers, we were also nominated for design and international coverage.

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Dreams of power

I was given a badge for Christmas, a protest badge that read: 'If you're not totally pissed off, you're not paying attention'. Other than mass medication or hypnosis, this really does seem to be the only plausible explanation for the general lack of anger at what is happening to democracy in Europe, and more specifically in Britain. With every passing day the distance between people and power is growing, and as a society we're moving frighteningly close to a situation where the former has no hold at all on the latter.

Graham Allen, a Labour MP, claimed recently that 'behind the camouflage, the UK President [sic] has powers that would make Stalin blush'. Like Roy Jenkins, Tony Benn and others, he was referring to Mr Blair's marginalisation of Parliament, and the emergence of de facto rule by political appointees. Mr Allen is right. By centralising control of the Labour Party and then using his parliamentary majority to strip the House of Commons of many of its rights and prerogatives Mr Blair has been able to accumulate for himself a near-unprecedented degree of power. And he has not hesitated to expand upon it.

Reform of the House of Lords for instance has been less about correcting what Blair described as a 'democratic monstrosity', and more about neutralising an inconvenient check on his power. Under the proposed next stage of reform, the second chamber would become a mere depository for obedient New Labour careerists, a rubber stamp for Blair's every move, just as undemocratic and even less independent than its predecessor.

That Mr Blair is a control freak is no revelation. It was always likely he would seek to control every aspect of Parliament. But the lengths to which the Prime Minister has gone in order to politicise every aspect of Britain's political infrastructure is both astonishing and worrying. Rules, for example on promotions within the police, have changed, so that government pawns, with zero policing experience can now be parachuted into top positions at the whim of the Government. Trial by jury is to be virtually eliminated so that sensitive cases will more often than not be presided over by a magistrate whose hopes of promotion increasingly depend on the Lord Chancellor. The BBC now brims with New Labour acolytes, some of whose pretences of objectivity are borderline comic.

In the weeks ahead, legislation is to be rushed through Parliament that will effectively render public enquiries a thing of the past. No longer will the people have an opportunity to scrutinise major projects like nuclear power plants, roads and airports. Instead, these projects will be 'debated' in Parliament, before Labour MPs are instructed by their whips to agree to them. Nothing has been left to chance in New Britain. No aspect of the Blair project is to be foiled – least of all by a public it disdains.

Since the attack on the World Trade Centre, Mr Blair has gone wild with megalomania, and ordered, among other things, that Britain's Internet Service Providers retain all email traffic for at least one year for government use in the 'war against terrorism'. But who's to say that your and



my emails won't be scrutinised for more sinister purposes? Ours is a government, let's not forget, that encourages MI5 to spy on behalf of big business. How comfortable will campaigners against Heathrow's expansion, the Government's nuclear revival plans, or the Euro, be with the knowledge that the Government may be monitoring their every written word in preparation for an offensive.

If the debate that surrounded this legislation's introduction to Parliament is anything to go by, they should be deeply uncomfortable. At various points opposition peers attempted to amend the new law to specify that the Security Services could only take action under its provisions if they were combating terrorism. The Government vigorously resisted but could come up with no convincing explanation as to why this was so. Independent commentators drew the inescapable conclusion that the anti-terrorism legislation is being used to massively widen the ability of the state to snoop into the private and legitimate activities of its citizens.

But the icing on the cake in the so-called war against terrorism is the passing of legislation enabling the European Union to overrule our own decision makers. For example, the new EU police force, EUROPOL, is to be granted a special Europe-wide arrest warrant. This is particularly worrying given that 'xenophobia', as defined by civil servants, is to become a cross-border crime, punishable by jail. What constitutes xenophobia remains largely ambiguous, but it seems to include something called 'monetary xenophobia', or anti-euro activity.

These developments make even Mr Blair's attack on Parliament pale into insignificance. The transfer of key decision-making powers to the European Union ensures the effective redundancy of British politics. Decisions on fundamental scientific, economic, social and moral issues are increasingly being taken behind closed doors, by people who we neither elected nor know. As a result there's nothing we can do to amend poor decisions, short of protesting, and that presupposes that we will even know about them. A superstate police force, superstate currency, superstate army, superstate judiciary and even, we're told, an elected superstate president are all either here or on the way, yet our own leaders – alone among European politicians – still pretend we're not heading towards a European superstate.

Mr Blair has done more to undermine the integrity of our democracy than any Prime Minister in memory, but his greatest crime is to hand effective control of the affairs of state to people with even less respect for the rights of the people than him. Anyone who thinks this an exaggeration should heed the chilling words of the Advocate General of the European Court of Justice: 'Criticism of the European Union is akin to blasphemy and could be restricted without violating freedom of speech'.

It's worth remembering that self-serving bureaucracies never willingly shrink. They only grow, along with their powers, and once seized, those powers are never restored.

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The editor reserves the right to shorten or edit correspondence where necessary.

Money for old dope

I wanted to write to express my agreement with *Big Brother: America's real dependence problem* (vol 31/10). On the whole I found it to be an accurate presentation of my beliefs. However, I do need to point out one issue. Gard Binney states that the US government does not have an incentive to legalise drugs because a profit motive does not exist. I suggest that, to the contrary, a profit motive exists to ensure that the status quo of drug law remains as it is. The profit motive of drug prohibition can be found in the budgets of the Drug Enforcement Agency and other law enforcement agencies, the prison industry whose privatised corporations continue to grow, and politicians who get large donations for being 'tough on crime'. Furthermore, the advent of seizure law ensures that drug profits flow to those who have a vested interest in drugs remaining illegal.

In my opinion, this 'inverted' profit motive is the largest stumbling block in the liberalisation of drug laws.

Scott Newkirk, Denver, Colorado, US

Food writes

In reply to Debbie Carson (*Letters*, vol 31/9) I would like to ask: how can you care about the environment but not the welfare of animals and the effect the meat and dairy industry has on the environment? The

environmental movement may well be aware and fighting for change in the farming industry but that doesn't mean it's right to carry on consuming animals and their by-products while we wait for change.

Either you care or you don't. People who don't care always criticise vegans and veganism because deep down they know that vegans are right for the very points put forward by Mr Friedrich.

On another subject, I would like to ask why *The Ecologist* has anything to do with Robin Page [on our 'Associates' list] who is pro-blood sports and was very much in favour of the apartheid regime in South Africa? If he is a regular contributor I will not be renewing my subscription.

L M Byway Bein, Thanet, Kent, UK

Country sides

I recently became a reader of your magazine, which at first, I found enlightening and enjoyable to read. However, I noticed a large advert for the Countryside Alliance inside the back page of the last issue.

Is your magazine for blood sports fans? You should know that this organisation is just a front for blood sports fanatics and is not an environmentally friendly organisation at all, but the opposite.

I have now cancelled my subscription and am sickened by the hypocrisy of

Robin Page and the likes.

When you change your policy towards blood sports, I will re-order.

Catherine Fulton, Shipston, Wales

The Ecologist replies: *The Countryside Alliance has become an important voice on a wide range of rural issues. On some issues we are in agreement, on others we are not. We would not, however, refuse them advertising space on the back of their support for hunting, as we ourselves are neither pro, nor anti hunting.*

We are, however, in favour of taking the issue further than the confines of the current debate, which is highly polarised and whose arguments are strangely incomplete. No one from the anti-hunting brigade for instance has explained why their campaign is fought so much harder than campaigns against the routine torture of animals in laboratories and factory farms? Or why the anti-angling campaign appears to be gaining more ground more quickly than the campaign for reform of the EU's hugely destructive Common Fisheries Policy? Or where the anti-cruelty campaign was during the butchery of millions of farm animals during the Foot and Mouth crisis?

In short, no one has explained why the real villains of the countryside are being ignored by our anti-'cruelty' government, while rural people, the majority of whom are fighting a losing battle for economic security against a rigged economic system, are being hammered at every level?

The pros and cons of hunting are legitimate material for debate. But for The Ecologist at least, the politics of hunting are as important. Where should this battle be fought, and by whom? In normal conditions, hunting is a local issue, not an excuse for yet more state interference in the countryside.

Wide awake in Settle

It is a shame that Michael Maas, from the Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire, was 'sorry' to see my defence of the British countryside in *The Ecologist* (*Letters*, vol 31/9). I believe in open debate and so I was pleased and amused by his witty rejoinder to my article.

Mr Maas rarely deviates from the 'line' put out by animal rights lobbyists, who refuse to differentiate between the independent farmer and agribusiness. This mistake costs his movement much support and good will. I invite him to come to the Dales and meet some of the farmers he demonises. He would find people who care about animal welfare and feel the encroachments of big business, supermarkets and insensitive bureaucrats. This, along with a couple of pints, would enable him to see the countryside in a

MILLBANK TOWERS





Making connections in South Africa

different light.

I detect an element of class antagonism in Mr Maas's comments about shooting. In reality, my pullover is not for shooting, but for long-distance hiking. Bought from Silverman's Army Surplus in East London. It is made from 100 per cent British wool and is more sustainable than the designer gear of suburban 'ramblers'.

Lastly, if Mr Maas believes that the government is not hostile to independent farmers and that 'there is no attack on rural life' then he should be prepared to accept a few similarly absurd propositions, such as that the world is flat or 'Townie' Blair is a socialist.

Aidan Rankin, Settle, North Yorkshire, UK

Gone M.A.D.

Peter Bunyard's *The Plane Truth* (vol 31/9) analyses in detail the consequences of a commercial jet colliding with a nuclear power station – consequences BNFL have said would be 'unthinkable'. Yet as far as I understand it, nothing has been done to halt the nuclear programmes, either here or in the US. It goes without saying that nuclear power stations are a big target, but what about others, such as water supply?

In October's *No Comment* (vol 31/8), George Melloan says: 'Mr Bush no doubt concluded that an American president would be out of his mind [mad] to commit to something like this [Kyoto]'. That was when Mr Bush was early into his presidency and made it clear that he advocated policies that benefited the American people first and foremost. I hope his philosophy has changed after 11 September. When the US has had its revenge, it will no doubt return to its characteristic stance – America for Americans. US isolationism is MAD, the war in Afghanistan is MAD and so is Mutually Assured Destruction.

John Mellor, Cowden, Kent, UK

MET-aphorically

I just wanted to know if you are aware of the relocation of the Met Office to Exeter? The groundwork is already taking place on greenfield land in order to construct their head office.

Worse still are the associated developments that will need to be done in order to accommodate the 1,500 workers and their families. The land to the east of Exeter is the prime site for a proposed new town and the Met office relocation is giving Devon City Council/East Devon Council real ammunition to justify the go-ahead for this environmentally destructive development.

A young man in a red t-shirt shins up a telephone pole in the Johannesburg township of Soweto. He fiddles around with a pair of pliers, then slips down again. He goes to the electricity meter mounted on the side of a nearby house, and swings a pickaxe at it. It splinters and tears away from the wall. He makes some adjustments to a jumble of wires with a knife, using plastic bags for insulation. Then he stands up, dusts himself down and approaches the house owner, an old woman who has been anxiously watching from her doorway.

'You now have electricity', he says, and flicks the light switch. Her front room floods with light for the first time in weeks, and she bursts into tears of joy. 'Now I'll be able to drink tea in the morning, instead of water!' she sniffs.

The man's red t-shirt bears the legend 'Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee', or SECC. He is one of dozens of illegal 'reconnectors' established by this community organisation to roam this former black township reconnecting homes whose electricity has been cut off by the state electricity company Eskom.

Look at the background, and you see why. Along with many other public industries, the government is preparing Eskom for privatisation. After privatisation it will be following the World Bank's recipe for efficient profit generation in formerly public services – something called 'full cost recovery'. This means, in effect, that you can't afford to subsidise the poor. And this means that bills go up. Eskom's bills have already gone up, often steeply; so steeply that many in Soweto, where the unemployment rate is 70 per cent, simply cannot pay them. Eskom's answer? Cut them off. Soweto's response? Reconnect them.

This small battle is part of an emerging national picture in the new South Africa. The ANC government, liberators of the people, having abolished the inhuman experiment that was apartheid, are now subjecting their people to another inhuman experiment: neoliberalism. Their economic programme, which the World Bank helped them construct, contains the usual 'free' market measures: privatisation of state services, shrinking of government, relaxing regulations for multinationals, focusing production on exports, and all the rest. The

The usual propaganda is being churned out about bringing jobs and prosperity to Exeter, when in reality it will be a drain on the local job market and public services.

What concerns me is the hypocritical attitude held at the Met Office. They say they are concerned about climate change,

Beloved Country is being sold off by its saviours, and the losers are the poor.

If you think that comparing global capitalism with apartheid is over the top, listen to Dudu Mphenyeki of the SECC when she tells you that material living conditions for many blacks now are actually worse than under apartheid. 'We feel deceived by the ANC', she says. Listen to Trevor Ngwane, former Soweto ANC Councillor, turfed out of the party for criticising its privatisation policy, tell you of the suffering of people with no water and electricity, disconnected in the name of profit. Listen to people in Chatsworth, a former Indian township in Durban, tell you of the government's 'war on the poor', and the numbers of them who have been evicted from their homes in its name. Evictions, cutoffs, unemployment: all have increased since apartheid was banished. What happened?

What happened is simple. Thabo Mbeki's ANC is an unashamedly, and enthusiastically, neoliberal government. Ask a senior ANC spokesman why, as I did, and the answer goes: 'This is still a revolutionary government, but it's difficult to be revolutionary in a unipolar capitalist world.' Is that why your trade minister was the only one in Africa pushing for a new WTO round in Qatar? 'Look,' he says, 'it's controversial. Maybe you could call it homegrown structural adjustment.'

Plenty of people call it something worse. And people in Soweto, Chatsworth and elsewhere are beginning to see their problems in a global context. A well-attended anti-WTO demo in Johannesburg recently was only an echo of last year's march in Durban, when 20,000 took the streets to object to what the government is doing, and the role of the World Bank, IMF and WTO in it. A new liberation struggle suddenly seems global in scope.

But they're good at fighting back here. They recognise oppression when they see it. It could be that an entirely new revolution is brewing in South Africa.

Paul Kingsnorth is writing a book about the new global resistance movement, to be published by Simon and Schuster in spring 2003.

but at the same time are exacerbating it with this unnecessary relocation and its associated destruction of the local environment.

Your recent *Ecologist Report* on climate change (vol 31/9) has many positive features. However, the expert advice given

by Peter Cox (p17), a MET office climate modeller has a hollow ring, as this is a scientist who professes to be concerned about the effects of climate change whilst working for a company who is contributing to it!

The Met Office already has a home – can you do anything to make them stay?

Dominic Clifton, Starcross, Devon, UK

Down to earth

Philanthropy or villain-trophy (vol 31/9) contains the curious assertion that 'Earth Day is an annual festival that takes place across the US, organised by... Enron,' accompanied by a paragraph of rich sarcasm. Outside of a George W Bush press briefing, it is rare to see so many errors compressed into so few words.

Earth Day is not a 'festival'. Earth Day's base is vastly larger than the US. And – most emphatically – Earth Day is not organised by Enron.

Earth Day is not a festival. It is a theme-oriented annual global campaign geared to educate the general public and move it to action on environmental issues. For the last two years, it has focused on the myriad problems associated with climate change and the opportunities presented by a worldwide shift to the efficient use of renewable energy.

Earth Day is not exclusively a US phenomenon. On 22 April, more than 5,000 groups in 184 nations organised Earth Day campaigns. Over the decades, it has planted some of the first seeds of environmental activism from Czechoslovakia to China.

This year, Earth Day Network and UNEP co-sponsored a conference on threats from rising seas to small island countries; five such states used the conference to announce impressive commitments to renewable energy. On Earth Day, millions of people in 30 countries participated in 'car-free day' street demonstrations calling for leapfrog improvements in transportation technology. On Earth Day, Seattle's mayor and city council 'ratified' the Kyoto Protocol and resolved to exceed its too-modest targets for greenhouse gas reduction by 300 per cent, regardless of whether the federal government follows suit. For more examples, visit: www.earthday.net/events/wwreport2001.stm.

Finally, as the National Coordinator of the first Earth Day in 1970 (decades before Enron was even a gleam in Kenneth Lay's eye) and current board chair of the Earth Day Network, I assure you that Earth Day is not organised by Enron. That assertion has roughly the same kinship to truth as a claim that *The Ecologist* is published by Rupert Murdoch because someone at Fox

Television has a subscription.

Enron is accused by your writer of human rights abuses. Earth Day Network works against precisely the type of abuses alleged in your article. For example, our website contains details of the high profile, global human rights campaign (www.earthday.net/goals/humanrights.stm) that we ran this year in coordination with Amnesty International and the Sierra Club – attacking, among other things, abuses by the global oil and gas industry! As part of our human rights campaign, indigenous peoples on four continents released a joint Earth Day Solidarity Statement that called for 'energy without blood'.

So, did your writer just pull this idiotic claim out of thin air? Almost, but not exactly. Apparently, a local event in Portland, Oregon, last year accepted a small amount of funding from a local utility, which had recently been acquired by Enron. The money was used to underwrite an effort to remove alien invasive botanicals from a park. The local organisers, ardent environmental activists, were comfortable with this because the utility (while not sin-free) had decommissioned its only nuclear power plant and had made a large commitment to new wind generation. In any event, local organisers around the world have the right to choose from whom they will accept funding for local events.

If *The Ecologist* feels the Portland group got snookered, it is obviously free to offer that judgement to its readers. But it is irresponsible for *The Ecologist*, whose founder I count as a friend, to casually mischaracterise the whole Earth Day movement.

Denise Hayes, Chair, Earth Day Network

Inspired!

In response to *Many Hands...* (vol 31/8) I've decided to make one of my life's goals to simply seek the truth. One truth that has become increasingly clear is that, as an American, I need to examine very closely and then act on, my role as a consumer. I want to stop Monsanto. I want to stop the Wal-Marts of the world and destruction of cultures and environments inflicted by multinationals. But how?

We must control what we buy. It has always been a case of supply and demand. Nothing has changed. Two hundred and seventy million people have consumer power. If the US airlines can experience near collapse in just three days, imagine what can happen in a one month WalMart boycott!

I challenge all Americans to seek the truth and then act on it.

Susan Green, Miami Beach, USA

Rio 1

Ros Coward's column on the next Earth Summit (*Coward's Stand*, vol 31/9) rightly points to the need to 'unjargon' if the summit is to be made relevant to ordinary people. And, yes, we at the United Nations Environment and Development (UNED) UK Committee need to try harder here.

However, in other areas she is surprisingly misinformed. On South African request the term Rio Plus 10 has for some months been dropped by the UN system, by governments and by the vast majority of NGOs involved in Summit preparations. The official title almost everyone now uses is the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) or, more informally, the Johannesburg Summit.

Likewise, it is misguided to attack the term 'Agenda 21' as one more unnecessary product of UN obscurantism. Like it or not the title was agreed by world leaders at the Rio Summit as a shorthand for the global programme for sustainable development for the 21st century to which they committed themselves. Assessing their record in pursuing this is one of the main focuses of the Johannesburg Summit preparatory process. Most of the young activists I know are well aware of this. Others may need to be informed.

Coward does not touch on another, more fundamental challenge which faces UNED. This is quite simply, how can we use the window of global urgency and opportunity opened by the WSSD to influence the domestic policies of the UK in the right direction? At the same time, how can we build up wider awareness of the need for more radical long term changes which are necessary for our survival and translate this into the political mainstream?

Those who would like to know more about the consultative and consensus-building process through which UNED, with – we confess to *The Ecologist* – some help and encouragement from the British government, are working with others to meet this challenge should visit our website at www.earthsummit2002.org or www.unedforum.org.

John Gordon, UNED UK 2002 Coordinator, London, UK

Rio 2

I would like to comment on the *Tinto Tainted* news item by Gavin McGregor (vol 31/7). It is understandable that there is scepticism about the independence of a Global Mining Initiative (GMI) that is funded by mining companies. However, I believe that this initiative provides a golden opportunity for all individuals and organisations concerned about the effects



Our words are our bond

Proverbial wisdom has it that the devil has all the best tunes. Political ideals or ethical stances are seen to be worthy but never creatively exciting. Environmental politics, however, seems to be putting paid to that notion. Currently no other section of politics or culture is so vibrant, original and clever at conveying its messages – a sign that it has the pulse and heart of the public.

'Limits to growth' and 'sustainability' are often held up as proof that environmental concepts and slogans are dull as ditchwater. As David Nicholson Lord once said: 'If "sustainability" were a person... you would say that he or she means well but dresses badly.' But forget environmentalist self-deprecation and look closely. Environmentalism has a flair for language that is becoming more striking by the day.

This more creative side has always been there. Schumacher's slogan 'Small is beautiful' took up, played with and remoulded the slogans of the Seventies, in particular the anti-racist slogan 'Black is beautiful'. But whereas that slogan has almost completely disappeared, 'Small is beautiful' lives on. It says everything, and has been re-invigorated by anti-globalisation.

Environmentalism has always been adept at utilising trends in mainstream politics and advertising, imbuing them with new meanings. Another early slogan, 'Think global. Act local', echoed the simple, yet packed and multi-layered concepts of advertising. An elegantly tight catchphrase, it resonates on several layers, connoting knowledge of our interconnectedness with global politics and the need for global solutions. Simultaneously it communicates that these interconnections converge in our immediate environment so that personal and immediate choices do matter for global solutions. Its unbroken circle of connected meaning evokes the circle of the earth.

In other ways, too, environmentalism has embraced the dynamism, creativity and *double entendre* of language more often associated with advertising. You see it in the clever book titles, such as *Seeing Green*, *From Here to Sustainability*, and *Sharing Nature's Interests*. It is especially noticeable in the extraordinary outpouring of concepts, ideas and businesses emerging from environmentalism's basic terms. 'Green' has been expanded into 'green products', 'green ethics', 'green politics', 'greenwash' and 'greening lifestyles', to name but a few.

But it is the fate of 'ecology' that is truly extraordinary. Just look at the use of the prefix, 'eco-'. It astonishes me that every day new intellectual and business concepts emerge from these three little letters. But the list is apparently endless. We now have 'eco-homes', 'eco-labels', 'eco-businesses', 'eco-villages', 'eco-tours', 'eco-

portals', 'eco-fuel'. There are new movements emerging: 'eco-art', 'eco-criticism', 'eco-investment' and 'eco-tourism'. This simple prefix now also defines mindsets, strategies and ways of being: 'eco-solutions', 'eco-technologies', 'eco-cide', 'eco-piety', and 'eco-investment'. And then there are products: 'Ecover', 'Eco-Babes', 'Eco-Logique', and 'Eco-balls' (not the Government's so called policy on sustainability, but a product for washing machines). Such creativity shows the way 'ecology' has connected with public understanding and sparked creative responses.

The same creativity is evident in the positive outpouring of new terms and concepts entering public speech. Now 'life cycle analysis' is part of industry discourse and beginning to filter back to consumers. Now people talk of 'beacon buildings', which exemplify trends in green architecture; while discussion of wildlife now refers to 'beacon species'.

Politically, too, there's a wealth of new concepts. 'Bio-regionalism', for example, is a wonderfully inventive term that captures what environmentalists stand for, marking out the differences with other previous politics. 'Bio-regionalism' connotes an affinity to your region, a loyalty and sense of belonging that is completely different from the way loyalty has been expressed in nationalism or chauvinism. It suggests affinity to nature and to the biosphere, not to something narrowly political like a nation. Jonathan Bate's wonderful book about the importance of poetry, *The Song of The Earth*, shows how creatively suggestive a concept like 'bio-regionalism' can be. He links it to that sense of locality, belonging, or truly 'dwelling in a place' expressed by the great nature poets.

'Global footprint' is another fine concept conveying a sense of our being on the earth, our reach beyond our own locality and our personal impact on the wider world. It also links to more scientific assessments of the impact of individuals and their technology on the whole planet. 'Environmental space' is a further suggestive term, emotive because it evokes ideas of having personal space while observing others, but also having wider political and economic resonance. How can we achieve a just distribution of the world's dwindling natural resources? How much is enough for an individual or a country?

Caring about the environment can feel like a burden. But we shouldn't be blind to positive signs. Environmentalism is capturing the popular imagination and firing creativity. In dark moments this should be cause for hope. The battle for minds is going well when environmentalist language and concepts provide the most vibrant and meaningful definitions of the world.

Ros Coward

of mining, both environmental and social, to make their concerns and feelings heard. Regardless of the funding and background of the GMI, it does nevertheless provide a forum for expressing concerns, bringing specific incidents like those described in the article to notice, and suggesting solutions or alternatives to the problems. This should force disclosure and open debate about the causes, consequences and rectification of such events.

May I recommend that anyone who has concerns about the effects of mining on the environment and society, contribute directly to the debate through www.globalmining.com.

Sue Struthers, Burray, Orkney Isles, UK

Chinese puzzle

Lester R Brown in *What goes around...* (vol 31/9) convinces me of my long-held belief of the importance of engaging China in whatever we do. For, without China's participation, no amount of hard work and dedication that environmentally concerned people give would amount to much. Sadly, not many other people seem to share this realisation. In fact, I often get the impression that the majority of environmental groups in the West toe the US political line on China.

Hence, an increasingly paranoid Washington that views China as the personification of obloquy. And hardly anybody in the movement says anything about the need to do work in China and/or to make more and more people there wake up to the degradation of their environment as a result of the current economic 'development'.

Just to name one specific example, I have not been aware if any of the various anti-car groups has made any attempt to liaise with the internal movement in China that Brown implies. Whereas it seems quite obvious, indeed, that it makes more sense to discourage those who have not been addicted to the use of the car such as the Chinese by alerting them to the myriad hidden and/or health costs of car ownership, than to try to cure the habit of Western addicts.

Dr A R T Kemasang, London, UK

Correction: In the *Ecologist Report*, (vol 31/9), we state: 'Over 4 million sq km of vegetation would die back within 100 years... leading to a massive venting of... 1 billion tonnes of carbon within a century'. Due to an editing error, 1 billion tonnes should read 170 billion tonnes. We also omitted some references from our report. To read the articles with full references, visit www.theecologist.org, go to the archive section, and search under 'climate'.

Deep blues

First the good news. The EU has reduced cod fishing quotas by up to 55 per cent, thus giving the poor fish a chance to escape the cellophane wrapping and batter that were threatening to drive it towards extinction.

No such luck sadly for the lesser known, but even more at risk, Patagonian toothfish. According to the *International Herald Tribune*, just as the new quotas were being agreed, the Spanish-owned *South Tomi* was busy hauling 90 tons – about \$800,000 worth – of the exotic fish on board.

Patagonian toothfish is an endangered species, and so when an Australian fisheries inspection vessel spotted the *South Tomi* fishing illegally off the Australian coast, it challenged the Spanish boat, which promptly fled, with the ensuing pursuit ending some 14 days later in South Africa's Cape Town.

The toothfish is a popular delicacy in many countries, including some in Europe. There are many who say that if the EU was truly concerned about extinction, it would not allow the sale of endangered species in member states. And the hypocrisy runs deeper still, for while it may have reduced



cod quotas on its own seas, it is now bidding for a 60 per cent increase in fishing access rights to equally overexploited Senegalese waters.

As fisheries close to the major centres of Europe, America and Asia reach the point of collapse, subsidised trawlers and factory ships move to ever more remote regions. Every year, the EU spends about 270m euro to purchase access to fisheries' resources in other countries, the majority in Africa. According to conservative estimates by the WWF, the European fishing fleet was supported by harmful subsidies to the tune of 1.4bn euro in 1997 alone. Since the total reported catch in the 1990s was 78-86m tons, an increasing number of scientists believe the point of maximum harvest has already been reached, leading to a dangerous decline in breeding stocks, as younger fish and more species are taken from the seas.

Later this year, EU ministers will vote on the future of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). WWF is launching a campaign for radical reform to coincide with the CFP review – the first chance to fundamentally change the policy for 10 years. Visit www.panda.org/stopoverfishing to find out how you can help ■



STILL PICTURES

Burning up

Last November the management of the Belgian government-owned MIWA waste incinerator was ordered to close down the Sint-Niklaas-based facility by 31 December 2002, despite the fact that it still had a licence to operate until 2008. The Belgian court of appeal decided that, since the potential health hazards of the incinerator were unknown, and since its management had refused to install a Denox-filter installation, the MIWA facility presented a serious threat of infringement of environmental law.

As an implementation of the precautionary principle, this decision is the first of its kind. For more information and an excellent report on the health impact of the Sint-Niklaas incinerator; visit www.milieugezondheid.be ■

NOTES &

The following four quotes are a reconstruction from parts of the Leacken EU Summit discussions regarding the future EU food safety agency which was awarded to Finland.

'Parma is synonymous with good cuisine. The Finns don't even know what prosciutto is. I cannot accept this.'
Silvio Berlusconi

'The gastronomic attraction of a region is not argument for the allocation of an EU agency.'
Guy Verhofstadt

'... My final word is No!'
Berlusconi again

'I love Parma but you'll never get it if you argue like that.'
Gerhard Schroeder

'Why are the Americans such big givers? Capitalism is the ideology of building up; it is the best ethos for making our dreams and aspirations concrete that mankind has ever found.'
Lawrence Lindsey, US President Bush's economic adviser

'The essence of unilateralism is that we do not allow others, no matter how well-meaning, to deter us from pursuing the fundamental security interests of the United States and the free world. And that is the reason it has been so successful.'
Charles Krauthammer, Pulitzer Prize winner

'It is time to turn our backs on the unilateral search for security, in which we seek to shelter behind walls. Instead, we must persist in the quest for united action to counter both global warming and a weaponised world.'

From a statement issued by 100 Nobel laureates at the Nobel Peace Prize Centennial Symposium in early December

'Dividing the world into discrete civilisations is not just crude. It propels us into the absurd belief that this partitioning is natural and necessary and must overwhelm all other ways of identifying people. That imperious view not only goes against the sentiment that "we human beings are all much the same," but also against the

Healing ways

A coalition of Maya healers in Chiapas has won an important victory – a victory that might take on even greater significance in the future as a landmark in the fight against biopiracy.

For centuries, the healers, or Compitch as they are now known, have been using various traditional cures within their indigenous communities. But a project, known as the International Cooperative Biodiversity Group Maya, had recently been launched to gather data on the plants and healing methods used, with a view, alleged the Compitch, to producing patented drugs based on the healers' knowledge, while the healers themselves would receive little benefit.

The project, funded by the US government to the tune of \$2.5 million and comprising researchers from the University of Georgia (UG), the US National Health Institute (NIH), the Mexican research institute ECOSUR, and the Welsh pharmaceutical company Molecular Nature, has now been abandoned, due possibly to the negative publicity it was receiving. The Compitch have won.



AP PHOTOS

Nor does it stop there. The Brazilian government, increasingly fearful of what it, too, regards as 'biopiracy' by foreign companies, universities and laboratories, and under increasing pressure from the country's 230 different indigenous peoples, is moving to impose stricter controls on the use of medicinal plants from the Amazon region ■

QUOTES

more plausible understanding that we are diversely different. The main hope of harmony lies not in any imagined uniformity, but in the plurality of our identities.'

Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize laureate

'What we are witnessing in the world today is an active form of nihilism in social and political realms that threatens the very fabric of human existence. It assumes various names, and it is tragic and unfortunate that some of those names bear a resemblance to religiosity and some proclaim spirituality.'
Muhammad Khatami, President of Iran

'To those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty, my message is this. Your tactics only aid terrorists, for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to America's enemies and pause to America's friends.'

John Ashcroft, US Attorney General

'What we've seen, since 11 Sept, if you add up every thing that Ashcroft, Bush and their coterie of federalist society lawyers have done here, is a coup d'etat against the United States Constitution.'

Francis A Boyle, professor of international law at the University of Illinois

'The intelligence agencies have a long list of things they want done. They've been waiting for an event to justify them.'

Morton H Halperin, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, DC

'Many of the steps we have now been forced to take will become permanent in American life. They represent an understanding of the world as it is....'

Dick Cheney

'Armed civilians can deter crime. Armed civilians can mean safer planes, shopping malls and other public places.'

Robert Levy from the Cato Institute

continued on page 12

One dam up...

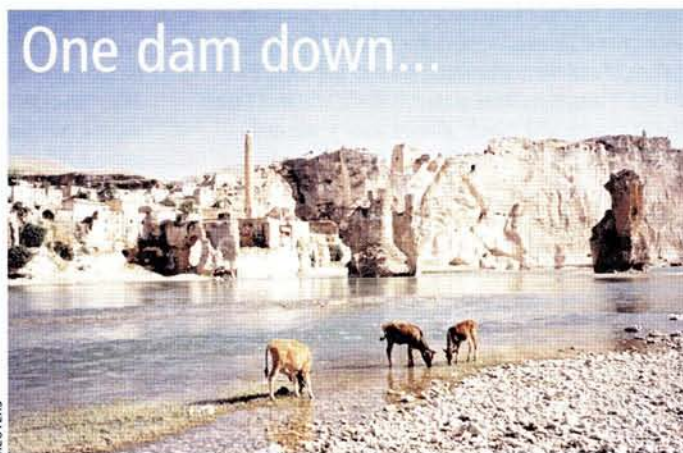
The World Bank has approved the construction of a large dam in Uganda that will cause the loss of thousands of people's land and access to river resources. The \$520 million Bujagali Dam will also destroy the culturally significant Bujagali Falls.

The World Bank has approved the project even though its own Project Assessment Document (PAD) indicates how economically risky the project is and despite the fact that there are ongoing internal investigations into the project's compliance with Bank policy. In fact last September, the IFC's Ombudsman

issued a report supporting NGOs' concerns (see *News*, vol 31/10).

So who stands to gain? Under the contract Uganda will pay AES Corp, the largest independent power producer in the world, about \$100 million in US dollars annually for 30 years no matter how much power is actually produced.

'The Bujagali Dam is a boondoggle that will enrich a large multinational while doing little to bring electricity to poor Ugandans. It is corporate welfare masquerading as poverty alleviation, and Uganda could be the poorer for it,' says Lori Pottinger from the International Rivers Network ■



REUTERS

Balfour Beatty, the lead contractor for the controversial Ilisu Dam in Turkey, has withdrawn from the project on social, environmental and economic grounds (see *Campaigns*, vol 31/10). Its Italian partner, Impregilo, has also withdrawn. Balfour Beatty, whose share prices have been steadily falling since last May, had applied for export credit support from the UK Export Credits Guarantees Department (ECGD) and from the US Ex-Im Bank.

With the company's withdrawal from Ilisu, both agencies have ceased to be involved in the project. Impregilo's application for export credits with the Italian export credit agency, SACE, has also been withdrawn. Campaigners are now calling for the ECGD and other ECAs to adopt legally-binding human rights, environment and development standards in order to screen out further similar projects ■

One dam good protest

More than a thousand people gathered in Malaga in Southern Spain late last November for a protest march against a planned reservoir and dam in the region of Cerro Blanco (see *Campaigns*, vol 31/9).

The police were forced to cut off several streets so that protesters and their tractors, mules, hens, farm machinery and even an oxcart could pass. According to the local press, 'the demonstration saw the

countryside transferred to the city, complete with all its details' and brought about total traffic chaos in the city for several hours.

The march culminated with the arrival of the protesters at the headquarters of La Confederacion Hidrografica del Sur. No violence took place – on the contrary, the atmosphere of the march was festive, and included carols dedicated to the president of La Confederacion, José Antonio Villegas ■

Fiddlers under one roof

Conspiracy theorists are wont to believe that the world is in fact run by a shadowy elite operating far from the public eye. The extent of their beliefs may be stretching things, but increasingly their general premise is being shown to be valid.

Take the High-Level LOTIS Group for example, who along with the LOTIS Committee are two of the working groups that make up International Financial Services, London (IFSL) and aim to influence ongoing negotiations on the liberalisation of trade in services at the WTO.

Just read what the chairman of the High Level LOTIS Group, the rather less shadowy Lord Brittan of Spennithorne, said of the outcome of the Doha negotiations: 'The decision taken by ministers at Doha to launch a wide ranging new trade round is most welcome. Further liberalisation in trade in services is in all our interests. But I doubt if we would have got very far if the negotiations had been confined to services and agriculture. With a full-scale and wide ranging Round, the scope for trade-offs between the different areas under negotiation should enable us to achieve a high quality services package which will benefit all WTO Member countries, whatever their stage of development.'

According to Corporate Europe Observatory, these two bodies constitute no less than a corporate state alliance in which senior UK government officials sit together with their business 'counterparts'. The LOTIS minutes available to read on www.gatwatch.org constitute hard evidence of corporate-state collusion and show how UK trade negotiators and the financial industry have been meeting regularly to develop joint strategies to push for sweeping liberalisation of trade in services and to undermine NGO campaigns opposing GATS ■



REUTERS

'The Bush Administration's decision to withdraw from the ABM treaty is both unnecessary and unwise. It is ironic that as we rediscover the need for international cooperation, we are taking an action almost universally opposed by our allies.'

Federation of American Scientists

'It'd be nice if there were leaders there and it'd be great if we were able to kill them.'

Gen Peter Page, Vice Chairman of the US Joint Chief of Staff on looking for Al-Qaeda members in the Tora Bora cave complex

'The American veto to a reasonable project of resolution by the Security Council, which plans an impartial mechanism of surveillance in the Middle East, is even more incomprehensible since the United States accepted it at the G8 summit in Genoa in July, and the resolution is more necessary now than ever before.'

French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine

'America's liberal activist groups – the environmental radicals, the animal-rights protesters, the archfeminists, and the antiglobalisation protesters – the indulgent world in which these groups had operated collapsed on 11 Sept. Most found themselves floundering for a message and scratching for funds; all are facing the realisation that a decade of shenanigans may be over.'

Kimberly Strassel, features editor at the *Wall Street Journal*.



God knows how...?

One of the largest, if not the largest, environmental disasters in the history of North America occurred deep within the Appalachian Mountains of Eastern Kentucky (US) last October. A coal waste impoundment, owned and operated by Martin County Coal Co (owned by A T Massey Coal Co; owned by the Flour Corporation) broke into abandoned underground mines and spilled in excess of 750 million gallons of coal slurry into nearby streams and rivers. Even though it was many times greater than the infamous Exxon Valdez disaster, and directly affected many towns and villages, the mainstream media, national environmental organisations, and political entities paid little or no attention.

The spill began when an underground coal mine collapsed and contents of a 72-acre 'pond' containing coal slurry approximately the thickness of wet cement poured from the 'pond' into the mines and gushed out of two openings into nearby Coldwater Fork and Wolf Creeks. The slurry then made its way into the Tug Fork River and on to the Big Sandy River. It eventually emptied into the Ohio River near Ashland, Kentucky.

The spill was so devastating that Kentucky Governor Paul Patton was forced to declare a state of emergency in 10 counties. The cities of Inez, Kentucky; Louisa, Kentucky and Kermit, West Virginia were forced to close their water intakes and rely instead on supplies provided by trucks and temporary pipelines operated by the National Guard and citizen volunteers. Private wells and springs were no longer usable by residents.

Even now, several months after the original incident, the adverse effects are visibly prominent among the residents of the region. Many have red blotches, called 'sludge bumps' spreading across their bodies. If one was to throw a rock into

the creek a plume of black would follow the impact.

According to the US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) analysis, 'in some samples of the source coal slurry material, copper, vanadium, manganese, barium, arsenic, and cobalt were above levels of health concern'. The report also states that 'in some forms, barium, arsenic, and vanadium can produce health effects by skin contact. Like most heavy metals, all of these compounds affect the digestive system, the kidneys (except manganese), and the liver (except vanadium). Many of these compounds produce effects on the central nervous system and some of them produce effects on the cardiovascular system.'

Whilst Martin County Coal initially refused to respond to questions about the spill and instead blamed it all on a 'sudden and unexpected' collapse of the underground mine roof, the Kentucky Department for Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement still issued four notices of non-compliance to Martin County Coal for violations. They accused the company of 'engaging in an unsafe practice by allowing substandard water and slurry' to flow from the impoundment into the underground and creating an 'imminent environmental damage.'

Two months later and in response to five civil lawsuits for damages against them, Martin County Coal has made two defences claiming:

- that the slurry spill 'was the direct, sole and proximate result of an act of God, the occurrence of which was not within the control of Martin County Coal', and
- that any alleged negligence by the company occurred more than five years before the filing date of the suits and therefore is barred by statutes of limitation.

Draw your own conclusions. ■

STAN AT EASE by Stan Eales

SMALL PHONE, BIG C



Laborious attitudes

Tensions are rising between the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), who are strongly opposed to the ANC's plans to privatise the country's utilities. The recent halt of the state's ambitious programme to sell off some of its £11.3bn assets has only made matters worse. 'The government can sell the restaurants it owns. But it can't sell basic services, like provisions of water, because they must deliver to the people,' Willy Madisha, president of Cosatu said in the *Financial Times*.

As the government has been unable to sell off its leisure, transport or electricity businesses, investment consultants predict that, in waiting too long for the best offer, the sale goods have lost their momentum on the market. Rather than rest on its laurels, however, Cosatu is planning more action against privatisation for this year.

Similar resistance is growing in the UK, where in January one of the largest unions, the GMB, announced it will substantially cut funding to the Labour Party while it continues to privatise public services ■

Beating waste

The director of Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority, Carl Beer, announced recently that the philosophy of ZeroWaste made sense and that he could not disagree with it. But, he added, the changes needed would necessarily entail changes from the top and politicians and civil servants could be unwilling to take the risks. He felt they would never be willing to promote any great change until people begin, in large numbers, to demand it.

His remarks came at a public meeting held by Wirral's Local Agenda 21 Forum to discuss its long term waste strategy (see *Campaigns*, vol 31/8). The meeting was inspired by the recent birth of Zero Waste UK; the interest shown in it by other local authorities, such as Bath City Council; and the announcement of the PIU Waste Study.

Zero Waste Policy urges that products, materials and packaging be designed to be recycled, rather than discarded into landfill or incinerators. However, its efficacy relies upon individual efforts to recycle – Wirral's Local Agenda 21 Forum discovered that 75 per cent of the rubbish in local wheelie bins was recyclable or compostable ■

N&Q CONTINUED

'We will not accept that Americans must sacrifice their prosperity or surrender their constitutional rights in order to preserve our environment.'
Grange National Master Kermit Richardson

A recent MORI survey shows that 41 per cent of British people agree that anti-globalisation protesters are raising genuine concerns and issues shared by many people around the world. Whilst 58 per cent of the public think that 'what is good for business is not good for most people in developing, poorer countries', 38 per cent believe that globalisation damages the environment.

'Far from being just a collapsing of distance and widening of opportunities for all, the increasing mobility of information, finance, goods and services frees the American government of constraints while more tightly constraining everyone else. The United States and its allies can stamp out specific groups by force and bribery. But in the long run, the structural arrangements that replicate a grossly unequal world would have to be redesigned... so that markets... produce more equitable results. Historians looking back a century from now will say that the time to have begun was now.'

Robert Hunter Wade, Professor of political economy at the LSE

'What the agency is trying to hide is not its intelligence sources but its own dirty laundry about internal disputes, disciplinary procedures, discrimination and who is to blame for blunders.'

Roy Krieger, the US lawyer defending 15 past and present CIA employees in a class action against the agency

'What can a judge in Belgium understand about, for example, suicide bombers?'

Shimon Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister making the case against Ariel Sharon's trial for war crimes

'I have the impression that the Israelis are ready to negotiate.'
Guy Verhofstadt, Belgian Prime Minister

continued over

PHOTO NEWS



The European Union has banned the import of grizzly bear trophies into Europe from the Canadian province of British Columbia.

J BALOG

Separatism and terrorism

After a series of bomb blasts in the Muslim Xinjiang province, China's national legislature plans to use the death penalty to deal with the 'terrorists' convicted of organising these acts (see *News* vol 31/9). According to *Der Spiegel* roughly 900 separatists – almost all from the Xinjiang Province – have been arrested on terrorist charges since late September. China also requested that over 8,000 Imams participate in a 're-education campaign' to avoid 'political and ideological confusion'. Human rights campaigners are worried that China is using the global anti-terrorism campaign with the purpose of putting pressure on Muslim minorities that live within China. Beijing contends that up to 1,000 Chinese Muslims were trained in Afghanistan by Al Qaeda.

Although US military forces have captured some Chinese nationals in Afghanistan and while some these may have been involved in terrorist activities

in the country, Muslims in Xinjiang have, according to Francis Taylor, US State Department counter-terrorism coordinator, 'legitimate economic and social issues that... should be resolved politically'. However, in exchange for supporting the international anti-terrorist campaign, China has demanded that all Chinese nationals captured in Afghanistan are delivered back to China.



Chinese Muslims pray at a mosque in Kashgar, in China's western Xinjiang province

AP PHOTOS

news in brief

'We didn't feel that the abuse of this technology, its potential abuses, should stop us from doing what we believe is the right thing in medicine.'

Dr West, cloning expert on the 'morals' of human cloning

'Temperatures are getting hotter and they are getting hotter faster now than any time in the past.'

Michael Jarraud, deputy director of the World Meteorological Organisation

'We only want three things from government: to tell us where to go (by establishing caps), when to get there and to get the hell out of the way.'

Michael Marvin, President, Business Council for Sustainable Energy on the Bush administration's attempt to cobble together an alternative to Kyoto

CO₂ emissions spewed by the United States and its territories jumped 3.1 per cent last year reaching 1,583 million metric tons of carbon equivalent, according to the Energy Department's analytical arm.

'I have been asked to go because my research results are unpopular.'

Andrew Wakefield, a researcher who raised safety concerns about the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine

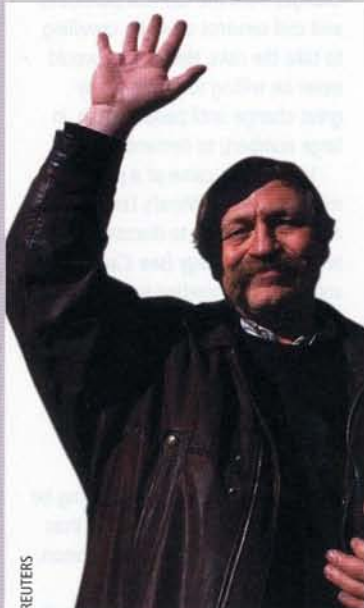
'The practice of feeding animal waste to ruminants had been going on for years, and recycling animal matter back into the food chain is a much more environmentally beneficial option than putting animals into a hole in the ground.'

Sir John Krebs, Chairman of the Food Standards Agency

'May we have a debate on GM contamination? My Right Hon Friend will be aware of this morning's news that contaminated maize has turned up in a remote area of Mexico that is separated by some 60 miles and several years from the last recorded GM plantings in California. Given that the UK has paltry separation distances, that UK farmers cannot get insurance against GM contamination and that we have found ourselves

CAUSING A STINK

The Ex-Press Plastics Action Group has called for a public enquiry into the siting and authorisation for production of the Express Plastics factory in a residential conservation area of Loddon, Norfolk (see *Campaigns*, vol 31/9). The local residents who sought help from South Norfolk Council say that a public enquiry is their only chance to get a fair hearing.



REUTERS

BOVÉ CONVICTED

José Bové, the French farmer and leading anti-globalisation activist, has been convicted to six months in jail for his role in destroying a genetically modified rice field in southern France in 1999.

A LITTLE LESS NUCLEAR?

Germany's plan to phase out nuclear power was approved in the Bundestag last December, the lower house of Parliament. The draft law provides backing for the June agreement between the government and the nuclear industry, under which reactors can each operate for up to 32 years and generate a set amount of electricity.

Thus Germany's most recent nuclear power plant will have to close around 2021. Centre-right opposition parties pledged to reverse the law if they win next year's general election.

MARKET SPIRIT

Robert AG Monks, founder of the Institutional Shareholder Services Inc (ISS), in December introduced a shareholder resolution calling for the

board of ExxonMobil to rein in its controversial top executive and chairman, Lee Raymond. Monks called for ExxonMobil's Board to separate the roles of board chairman and chief executive officer, charging that Raymond's 'increasingly extreme position' on global warming and other environmental and social issues was harming the company's reputation and share values.

APROPOS EXXONMOBIL...

ExxonMobil has been ordered to pay \$11.2 million to settle one of the largest hazardous waste cases, reports ENS. The agreement settles a case filed against Mobil Oil Corporation in 1986. The company was charged with mismanaging benzene contaminated wastes at Port Mobil, in Staten Island. The settlement includes an \$8.2 million civil penalty under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), one of the largest civil penalties ever obtained under RCRA.

MORE MARKET OPTIONS

The dispute between Austria and the Czech Republic over the Czech nuclear power plant at Temelín was resolved in early December after the Czechs agreed to introduce legally a series of safety improvements. In return, Austria said it would drop its threat to oppose the Czech Republic's entry into the European Union.

The Czech Government is in the process of privatising its energy sector.

FOUL IS OUT

Shipping companies will have until 2003 to stop using tributyltin-based antifouling paints and an additional five years to cover up existing tributyltin (TBT) paint on ship hulls, once the agreement adopted at the latest UN International Maritime Organisation has been ratified. TBT has been shown to cause deformities and sex changes among crustaceans once it leaches into the water (see *News*, vol 31/5).

HAVE A TACO

The US Environment Protection Agency (EPA) has renewed its approval for Bt corn for another seven years, saying that the GM product does not pose risks to human health and the environment. 'EPA's assertion that BT corn does not harm monarch

butterflies is an over-interpretation of the results of many studies,' says Karen Oberhauser, ecologist at the University of Minnesota.

Around the same time, Mexican scientists detected genetically modified DNA in native varieties of cultivated corn in the south-east of Mexico, home to teosinte, the corn's wild ancestor. In response the Mexican Congress unanimously demanded that President Vicente Fox ban the importation of genetically modified (GM) corn, and claimed the new corn could affect the genetic integrity of Mexico's crops and threaten the country's food supply.

RECLAIMING THE RICE

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was cited as telling reporters that his government was commissioning American lawyers to take legal action against any efforts by US companies to patent an American version of Thai jasmine rice (see *News*, vol 31/10).

Thailand, the world's top rice exporter, produces about three million tonnes of jasmine rice – famed for its superior flavour – a year and about 24 million tonnes of rice in total.

FIXING THE TRUTH

Monsanto knew about serious safety problems with PCBs as early as 1930 according to an article published in the *Washington Post* (see also vol 31/10). The article said that: 'thousands of pages of Monsanto documents – many emblazoned with warnings such as "CONFIDENTIAL: Read and Destroy" – show that for decades, the corporate giant concealed what it did and what it knew...

'In 1975, a company study found that PCBs caused tumours in rats. They ordered its conclusion changed from "slightly tumorigenic" to "does not appear to be carcinogenic".'

'In 1998, a former Anniston plant manager, William Papageorge, was asked in a deposition whether Monsanto officials ever shared their data about PCB hazards with the community. "Why would they?" he replied.... The [Monsanto appointed] committee even drew up graphs charting profits vs liability over time, and urged more studies to poke holes in the government's case against PCBs.'

THE CENSORED RIGHT TO CHOOSE

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has warned six natural food companies that they are misleading consumers by labelling their products as 'GM-free'. The FDA's warning is not based upon the fact that the products may contain traces of GMO's, but reflects a growing concern by the agency that some companies might be trying to play with the public's concerns over GMOs – which after all the FDA has declared safe.

GRASSROOT POWER

Three of the four top Dutch banks – ABN AMRO, Rabobank and Fortis Bank – have decided to stop or substantially restrict financing the development of oil palm plantations which entail the destruction of tropical rainforest. The decision is the result of a joint campaign by Sawit Watch Indonesia, Milieudefensie (Friends of the Earth Netherlands) and Greenpeace, Netherlands.

ING Bank remains the only top Dutch bank unprepared to withdraw from financing oil palm plantations. In the Belgian newspaper *De Morgen* an ING representative was quoted as saying: 'If forest clearing is government approved, we are still prepared to finance.'

JUSTICE

Survivors of the December '84 Union Carbide disaster in Bhopal celebrated a victory in the US Second Circuit Court Of Appeals. A decision passed on by the appellate court has reversed nearly half of the decisions taken by Judge Keenan of the Southern District Court in New York when he dismissed the class action suit by the survivors over a year ago. The decision affirms

the environmental damage claims of the survivors and is likely to have consequences for Dow Chemical Company, which took over Union Carbide in February last year.

MINE BLOWING

A study by a Honduran association of NGOs revealed that the country's Mining Department has issued mining concessions to multinationals from Canada, Australia and the US that cover about 30 per cent of the country's territory. The concessions are based upon a 1998 General Mining Law granting companies lifelong concessions, low taxes, unlimited access to water, and the right to expropriate lands. The Earth Island Journal reports that the law was apparently written by a mining association dominated by US and Canadian companies and gives companies rights to petition the government for the removal of traditional communities who live near mining concessions.

INDIGENOUS LAND RIGHTS

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Costa Rica ruled in favour of a Nicaraguan indigenous group that sued their government in 1998 for violation of property rights when logging concessions were sold to a South Korean company.

The ruling requires Nicaragua to demarcate and title the community's land, reform national legislation to conform with the American Convention on Human Rights, and pay US\$80,000 in compensation and legal costs. Notably, the court maintained that indigenous land ownership is based on traditional land occupancy and not just titles granted by the state.

REAL-POLITIK IN A GLOBAL AGE

Reuters in Luanda reported in December that US\$1.5 billion in oil revenues – over one third of Angola's oil income – went missing last year. The oil money, which comprises some 87 per cent of the war-torn country's total income, appears to have vanished into a 'black hole' between state oil company Sonangol, the Treasury and the Presidency. The IMF uncovered the missing billions in its Oil Diagnostic Programme, which compares reportedly paid revenue by the oil companies – currently, mainly from TotalFinaElf and Chevron-Texaco – with the money that actually appeared on the Government's books. According to Global Witness, international oil companies and banks that continue to do business in Angola, operating with a complete lack of transparency, and hence accountability, are complicit in this situation. The Oil and banking sectors have repeatedly refused to release any public information about the scale of their payments to the State, making it impossible for civil society to hold the Angolan Government to account over misappropriation of state assets.

FREE TRADE SUBSIDISED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Canfor Corp, a British Columbia (BC) lumber producer, has filed a \$250 million case against the US under NAFTA's controversial chapter 11 provisions, which grant foreign corporations legal rights where they feel that their profits have been 'expropriated'.

Canadian softwood, cut largely from ancient forest in BC, is heavily subsidised, and the US has used Canadian subsidies, as well as mill closures and job losses in the US, to slap a series of duties on Canadian imports. In invoking NAFTA's chapter 11 on investment, Canfor Corp is initiating one of the most expensive challenges so far brought under NAFTA.

Chapter 11 has been the basis of numerous lawsuits that have handicapped environmental protection, cost taxpayers millions of dollars, and overridden domestic laws and standards.

Whilst the duties imposed will for the time being enrich the US, Canfor Corp will continue to clear cut Canada's old growth forests. The loser under the lawsuit will be neither the US nor Canfor Corp but British Columbia's ancient forests.

consistently blocked from having a GM producer liability regime by the industry that wants to pursue the trials, could we have an urgent debate in order to dispel the public myth and criticism that UK policy is increasingly either in the pay or the pockets of a biotech industry that is currently driven by a bunch of crooks and shysters?

Alan Simpson, MP

A recent European Commission survey shows 79.9 per cent of people surveyed don't want GM foods, 94.6 per cent say they have the right to choose about GM foods, 59.4 per cent say GMOs could have negative effects on the environment.

Organic feed sampled by the Danish Plant Directorate under the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries from eight Danish feed companies revealed traces of GMOs in 20 samples out of a total of 48, and in 7 samples, in quantities of more than 1 per cent.

City officials in Lewiston/Maine have offered Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, more than \$5.8 million in tax reimbursements if it builds a 480,000 square-foot distribution centre.

According to the Renctas, an estimated 38 million animals are stolen from Brazil's forest per year – the business earns traffickers about £1 billion per year.

The NFU estimates that the F&M crisis has cost the industry about £1bn even after compensation has been paid... peanuts compared to compensations to all farmers the UK government wanted to get rid of in the long term.

The countryside agency estimates that England's remaining 7,000 country pubs are closing at an average of six a week.

According to Valli Moosa, South African Minister for the Environment, the Johannesburg Summit in September 2002 will cost \$50.6 million to \$55.7 million to stage.



campaigns

- Spain's rain drain • Papuan logging travesty • Peruvian pressure-cooker • UK GM Oration
- Amazon in distress • UK radio-activism • Australian ancient forest threat

SPAIN Draining the life out of the land

The Spanish government is pressing on with its National Hydrological Plans, in spite of massive opposition from national and international environmental groups. These plans, breathtaking in the scale of destruction they entail for countless areas of wildlife importance, appear to contravene the EU Directive on Water, Habitats and Birds. Yet, although the EU initially listened to protests and warned Spain to remain within the law, it has so far done nothing to cut off European funds for these plans. Indeed, to the horror of environmentalists, the Commissions Deputy Director General for the Environment has recently appeared on Spanish television endorsing the plans.

The National Hydrological Plans have been a priority for the Spanish government since the Partido Popular (the main centre-right party) gained absolute control in 1999. Since then, it has used its majority to overrule all opposition or attempts at amendments to its plans, which include the construction of 110 dams, and a huge number of water channels, canals and ditches to transfer water from wetlands to the arid Mediterranean coast areas.

This transfer is driven by the demands of the arid southern coast.

There, huge amounts of water are consumed

by ever increasing numbers of hotels, apartments and golf courses, as well as by farmers seeking ever more irrigated land to grow Mediterranean fruit and vegetables. Despite this surge in demand, no attempt has been made by the Spanish government to implement more sustainable water management.

Assessment of the environmental impact has shown that a hundred Natura 2000 sites would be damaged by the plans. They would spell ecological catastrophe for both wetlands (especially the Ebro delta, an internationally-recognised Ramsar Wetlands Convention site) and also the dry land of the south where irrigation for unsustainable farming will destroy the habitats for birds such as the rare Bustard. Other endangered species are also directly threatened, including the Iberian lynx (see *The Algarve Tiger*, page 52). New dams and their connected infrastructure will break up the few remaining intact regions for the world's rarest big cat.

Over a million protesters in three different cities took to the streets earlier this year.

But the government has not budged. In November, it emerged that 80 per cent of the environment department's budget is to be spent on this ecologically disastrous scheme. So campaigners are now focusing their efforts on persuading the European Commission to refuse to give any structural funds for the big dam and canal projects. They believe that without this money the plans would have to be

scaled down considerably. However the augurs are not good; two controversial dams funded by European money (La Brena II and Santaliestra) are already under way.

The National Hydrological Plans raise the question of just how effective European legislation is. The Water Framework Directive is supposed to conserve water and protect the environmental quality of aquatic and land-based ecosystems dependent on water. Yet this plan promotes excessive water consumption instead of water management and will have catastrophic effects on Spain's unique biodiversity.



make a difference

Visit Ecologistas En Accion at www.nodo50.org/ecologistas and follow instructions to send an email to Margot Wallstroem, European Commissioner for the Environment. Should you wish to write a letter, write to: Margot Wallstroem, European Commissioner for the Environment, 22 Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200, 1049-Brussels, Belgium. Copy your letters to: Ecologistas En Accion, Marques de Leganes 12, Madrid (Spain) or fax: +34 91 531 2611.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA World Bank waters down failed moratorium

When it accepted a Structural Adjustment Loan from the World Bank, Papua New Guinea's government agreed to a moratorium on new logging concessions. Although the moratorium has now lapsed, it is well known that the government did not fulfil its obligation under the loan conditions. But, despite the fact that several logging operations commenced during the moratorium period, the World Bank still refuses to suspend lending.

In response, Papua New Guinean landowners from the Kiunga Aiambak Road area in the Western Province have filed an Inspection Panel

grievance with the World Bank, claiming they lost their land and forests while the government was contractually bound to the World Bank to improve forest governance and not commence new logging. Furthermore, several of those landowners that protested the illegal logging of their land have been unlawfully imprisoned, beaten and tortured. The World Bank is currently considering disbursement of the final loan payment.

If it does so without insisting on maintaining the moratorium it would be in violation of the contractual provisions of the loan, as well as in conflict with its

make a difference

Write to Mr James Wolfensohn, President, The World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433, email: cunit3@worldbank.org. For a sample letter visit forests.org. Copy letters to: Glen Barry, Forests.org Inc, PO Box 46281, Madison, WI 53744-6281, USA, email: gbarry@forests.org.

own operational directives. Instead, the World Bank has now proposed a so-called Forestry and Conservation Project (FCP), which, although it includes a fund to protect biodiversity, doesn't ensure the legal status of conservation or community development projects that strive for local ownership, ecological sustainability and community development.

The FCP's forest sector

management provisions are deeply flawed and local consultation has not occurred. What's more, there has been no sharing of project documents for years despite promises to do so. The World Bank must be taken to task for not withholding lending unless illegal logging ends and for failing to support community-based and ecologically-sensitive forest alternatives.

PERU Gas exploration threatens untouched regions

The \$2.7 billion Camisea gas project in Peru comprises fields estimated to contain 11 trillion cubic feet of gas and 600 million barrels of condensate. If it goes ahead it will mean the construction of wells, flow lines, a gas plant and two pipelines to the coast.

Citibank is financial advisor for the project whose upstream component alone will cost US\$1.2 billion. Other concession-holders are Hunt Oil and Argentina's Pluspetrol. Chase Manhattan Bank recently received approval from the US Ex-Im Bank for a guarantee on a US\$25.332 million five-year loan to Pluspetrol (Peru Corp SA) to conduct initial oil and gas exploration. Drilling commencement is slated for April this year and pipelines are expected to be completed by December 2003.

The site, however, is not only rich in gas. The Lower Urubamba River Valley gas field is located in one of the world's most biologically diverse regions in the legally titled territory of several uncontacted indigenous peoples. A study headed by Smithsonian Institute recognises the area 'to be in nearly pristine condition,' showing no evidence of human activity. The Camisea region is home to Nahua



and Kugapakori Indians who live in voluntary isolation. When Shell conducted preliminary exploration of the region in the mid-1980s, the Nahua were exposed to whooping cough, small pox and influenza. An estimated 50 per cent of the population died. Most of the remainder fled the area. Dozens of Machiguenga and Yine communities are also located along the rivers inside Camisea's area of operation. Shell's own Environmental Impact Assessment found that the following socio-cultural impacts could occur: loss of food resources, contamination of drinking water supplies, diseases, loss or damage to archaeological

sites and changes to existing economic activity. The gas pipeline route is also said to traverse the remote and biodiverse Vilcabamba range to the south-west of the Camisea gas field, which includes two communal reserves and a national park. The range contains the Apurímac Reserved Zone, the source of more than 50 rivers that drain into the Amazon basin via the Ucayali River.

According to local community leaders neither the company nor the government has made the full copy of the relevant Environmental Impact Assessments available to local stakeholders. However, they have all the more reason to be worried: Pluspetrol has an appalling environmental track

record. In November 1999, a rupture in a Pluspetrol oil pipeline in the Pucayacu ravine contaminated the Chambira River. The Urarina indigenous people suffered severe health problems and deaths. In October 2000, a Pluspetrol oil spill on the Marañón River caused ecological disaster contaminating Peru's largest protected area, the Pacaya Samiria Reserve. The area's 20,000 inhabitants suffered diarrhoea and skin diseases and saw their food and water supply decimated by toxic pollution. Much of the medicines promised by Pluspetrol never even reached any of the affected communities.

make a difference

Write to: James Jennings, President and Steve Suellentrop, Vice President, Camisea Development Project, Hunt Oil Company, 1445 Ross at Field, Suite 1400, Dallas TX 75202-2785, USA. Fax: + 214 855-6712; email: jjennings@huntoil.com and ssuellentrop@huntoil.com. Sandy Weill, CEO Citigroup Center, 153 East 53rd St, New York, NY 10043, fax: +1 212 793 8999. Ask them to pull out of the Camisea Project and to stop any further involvement for gas exploration, production and transportation activities in ecologically and culturally sensitive areas of the Peruvian Amazon, including areas inhabited by uncontacted or isolated indigenous communities. Copy your letters to: Amazon Watch, 115 S Topanga Canyon Blvd Suite E, Topanga, CA 90290, USA; fax: +1 310 455 0619, email: amazon@amazonwatch.org. For more information and updates visit: www.amazonwatch.org.

7 key websites

- 1 **www.opendemocracy.net**
Real food for thought.
- 2 **www.globalroots.net**
Building a multi-racial, locally-rooted global awareness movement in the US.
- 3 **www.gatswatch.org**
GATSwatch brings you the latest news and critical information on the GATS negotiations and the global campaign to Stop the GATS Attack.
- 4 **www.etcgroup.org**
Dedicated to the conservation and sustainable advancement of cultural and ecological diversity and human rights.
- 5 **www.iatp.org**
Download 'When Does It Pay to

Plant Bt Corn: Farm-Level Economic Impacts of Bt Corn, 1996-2001'.

6 **www.chemicalindustryarchives.org**

The documents global chemical companies thought you'd never read.

7 **www.prwatch.org/cgi/spin.cgi**

Spin of the day – Public Relations, Propaganda and Media Spin.

Please send your campaigns and websites to Stephanie Roth at: The Ecologist, Unit 18, Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Road, London SW10 0QJ, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 7351 3578. Fax: +44 (0)20 7351 3617. Email: campaigns@theecologist.org.

UK We still need that five year freeze

Two-and-a-half years after launching its Five Year Freeze campaign calling for a moratorium on genetic engineering and patenting in food and farming, the Genetic Engineering Alliance (GEA) felt it was time to assess the Government's handling of this highly sensitive subject. This was particularly necessary as the Westminster PR machine has used all possible means to assure consumers that everything – from trials, farming and the environment, to public involvement – is in safe hands.

In December, the GEA released its report (available at www.fiveyearfreeze.org) and many of the findings are worrying, to say the least. Serious omissions remain in



the research agenda, the regulatory process and in adequately informing and consulting the public. Simply stated, the risks the government is currently taking are just too high.

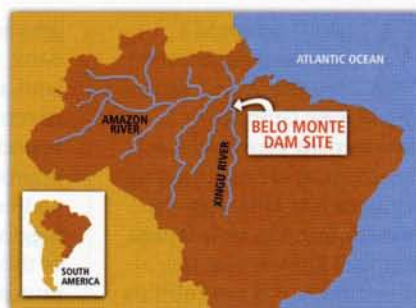
In response, Alan Simpson MP has tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM 499) on behalf of the Freeze campaign. It calls upon the Government to cease the growing of GM crops in the UK until such time as a comprehensive assessment of research needs, that is both independent and public, has been carried out and acted upon. Everyone who cares to know the truth about the impact of genetic engineering on agriculture, food and health should lend their support to EDM 499.

make a difference

For an EDM to be taken up, it must be signed by as many individual MP's as possible. Get your MP to sign EDM 499. Just go to www.faxyourmp.com and send an automatic message. Copy your message to enquiry@fiveyearfreeze.org, and please tell as many friends as possible to lend their support to this campaign.

BRAZIL Villages of the dammed

'What will be left of the Xingu River for the people of Xingu?' *Ademir Alfeu Federicci, opponent of the Belo Monte Dam, murdered 25 August 2001.*



In the late 1980s, the Kayapo people forced the Brazilian government to abandon plans to build six huge dams on the Xingu River. The ensuing international uproar over human rights and environmental concerns then persuaded the World Bank to suspend financing for all dams in the Amazon Basin.

Now, Eletronorte, the state-owned electrical utilities company, is back on the Xingu River with new plans to build a dam, the Belo Monte. However, since the Belo Monte dam will not have enough water to generate electricity during the four-month dry season, it is highly probable that construction won't stop there, and that more dams will be built upstream to increase efficiency. These in return will have huge reservoirs and could well double the amount of submerged rainforest in Brazil.

While Eletronorte touts the Xingu dams as 'a blessing from God', the battle between those for and those against the development plan for the Amazon, known as *Avanço Brasil* (see *The Ecologist*, vol 31/3), has turned bitter and bloody. Since June, five grassroots activists have been murdered and hundreds jailed.

So just how serious is the potential damming of the Xingu

River? One-third of all the world's species live in the Amazon River Basin and one-third of the world's tropical woods occur only in the Amazon. The Amazon River and its tributaries, including the Xingu, supply 20 per cent of the earth's fresh water and have the highest diversity of freshwater fish.

What's more, 1 million Brazilians have already lost their lands and livelihoods to dam constructions, with indigenous peoples being especially vulnerable. Damming the Xingu River would seriously threaten the survival and cultural integrity of at least 15 indigenous tribes, including the Kayapo.

Movimento Pelo Desenvolvimento da Transamazônica e Xingu (MDTX), a coalition of 113 organisations, is calling for international support to pressurise the Brazilian government to bring the murderers of community leaders to justice, and to require community participation and consent for dam construction projects in keeping with the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams.

make a difference

Please write a polite letter to: Exmo. Sr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Presidente da República, Praça dos Tres Poderes, Palácio do Planalto – 30 Andar Brasília, DF 70150-900 Brazil. Fax: +55 /61/ 411-2222, email: presidencia@planalto.gov.br; pr@planalto.gov.br. Express your concern about the atmosphere of intimidation. Demand a full investigation into the murder of Ademir Alfeu Federicci. Ask him to order Eletronorte to immediately release the feasibility studies for the Belo Monte dam, for independent review. Urge him to suspend construction of the Belo Monte dam in order to first adopt and implement the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams. Express your support for the local organisations that altogether form the Amazon Working Group (GTA) in their petition for a Moratorium on all high-impact development projects in the Amazon. Copy your letters to: Raimunda Monteiro at MDTX, email: rai@amazon.com.br. For more information visit: www.globalresponse.org.

UK Stop Plymouth's city-centre nuclear dump

In November, the UK Environment Agency (EA) granted Devonport Management Ltd (DML) permission to increase the amount of radioactive waste in the form of tritium that it dumps into Plymouth's river Tamar by 500 per cent (see 'Ship of Fools', *The Ecologist*, vol 31/8).

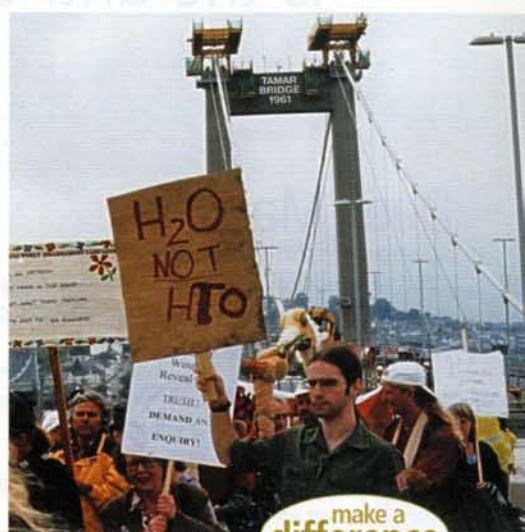
Devonport has the world's only nuclear facility that is not only in the centre of a city of 300,000 people, but is also only 400 yards from the nearest primary school, which itself has the dubious honour of being the only school with a nuclear alarm button at the back of the classrooms.

Despite both the EA and Devon Health Authority's claims that tritium is safe, many scientists disagree, pointing out that the risk to future generations lies in 'genomic instability' which could effect generation after generation.

What's more, Plymouth already has leukaemia rates 25–29 per cent above the average for the rest of England and Wales.

CANSAR, the resident-based pressure group, is campaigning for an immediate adoption of the 'precautionary principle' and a public inquiry so that the truth about the risks to the health and safety of local people may surface.

Even though the EA has granted the license to DML to increase the dumping, there is still time, as the Secretary of State could still 'call in' the decision and make it the subject of a public inquiry.



Write to the Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP, Secretary of State and Rt Hon Michael Meacher MP, Minister of State, DEFRA, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR. Please copy your letter to Ian Avent, CANSAR, 60 Royal Navy Ave, Keyham, Plymouth PL2 2AQ.

AUSTRALIA Cut me rainforest down



Because of its ecological and cultural significance, New South Wales' publicly-owned Badja forest has become the site of the first major showdown between the state government and the community over forests lost to logging. Despite a decade-long campaign, which culminated in an eight month vigil, staffed by hundreds of volunteers to protect this precious forest, the Carr government has refused to

address the community's concern and is backing the woodchippers' smash and grab with enormous public funds.

In December, helicopters, 24-hour police patrols and roadblocks managed to break up a peaceful vigil, and logging has since commenced. Only a few days later, two forest rescuers were arrested for attempting to slow the relentless procession of log trucks carrying 600-year-old trees from the Badja forest to the woodchip mill in nearby Eden.

'The community wants to protect unique places like Badja forest. The New South Wales state government has been completely unwilling to negotiate appropriate outcomes for this public forest. Instead, it has pulled out all the stops to ensure the destruction of this precious forest. The massive police presence required to block public roads, escorts for log trucks and surveillance helicopters are costing the community up to \$400,000,' said Annie Coleman, forest

campaigner for The Wilderness Society.

The Badja forest was protected from logging by community action in the early 1990s when a moratorium was won pending the completion of the Regional Forest Agreement. Unfortunately the area was lost to logging interests during that process and is now scheduled to be destroyed.

The Badja forest contains large areas of continuous old growth forest that are home to a vast array of native animals, of which at least 11 are threatened species, and provides pristine water catchment for the Tuross River. Some of the ancient trees in the forest stand 50m tall, with a girth of 10m, and are probably 300–500 years old. The forest is home to an array of flora species including Brown Barrel and Shining Gum. The combination of wilderness, old growth, high productivity and high biodiversity make Badja essential for the survival of the region's wildlife and ecological processes.

6 online campaigns

1 www.twinside.org.sg
NGOs and social movements sign-on campaign to oppose Mike Moore as candidate for Chair of Trade Negotiations Committee.

2 www.greenpeace.org
In April 2002, 189 world governments will meet in The Hague, The Netherlands for the Ancient Forest Summit. Push them for real change.

3 www.scottishgreens.org.uk
and click onto 'SANE'
Push Scotland's First Minister and the Scottish Parliament against nuclear power and towards more renewable energy and energy efficiency.

4 www.stoppedrugwar.org
US-imposed 'drug war' policies have driven the nation of Bolivia into a deepening civil conflict. Take Action and stop US Drug War Policy in Bolivia.

5 www.zelena-akcija.hr
Help Croatia stay GM-free.

6 www.earthisland.org/
The US House Energy and Commerce Committee marked up a bill to reauthorise the Price Anderson Act. The act subsidises the nuclear industry by lowering its insurance costs and reducing its liability. Reauthorisation of the act, which expires in August of 2002, would pave the way for new nuclear reactors to be built.

make a difference

Urgently email, fax or write to: Premier Bob Carr, Level 40, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000; fax: +61 2 9228 3935; email: bob.carr@www.nsw.gov.au. Minister Kim Yeadon, Level 34, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000, fax: +61 2 9228 3810. Please copy your letters to: Annie Coleman, c/o The Wilderness Society, PO Box K249, Haymarket, NSW 2140; Fax: +61 2 9282 9557; email: sydney@wilderness.org.au.

Is the anti-corporate globalisation movement a

JOHN LLOYD AND MARK CURTIS

Dear Mark

My argument is that 11 September has made the global movements of protest even less intellectually sustainable than they were before. I am not arguing that 11 September was an event which completely transformed the movements' landscape. They had very large organisational, intellectual, even moral, problems before it. But the consequences of the attack have made these more visible.

The global movements of protest are exceptionally diverse. One sort are the big and relatively well-established NGOs like Oxfam and Médecins sans Frontières: they generally protest against specific events or actions or states of affairs. They seek peace and security in which to do humanitarian work: they often cannot count on it, thus put pressure on governments to ensure it. They also, in the course of their work and experience, have evolved views on aid, development and wars: in close alliance with the media, they have been able to make these views generally recognised and admired.

On the other side, organisations like Reclaim the Streets and Ya Basta! protest against global capitalism: they see in it an inhuman and degrading system which pushes the poor ever deeper into poverty. All efforts to soften it or regulate it are doomed to failure, and are generally the work of hypocrites.

Between these exist most of the global movements.

'The consequence of 11 September is for those on the centre left and right, liberals and social democrats, to question more harshly those whom they may hitherto have seen as merely over-enthusiastic.'

They tend to shift emphasis from one side to the other as the occasion demands. They will, at times, seek reforms in particular instances: at others they will join with those who oppose global capitalism, especially in their critique of world trade, or investment. Lack of clarity on ultimate purpose is an important element here – since they can benefit both from the wave of militancy which fuelled the global movements, and yet remain within the influential and sometimes profitable ambit of dialogue with corporations and government.

The humanitarian bona fides and courage of the first kind of movements hardly need restating. There are hard questions to be asked about how aid is

distributed, how development is furthered, how far the NGOs impede UN and state aid, as well as each other. But these are questions within a general consensus that aid and development are good and necessary.

It is the practice and theory of the others which is the issue here. There is a view – Ralph Dahrendorf, consistently liberal, has recently stated it – that in the absence of a global people or global democracy, these movements are the closest thing we have to an opposition. While their violence when it occurs should not be condoned, they should be seen largely in that light.

I agree with that. Not only do the movements have the right to protest, publish and disseminate their protest, but they must do so in the interests of debate and of enlightenment. Demonstrations have achieved purposes which are likely to be benign – as that organised in 1998 in Birmingham which highlighted the cause of debt reduction, and which seems to have assisted and may have deepened the movement towards it.

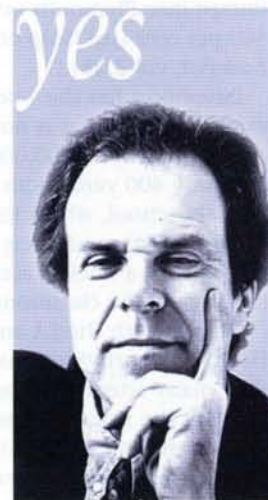
But the tendency of the movements towards both nihilism, and a view of global development as a mixture of American imperialism and corporate greed, made them vulnerable to a shift of opinion from indifference of the majority to an at least potentially hostile questioning of the bases of their opinions.

That shift has occurred. The consequence of 11 September – and not just, perhaps even not mainly, in the US – is for those on the centre left and right, liberals and social democrats, to question more harshly those whom they may hitherto have seen as merely over-enthusiastic.

The first question – which has been a mainly American one – has been: how far do these who are active in the global movements see 11 September as a result of the US 'asking for it' – is relatively easily solved. Judging by the websites, some did. These sentiments were also voiced in journals of the left, as the *London Review of Books*, *The New Statesman*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *The Nation* (US) and by some contributors to and staff writers for the *Guardian*. Outside of Europe, this feeling was much more widespread, and relatively popular: the rejoicing of Palestinians on the West Bank, featured in the news, was far from the limit of it.

But it was not general. Many of the movements expressed horror; some cancelled demonstrations and marches – though these have since re-grouped, round opposition to the war in Afghanistan. The harder and longer-term questions are these.

- How far is globalisation co-terminus with American power and influence, generally called US imperialism?
- Is the US monolithic on its approach to globalisation, to the Middle East, to the ways in which development should be funded, to the



John Lloyd is a freelance journalist and author of *The Protest Ethic: How the anti-globalisation movement challenges social democracy*, published by Demos.

finished force in the post-11 September world?

DEBATE A KEY ISSUE OF STRATEGY.



Mark Curtis is the author of *The Great Deception: Anglo-American Power and World Order*, Pluto Press, and head of policy at Christian Aid.

programmes of the UN and the international financial institutions?

- Do the proposals of the centre left – for a strengthening and democratising of global institutions and the creation of new instruments of global justice – constitute a meaningful set of reforms?
- Are they the same as the views of the right on global justice and equity or is a distinction to be made between them?
- Why do developing countries demand freer trade, more investment and greater activity by the international financial institutions? Why do they often oppose higher labour and environmental standards?
- And crucially: How far do the global movements, or any group of them or any individual movement, have a view of an alternative system of global trade and economy from the present one (NB: an alternative system, not a series of reforms).

Some sort of account of these questions is necessary for a dialogue which is not that of the deaf.

John Lloyd

Dear John

You provide no cogent arguments for your assertion that the anti-corporate movement is a finished force, and simply ask a lot of questions. Let me explain why this movement is far from a finished force.

The most noticeable feature of the 'post-11 September world' is how much it resembles the pre-11 September world. The power of global corporations remains unchecked. At November's meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Qatar, OECD countries forced four new issues into the WTO's negotiating remit which are likely to increase corporate power. This was in the face of opposition from almost all developing countries. The US continues to veto multilateral initiatives such as the biological weapons convention and intends to withdraw from the anti-ballistic missile treaty. Meanwhile, 2.8 billion people across the world continue to live below the poverty line.

The prospects for developing the movement for greater global justice, often wrongly painted as 'anti-globalisation', are one of the few things that have changed. They are if anything stronger – precisely because so little has changed after 11 September. The part of the movement that seems – fortunately – to have been dealt a blow by 11 September is the violent element, which anyway represented a miniscule proportion of public protesters. Recently, in excess of 8,000 peaceful protesters joined the Trade Justice Movement parade in central London, a brand new branch of the movement recently set up by UK-based development and environmental NGOs. Not exactly a

sign that the protest movement is dead.

There are at least three reasons why the global movement is growing and will continue to grow.

First, the power of corporations compared to people and governments is still increasing and received a significant boost in Qatar. The four new issues added to the WTO's remit – especially investment, government procurement and competition policy – are intended to open up national economies even further to the reach of overwhelmingly rich country-based transnational corporations (TNCs). These new issues have little to do with trade: they are more about extending the control of TNCs over countries' domestic policy-making.

Second, in the UK and other OECD countries, there is every reason to believe that people's sense of disempowerment is either unchanged, or is perhaps increasing. This is partly the result of what appears to be governments' willing capitulation to the demands of transnational capital and the fact that politicians of all mainstream persuasions increasingly offer people no alternative policies. Protest through the political system is increasingly seen as ineffective.

Third, in many developing countries there is a burgeoning of civil society activism. Protests against corporate globalisation have taken place from Ghana to Bolivia, and groups from developing countries have become much more active on the global stage. The prospects for global coalitions have never been better.

I think that the events precipitated by the appalling

'I think that the events precipitated by 11 September have revealed to many people the power imbalances that exist in our world.'

tragedy of 11 September have revealed to many people the inequities and power imbalances that exist in our world, providing an even clearer reason for developing this global movement. The extent of poverty and marginalisation of ordinary people in countries such as Afghanistan, but also throughout Africa and in many parts of Asia and Latin America is staggering. Much public debate has correctly noted that these levels of poverty and inequality ultimately contribute to greater insecurity and threaten western prosperity. I also believe that most people want not only sustained action against terrorism. They also want their governments to act in more moral ways, tackling the root causes of poverty and taming the power of corporations. ■

✦ Many sections of the political class are pushing the view that the global protest movement has dissipated following 11 September for the obvious reason that it represents a serious challenge to their power. No doubt they hope that the more they write about it failing the more this will become a reality. These people probably didn't attend the World Social Forum conference in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January, which brought together hundreds of civil society groups from many dozens of countries. These human rights, environment, development, women's, peace and other groups often do not have an identical agenda. But they are united in challenging the current unjust global order and in putting forward positive alternatives based on a different set of values, such as human rights, justice and equity. Those who are afraid of events like Porto Alegre are right to be afraid; the values of this movement are also the values of people the world over, and they are alternatives to the current corporate greed that our elites are so keen to promote.

There are serious challenges facing this movement. Its strength and its weakness are that it is disparate. It champions diversity and recognises that there is no single alternative economic or political model that can replace the current dominant paradigm (call it corporatisation). But this often makes it easier for its enemies to criticise.

I find it revealing that many 'progressives' are pronouncing the death of this global protest movement. Where do they believe that needed change is to come from if not from this diverse, internationalist, value-based and people-focused movement? We are indeed faced with a choice: whether to acquiesce in the face of increasing corporatisation of our social, economic and political life – the choice offered by the political classes – or whether to help shape alternatives both nationally and globally to reassert the primacy of human values.

Mark Curtis

Dear Mark

To begin with an answer to your last question – where is needed change to come from if not from the global movements? I don't believe it will come mainly from these: indeed, it would be wrong if it did. It must come from the governments and people of the developing and developed worlds. Your assertion earlier that people are now withdrawing from the political process because of 'governments' willing capitulation to the demands of transnational capital' is the now classic rationale for the global movements: that they must be given legitimacy and mandate because governments have lost them. But on that analysis, we are in a world where the loudest voices achieve the most change. We need, to be sure, to find better ways of reflecting peoples' demands and desires: the voice of authoritarian states is a continuing problem. But an assertion that the shifting memberships of the global movements have a larger mandate than the voices of the hundreds of millions who do vote in democratic elections, especially of those who have only recently received the right, is a curious definition of empowerment.

Your selection of the elements to which developing countries objected at the Qatar meeting of the World Trade Organisation was, as ever, one sided. The larger movement in that meeting from the side of the developing states was not to restrain trade and investment, but to increase it. India and other states are now more and more able to

pose the sharp question to the developed states, particularly to the EU: why are you keeping out our goods when you proclaim free trade? Secondly, the view that the poorest states need not just more trade but more managed trade so that they can catch up, at least somewhat, is now gaining ground. But it needs to be negotiated with the developed countries which will lose jobs because of free trade: and because their governments have to get elected, that means time.

The new trade round might fail – but it will fail most of all if the developed states refuse to follow through on their own protestations of favouring open markets. The global movements, by contrast, continue to plough the furrow of restraining trade. They also remain wedded to a view of trade negotiations and to the initiatives of the international financial institutions, as generally catastrophic. They do not appear to see the world as a forum for negotiation and compromise in which winning and losing is an inevitable part of the process. It is not that they are violent: I can see, as most can, that those who wish to cause violence in demonstrations are a minority. It is that the mindset is authoritarian. The chief tool of this mindset is a kind of catch-all anti-Americanism – as in the meaningless conjunction you make of the US' present – and relative – unilateralism with the 2.8 billion people who live under the poverty line in the world. US unilateralism is, I believe, a real danger: but the openness of US borders to immigrants, the extension of the US free trade area to Mexico and other Latin American states, and the large support the US has given to developing states have also to be part of the equation.

That is something of what I meant when I said that the global movements are increasingly walling themselves into intellectually unsustainable positions – emphasised, though not created, by 11 September, because it showed the extreme of authoritarian mindsets which had taken the step on to the ground of terror. I repeat that their demonstrations are a common right, and a good in that they put more elements into the debate on globalisation.

But the insistence on primacy before representative governments; their obsessive anti-Americanism; their inability or at least unwillingness to engage in or contemplate the compromises which mark all democratic politics weigh upon them and, unless remedied, will contribute to their decay.

John Lloyd

Dear John

You now seem to be saying not that the global protest movement is finished; just that you don't like what it stands for. I find your assertion that the movement's 'mindset is authoritarian' quite bizarre. Rather, diversity is the watchword – people should be able to develop their own solutions and development paths appropriate to their local and national circumstances.

The real current authoritarianism lies with global political and business elites who insist on all countries adopting the same, 'one-size-fits-all' economic policies. These are mainly about securing 'equal access' to developing countries' economies for transnational capital and exports, irrespective of the implications for local economies and peoples' rights. The straitjacket of this dominant ideology is severely limiting the development options of poor countries. At the same time, trade and

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John Lloyd

'I think you are wrong to say "the mainstream political process is the representation of people". This should be the case but it isn't. It may be what elites believe, but not what people know.'

Mark Curtis

development ministers from governments like the UK have the audacity to claim they are trying to make trade work for the poor. Multilateral financial institutions like the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank enforce these policies, highlighting how far fundamental changes in 'global governance' need to go to champion people's rights nationally.

The United States is the major power behind these policies, and I was surprised to see your reference to a 'catch-all anti-Americanism' as the 'chief tool of this mindset' – the standard device used by apologists for US power. You refer to the 'large support the US has given to developing states'; but the biggest recipients of US 'aid' are its allies in the Middle East (mainly Israel and Egypt) whose 'security assistance' is double the amount of US aid to sub-Saharan Africa. A massive 70 per cent of US 'aid' is a subsidy to US corporations – tied to buying US goods and services. The trickle of US aid that might actually benefit the poor is overwhelmed by a whole range of US arms, economic and foreign policies that aim at making the world safe for US corporations.

I am not saying, as you suggest, that the global movements have a larger mandate than the voices of the hundreds of millions of people who vote in democratic elections. It is precisely the latter who are increasing the size of the former. As more and more people become disillusioned with the mainstream political process, they turn to alternatives. This means that many democratic governments have increasingly shakier mandates, as in the UK.

My view is that the global protest movement will significantly grow in the coming years, involving wider sectors of society. The key is whether it can pose a significant enough challenge to the formal political processes to help transform them. There is no more urgent task than this since current political processes have become little more than rubber stamps for empowering transnational corporations over people. This reveals the extent to which our societies are, at root, more oligarchical than democratic.

Many people's acquiescence in this has been secured largely by rising prosperity; but at the same time there is rising public concern about education and health services and job insecurity, even among the prosperous. This is not even to mention the huge growth in the underclass and the numbers of people who have little or no stake in the current system. We are in a situation where people will, I believe, increasingly demand that our societies are run by a fundamentally different set of values, reinforced by the sense that, globally, we are all in the same boat.

Mark Curtis

Dear Mark

Space is short, so we have to put our disagreements in telegraph form. I will do so finally.

The point is not that global corporations, international financial institutions and governments work ceaselessly and selflessly for the interests of all. It is that there is no large alternative available.

In particular, there is no alternative available to democratic government, apart from various kinds of authoritarian ones. Thus your assertion that democratic governments have increasingly shaky mandates and your desire to increase the strength of the forces which would

further shake them is, to say the least, irresponsible. Representation has to be strengthened and deepened: but not attacked. The 'mainstream political process' is the representation of people. If you have another way of doing it than the present one – in all its many varieties – it is your responsibility to say so, and seek support for it.

At the same time, the 'current system' – market economics – also has no systemic alternative. It is capable of endless improvement and correction, including by NGOs like your own. But to appeal vaguely to another one without even beginning to describe what it might be is to deceive those who follow you. To say, as you do, that the current 'political processes have become little more than rubber stamps for empowering transnational corporations over people' is a statement so devoid of meaning or context that it is difficult even to argue with it. It would mean that no actions of governments, no initiatives by the international financial institutions, no transformation of authoritarian states into proto-democratic ones, no agreements or projects at the level of the European Union, no constitutional change within countries (as the devolution of parliamentary authority in our own), no bringing of peace where there was war, no encouragement to youth, or culture, or voluntary activity – in short, nothing which governments singly or in concert do is worth mentioning, before the overwhelming fact that they rubber stamp corporate decisions.

It does not begin to describe the real world.

John Lloyd

Dear John

My starting point is the need for radical change. I don't think you accept this and neither do mainstream political parties, who are really defenders of traditional privilege.

The global movement is growing because it knows two big things along with ordinary people. First, mainstream political processes do not represent people in a truly democratic way and need to be re-democratised to prioritise people's real concerns. I think you are wrong to say 'the mainstream political process is the representation of people'. This should be the case but isn't. It may be what elites believe but not what people know. This explains why people hold MPs in contempt and why people often do not vote.

Although the UK's political system has democratic elements, it is more an oligarchy than a democracy, whether we consider the power of the ruling party to do more or less as it pleases, the power of the prime minister, or of ministers to withhold information virtually at will. Only with extreme difficulty can people really influence decision-making or even hold government properly to account.

Second, people increasingly know that big business is too powerful. This is visible not only in high streets and 'fat cat' salaries but in the WTO and elsewhere. We need legally-binding regulation of private businesses so they are compelled to abide by standards of behaviour outlined in UN declarations. We should press rich country governments to stop imposing the economic 'liberalisation' model on the rest of the world. Civil society groups, communities and in fact whole countries are in reality pursuing alternatives, often very successfully, that we can find if we choose to look.

Mark Curtis

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profile

Ken Asch meets the legendary marine campaigner and founder of the International Ocean Institute, Elisabeth Mann Borghese.



ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS BLYTHE

There are very few global issues, even poverty, that are not linked to the oceans. More than 60 per cent of the world's population lives within 100km of the coast and more than three billion people depend on coastal and marine habitats for survival – for food, trade, tourism and waste disposal.

In 1982, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) generated a new order of ocean governance based on the principle that the oceans are the common heritage of all people. Subsequent conventions, agreements and programmes followed the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, and Elisabeth Mann Borghese has been crucial to them all. She initiated, with others, the UN 1998 International Year of the Ocean.

Aged 84, Mann Borghese has devoted her life to the oceans, working to enhance the peaceful and sustainable use and management of their resources. She organised a pioneering conference on the Law of the Sea in 1970, entitled 'Pacem in Maribus' (Peace in the Oceans). Since then, 20 such international conferences have taken place.

In 1972, she founded the International Ocean Institute (IOI) with the help of Arvid Pardo, the Maltese Ambassador to the UN. Through the IOI she has trained a generation of people on subjects related to UNCLOS. She focuses on safeguarding the ocean environment and its ecosystems, but also works to benefit the poor and other vulnerable sectors of society.

Early ambitions to be a jockey, perhaps influenced by her elfin size, were dampened during summer holidays with her father, the celebrated German novelist Thomas Mann. 'My father's love affair with the ocean must have influenced me powerfully,' she says. 'I find his analysis of the human relationship to nature, especially the sea, the most profound I have come across. He recognised man's awe in the face of the sea's infinity and wildness. The sea is all and nothing, damnation and redemption, longing and fear. It is the dark and wild element within the artist, within the characters he creates, within himself.'

She recalls walking with him along a narrow strip of the Baltic coast, 'where the tide and wind jostle with the human experience... It's where I learned to appreciate the wider significance of vast and mysterious bodies of water, initially in identifiable terms of national and international

security as well as conservation and survival.'

Mann Borghese continues to play a central, behind-the-scenes role in the UN's two-year-old informal consultative process on the Law of the Sea.

'Elisabeth's strength is not cheerleading,' says Noel Brown, former director of the UN Environment Programme in the North American region, 'but as a quiet influence proposing initiatives and building coalitions and networks. She can appreciate the importance of the 'next round' if things have not turned out her way. She is perhaps the best informed civilian of anyone I know.'

Known as the 'mother of the oceans' and an active member of the Club of Rome, she has encouraged world leaders to rethink our relationship to the sea. In her book, *The Oceanic Circle*, she brings together her ideas on how to develop a global interdependent system of good governance for the seas. She was invited to Buckingham Palace last year to present the book to Prince Phillip.

Recently honoured with Germany's highest civil honour, the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit, the Munich-born ocean researcher now resides on the secluded Atlantic shores of Halifax, Canada where she has been professor of law and political science at Dalhousie University since 1979.

'I feel absolutely at home here and I'm not moving any more,' she says. 'I walk for hours on these beaches without a car, a human soul, even a telegraph pole in sight. I must say I've lived in some beautiful places in the past, but I've never had a study as inspiring as this one.'

As she speaks, she points, with considerable irony, to the bay adjacent to her house. A huge container floating offshore obstructs the view. The millennium has caught up with Elisabeth Mann Borghese's treasured wilderness. Of all the countless inlets and coves along the coast, it was her very doorstep that had been selected as a landing site for a fibre optics cable which stretches across the Atlantic floor.

Mann Borghese views the world as an organic whole, ultimately embracing the oceans as a cultural, even artistic, resource. Bach, she says, provides a constant renewal for her sense of the profound. 'I like nothing better,' she mused, 'than to go right to the piano next to my desk and memorise a Bach fugue. It does wonders.'

Additional reporting by Laura Kyle.



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At a 1999 conference of corporate leaders and bankers, Robert Nef, the head of a Swiss research institute, gave a thoughtful definition of technology. 'Technology,' he said, 'is nature's experiment with man.' In the last two issues, **Lester Brown** explained what an eco-economy was, and how we could set about creating it. In this final article, he explains firstly why, with the results of this 'technological experiment' wreaking havoc across the planet, the time to implement the eco-economy is now; and secondly, the roles we will all have to play.

Revolution

Students of social change often think in terms of 'thresholds' of change. A concept widely used in ecology in reference to the sustainable yield of natural systems, a threshold is a point which when crossed can bring rapid and sometimes unpredictable change in a trend. In the social world, the thresholds of sudden change are no less real, though they may be more difficult to identify and anticipate.

Among the more dramatic recent threshold crossings is the one that led to the political revolution in Eastern Europe in 1989 and 1990, the year the Berlin Wall came down, as well as the one that led to the dramatic decline in cigarette smoking in the US.

[Although Eco-Economy was only recently published, this extract was written before 11 September. However, the concept of a threshold certainly applies to the events of that day and the actions that have followed. In fact, they have only made the changes called for by Lester Brown all the more urgent, as well as showing that the scale of global co-operation needed is indeed feasible.]

The political change in Eastern Europe came with no apparent warning. It almost seems as if one morning people woke up and realised that the great socialist experiment, with its one-party political system and centrally planned economy, was over. Even those in power realised this, which was why it was essentially a bloodless political revolution. Interestingly, no articles in political science journals during the 1980s

forecast this fundamental change in governance. Although we do not understand the process well, we do know that at some point in Eastern Europe a critical mass had been reached – that a time came when so many people were convinced of the need for change that the process achieved an irresistible momentum.

A similar scenario unfolded with smoking in the US.

In the early 1960s, smoking was increasingly popular among Americans – a habit that was aggressively promoted by the cigarette manufacturers. Then, in 1964, the US Surgeon General released a report on the relationship between smoking and health, the first in a series that has appeared almost every year since then. These reports, and media coverage of the thousands of research projects the reports spawned, fundamentally altered the way people think not only about their own smoking but also about secondhand smoke from the cigarettes of others.

So strong was this shift in thinking that in November 1998 the tobacco industry, after arguing under oath for decades that there was no proof of a link between smoking and health, agreed to reimburse state governments for the past Medicare costs of treating smoking-related illness. This settlement with 46 state governments, plus separate agreements reached earlier with the other four states, totalled \$251 billion.

An earlier, much more abrupt shift in thinking in the US may be even more

relevant to the economic restructuring needed today. In 1940 and 1941, there was a vigorous debate in the US about whether the country should become involved in the war in Europe. Although most Americans were strongly opposed to US entrance into the war, President Franklin Roosevelt felt that US involvement was inevitable. But the majority of the American people did not want to be pulled into Europe's internal conflicts again, arguing that 160,000 young American men had died in World War I without being able to establish a lasting peace.

Then came the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December, 1941, which crippled the US Pacific fleet. The debate was over.

The US declared war and began to mobilise. Things changed rapidly. One day men were working in factories and offices. The next they were in military training camps. Women who had been

energy economy now realise that shifting from a carbon-based to a hydrogen-based energy economy is almost inevitable.

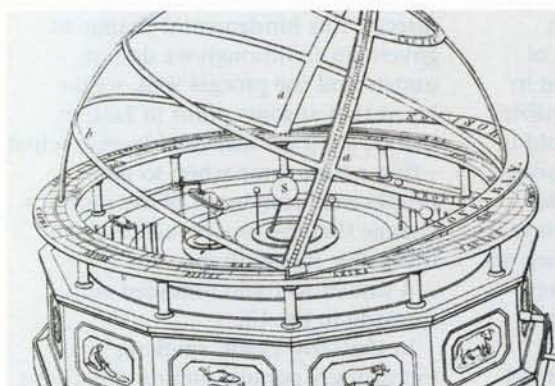
Wind of change

Attitudes toward various energy sources are changing. Coal, which fueled the early Industrial Revolution, is now seen as a villain among fuels. Natural gas is the fossil fuel of choice.

And attitudes toward nuclear power have changed. The destructive explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in the Soviet Ukraine in early April 1986 did what hundreds of studies assessing the risks of nuclear power could never have done: it made the dangers real. Fresh vegetables were declared unfit for human consumption in northern Italy. Polish authorities launched an emergency effort to administer iodine tablets to children. The livelihood of the Lapps in

generating electricity from wind is falling fast. Two, there is a growing realisation of the worldwide abundance of wind energy. Three, as farmers and ranchers realise that they own most of the wind rights in the country, a new agricultural lobby is emerging in support of wind power, joining the environmental lobby that has been supporting it for years. The fourth trend that is spurring the growth in wind power is the requirement by more and more state utility commissions that utilities offer their customers a 'green power' option. This is enabling individuals, companies, and local governments to vote with their chequebooks. And they are doing so in growing numbers. The convergence of these four trends is creating a situation where wind electric generation is likely to soon become a major US energy source.

Changes are also under way in other



working at home suddenly found themselves on assembly lines. One day Chrysler was making cars. The next it was making tanks. Consumption of gasoline, rubber, and sugar was rationed.

The entire US economy was restructured almost overnight in what was referred to as the 'war effort'. The attack on Pearl Harbor had lifted the US past a threshold.

Now, as we face the need for a wholesale restructuring of the global economy, for a Copernican-scale shift in economic thinking, we need to be lifted past a similar threshold. The ecological trends of recent years are driving a paradigm shift toward an eco-economy. For years, these trends were marginalised by policymakers as 'special interest' topics, but as developments have come to impinge more and more directly on people's lives, this has begun to change.

We see these changes occurring with energy, for example. Most leaders in the

northern Scandinavia was threatened when reindeer became too radioactive to bring to market. In the Soviet Union itself, 100,000 people in the vicinity of the reactor were forced to abandon their homes.¹

More fundamentally, nuclear power is no longer an economically viable energy source. Wherever markets for electricity have been opened to competition, as in the US, no one is investing in nuclear reactors. When the costs of decommissioning nuclear power plants, which may rival those of construction, and the costs of disposing of nuclear waste are incorporated into cost calculations, it seems clear that nuclear power has no economic future.

Meanwhile, in sharp contrast, wind power is gaining rapidly in public favour. In the US, where the modern wind energy industry was born in the early 1980s, four trends are converging to create a potentially explosive growth in wind energy use. One, the cost of

sectors, such as the forest products industry. The US appears to be crossing the threshold for responsible forest management as the principles of ecology replace basic economics in shaping the management of national forests. After several decades of building roads with taxpayers' money to help logging companies clearcut publicly owned forests, the Forest Service announced in early 1999 that it was imposing a moratorium on road building. For decades the goal of the forest management system, which had built some 600,000km (400,000 miles) of roads to facilitate clearcutting, had been to maximise the timber harvest in the short run.² But in 1998, Forest Service chief Michael Dombeck, responding to a major shift in public opinion, introduced a new management system – one designed to maintain the integrity of the ecosystem and to be governed by ecology, by a complete cost accounting that includes both the goods and the

services that forests provide.

Henceforth, the 78 million hectares of national forests – more than the area planted to grain in the US – will be managed with several goals in mind. For example, the system will recognise the need to manage the forest so as to eliminate the excessive flooding, soil erosion, silting of rivers, and destruction of fisheries associated with the now-banned practice of clearcutting. Under the new policy, the timber harvest from national forests, which reached an all-time high of 12 billion board feet per year during the 1980s, has been reduced to 3 billion board feet.³

The US is not the only country to institute a radical change in forest management. In mid-August 1998, after several weeks of near-record flooding in the Yangtze river basin, Beijing acknowledged for the first time that the flooding was not merely an

act of nature but was exacerbated by the deforestation of the upper reaches of the watershed. Premier Zhu Rongji, recognising the water storage and flood control capacity of forests, personally ordered not only a halt to the tree cutting in that area, but also the conversion of some state timbering firms into tree-planting firms. Another key threshold was crossed.⁴

A chastened tobacco industry, oil companies investing in hydrogen, reformed forest management in the US and China – these are just some of the signs that the world may be approaching a paradigm shift on the scale described in my first article. Across a spectrum of activities, places, and institutions, attitudes toward the environment have changed markedly in just the last few years. Among giant corporations that could once be counted on to mount a monolithic opposition to serious environmental reform, a growing number of high-profile CEOs have

Is there enough time?

begun to sound more like environmentalists than representatives of the bastions of global capitalism. If the evidence of a global environmental awakening were limited to only government initiatives or a few corporate initiatives, it might be dubious. But with the evidence of growing momentum now coming on both fronts, the prospect that we are approaching the threshold of a major transformation becomes more convincing. The question is: Will it happen soon enough? Will it happen before the deterioration of natural support systems leads to economic decline?

looking for massive changes in industry, especially in energy. We are looking for changes in the material economy, shifting from a throwaway mentality to a closed loop/recycle mindset. If future food needs are to be satisfied adequately, we need a worldwide effort to reforest the land, conserve soil, and raise water productivity. Stabilising population means quite literally a revolution in human reproductive behavior, one that recognises that a sustainable future is possible only if we average two children per couple. This is not a debatable point. It is a mathematical reality.

The big remaining challenge is on the educational front: How can we help literally billions of people in the world understand not only the need for change, but how that change can bring a life far better than they have today?

I am frequently asked if it is too late. My response is, too late for what? Is it



between the first US Surgeon General's report on smoking and health and the landmark agreement between the tobacco industry and state governments. Thirty-eight years have passed since biologist Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, the wakeup call that gave rise to the modern environmental movement.

Sometimes things move much faster, especially when the magnitude of the threat is understood and the nature of the response is obvious, such as the US response to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Within one year, the US economy had largely been restructured. In less than four years, the war was over.

Accelerating the transition to a sustainable future means overcoming the inertia of both individuals and institutions. In some ways, inertia is our worst enemy. As individuals we often resist change. When we are grouped into large organisations, we resist it even more.

At the institutional level, we are

too late to save the Aral Sea? Yes, the Aral Sea is dead. Its fish have died; its fisheries have collapsed. Is it too late to save the glaciers in Glacier National Park in the US? Most likely. They are already half gone and it would be virtually impossible now to reverse the rise in temperature in time to save them. Is it too late to avoid a rise in temperature from the buildup in greenhouse gases? Yes. A greenhouse gas-induced rise in temperature is apparently already under way. But is it too late to avoid runaway climate change? Perhaps not, if we quickly restructure the energy economy.

For many specifics, the answer is, yes, it is too late. But there is a broader, more fundamental question: Is it too late to reverse the trends that will eventually lead to economic decline? Here I think the answer is no, not if we move quickly.

Perhaps the biggest single challenge we face is shifting from a carbon-based to a hydrogen-based energy economy, ■

act of nature but was exacerbated by the deforestation of the upper reaches of the watershed. Premier Zhu Rongji, recognising the water storage and flood control capacity of forests, personally ordered not only a halt to the tree cutting in that area, but also the conversion of some state timbering firms into tree-planting firms. Another key threshold was crossed.⁴

A chastened tobacco industry, oil companies investing in hydrogen, reformed forest management in the US and China – these are just some of the signs that the world may be approaching a paradigm shift on the scale described in my first article.

Across a spectrum of activities, places, and institutions, attitudes toward the environment have changed markedly in just the last few years. Among giant corporations that could once be counted on to mount a monolithic opposition to serious environmental reform, a growing number of high-profile CEOs have

✎ basically moving from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy, such as solar, wind, and geothermal. How fast can we make this change? Can it be done before we trigger irreversible damage, such as a disastrous rise in sea level? We know from the US response to the attack on Pearl Harbor that economic restructuring can occur at an

incredible pace if a society is convinced of the need for it.

We study the archeological sites of civilisations that moved onto economic paths that were environmentally destructive and could not make the needed course corrections in time. We face the same risk.

There is no middle path. Do we join

together to build an economy that is sustainable? Or do we stay with our environmentally unsustainable economy until it declines? It is not a goal that can be compromised. One way or another, the choice will be made by our generation. But it will affect life on earth for all generations to come.

All change for an eco-economy

Restructuring the global economy is not a spectator sport. If we are to reverse the trends that are undermining our future, the effort must be supported by every segment of society, and that means...

Governments

Building an eco-economy depends on a shared global vision and a broad understanding of the fiscal restructuring needed to realise the vision. It is up to governments to foster the national vision of an eco-economy and to adopt the ecologically defined economic policies needed to build it. This will require a systematic effort to incorporate input from ecologists in economic policy formulation, especially in restructuring taxes and subsidies to help the market reflect the ecological truth.

Building public support for change of this scale will not be easy because it involves challenging vested economic interests. A sustainable economy will not emerge by accident, but only as a result of concerted, intelligent effort by an informed citizenry supporting strong political leaders.

It is up to national governments to develop long-term plans for where we want to go and how we get there. The basic components of this plan are rather straightforward. They include: reestablishing a balance between carbon emissions and carbon fixation, between aquifer withdrawals and aquifer recharge, between trees cut and trees planted, between soil loss and soil regeneration, and between human births and deaths.

Formidable though the effort to build a sustainable economy appears to be, almost all the component goals have been achieved by at least one country. China, for example, has reduced its fertility rate to below two children per woman and is thus headed for population stability within a few decades. Denmark has banned the construction of coal-fired power plants.

Israel has pioneered new technologies to raise water productivity. South Korea has covered its hills and mountains with trees. Costa Rica has a national energy plan to shift entirely to renewable sources to meet its future energy needs. Germany is leading the way in a major tax-shifting exercise to reduce income taxes and to offset this with an increase in energy taxes. Iceland is planning the world's first hydrogen-based economy. The US has cut soil erosion by nearly 40 per cent since 1982. The Dutch are showing the world how to build urban transport systems that give the bicycle a central role in increasing urban mobility and improving the quality of urban life. And Finland has banned the use of non-refillable beverage containers. The challenge now is for each country to put all the pieces of an eco-economy together.⁵

The United Nations leadership

Although the UN has recorded numerous successes on the environmental front, the gap between what needs to be done and what is being done to ensure a sustainable future is widening. In the end, the UN cannot move any faster than its member governments will permit.

When the UN convened the first conference on the environment in Stockholm in 1972, it gave the fledgling international environmental movement a legitimacy it had lacked. When it convened the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, its principal product was Agenda 21, a voluminous work on sustainable development. Although this consisted of bits and pieces of a

sustainable future, it did not deal with the systemic economic change needed to create a sustainable future.

In September 2002, the UN will convene the World Summit on Sustainable Development in

Johannesburg, South Africa.

In many ways, this conference will be a test of whether the international community is ready to take the steps needed to reverse the earth's environmental deterioration before time

runs out.

Recognising this, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said in a 2001 commencement address at Tufts University: 'We must stop being so economically defensive and start being more politically courageous.'

The media

Only the media have the capacity to disseminate the needed information in the time available.

The communications media have an extraordinary ability to raise public understanding of issues if they wish to – witness their role in raising awareness of smoking and health issues in recent decades. A global environmental educational effort would rely heavily on the world's major news organisations, supported at the national level by television networks, news magazines, and newspapers.

One media shortcoming is the failure to convey the big picture. A newspaper might report that ice is melting in Alaska or on Mount Kilimanjaro, but fail to observe that ice is melting almost everywhere. A research report of a



particular glacier or ice cap melting is news, to be sure, but the bigger story is not being well covered.

One reason for this information gap is that news media are not organised to deal with global issues and trends. A major news organisation typically has a national desk and a foreign desk. The latter includes reporters based abroad, operating at the country or regional level. But a foreign desk is not a global desk, regularly assigning global stories. Today the key stories are global in scope, but there is no global desk to deal with them systematically.

The bottom line is that disseminating information on the scale needed to build an eco-economy in the time available is not likely to succeed unless the communications media can raise public understanding to the point where people will support these changes. This is not a responsibility that editors and reporters have asked for or, indeed, that most would want to assume. But there is no alternative. We are facing a situation so totally different from any that our modern civilisation has faced before that entirely new initiatives are required.

Corporate interests

Like the rest of society, corporations have a stake in building an eco-economy. Profits do not fare well when an economy is declining or threatening to collapse. The stakes are particularly high in the energy sector, which is affected much more than, for example, the food sector. To become sustainable, the latter needs to be modified, but the former needs to be fundamentally restructured.

There are essentially two approaches that fossil fuel firms can take. They can try to defend the status quo or they can see climate stabilisation as the greatest investment opportunity in history.

Ray Anderson, the CEO of interior furnishings company Interface, became an avid environmentalist in 1994 after reading *The Ecology of Commerce* by Paul Hawken.⁶ Since his conversion, he has become an enthusiastic advocate of building an eco-economy. In *Fortune* magazine, he described plans for his firm: 'Interface of Atlanta, my company, is changing course to become sustainable – to grow without

damaging the earth and to manufacture without pollution, waste, or fossil fuels. If we get it right, our company and our supply chain will never have to take another drop of oil.'⁷

The Interface plan is to generate no waste and no carbon emissions – to be totally sustainable. Instead of selling carpet to companies, Anderson wants to sell carpeting services, an arrangement whereby Interface agrees to maintain a certain style and level of carpeting in a company's offices for, say, 10 years. Worn carpet will be returned to the factory, melted down, and respun into new fibre. This new

'the transition to a sustainable future means overcoming the inertia of both individuals and institutions. As individuals we often resist change. When we are grouped into large organisations, we resist it even more.'

carpet then goes on the floor. 'Our goal,' Anderson says, 'is not to lose a single molecule of carpeting material.' This system, which requires no raw materials and sends nothing to the landfill, closes the loop.⁸

Interface's zero carbon emissions goal is being achieved by turning to solar cells and wind energy to power its plants. For energy uses that cannot be covered by these renewable sources, the company plans to offset carbon emissions by planting trees.⁹

In the end, this is not altruism, it is self-interest.

As Ray Anderson has 'Greened' his firm since 1994, sales have surged 77 per cent, profits are up 81 per cent, and the stock price is up 70 per cent. Amory Lovins, a longtime energy efficiency advocate who has served as a consultant to Anderson, notes that the sales representatives adopt the CEO's vision and become eco-crusaders as they pitch their carpeting with renewed fervour.

Lovins observes: 'This happens a lot in Green companies. Freeing up the contradictions between making a living

and doing it in a way that your kids can be proud of you causes an explosion of energy.'¹⁰

NGOs and individuals

Few areas of human activity have been so dominated by NGOs as the environmental movement. Broadly speaking, NGOs evolve to fill gaps left by government and the business sector. Literally thousands of such groups have been formed in both industrial and developing societies. Most NGOs are public interest groups as opposed to special interest groups.

Environmental groups are sometimes local, single-issue organisations with a handful of members. Others are full-spectrum groups that are global in their membership and orientation. When coalitions mobilise to focus on a single issue, they can become a formidable political force.¹¹

Using the internet to mobilise political support for environmental actions is a valuable new asset in the effort to build an eco-economy.

Thousands of environmental NGOs have web sites and electronic mailing lists that provide information on key issues. Concerned individuals can develop their own electronic mailing lists, distributing environmental information to hundreds, if not thousands, of friends and associates.

NGOs and individuals have been instrumental in bringing about many basic changes, playing a leading role in bringing the growth of nuclear power to a halt, in raising public awareness of climate change, and in putting water scarcity on the global agenda. The challenge to environmental groups now is to broaden their agendas so they can promote a shared vision of an eco-economy and can work together to make it a reality ■

References on page 82.

This article comprises abridged excerpts from Lester Brown's book *Eco-Economy: Building an Economy for the Earth*. UK readers can purchase it at a reduced price of £15.99 (rrp £17.99) by calling the publishers, Earthscan, on +44 (0)1903 828 503 and mentioning *The Ecologist* (free P&P in UK, for customers outside the UK please add £3.60 plus £1 for airmail). For readers in North America, it is available priced \$13 (rrp \$17) by calling the Earth Policy Institute on +1 202 496 9290 or by emailing epi@earth-policy.org. For more information on the Earth Policy Institute, visit www.earth-policy.org.

Suckered at Sakhalin

Exxon-Mobil may be planning to boost Russia's economy, says David Gordon, but it could come at a whale of a cost.

Economically, Russia is on the move. Ever since her leaders tied the country's economic future to oil development, recent high oil prices have spurred a recovery, providing revenues to service Russia's foreign debt. All the while, regional governors talk enthusiastically about 'black gold' as a key to economic development. Governors in Siberia and the Russian Far East have proposed at least 6 different pipelines to transport oil from fields to potential markets in China and Japan.

But investment in Russia has been stymied by the lack of 'rule of law', especially in remote regions of Siberia and the Russian Far East. Government corruption and organised crime cloud an already questionable business climate. All of which is why a recent new announcement has had Russian and US leaders talking loudly of breakthroughs, new stability of business

climate... and that critical phrase 'foreign investment'.

The 'breakthrough' came in October 2001, when Exxon-Mobil announced the commercial feasibility of a large offshore oil and gas drilling project near the Russian Far East's Sakhalin Island. The oil giant, which is developing the project through its Bahamian-registered subsidiary Exxon Neftegas Ltd, announced that it would invest \$12 billion, making 'Sakhalin-1' Russia's single largest foreign investment project.

Sakhalin-1's fields contain an estimated 2.3 billion barrels of oil and 17 trillion cubic feet of gas. The fields are located in the Sea of Okhotsk, an area rich in marine biodiversity, providing more than two-thirds of Russia's total fish catch.

Yet, as is so often the case, a closer look is needed. That closer look shows that Exxon's supposed success with

Sakhalin-1 is coming at a high price for 'rule of law' in Russia. Investigation of Exxon's ship-based seismic surveying in summer 2001 shows that Exxon subverted Russian government officials who tried to implement Russia's environmental laws. It all comes down to the whales.

Grey areas

Western Pacific Grey Whales are one of the planet's most endangered populations of whales. The population is estimated at less than 100, of which fewer than 20 are reproductive females. The whales are protected in Russia's 'Red Book' of endangered species and in 2000 were listed as 'critically endangered' by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), a designation that states that the population is highly likely to become extinct in the foreseeable future.

Western Pacific Grey Whales spend



more than five months of the year – from June to November – feeding offshore of Sakhalin's Piltun Bay. Their prime feeding ground overlaps with the Odoptu oil field, part of Exxon's Sakhalin-I project.

When oil projects were first proposed for Sakhalin Island, a number of Russian and US scientists raised concerns about the Western Pacific Grey Whales, about which little information was available. With the help of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, the scientists reached an agreement with international oil companies to monitor these whales.

Funded by Exxon and Sakhalin Energy (a consortium run by Shell), a Russian-American scientific team started a research project on the western Pacific grey whale in 1997. The team was led by Dr Bob Brownell, a renowned whale scientist who works for the US National Oceans and Atmospheric Administration, Dr Alexander Burdin of the Kamchatka Institute for Ecology and Nature Management, and Dr Dave Weller of Texas A&M University. This scientific team documented the size of the population, observed whale behaviour relative to oil and gas activities, and defined the conservation status of the species.

Scientists observed changes in whale behaviour when Sakhalin Energy conducted seismic testing and started drilling for oil near the whale feeding grounds. In 1999 and 2000, scientists observed 'skinny' whales – severely malnourished whales that may not be able to survive migration or effectively reproduce.

Of the 58 whales observed in 2000, the scientists documented 27 skinny individuals. Equally alarming is that between 1997 and 2000, only 12 reproductive females have been identified, representing a number considerably lower than expected.

In summer 2001, the team's research resulted in a resolution to protect Western Pacific Grey Whales from the intergovernmental International Whaling Commission (IWC) that called for 'every effort... to reduce anthropogenic mortality... to zero and to reduce various types of anthropogenic disturbances to the lowest possible level'.

The resolution agreed with the findings of the IWC's Scientific Committee, which strongly recommended that Exxon's planned seismic testing not be conducted while whales were in the area.

Seismic effects

Seismic exploration uses high intensity noise to determine approximate oil and gas reserves under the seabed. Seismic tests have been shown to affect whale behaviour significantly in other parts of the world. Studies have shown that more than 80 per cent of grey whales offshore of California change their migration route when seismic testing increases above 130 decibels. Grey whale mothers and calves appear to be particularly sensitive to seismic exploration.

Scientists are observing similar tendencies in waters near Sakhalin. When Sakhalin Energy conducted seismic testing 30 kilometres away from the whale feeding ground in 1997, scientists noticed changes in whale behaviour. In 2001, the Russian-American scientific team observed a movement of whales to the south that 'occurred abruptly in early August and coincided with the start of Exxon Neftegas Ltd seismic surveys in the central to northern part of the whales' feeding habitat'.

In a letter to the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources, the scientists wrote: 'We believe that seismic operations have displaced whales from their preferred habitat. It is quite likely that they have been forced to use less preferred areas that may be characterised by food resources that are more limited or of poorer quality. That is, although the whales observed continue to feed, their food intake may be decreased as a result of the noted shift in distribution to the south.'

While some scientists believe that changing ocean conditions and global climate change – another issue that Exxon-Mobil has failed to address adequately – may contribute to the problem of skinny, or malnourished, whales, they agree that seismic exploration exacerbates the threat to vulnerable populations, particularly pregnant females and calves, which need to feed as much as possible in order to build up the body fat necessary to survive their migration south.

Russia acts

Alarmed by the whales' condition and in response to the IWC resolution, Russia's Ministry of Natural Resources acted to protect the whales. The Ministry sent a telegram on 20 August to its local branch, the Sakhalin Committee of Natural Resources, ordering a halt to seismic testing while the whales were on their feeding

grounds. The telegram, signed by A M Amirkhanov, the head of the Ministry's Department for Protection of the Environment and Environmental Security, orders the Sakhalin Committee to: 'Take measures to not allow the conduct of seismic exploration while whales are located along the shore of Sakhalin. Urgently inform concerning adopted measures.' The telegram was authorised by the office of Russia's Minister of Natural Resources, V Artyukhov.

Despite the directive, Exxon continued its seismic testing. According to Exxon's Sakhalin Public Affairs manager Michael Allen, Exxon was never officially directed by the Sakhalin Committee of Natural Resources to stop its seismic exploration. Allen acknowledges that he was informed by the local Committee about the telegram and its contents as soon as it arrived, but the local committee concluded their discussion by saying that Exxon need not stop its testing. So Exxon continued to bombard the whales' feeding area with seismic blasts until 8 September, almost three weeks after the Russian federal government had first ordered a stop to the exploration.

Why local government failed to act

Why did the local government refuse to implement Moscow's order? How does a multinational company such as Exxon subvert the rule of law in Russia so as to allow it to complete the seismic testing it needed in order to announce commercial feasibility, notwithstanding orders that the testing be halted?

Natalya Onischenko, head of the environment department for Sakhalin's Committee of Natural Resources, claims that the telegram was not clear that it ordered them to stop the seismic exploration – even though the words 'not allow' were in the telegram. Onischenko, who has long been a staunch defender of western oil company activities on Sakhalin, instead says that the Committee simply requested information from Exxon about whether it was conducting seismic testing in accordance with its original permit.

The end of environmental protection?

In May 2000, President Vladimir Putin issued one of the most controversial orders of his presidency. In a decree to reorganise the government, he liquidated the State Committee for Protection of the Environment and transferred those functions to the



■ Ministry of Natural Resources. The Ministry of Natural Resources is the ministry in charge of extracting natural resources, including oil and gas, in the Russian Federation – thus leading to a direct conflict between its mission to extract minerals and, now, to protect the environment.

Alexey Yablokov, a leader in the Russian environmental movement and a marine mammal biologist who has worked on grey whale issues, strongly opposes the liquidation of the Committee and has led efforts to have the Committee reinstated.

Onischenko argues that due to the liquidation of the State Committee, she no longer has the authority as a state inspector to halt Exxon's operations. Dmitry Lisitsyn, chair of the environmental watchdog group Sakhalin Environment Watch, agrees – but points out that her boss, A S Chibisov, the chair of the Sakhalin Committee of Natural Resources, and the original recipient of the telegram, does have those powers. Yet Chibisov, with his background in resource extraction, would be unlikely to stop Exxon.

Environmental control in Russia was severely diminished following the liquidation of the State Committee. In this case, the liquidation contributed to a failure by local government officials to act to protect the environment.

Exxon's Sakhalin Public Affairs Manager Michael Allen echoed Onischenko's argument that the language in the telegram from the Ministry of Natural Resources was unclear. He further maintained that the order should not have been sent as a telegram, but rather as a letter – notwithstanding that the Russian government traditionally uses telegrams to emphasize the urgency of an issue.

Allen also claims that an order

stopping the seismic testing would have had to come from someone higher up than Amirkhanov, who is the director of the Department for Protection of the Environment and Environmental Security. Allen believes the order should have come from the Minister himself – implying that Exxon would only obey an order

from the Minister, not from any other government official responsible for enforcing Russian government regulations.

Allen disputes the Russian-American scientific team's conclusion that seismic testing displaced the grey whales, although he has not seen their results. He argues that Exxon's observers did not observe any behavioural changes. Despite repeated requests from the author to Allen to provide Exxon's data to compare it with data from the Russian-American scientific team, Exxon has so far refused to share this information.

Allen admits that Exxon was in close contact with the Committee of Natural Resources following receipt of the telegram from Moscow. But Allen maintained that no payments were made to the local Committee of Natural Resources or its employees that would constitute a violation of the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, notwithstanding that the company regularly pays local government agencies for various services.

High stakes

One key reason behind the local government refusing to implement Moscow's orders is that no one was willing to potentially scuttle or even slow a huge economic project in favour of an endangered population of grey whales.

According to the Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) – the contract between the Russian government and Exxon that allows for development of Sakhalin-I – Exxon was required to finish its seismic exploration in 2001.

Exxon couldn't afford to wait until the whales moved away from Sakhalin in November, because by then weather conditions offshore of Sakhalin would

not allow for seismic testing.

Some within the Russian government acknowledge that the Sakhalin-1 PSA was signed hastily and will not benefit the Russian people. A report from the Auditing Chamber documents the economic mistakes in the Sakhalin-1 PSA. If Exxon had not finished seismic testing, the Russian government could have revoked the PSA and started anew.

Nonetheless, Onischenko admits that no one was willing to take ultimate responsibility to implement a rule that might have threatened the entire project. She argues that Moscow sent the telegram to the local Committee because Moscow did not want to take the heat. But the local Committee refused to act for fear of repercussions associated with halting a project by a major transnational oil company.

When the local Committee of Natural Resources refused to implement the orders from Moscow, Dmitry Lisitsyn of Sakhalin Environment Watch went to the scientists. On 31 August, following an overnight train ride to northeast Sakhalin, he walked 40 kilometres, all day in bad weather, to reach the Piltun lighthouse, where the whale scientists were camped.

Following Lisitsyn's explanation of the situation, the scientists wrote a letter on 1 September to the Ministry of Natural Resources, reiterating their concerns about adverse impacts to the whales from Exxon's seismic testing. On 7 September, the Ministry of Natural Resources directly ordered Exxon to stop its seismic tests by 15 September. On 8 September, Exxon ceased seismic exploration, claiming that it had completed its work – though people familiar with the project believe Exxon did not complete its seismic programme.

Now, NGOs are banding together to focus attention on threats to grey whales from oil and gas development. In addition to Sakhalin Environment Watch, three international NGOs – Greenpeace, International Fund for Animal Welfare, and the Worldwide Fund for Nature – have formed a Moscow-based coalition to protect Sakhalin's grey whales. In the Russian Far East, the Living Seas Campaign – a coalition of leading regional environmental groups working to protect marine biodiversity – is focusing attention on the grey whales.

Scientists throughout Russia are calling for grey whale protection. The Council on Marine Mammals of the Interagency Ichthyological Commission

in Moscow recently issued a resolution calling for a ban on industrial activity, including seismic exploration and construction for oil and gas development, in the grey whales' feeding area.

Backlash

In response to this mounting pressure, Exxon and its friends on the Sakhalin Committee of Natural Resources have launched an attack against the Russian-American scientific team that has studied the grey whales for the last five years. Even though Exxon was one of the original funders of the research, Exxon is neither funding the team nor heeding their advice now that the findings might adversely impact Exxon's operations.

In order to study whale genetics, the scientists collect biopsy samples by shooting a highly specialised dart to take a small piece of skin for analysis. Each biopsy is about the size of a vitamin capsule, and in addition to being used for genetic analysis is also being used to examine molecular stress in the whales. Brownell of the Russian-American scientific team says this accepted scientific method for collecting genetic data is harmless and is used to study whales and dolphins around the world. The biopsy sampling programme is conducted as part of a US-Russian environmental agreement. In our interview, however, Exxon's Michael Allen contended that the scientists' taking of biopsies is unconscionable and the true cause of disruptions to the grey whales, rather than Exxon's seismic testing.

Exxon's allies at the Sakhalin Committee of Natural Resources parrot these sentiments. Onischenko complained about the biopsies and worried about the lack of 'control' over grey whale research. She suggests a need for greater government oversight – which raises the disconcerting spectre that government officials might use the red herring of alleged harm to the whales as an excuse to halt research that tracks adverse impacts on whales from oil development.

To ensure protection for the whales, environmental NGOs are going to the Russian courts. Rodnik – a public-interest environmental law firm based in Moscow – and Sakhalin Environment Watch, joined by seven other environmental organisations and 70 citizens from around Russia – have filed suit against the Russian government, arguing that it is not doing enough to

protect grey whales.

According to the 'Law on Protection of the Animal World', the Russian government must take all necessary action to protect endangered species such as the Western Pacific Grey Whale. Rodnik and Sakhalin Environment Watch point to this summer's seismic testing and argue that the federal government did not fulfil its responsibility to protect the viability of this critically endangered population.

Rodnik and Sakhalin Environment Watch are asking that the courts order the Ministry of Natural Resources to prevent future seismic testing and disturbances from oil and gas development during the grey whale feeding period. Neither the Russian government nor Exxon deigned to appear for the first court hearing.

Legal remedies have so far been the best method for Russian environmentalists to ensure that Exxon follows the law in the Russian Far East. It took a court victory in 1999, led by the Moscow-based Ecojuris and Sakhalin Environment Watch, to prevent Exxon's dumping of drilling wastes at sea in violation of the Russian water code.

Nonetheless, even the Russian judicial system may not be a reliable way to implement the law. In an unrelated court case associated with Sakhalin Energy and the Sakhalin-2 project, Sakhalin-based judges overturned a fine on Sakhalin Energy by the Sakhalin Fisheries Agency for refusing to provide the government with information about its payments for damage to marine resources. Sakhalin Environment Watch argues that the law was clearly on the side of the Sakhalin Fisheries Agency, but that the local judges were swayed by the power of the oil companies.

What's next?

Russian scientists and environmentalists are especially concerned about Exxon's plans now that it has announced commercialisation. These include the construction of a pier right in the middle of the grey whales' feeding ground and intensive shipping to and from the pier. This constant disruption, in addition to planned development of



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offshore-to-inshore pipelines requiring substantial dredging of the seafloor, is likely to further adversely impact the grey whales.

Environmentalists are calling upon Exxon to forego construction of the pier and instead transport materials by land. They are also calling for the creation of a whale sanctuary offshore of Piltun Bay that would protect the Western Pacific Grey Whales from seismic exploration and other disruptions from oil and gas drilling.

Environmentalists are equally concerned by Shell's plans to expand the Sakhalin-II project. Shell intends to build another offshore oil platform near the whale feeding grounds, construct pipelines connecting the platform to the shore, disturb the seabed, and potentially conduct further seismic testing. Shell's activities are likely to be as dangerous for the grey whales as Exxon's plans. Also, seismic testing is planned next summer as part of the Sakhalin-V project, run by British Petroleum. Scientists and environmentalists worry about the cumulative impacts of Sakhalin oil development on the grey whales and argue that the government and financing agencies have not reviewed these cumulative impacts.

Dmitry Lisitsyn of Sakhalin Environment Watch argues: 'If these plans are realised, the whales will not have any chance to survive. All this work will occur in the most important whale feeding areas. This risk is simply unacceptable if we want to further admire these amazing animals.' ■

David Gordon is Associate Director of Pacific Environment, which has worked in partnership with Sakhalin Environment Watch, a local environmental organisation, to monitor the offshore oil developments of Sakhalin since 1997.

ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES



To launch our special report on alternative communities, Hugh Brody emphasises the need to preserve the world's many diverse indigenous societies. Embedded in their languages and cultures may well be the knowledge needed to heal the Earth. As well as protecting the past, we can also build different futures for ourselves. One of the most dynamic ways, writes Helena Norberg-Hodge, is to be found in the Ecovillage Movement.



The Language of Community

A hundred years ago European and mixed race settlers began to set up sheep farms in the remotest corner of South Africa, pushing into the dry scrub and desert of the southern Kalahari. This was the land of the last remaining San communities of the region, little known at the time and regarded as having no rights to their lands.

In the 1930s the Kalahari Gemsbok Park was created at the very tip of the northern Cape, adjacent to the vast desert of central Botswana. Both Bushmen and settlers were forced to leave the land to animals, tourists and park officials. Most of the settlers moved to other places where they could farm. The Bushmen were made landless, finding themselves living at the edges of dirt roads and as the cheapest of labour for the newcomers. In this way, yet another indigenous society came to be destitute and scattered.

This process is integral to the advance of colonial frontiers. It results in the apparent transformation of those in its path from peoples with their own territories, resources, customs, beliefs and languages into men and women at the very bottom of the colonial class ladder. Indigenous peoples such as the San of the southern Kalahari become landless, unemployed or seasonal labour, wearing the clothes (albeit in ragged versions), attending the churches

and speaking the language of their new bosses. In this way 'development' all too often homogenises the appearances of people, while increasing disparities of wealth and power.

Four years ago, in 1997, the Bushmen of the southern Kalahari – known to anthropology as the =Khomani San – launched a land claim (the = sign indicates a click that sounds something like the 'tch' sound used to encourage a horse to go faster). I was lucky enough to be asked to help set up a land use mapping project that would detail the places the =Khomani had lived, hunted and gathered, showing their relationship to their own lands. Those we began working with lived near the Gemsbok park, from which they had been evicted some 25 years earlier. They spoke Nama, the language of herding peoples who had been a force in the region for generations, and Afrikaans. Linguists had reported in the 1970s that the original Bushman language of the region had died out. But we learned from the people that there was one old woman, Elsie Vaalboi, living on the Namibian border, who still spoke the old language. We went to visit her.

Elsie lived with a son and her grandchildren in a small concrete house in a small border town. She was very frail and nearly blind. She had difficulty moving, and spent her time on an old bed under an awning attached to the

side of the house. She appeared to be at the very end of her life, withered and exhausted. She said she was in her 90s, though we later discovered that she was already over 100 years old.

Despite her frailty, she was happy to talk to us for short periods, and soon revealed that she did indeed speak her language fluently, even though she also told us that she had spent all her working life as a domestic servant. In our first conversation, she asked us to record a message to Nelson Mandela and his government, in which she said her people must rise up and confront the farmers, that they must get back their lands and, above all, that they must not lose their language. Elsie's one hope was that the things that had once been the basis for her people's economic and intellectual life should not be allowed to disappear.

Discovering Elsie led to finding other speakers of the language, known to them as N/u (the / marks a click that sounds like the 't' at the beginning of 'tut-tut'). As the land claim progressed, and in time won the support of the South African government, the =Khomani came to attach immense importance to the survival of N/u. Even those who had never heard the language, and who were unlikely ever to learn more than a few words, said that its fate was of central importance to them.



At the same time, the idea that here was the only or the last speaker of a language captured the imagination of journalists from all over the world. She was recorded and filmed over and over again, and her story was broadcast in England, France, Germany, Australia, Canada, Japan... Finally a year ago, the =Khomani set up a series of N/u workshops, at which elders, with the help of a Namibian linguist, began to teach their language to their grandchildren. N/u may well not survive beyond the lifetimes of the elders who still speak it, but its existence and its fate seem to be of intense importance.

What is this importance that the =Khomani San, journalists and people around the world attach to Elsie Vaalboi and the N/u language? Historical realities, political ideals and complex fantasies are meeting one another. The San, silenced for so long in the old South Africa, at last have a voice. Their silence has been deepened by their absorption into the white frontier and

the Afrikaans language, so to hear their own language spoken, even if not understanding its words, is a powerful symbol. The rights to lands and resources that come with a San land claim depend on showing that the San are indeed a distinct people, and a distinct San language represents the claim. And those from outside see in the Bushman hints of a remote and 'vanishing' tribal world, and may hear in the strange sounds of the N/u language echoes of their own romantic dreams about the Kalahari. All these play their part.

But I suspect that there is something else going on in the Elsie Vaalboi story. She herself often spoke to us of an old prophecy that one day people from far away would come and help the Bushmen recover their place in their own world. To her the language is more than a symbol of this recovery: it contains the world, for it carries knowledge and truths on which the San have always depended. Language, and the stories in the language, are the

people's encyclopedia, the record of accumulated information and wisdom, the details of land, biology, climate and social rules that defined the =Khomani system and made it unlike any other and also made it work. Embedded in the language is therefore something about difference and pride. To have the language is to have one's heritage, one's claim to a place and essential expertise; and is also to have oneself. To lose it is to risk many kinds of losses – losses that are to do with economic wellbeing, rights to land and self-esteem. This is what Elsie Vaalboi understands.

As the land claim advanced, and as other speakers of N/u were found and came to meet one another, a sense of excitement built in the =Khomani communities. Elsie Vaalboi was part of this and, to everyone's amazement, rose from her bed and found new strength and energy. She continues to give interviews with fierce insistence on her people's rights and passionate declamations about the importance of her heritage. She also demands fees to



do this. Speaking for her people, she insists on staying alive and well. She also insists on the importance of identity.

This sense of identity speaks to global concerns about difference. Ethno-diversity may well be of vital importance to humanity. Indigenous knowledge, about both environment and society, constitutes a large proportion of what humanity has learned over tens of thousands of years. Far from being primitive and marginal, this body of knowledge could include remedies to profound social, environmental, psychological and medical ailments. We in the 'developed' world more and more look out on devastated landscapes; anticipate the shock-waves of agricultural pollution and global warming; see the extent of dispossession and impoverishment around the world; witness the polarisation of rich and poor; and experience in ourselves or in our children the impoverishment of spirit that spreads as a deadly inner infection. Indigenous peoples are caught in these changes, and often suffer some of their worse consequences – from extreme poverty to personal breakdown. But within the knowledge of indigenous societies – embedded and sustained by that which is their distinctive heritage, namely their difference – are ways of being in the world that can inspire us with hope. With uniformity of human circumstances, then, comes loss – of ways of life, of cultures, and, for all of us, of hope.

Perhaps the most compelling sign of a

rapid surge towards uniformity of human life is to be seen in the decline of the number of languages that are being spoken. Experts on language change estimate that 5,000 languages or distinctive dialects have disappeared in the last century. In Australia, approximately 1,000 different languages were spoken by Aboriginal societies when Captain Cook and his crew added English to the list in 1790. No more than 100 Australian Aboriginal languages survive, and many of these have fewer than 20 speakers. In North America alone, some 1,000 languages have reached the edge of extinction in the last 30 years. There are Elsie Vaalbois in many parts of the world, on just about every colonial frontier. And as they urge that their languages be saved, they may well be speaking for us all. We may never come to understand those languages, but we may depend – while not knowing in what ways – on what people who do understand those languages have to tell us.

The loss of language is inseparable, of course, from breakdown and disappearance of communities. The uniformity of the world takes place because large, dominating social and economic systems transform and dissolve the boundaries between societies. There is a rhetoric of progress and development that urges this change as a necessary condition for the spread of wealth between peoples. In reality, this spread of wealth occurs among those who are already prosperous, while the peoples who live in isolated and 'traditional' societies, depending on

their local resources and customs, often experience far more losses than gains when their distinctive ways of life fragment and their systems are absorbed into a homogenised world. Indigenous peoples say again and again that real development depends on the existence, not the destruction, of their communities and the security of their own resources.

And this may well be just as true for the rest of us, for whom a standardised culture and restless longing for at least some form of community may have closer links with crime, depression and international terrorism than with any authentic economic or social development. Anomie and violence, within the family and society as a whole, can be associated with breakdown of community. Even the fanatical exaggeration of community, with frenzied insistence on some kind of 'pure' form of religious or family life, may well be the result of globalisation of both economics and culture. Elsie Vaalboi is angry about the losses her people have endured because these losses are economic as well as social. The kind of development she seeks begins with securing the San community, offering them a chance to be both themselves and participants in developments based on their own resources and skills. In this way modernity can be integrated into community, rather than built on its ruins ■

Hugh Brody is an anthropologist and filmmaker.

Why Ecovillages? by Helena Norberg-Hodge

As the effects of economic policies that ignore the needs of people and the planet become glaringly apparent, rebuilding community and local economies becomes more and more urgent. Today's global economy is mostly made up of speculative investors and giant transnational corporations which, by their very nature, have but to generate maximum profits in as short a time as possible. In an era of absentee ownership and 'foreign direct investment', there is little room for social, ecological, or spiritual values. The result is rising social and environmental breakdown.

However, even though business and government leaders continue to push their outdated economic models on the world, resistance is growing by leaps and bounds. New coalitions are bringing together labour unions, environmentalists and farmers from the developed and developing worlds alike. This growing resistance is further strengthened by thousands of grassroots initiatives that are reweaving the fabric of community, restoring ecosystems and rebuilding local economies.

Of these inspiring initiatives, the ecovillage movement is one of the

most holistic and therefore one of the most important. These smaller-scale communities nurture more intimate relations among people and ensure that everyone is seen, heard and recognised – providing a sense of individual identity that is lacking in the anonymity and isolation of mass society. When people live in smaller-scale social and economic units, where mutual support is necessary, the human capacity for caring and kindness is enhanced. As a consequence the individual – including very importantly the children as well as the aged – experience the joys of a more loving environment.

Ecovillages also encourage a sense of connection and responsibility to the natural world which goes far beyond a reduction in the use of natural resources; it represents an altogether new development vision with different economic underpinnings, energy use, social structures and values from those of industrial society. Ecovillages provide models for living close to the land and in community with one another – a vision that is inspiring for the increasing numbers of people who long to live in a way that is spiritually rewarding, as well as ecologically sustainable.

Planning ahead

The Government has unveiled plans for the biggest shake-up in the English planning system in 50 years. But as **Jake Bowers** discovers, there's little in it for the smallholders and eco-villagers who must continue to break planning law to live simple, sustainable and secure lifestyles on their own land.

On 12 December 2001, Stephen Byers, Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions unveiled a green paper entitled *Planning: delivering a fundamental change*. Its purpose, claims the Government, is to create a 'faster, fairer planning system, with community interests at its heart'. According to Byers himself: 'We want a planning system in which the values of the whole community are allowed to prosper and develop. The current system does not allow that. It is slow, ponderous and uncertain. It benefits those with large cash and time resources and excludes those without.' Fine words, but with little connection to the truth of the green paper, which contains plans for allowing faster planning procedures for major infrastructure developments and business zones where planning applications won't be needed at all, but very little on offer for those who just want to lead sustainable, affordable lifestyles in the British countryside.

The perversity of the UK's planning laws is epitomised by the story of Jack Everett. He and his family are facing removal proceedings under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act because they didn't apply for planning permission when they started to build their home in a disused limestone quarry in 1984. It's not that the house is some 'monstrous carbuncle' dominating the Gloucestershire countryside; in fact it's an environmentally benign house that doesn't even pierce the earth it stands on. Yet to Stroud District Council, it doesn't matter that 90 per cent of the energy-efficient timber house was made from recycled materials. It doesn't matter that the water it uses is collected from the sky, or that the family have found a way to house themselves at a



The house that Jack built: Jack Everett's eco-home – shown above at various stages of construction – has upset Stroud District Council.

JACK EVERETT

time when millions can't get a foothold on the property ladder. It doesn't even matter that it will cost thousands to re-house the family. Fifteen years of temporary planning permission have now run out and the council says the family has to go.

Ironically, the Everetts' final hope may rest on the environmental credentials of some of their house's inhabitants – namely the bats that live in the roof. If they turn out to be a threatened species, Jack, his partner Emma, and their four children may be allowed to stay. When it comes to fulfilling that most basic of needs – shelter – it seems there is one area of British law in which animal rights can sometimes exceed human ones.

Everett is philosophical about the prospect of losing his home. He plans to dismantle his house rather than see it being ripped down; the fact that he can easily remove the house and re-use the materials he built it with demonstrates its ecological nature. 'I'm not going to defend it with a gun,' he explains. 'We have to have integrity, otherwise our case is lost on greed.'

Everett is far from greedy. His house cost just £10,000 to build and the acre of land it stands on cost £1,000. An equivalent conventional 3-bedroom house would have a far larger ecological impact and cost at least 10 times as much to buy, largely because of the scarcity value of land with planning permission. It is this artificial scarcity, determined by planning zones rather than genuine environmental criteria, that the Everetts and a growing number of advocates of 'low impact

development' are challenging by building on greenbelt land first and applying for retrospective planning permission later.

'The planning system views us as marginal aberrants who have gone feral,' says Everett. 'In other parts of the world, like Central America, we'd be praised for what we've done. I don't see why people who cater for their own needs should be penalised; they should be supported and seen as useful pioneers.'

His home may not be a universal blueprint for the 3 million new homes the Government wants to build in Britain, but it is his solution for meeting his family's needs. 'Not everybody would like to live this way,' he says, 'but even if we're only talking about 2 per cent of the population, they should still be allowed to do it. As a society we are only just beginning to sort out our basic needs. We have health food shops and alternative therapies available on every corner. Now we need to deal with shelter.'

Kings of the Hill

One group of people who have got their shelter sorted are the people of the Kings Hill Collective in Somerset. In November 2000, they won their protracted legal battle for planning permission to live in traditional Gypsy dwellings called 'bender tents' on their own land. Just one month after the UK Human Rights Act came into force, Secretary of State John Prescott resolved a planning appeal by giving the community permanent planning permission. He recognised that forcing the community to leave their homes

would breach the right to respect for private and family life enshrined in Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The rare victory granted the inhabitants of Kings Hill permission to have no more than 16 'low impact residential shelters', which the government defined as 'a structure... [that] maximises whenever possible the use of sustainable, local and recycled materials, is capable of removal from the site within one day, is constructed without permanent foundations, is not connected to mains services, [and] which allows the land fully to regenerate once the dwelling has been removed from the site.'

Mike Hannis is one of the 16 who have lived at Kings Hill since 1992, when the group clubbed together to afford the four-acre field after years of living in vehicles and at environmental protest sites. Having been part of defeating the Conservative Government's road-building programme, the group used the campaigning and practical skills they learnt on one front line to open up another. 'It was originally a form of direct action. A lot of our spirit came out of the anti-road camps and being prepared to live on the frontline,' says Hannis. Now that the group has permission to stay, the inhabitants have switched their energies from fighting the planning system to developing their lives.

'I used to tell people that we had it pretty bad, but since we've got permission we realise just how lucky we are,' says Hannis. 'The lesson we've learnt is to get on the land and just start doing it because they will never just give you permission.'

Tinkering around: Construction on Tinkers Bubble in Somerset – below and right.



Yet, despite his long battle with the planning system, Hannis thinks it's the criteria used that are at fault rather than the system itself. 'I actually believe in the planning system because it's right that people should be scrutinised,' he explains. 'But we need to establish the principle that not all buildings are the same. Sustainability should be a major consideration and people who want to live sustainably should be allowed to. The planning system could actually be used to encourage sustainable housing if local plans included the right policies.'

To this end, British land rights group The Land Is Ours has developed criteria that define exactly what is meant by low impact development. Its document *Defining Rural Sustainability: 15 criteria for sustainable developments in the countryside* provides a benchmark by which local planning officers can judge whether a project really is sustainable. And while the ideas might not have filtered through to Whitehall yet, an allowance for low impact development projects has already been incorporated into the draft local plans for Carmarthenshire, Milton Keynes, South Somerset and Torridge.

Furthermore, in March, a report commissioned by the Countryside Commission for Wales, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and Welsh Assembly will be published, looking at the relationship between low impact developments and planning systems. It represents the best chance yet to get the concept of low impact development enshrined in a part of British law.

'Without a doubt, this will be the most systematic study into low impact

development ever undertaken in Britain,' says James Shorten, senior lecturer in rural issues at the University of the West of England and one of those undertaking the study. 'There is huge pressure to build more rural houses and a great history of abuse. To go into the countryside you need an exceptional reason. But low impact development is a new phenomenon that cuts across the history of rural planning. The problem is the planning system simply doesn't have the toolkit to evaluate low impact development because it's neither a housing estate nor a farm. It's like measuring water with a ruler. Low impact development may not be the best way to make money from the environment, but it might turn out to be the best way to manage it.'

Tinkers' tale

But studies, criteria and policy aside, the greatest advert for low impact development is seeing it in practice. At Tinkers Bubble in Somerset, former *Ecologist* editor Simon Fairley has spent the last 10 years proving that low impact development does improve the ecological and social diversity of rural areas. He coined the phrase low impact development and his book of the same name published in 1996 has inspired hundreds to try it out. He also works for the low impact development consultancy and land rights organisation Chapter 7.

At Tinkers Bubble, a community of nine adults and three children have brought fields and orchards back into production and begun converting a coniferous plantation into a village our

ancestors would surely recognise and feel at home in. It once had the air of a temporary protest camp about it, but with a magnificent thatched roundhouse now dominating its centre the community is putting down strong roots. Temporary planning permission, however, may run out next year. If it does, Tinkers Bubble will become a potent symbol of the inflexibility of the British planning system.

Fairley put

'If the planning system doesn't bend, it will break,' says Fairley. 'Enforcement in the countryside is already virtually non-existent; if the government can't provide reasonable policies, then the planning system will be abused and may collapse. That's not what Chapter 7 wants, because we believe that as long as private motor transport exists, a planning system is necessary to prevent destruction of the countryside.'

'But if the only way to get the Government to confront these issues is by direct action, as a land rights organisation, Chapter 7 is duty bound to support such action. Move onto your land first, answer questions later, is now sound advice. OK, so this is an invitation for abuse. But bugger the niceties... if the government aren't willing to address the matter at policy level, let them deal with it under pressure.' ■

Jake Bowers is co-founder of Earth First! and a Romani activist. For more information call Chapter 7 on +44 (0)1460 249 204 or visit: www.tlio.demon.co.uk/chapter7/index.html



Other worlds are possible

Porto Alegre, host to January's World Social Forum 2002, lies at the heart of the world's alternative communities. Yet as our atlas shows, it is by no means the only successful attempt out there to found and continue new ways of living.

CRYSTAL WATERS PERMACULTURE VILLAGE, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

Year Founded: 1987

Population: 200

Main Features: In 1996 the community won the World Habitat Award for its work towards improving air, water and soil quality. Other aims include providing an area of 'freedom for spiritual belief which is healthy and safe for recreation and active social interaction'. The community lives by agreed by-laws which provide a frame for sustainable living.

More Information:

tel +62 7 54944653 email:
crystalwaters@hotmail.net.au

SOLHEIMAR, ICELAND

Year Founded: 1930. **Population:** 100 (40 disabled)

Main Features: The oldest community of its kind in the world where able and disabled people live and work together. The first community in Scandinavia to practice organic farming. Residents have just planted a forest on their 250 hectares. **More Information:** www.gaia.org

ITHACA, NY, USA

Year Founded: 1989

Population: 60 adults, 30 children

Main Features: The Ithaca community focuses around a 'Common House' where members socialise. Future projects include the construction of a compost heated greenhouse and an organic berry farm, amongst others.

More Information: website:
www.ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us

SANTA FE DE BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

Year Founded: Mayor Enrique Penalosa took office in 1997. **Population:** 7 million. **Main Features:** Bogota staged the first Car Free Day in a major Third World city in March 2000. 800,000 cars stayed in the garage and for the first time in years accident and pollution levels dropped hugely. Today, 120 kms of road space are closed every Sunday to motor vehicles, and over 2 million cyclists, walkers, joggers, and bladders take over the streets. Furthermore the city has increased tax on gasoline, and started an odd/even licence system – during peak hours 40 per cent of the cars are prohibited from driving in the city. And parking fees have increased by 100 per cent.

More Information: www.ecoplan.org www.breakthegridlock.org/Pages/tookerarticle.htm

PRATEC (ANDEAN PROJECT ON PEASANT TECHNOLOGIES), PERU

Year Founded: 1987

Population: ever increasing number of graduates

Main Features: teaches courses in 'non-subjecthood' and 'cultural affirmation' for Andean peoples, rejecting Western colonialism with its assumptions about nature, knowledge, human behaviour etc. **More Information:** *The spirit of regeneration: Andean culture confronting Western notions of Development* by Frédérique Apfell-Marglin (Zed Books 1998)

PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL

Year Founded: Governed since 1980s by Brazilian Workers Party. **Population:** 1.5 million.

Main Features: In a whole range of sectors (housing, public transport, highways, garbage collection, clinics, hospitals, sewage, environment, social housing, literacy, schooling, culture, law and order etc) the city has made spectacular progress. The key to this success has been its 'participatory budget', which makes it genuinely possible for the inhabitants of any given neighbourhood to define concretely and democratically where municipal funds are to be allocated. **More Information:** www.portoalegre2002.org www.forumsocialmundial.org.br

THE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY IN HJORTSHØJ, DENMARK

Year Founded: 1986. **Population:** about 500 when fully established. **Main Features:** The Co-operative Society works to further the ideas and principles of democracy and of co-operational organisation. Lifestyle is based on a 4 hours-per-day worklife. The community is working towards self-sufficiency with co-operative housing, organic farming and a building company for environmentally friendly construction. **More Information:** www.ecovillages.org/denmark/hjortshoj

FINDHORN FOUNDATION, FORRES, SCOTLAND, UK

Year Founded: 1962. **Population:** 450

Main Features: From its origins in a local caravan park the community has grown to the largest of its kind in the UK, attracting 14,000 visitors annually. In 1997 the charity was recognized as a UN NGO. The foundation invites guests to experience 'The God within' through educational programmes and conferences. **More Information:** tel: +44 1309 690311 email: reception@findhorn.org

ECO-YOFF, SENEGAL

Year Founded: 1996

Population: 50-100

Main Features: Eco-Yoff is the Yoff Ecocommunity Programme. It is a centre for research and education in IT, training, ecology and promoting sustainable development throughout Western Africa. Global citizens come together to join forces with an urbanising indigenous African community. EcoYoff is shared by the village association APECSY, which is constructing its ecovillage. The Senegal government is officially supporting the establishment of an ecovillage network.

More Information: email: mzeitlin@refer.sn; marietou@hotmail.com

KUTHUMBA, SOUTH AFRICA

Year Founded: 1994. **Population:** 24

Main Features: Kuthumba acknowledges and values traditional building methods and tribal knowledge of plants, medicines and culture. It works to integrate traditional knowledge with Western sustainable technology. Engages in volunteer holidays to co-create a viable organic agricultural co-operative with the local indigenous township. **More Information:** email: kuthmba@global.co.za

DAMANHUR, VALCHIESELLA VALLEY, ITALY

Year Founded: 1977

Population: 800

Main Features: Damanhur is a Federation of Communities and Regions with over 800 citizens, a social and political structure, a constitution, 40 economic activities, its own currency, schools and a daily paper. Research is undertaken in many fields, including alternative social models and renewable energies. **More Information:** tel: 39 0124

512205. www.damanhur.org email welcome@damanhur.org

KETURA KIBBUTZ, ISRAEL

Year Founded: 1973

Population: 300

Main Features: The Ketrúa Kibbutz prides itself in being the only Kibbutz that has a true mix of observant and non-observant Jews. The community specialises in a schedule of plays, dance performances and concerts from well known Israeli artists. Ketrúa stresses the point that individuals will only experience great reward from their kibbutz experience if they are willing to work as part of the community. **More Information:** email: ketura-volunteers@ketura.ardom.co.il

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGY & CULTURE (ISEC), LADAKH

Year Founded: 1978. **Population:** 5,000

Main Features: ISEC in Ladakh seeks to promote alternative development through green technology, sustainable agriculture based on the strong local community and Ladakh's unique cultural foundation.

More Information: tel: +44 1803 868650 email: isecuk@gn.apc.org www.ecovillages.org/india/ladakh

AUROVILLE, INDIA

Year Founded: 1968

Population: 1,500 (planned 50,000)

Main Features: Aurovilians are expected to lead a 'spiritual' life, but there are no religions in Auroville. The city is endorsed by three resolutions of the UNESCO general assembly and has received international acclaim for its work in wasteland reclamation and reforestation.

More Information: web: www.auroville.org email: avguests@auroville.org.in



Making it happen

As part of the Gaia Foundation's recent *Earth Ethic* Series, Right Livelihood Award recipient Martin von Hildebrand gave a talk on 'The Earth from an Amazonian Perspective'. Prior to the lecture Stephi Roth caught up with the ethnologist to hear what has been happening beneath the Amazon's canopy.

terms, to change the colonialist view which has been a dynamic of the American countries and is deeply rooted in national cultures.

The reality of external pressures

'The Amazon is part of the country where there is hardly any state presence, so the government creates these absurd outposts to give the impression that they are actually present. So they will have, say, local authorities. The people are generally posted to the region as a kind of punishment; basically because it's so far away – and they are supposed to see it as dealing with 'savages' or 'irrationals'. Thus the Indians come into contact with the worst of people. Yet this view about state presence is a colonialist one, ie that it is up to the government to impose the national socio-economic model.

'The government also funds missionaries to 'civilise' the Indians; to pressurise them into changing their way of life for a western, urbanised one. So you see it is important for the indigenous people to have allies willing to understand and defend their way of life. This is why we set up COAMA – knowing full well that we didn't have the answers. Because no one has the answers. Not us, not the government, and not even the Indians.

'There was a time when the indigenous culture reflected and grew out of their immediate environment – the forest, the natural world. Then the white people came in with a different agenda and forced it through; exploiting rubber etc, and bringing, or rather imposing, education, health and trade in the name of Christ, in the name of progress and in the name of civilisation. During the last 100 years this agenda has been imposed on Indian cultures. Inevitably the result is disorder. Today's challenge for the indigenous people is to find out how they can build an order that is not going to deny the western world

entirely, because they can't step out of it – it is already around them. But at the same time it must enable them to keep their identity and culture.'

Can aspects of indigenous cultures still be of use to us?

'We are dealing with another way of reading the world. We are extremely rational, or we believe ourselves to be rational – others would say we have reduced ourselves to rationality. Indigenous people work on different levels, with a very strong reliance on intuition and altered states of awareness. The world that we call dreams, to them is an active space for other ways of understanding, existing and relating. Our language and our understanding are both limited and limiting and yet there exists an increasing trend in the Western World to try to understand these other worlds.

'Today more than ever, we have to learn to break through our own schemes and learn to understand these people. We are capable of doing so essentially because they are human and we are human. To understand this is beyond language. And there are many elements of their culture that we can see that can be highly inspiring for us and that can help us move forward and break beyond our worldview.'

How can COAMA realistically mitigate between the different cultures?

'Slowly, that's why it has been a 10-year process. We accompany the indigenous peoples, try to explain the various choices and let them decide for themselves. Together we are developing the basis for an intercultural educational process, which imitates our western model undoubtedly, but is based on their identity and way of life.

'They are developing health processes and self-government. According to the law they now can run their territories, set up and administrate the social services that the state is under the obligation to provide.'

Between 1986 and 1990 the Colombian government legally recognised 20m hectares of rainforest in the Amazon region as *resguardos* – 'collective indigenous territory'. It was an unprecedented move towards the recognition of indigenous rights and the role indigenous people play in the conservation of rainforests. This was achieved through pressure from the various communities and with support from people like Hildebrand, who at the time was Head of Indigenous Affairs in the Colombian government.

In 1990 funds were secured from the European Union to set up a network to accompany indigenous communities to implement their rights, to help them determine the influence of external forces and to enable them to continue manage their lands according to their own cultural norms. Consolidation of the Amazon (COAMA) is this very network co-ordinated by Hildebrand. When COAMA received the Right Livelihood Award in 1999 it provided support for roughly 250 indigenous communities.

'When I first lived amongst Colombia's indigenous people in the Amazon we supported their initiative to end years of exploitation by rubber barons', he says. 'After that we were able to look into the land issue. And only then did we get their rights established in the national constitution. When we first decided to gather the NGOs together as COAMA, we agreed that we would support these indigenous initiatives because it is one thing to get the land and their rights recognised, but it is another just to put all this into practice; to build a future on these

But if resources are national property, what happens if a multinational discovers oil? Is this still a threat?

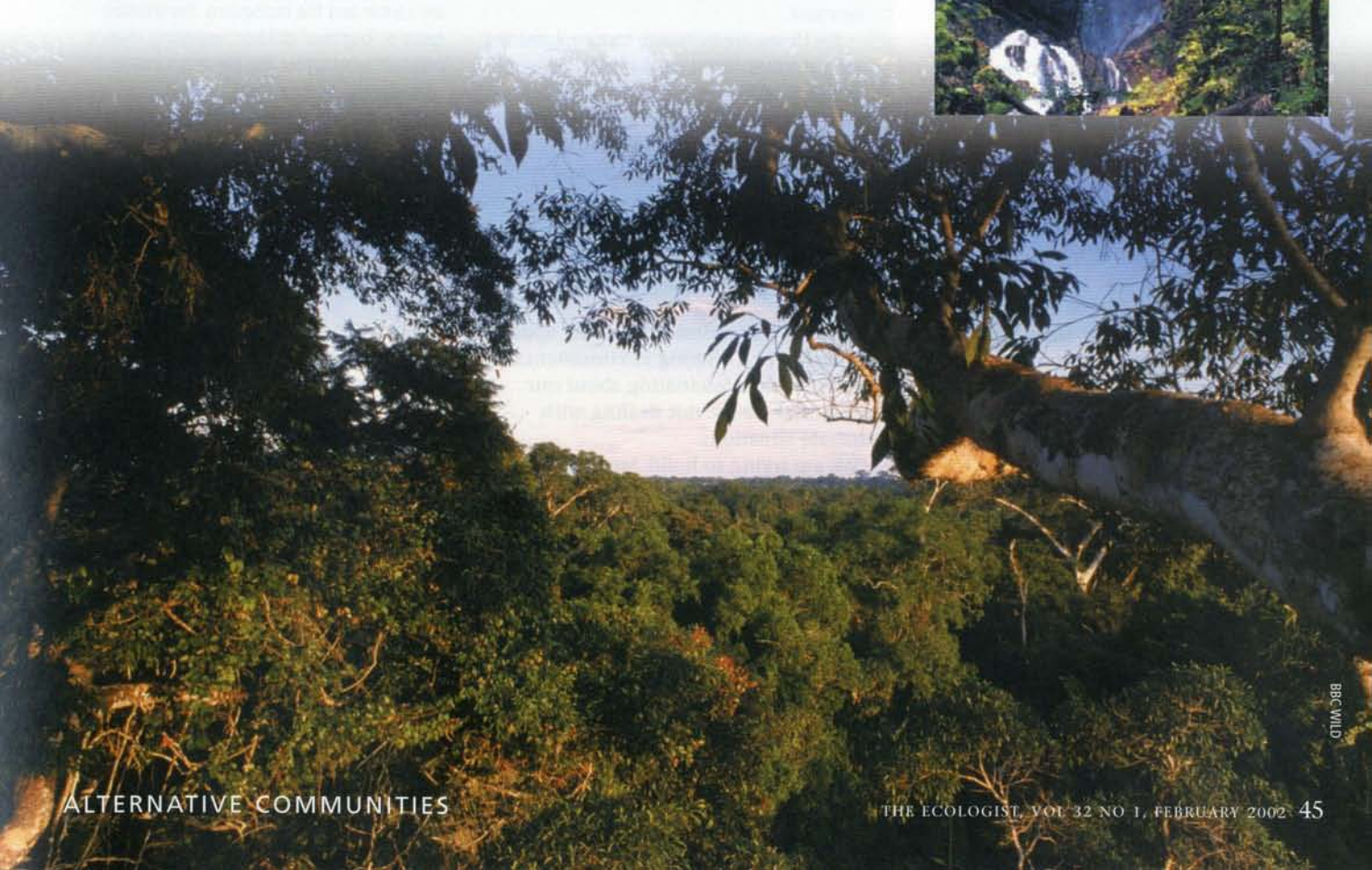
'Of course it is. But the whole point is that now the Indians are empowered. They own the land, they have the right to run their own government and put laws through, so that if an oil or mining company comes along, they have a much better chance to fight, negotiate and stand up for themselves, than they would have had 30 years ago.

'Only recently miners came in for gold. From a legal point of view we could have got them out. But our problem was that the guerrillas are present in this area, and they are quite keen on the financial gain from gold exploitation. So we encouraged a meeting between the Indian authorities and the guerrilla leaders. The guerrillas agreed that they would go along with whatever the Indians decided, as long as there is consensus. The problem is that most of them will say "no", but some cannot resist the temptation even knowing the consequences when getting into activities that are ecologically negative and illicit. The main reason why the majority say "no" is a cultural one; based on the respect for the living forest and fear of the guardian spirits. So the indigenous authorities are faced with consensus-building amongst their communities. Decisions cannot be imposed. So we all sit at night in their communal houses

and chew coca leaves again and again, and slowly make progress as we go deeper in to each issue. It is not for COAMA to interpret the world for them. All we can do is suggest alternatives and provide training or information, so that they can sit with the government and other actors in the region and say: "OK we have defined the way we want to do things, the way we want to build our future in joint responsibility with the rest of the state, so let's talk". At the end of the day it boils down to power.

There is an argument that finding commercial uses for the rainforest is the only way of saving it. What happens if a company wants to patent traditional knowledge?

'Many things can happen and current laws are unclear. The Colombian government tried to set up a deal like that, and allow a company to access natural parks. The government argued that natural parks do not belong to the Indians but to the state. But the government had to stop the deal. The constitution says that indigenous territories are inalienable, and it also says that the national parks are inalienable. In our view if something is inalienable it is inalienable to its owners by definition. The government has accepted this, which means that in those places where the natural parks overlap indigenous territories the



government has accepted that the land belongs to the Indians. But we have never taken this on a legal basis to the High Court. We haven't done so because we feel the current political mood is not favourable. Right now we are better off with an administration that is fundamentally in the hands of the Indians and includes the co-operation and co-responsibility of the state. Although the Indians own the territory and all the resources they are not free to use the resources in a negative way.

'So, if the Indians want to sell timber they would have to go through all the same restrictions and regulatory processes that the government has for any other territory. But more importantly, this is precisely where their culture is of such importance. Their tradition is based on a reciprocal relationship with the natural world and this is why they are so efficient at protecting the forests.'

What drives you to do your work?

'The problem I think we have with indigenous people in general is that they have been excluded and dominated in the name of Christ, or Marx, or progress; even in the name of the environment and wilderness. I got involved in the whole issue not out of love for indigenous people but because I believe in cultural diversity, biodiversity – in diversity fullstop.

'I disagree with domination over people, in denying their right to be different. What I have tried to do is to pull the West back and leave a space for these people to decide for themselves. When one says that collective ownership by the Indians of their land is recognised, this is a western concept. If you ask any indigenous community whether they own the land they will say: "No, we belong to the land, just as the birds and the trees." Yet today they might add something along the lines of: "in Western terms we have to say we own it otherwise the West won't respect our right to manage it." So what COAMA does is to try and withhold the imposition of conventional development programmes so that the indigenous people have a chance to build their own systems.'

Is this what you call decolonisation?

'Exactly. You take the land out of the market. What we are aiming for is a territory run by the people. They will need some income, but perhaps their

FORESTS WITHIN

It is not brute adaptation that ensured Colombia's tribal peoples' survival to this present day, but because they learnt to live in relative balance with their natural environment, and because their life is based on a reciprocal and highly ritualised dialogue with that environment.

Like many indigenous communities of the Colombian Amazon, the Ufaina of the Mirití Paraná and Lower Apaporis rivers in the north-eastern part of the country follow a way of life that evolves from and around the maloca.

A maloca is a communal house, usually circular, with a diameter of anything between 20 to 60 metres and about 10 metres high. Depending on the community's size it houses about 30 people, all of which are part of the extended family.

Malocas are spaced along rivers and streams; located a few hundred metres away on higher ground. The space within the maloca and around it forms a tapestry of meanings and consequently of behaviour. The space is a home which all share; it has no owner and serves as long as all participate in its maintenance. A maloca is self-sufficient in economic terms and autonomous in political terms. A community inhabits a particular maloca and lives from its surrounding resources for about 15 years; then it is left to regenerate. The community moves on to find a new spot.

The Ufaina live by fishing, hunting, gathering and gardening. Whilst much of these activities are seasonal; managed territories include rivers, swamps, lakes, forests, slash and burn gardens, with each ecosystem offering different opportunities of obtaining resources at different times.

The women look after the children, work in the garden, prepare food, manufacture

ceramics and hammocks. The men fish, hunt, make canoes and weapons and look after the maloca. Men also look after relationships within the community and between the community and the wider environment. They not only hold political power but dedicate a good part of their time to meditate over problems, which are dealt with through a structure ordained by myths, shamanism and rituals.

Each extended patrilineal family produces its own basic subsistence and surplus is distributed amongst members. The exchange of surplus between members of the extended family only has value for the relationship of reciprocity that it establishes between people without objects having any intrinsic value in themselves. Whilst to accumulate is viewed as antisocial – for it would deny the reciprocity established through exchange – redistribution of surpluses can reinforce ties within the community. In return, the community's needs are naturally limited by the considered need of the ecosystem to survive as a whole.

Inside the maloca there are clearly defined spaces reserved for rituals, for community and domestic activities, as well as spaces for each nuclear family and for each specialist charged with different aspects of life.

The most important of these specialists are the shaman (the jaguar-man to the Ufaina), the cantor and the maloquero. The shaman cures or 'baptises' children, assigning them a principal function for life. He also handles cosmological models and is trained to adapt them to the social and natural changes generated over time. By closely observing nature's behaviour he directs the community in using resources by permitting or restricting according to seasonal changes and ecological diversity. The cantor, too, functions as a

potential is that instead of talking about oil, they will be offering environmental services. What's fascinating about our work is that we are not dealing with desperate situations.

'We are trying to build Amazonian alternatives. Hopefully, people from different parts of the world will come to understand when they see a photograph of the rainforest with miles and miles of beautiful green canopy, that beneath it there are thousands of people living and thinking. In fact there might be some of the world's finest thinking going on; thinking of great importance for the 21st century.'

Where from now?

'For the next 10 years we want the government to further decentralise political-administrative decisions into the hands of the Indians. We have worked on six main rivers and now we will be working on all rivers extending across the Colombian Amazon. We have signed agreements with indigenous people and NGOs in Brazil and Venezuela to co-operate along the borders. We are aiming for trilateral agreements for the indigenous and ecological management of 70 million hectares of continuous rainforest in the north-west Amazon basin. In Brazil



mediator between the community and the natural world. He directs the singing during the rituals which, according to tradition, take away the ills of the world. The maloquero is the administrator of the maloca. He is responsible for the well-being of all, he oversees production and distribution of surpluses and he manages discords. Essentially the maloquero is responsible for executing what has been determined by the shaman.

The norms by which indigenous communities like the Ufaina live are planted in their concept of the cosmos. Reciprocal exchange at a social level is part of a cosmic system that extracts a permanent series of exchanges in nature. Their view of the universe is based on two types of vital energy that recycle between plants, animals and men. These energies are manifest in each group under the form of its members. Fufaka is one form of energy; it comes directly from the sun and recycles through plants. The other comes from the east, from Ha-atike, the original maloca, and recycles between animals and people. This energy exists in a limited quantity and each group of animals and people require a basic quota to exist and survive. For this each group has a guardian.

Since each time a member of a species consumes another it is taking vital energy and given that the energy's quantity is limited, guardians communicate in altered states of consciousness to maintain equitable distribution. The shaman thus enters into contact with the animals' guardians and negotiates the hunting of a member of that group. In return he offers coca as payment or the energy of one of his own members. If and when the guardian accepts the offer, then

hunting or fishing can be undertaken without danger. Such transactions are principally carried out during rituals. In the event that any group abuse or accumulate excessive energy, then the other groups' guardians will hunt and send sickness, so that the energy is recycled.

When a man eats an animal or plant and so acquires its energy, if the right amount has been consumed then the energy identifies itself by strengthening him. If too much has been consumed then the energy of the consumed animal or plant dominates that man's energy; creating a dichotomy in body energy; thus making him vulnerable to illness or misfortune. When this happens, the contaminated energy becomes visible to the original 'owners' and to the shaman, the jaguar-man. In order to keep the energy's vital balance, 'owners' will want to take human energy and will send snakes to bite the contaminated person or send ill-winds or sickness.

Only a person with contaminated energy is visible thus susceptible to these evils. The bodies of people respecting these restrictions are animated with their own energy; hence invisible to other 'owners' and no harm can come over them. It is for this reason that communities such as the Ufaina use special rituals to purify themselves and respect dietary and sexual restrictions imposed by the jaguar-man. In this way they return the energy which is not theirs.

Since being is manifested through (social) exchange and in return is represented through the community as a whole, its centre – the maloca – is a symbol of this cosmological concept that is expressed by reciprocal exchange. During daily life the maloca is used in general arrangements of reciprocity by means of

which the social continuity of the group is reaffirmed; whether by exchange among members of the nuclear family, or between families at the level of the community, as directed by the maloquero. The next form of that balanced reciprocity is expressed when during rituals surpluses are distributed between other communities and maloqueros. Exchanges with the animals' guardians are equally based on this balanced reciprocity.

If communities such as the Ufaina have survived to this present day it is because their vision of recycling and maintaining balanced energy functions as type of administration of natural resources over the long term and as a means of ensuring equitable distribution among the community in the short term. Last but not least, a major benefit of this way of living has been social cohesion.

Edited from Gaia in Action (ed. Peter Bunyard, Floris Books, Edinburgh, 1996).



most of the Indian territories have been demarcated. Venezuela recently recognised indigenous land rights in the constitution, but has not yet put this into practice.

'Coincidentally, the new Venezuelan constitution also is the only one I know of which forbids the patenting of traditional knowledge. I think it is difficult to foresee the potential impact of recognising a society as multicultural under some of the new constitutions. This was true of the Colombian constitution of 1991 which recognised the society as being "multicultural". To give an example, Indian languages are

official wherever spoken, but language is much more than just a string of words, it is a history, a way of thinking, a way of interpreting the world. It brings the constitution to life, it creates a space for rights to be developed based on different worldviews.

'There is a marvellous example from the Sierra Nevada de Marta, the highest coastal mountain range in the world, where the Kogi and Arhuaco Indians live. Missionaries had converted many of the Arhuacos who were spreading the gospel in the mountains. But some of the *mamos* (traditional Indian priests) argued that their communities should

not be taught a foreign religion. The converted Arhuaco Indians took the *mamos* to court because the constitution allows religious freedom. The Magistrates of the High Court concluded that for the Indians the mountain where they live is sacred, and consequently it is their temple and no one can go into another's temple to teach a different religion.

'So the *mamos* won. That's a hell of a big step – to get legal recognition that a mountain is a temple.

'You see, things can happen.' ■

Ceylon way home

Since it began in the 1950s, the Sarvodaya Movement for Peace has offered villages in Sri Lanka an alternative to top-down, sectional development. For Sarvodaya, development is a process of ongoing personal and social awakening of the individual, the family, the community, the national and global societies. **Karen Svensson** and **Hildur Jackson** interview its director Vinya Ariyaratne.

Q: How do you start up the different stages of development in the villages?

VA: I'd rather talk in terms of the three foundations we lay in a village. The first is the psychological infrastructure in the community, which consists of bringing villagers together through voluntary community action. This is essential to build the social infrastructure, which brings a bit more organisation to the community. Initially we make people understand their own situation, and have them participate in a community activity.

The social infrastructure is based on organising villagers in groups (mothers, youth, farmers, elders, preschool), where people can come and discuss their problems. Then we get the whole community together in a village society and get them legal recognition: they become a small democratic unit, with village self-government. We introduce basic elements of community organisation: rules, election process (officers), the keeping of accounts. The third foundation, based on the psychological and social infrastructures, is the economic infrastructure: we develop a banking scheme, a credit scheme.

The spiritual dimension of Sarvodaya runs through all these parts of the development. People get together and meditate, and follow this common spiritual practice all the way through. It's an integrated process.

Q: How do Sarvodaya villages integrate into today's globalised marketplace? Money-earning activities on a village or individual basis?

VA: We don't have to link directly to the global marketplace to survive: 3,500 of our villages have started their own economic programme, producing things required by the community, satisfying their basic needs. We don't believe the global system can help the people. We want village communities to create their own wealth, their own resources (instead of letting the global community take their resources out of the villages) so they can develop as economic blocks. We try to improve things at the village level. To

help establish this, we plan a national bank, the Sarvodaya Bank.

Q: Would you recommend this for African Networks, where they are trying to produce for exportation?

VA: There's nothing wrong with producing something for sale in the global marketplace. We also produce things for the global market. But we take care not to become dominated by the world economic system. There are many things we can do to meet our needs at a local level, and that is what we focus on first of all. It's a difficult balance to achieve. Most of our villages can produce more than they require. This is possible if you strengthen your own micro-level economic system first.

Q: What surplus businesses do you have?

VA: At the village level, we mostly have agriculture for self-sufficiency. But we have local crafts, such as batik, which we collect and export. We have also started a relatively new business in ornamental fish. At the village level, we produce household items such as brooms and brushes, and bricks for construction. We have a printing shop, which works at a national level. Wood crafts (wooden toys) are actually exported both to Europe and North America. Our metal workshop produces wheelchairs at low cost, and office furniture.

We also have training centres where we offer educational programmes (we teach government people and other NGOs in topics such as community health, biodiversity, information technology, and much more: altogether about 30 programmes), and we rent out facilities.

Q: What changes have happened within Sarvodaya since you took over from your father, Ari Ariyaratne?

VA: I have spent a considerable amount of time strengthening the next level of leadership, empowering them. It's a difficult transition, as it is a movement, and you can't totally convert into a professionalised organisation. But we

need to professionalise, because we have very limited resources. We don't have the same kind of donor funding as we received 20 years ago. So I had to bring in changes: We rely more on internal income now. I have worked on long-term financial and staff projections. We've seen lots of positive results. We have entered into new programmes as a response to needs: information technology; in the environmental area, a biodiversity program, training youth in environmental methods; the community health programme has expanded; our population is rapidly ageing, so we work out how to look after them. Reproductive health issues are not addressed by the government, so we set up programmes in this area as well.

Q: What is the role of spirituality in the Sarvodaya movement for peace? You have a Buddhist background, but you work with many different religions. Does Sarvodaya have its own special practice?

VA: The Sarvodaya philosophy, though derived from Buddhism, has a universal application, because it embodies the essence of spirituality. It is combined with all the religions that exist in the Sri Lankan villages, among which are Christianity and Hinduism.

The spiritual dimension of Sarvodaya brings out an understanding of your inner self in relation to the outside world. Service and development within Sarvodaya always have spiritual guidance as their source of inspiration. Our spiritual practice motivates hundreds of thousands of people to serve others, to bring happiness to other people through helping them satisfy their basic needs. We have brought about volunteerism in people. We start with spiritual development (which impacts on the moral and cultural levels), followed by social development, economic development and finally political development. We help people to understand themselves and the situation they are in first (spiritual). In a new village, we start with a Shramadana



camp, meaning the voluntary sharing of labour to fulfil a basic community need (for example cleaning the village). A camp can last for two to three days, or even a week. It's an initial mobilisation. We start the camp with meditation, combined with traditional cultural activities and indigenous practices. In a Hindu community, we bring out the Hindu philosophy to awaken the inner personality. We train people from all ethnic groups in this work, so our entry point is development, not a particular religion, and spiritual development is brought in as part of the development process.

Q: How is spirituality integrated in practice in your five phases of development?

In the higher stages of development we retain the meditation, as it is the common spiritual practice. Our spiritual practice affects the activities people are involved in and how they respond to them. In the economic dimension, for example, we give out loans for activities, and we know that people will never use them for anything harmful to human beings or animals. That is a result of the

spiritual dimension of our development: applying spiritual awareness in the economic dimension.

Q: What can you say to other networks and community movements about the inclusion of spirituality in the community's work?

The spiritual dimension is important as an integral part of a community. Don't separate it out from what is happening, it needs to be integrated into everything that you do. At the same time, it will not happen automatically, there has to be a conscious effort to retain this high level of spirituality (activities which bring the community together keep spirituality integrated). In our villages we try to get people to meet together in the evening to meditate and discuss with each other. Spirituality can take different forms. It's a matter of at least a few people realizing the importance of a spiritual practice, and the rest of the community will catch up. Really feel the energy, and the others around you will be converted and will start as well.

To recognise the need for spirituality is the first step. We have built a Peace Centre where people come from all walks

of life to meditate. It's remarkable the change you see in these people, when they experience it. Some come reluctantly (it's their company that sent them) but they go through something so rewarding that they are convinced.

Q: How do you define spirituality?

The connection I have with my own self. An understanding of the outer world is a result of how you relate to your inner self and your inner process. Through spirituality you get very balanced in your thinking. It inspires us to have compassion, understanding for other people, to get joy out of what we do, to feel equanimity (so we don't feel disturbed by negative things that happen). I believe in Buddhism. Any religion also helps. Belief in God helps bring these values forward.

This is an edited extract from 'Ecovillages: Restoring the Earth and Her People', edited by Hildur Jackson and Karen Svensson. They can be emailed at hildur@gaia.org and karen@gaia.org. The Ecovillage Network's website is www.gaia.org.

The book is published later this year.

DEVELOPMENT: ONGOING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL AWAKENING

The Sarvodaya Movement for Peace in Sri Lanka started in the 1950s when a young teacher, Ari Ariyaratne, moved into underprivileged villages and started working with the most downtrodden communities there, 'to dispel ignorance, inequality and powerlessness' through village development. 'From the beginning, I had faith in the common faith and small-scale activities,' Ariyaratne has said. His faith has been rewarded by the achievements of the Sarvodaya Movement, which established a model for village development currently extending to over 13,000 villages (of a total of 30,000) in Sri Lanka. With the help of

Sarvodaya, these village communities build strong social economic infrastructures to meet their basic needs and eventually expand to become surplus generating entities.

'Sarvodaya Shramadana' means the awakening of all through sharing of one's labour, time, and energy. For Sarvodaya, development is a process of ongoing personal and social awakening of the individual, the family, the community, the national and global societies. Since its inception, Sarvodaya has tried to offer an alternative to top-down, sectional development.

The idea of a local economy

As Wendell Berry explains, the one alternative that definitely will not work is the one being pursued at the moment – namely globalised free trade.

There is a growing perception that the global free market economy is inherently an enemy to the natural world; to human health and freedom, to industrial workers, and to farmers and others in the land-use economies; and furthermore, that it is inherently an enemy to good work and good economic practice.

I believe that this perception is correct and that it can be shown to be correct merely by listing the assumptions implicit in the idea that corporations should be 'free' to buy low and sell high in the world at large. These assumptions, so far as I can make them out, are as follows.

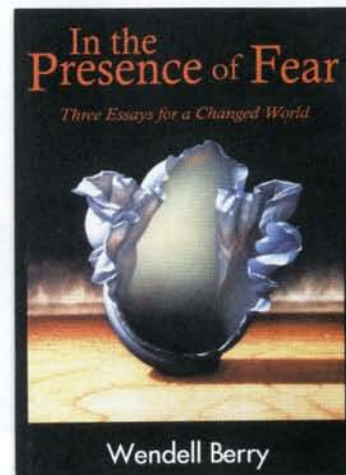
- 1 That stable and preserving relationships among people, places, and things do not matter and are of no worth.
- 2 That cultures and religions have no legitimate practical or economic concerns.
- 3 That there is no conflict between the 'free market' and political freedom, and no connection between political democracy and economic democracy.
- 4 That there can be no conflict between economic advantage and economic justice.
- 5 That there is no conflict between greed and ecological or bodily health.
- 6 That there is no conflict between self-interest and public service.
- 7 That loss or destruction of the capacity anywhere to produce necessary goods does not matter and involves no cost.
- 8 That it is all right for a nation's or a region's subsistence to be foreign based, dependent on long-distance transport, and entirely controlled by corporations.
- 9 That, therefore, wars over commodities are legitimate and permanent economic functions.
- 10 That this sort of sanctioned violence is justified also by the predominance of centralised systems of production supply, communications, and transportation, which are extremely vulnerable to acts of war between nations, and to sabotage and terrorism.
- 11 That it is all right for poor people in poor countries to work at poor wages to produce goods for export to affluent people in rich countries.

- 12 That there is no danger and no cost in the proliferation of exotic pests, weeds, and diseases that accompany international trade and that increase with the volume of trade.
- 13 That an economy is a machine, of which people are merely the interchangeable parts. One has no choice but to do the work (if any) that the economy prescribes, and to accept the prescribed wage.
- 14 That, therefore, vocation is a dead issue. One does not do the work that one chooses to do because one is called to it by Heaven or by one's natural or god-given abilities, but does instead the work that is determined and imposed by the economy. Any work is all right as long as one gets paid for it.

The local alternative

So far as I can see, the idea of a local economy rests upon only two principles: neighbourhood and subsistence. In a viable neighbourhood, neighbours ask themselves what they can do or provide for one another, and they find answers that they and their place can afford. This, and nothing else, is the practice of neighbourhood. This practice must be, in part, charitable, but it must also be economic, and the economic part must be equitable; there is a significant charity in just prices.

Of course, everything needed locally cannot be produced locally. But a viable neighbourhood is a community; and a viable community is made up of neighbours who cherish and protect what they have in common. This is the principle of subsistence. A viable community, like a viable farm, protects its own production capacities. It does not import products that it can produce for itself. And it does not export local products until local needs have been met. The economic products of a viable community are understood either as belonging to the community's subsistence or as surplus, and only the surplus is considered to be marketable abroad. A community, if it is to be viable, cannot think of producing solely for export, and it cannot permit importers to use cheaper labour and



goods from other places to destroy the local capacity to produce goods that are needed locally. In charity, moreover, it must refuse to import goods that are produced at the cost of human or ecological degradation elsewhere. This principle applies not just to localities, but to regions and nations as well.

The principles of neighbourhood and subsistence will be disparaged by the globalists as 'protectionism' – and that is exactly what it is. It is a protectionism that is just and sound, because it protects local producers and is the best assurance of adequate supplies to local consumers. And the idea that local needs should be met first and only surpluses exported does not imply any prejudice against charity toward people in other places or trade with them. The principle of neighbourhood at home always implies the principle of charity abroad. And the principle of subsistence is in fact the best guarantee of giveable or marketable surpluses. This kind of protection is not 'isolationism'.

A total economy for all practical purposes is a total government. The 'free trade', which from the standpoint of the corporate economy brings 'unprecedented economic growth', from the standpoint of the land and its local populations, and ultimately from the standpoint of the cities, is destruction and slavery. Without prosperous local economies, the people have no power and the land no voice.

Wendell Berry is a poet, ecologist and farmer. This article is an edited extract from his book *In the Presence of Fear*, \$8, published by Orion, www.oriononline.org.

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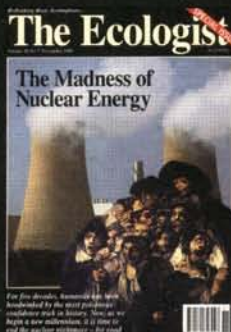
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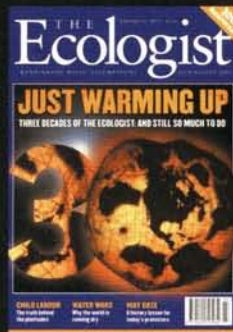
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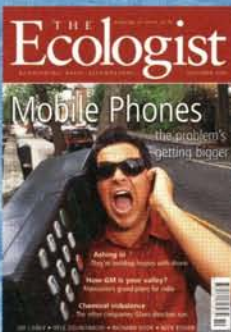
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The Algarve tiger

It's Europe's biggest conservation crisis, yet most of us have never heard of it. Within the next five years, we could see the first modern extinction of a big cat – on our own doorstep. Hunters, disease and now EU subsidies could wipe out the Iberian lynx, a mysterious creature known to locals as 'the phantom of the forest'. Eduardo Gonçalves, co-author of a new book – the first in English about the lynx – uncovers the secret story, and unfolding tragedy...

When we think of exotic big cats, our minds usually picture the jungles of Africa, the rainforests of South America, the peaks of distant mountain ranges. Snow leopards or Siberian tigers, you may think, are the world's rarest felines.

However, there is one species which faces such a serious risk of extinction it may disappear well before this decade is out. And it lives much closer to home.

The Iberian lynx, which inhabits the hills and open forests of south-western Spain and Portugal, is heading for extinction at a dramatic rate. In 1988, there were just 1,200 lynxes thought to remain. Today, though, as few as 300 of these magnificent animals are left.

In the last four decades, its range has shrunk by a staggering 90 per cent. From a species that recently ranged the entire peninsula, it is now reduced to populations numbering a dozen animals or fewer inhabiting scattered islands.

Some of the last strongholds of the lynx, sometimes referred to as Europe's tiger, include some surprises – such as the hills overlooking the famous beaches of the Algarve.

However, the plight of the 'Algarve Tiger' is a shocking story of neglect, persecution and environmental destruction. International conventions, European directives and national laws list the lynx as a 'priority' species, and forbid the destruction of its habitats. But fine phrases have been left on the shelf in the day-to-day reality of the market.

The majority of lynx territories remain unprotected. Traps, snares and bullets still take a heavy toll on young animals. And European taxpayers are unknowingly subsidising deforestation and the building of new dams in areas key to its survival.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of kilometres of highways are being built in the heart of lynx country. By contrast, the total amount spent on lynx conservation to date would

barely be enough for 1km of new road.

Whilst European leaders lecture so-called 'Third World' politicians on the need to preserve the habitats of tigers, elephants and black rhinos, one of the world's oldest feline species is being allowed to die out on our own doorstep. Worse still, those very leaders are in many cases responsible for bringing this species to the brink.

Co-existence undermined

The Iberian peninsula is a miracle of biodiversity, but one that is now under threat. A melting pot of mountains and plains, forests and steppe, wild rivers and scrubby foothills, it is home to over 100 mammal species and nearly 400 different birds, many of them exclusive to this region. The contrasts between the warm Mediterranean climate and cool, humid Atlantic winds helped make this landmass a fertile ground for such variety.

But so did the traditional farming practices of the area's early settlers, which still continue in some parts, favouring the development of species such as the lynx, a descendant of an African wild cat that roamed the earth 35 million years ago, and which successfully adapted itself to the oak forest habitat – and the supply of wild rabbits. (The word 'Hispania' means 'land of rabbits'.)

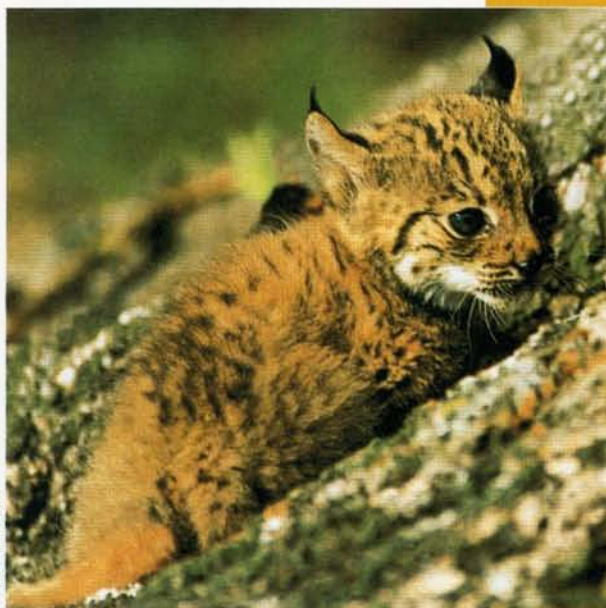
The use of the forests' natural resources for animal feed, fuel and wild foods conserved the thick bushy layers under the trees that lynxes use for shelter and cover. The opening of small clearings for grazing and orchards allowed rabbit numbers to grow, and created ideal forest edges from where lynx could attack their favourite prey.

Farmers adapted their needs to the area's thin soils, learning to use the wilderness to their advantage whilst conserving its precious resources. Holm oaks were pruned for charcoal, cork oaks were stripped for their cork, and the acorns of both were used to feed animals. The bushes of lavender and heather attracted bees ■



for making honey and pollinating fruit and vegetable gardens, whilst herbs were used for medicinal and culinary purposes.

These methods are still practised on the Portuguese 'montado' and Spanish 'dehesa' farms in many parts of the south-west of the peninsula, where the lynx is still present. Unlike many other forms of agriculture, this ancient system of mixed farming is not only sustainable, but provides a rich habitat for birds and mammals. And for thousands of years, lynx and farmers lived side by side in relative harmony.



ANTÓNIO SABATER

However, the expansion of agriculture early in the 20th century began invading many untouched and semi-wild areas. The lynx was also hunted for its fur. In the 1930s, for instance, as many as 500 pelts were traded every year. After World War II, local authorities organised culls to rid areas of lynx and other species considered 'vermin'. In fact, the lynx rarely attacks farm animals, and has never been known to attack humans.

Although lynx hunting was banned in Spain and Portugal in the late 1960s, and the lynx subsequently became a protected species, traps, snares and bullets continue to this day to be the leading cause of non-natural mortality. Some have been found shot at close range, suggesting they were killed deliberately. Many were young lynxes dispersing from their natal territories in search of a new home, thus depriving populations of vital new genetic resources.

Some types of traps – such as gin-traps, used to catch rabbits – are legal. Many, however, are not. The laying of

Cat stats – lynx on the brink

At first glance, the 'Algarve Tiger' looks not unlike an enormous domestic cat. Up to 1m long and 0.6m, males weigh 12–14kg, and females 9–10kg. With piercing green-yellow eyes, some animals are 'tabby' in appearance, with mottled markings on a beige coat, while others are almost bright orange with distinctive black spots, giving a leopard-like appearance. Indeed, *Lynx pardinus* – the species scientific name – can be translated as 'leopard lynx'.

The Iberian lynx is a solitary animal that becomes active at dusk, using its exceptional night-vision to hunt until after dawn. The lynx is a skilled hunter, equipped with sophisticated camouflage which helps it blend into the dappled forest light as it waits for wild rabbits, which make up most of its diet, to emerge from their warren. Its eyesight is many times better than that of humans, and it can detect the slightest rustle from great distances. Its hearing is so acute it can hear a rabbit chewing grass up to 300m away.

Surprise is its greatest weapon. Lynxes, like cheetahs, can accelerate at great speed

over short distances, but they are not long distance runners. They have been observed leaping 3m into the air in a single bound to catch a red-legged partridge, another

favourite meal.

The lynx's solitary lifestyle is interrupted during the mating season, which starts at the end of December. Then, the distinctive sharp calls of a lusty female on heat pierce the cold, wet winter nights as she seeks to attract the attention of a nearby male. It is a sound like no other, and hangs in the wind. The father-to-be will hunt with his mate, and lovingly wash and caress her. The female will then make a den to raise her litter in the hollow of an old cork oak tree, and give birth to two or three cubs between March and May.

The litter will grow rapidly, each cub weighing 500g after 2 weeks, and about 800g at one month. This is a difficult time for the mother, who will need to catch two or three rabbits a day in order to feed herself and her young family. Often, one of the cubs will not survive this period. She will carefully bury its body under branches and earth.

At about 6-7 months, the cubs become more independent. The time is fast approaching for them to leave and find a territory of their own. A female cub may inherit that of her mother's, or share it with her. For a male, however, it will be the most important – and dangerous – experience of his life. He will travel dozens of kilometres and face many obstacles and threats.

The majority – up to 80 per cent – die tragically during the journey, often on a road or in a hunter's trap. And today, those that do survive may find they still have no place to go.

poison also poses a risk to the lynx. As with traps, poisons do not discriminate between their victims. Even if a lynx survives, it may be left severely debilitated, and unable to hunt. Researchers have in recent years found many injured lynxes with legs and teeth mutilated from the struggle to free themselves.

Furthermore, over the last three to four decades, much of the region's natural vegetation has been simply destroyed. Some areas have been burnt to make way for urban development, or bulldozed for large infrastructure projects, such as highways and dams. These have inundated the river beds and valleys that were once rich in rabbits, and travelled by lynxes in search of a mate.

Others have been systematically replaced by new forms of intensive

agriculture, such as the colossal expanses of plastic that grow early strawberries for UK supermarkets, or industrial-scale monocultures of pine and eucalyptus – an Australian tree grown to supply the paper industry – that occupy areas where old woodlands and bush once stood.

Whole hill ranges have been machine-terraced and stacked with these alien trees, causing massive soil erosion and water table depletion, and creating a sterile, lifeless environment in which neither the lynx nor its prey can survive. Moreover, they have increased both the frequency and ferocity of forest fires. In the last 10 years, over 1 million hectares of woodland have burnt in Portugal, and there are 8,000 forest fires every year in Spain. Those lynx which survive are usually driven to hostile environments

unsuited to their needs.

Today, Portugal's largest landowner is a logging company. And the plantations, many subsidised with European taxpayers' money, are still growing.

To further complicate matters, in the 1950s, a French doctor lost patience with rabbits that had been attacking his vegetable garden, and imported from Australia a disease called mixomatosis – with catastrophic results. Entire rabbit populations were wiped out – and many lynxes starved or failed to reproduce. Then, a few decades later, just as rabbit populations began to develop immunity, disaster struck again. A new virus virtually eradicated rabbits from the Iberian Peninsula in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Today, rabbit populations are thought to number just 5 per cent of 1960s levels. There can be few more shocking spectacles than that of a starving, emaciated lynx barely able to walk.

The consequent fragmentation of lynx populations has had a devastating impact on the species' gene pool. Those lynxes still able to breed are forced to do so with close relatives. As a result, the animal's fertility suffers and it becomes more prone to disease and auto-immune deficiency illnesses. For the first time, there have been reports of lynxes dying from Bovine TB, whilst massive chromosomal damage has been found in the sperm of many males. Coat patterns are disappearing, and there have been sightings of 'melanistic' (black) lynxes, suggesting a recessive in-bred gene.

For those lynx that remain, any unfavourable event – a road accident, new dam or snare – could have a disproportionate impact on the local population. A disease affecting one animal can wipe out all the others, in turn provoking the collapse of a nearby group. As today's lynx populations become more isolated and vulnerable, the possibility of a domino effect becomes a serious prospect.

Warnings unheeded

Today, the Iberian lynx finds itself in a pre-extinction phase. Many animals are little more than wandering individuals travelling ever greater distances in desperate search of food and shelter, encountering ever greater dangers and obstacles, and unable to find a mate. Sightings of pairs and young cubs are increasingly rare.

However, European and national authorities have not responded to

scientists' frantic warnings. On the contrary. More large infrastructures – including new motorways and mega-dams – are now being planned and built in some of the most important remaining lynx habitats – even when official studies confirm the presence of lynx. The EU Habitats Directive prohibits destruction of lynx habitats, yet without the availability of EU funds, many dams and roads would not be built, bushland bulldozed or new plantations installed. Vital lynx habitats have been omitted – sometimes in mysterious circumstances – from the EU Natura 2000 network of European wildlife areas.

Meanwhile, official conservation efforts are either limited or have yet to be implemented. A promised captive breeding programme has not materialised. And the rapid decline in population has not been stemmed.

And all the while, rural communities, traditional farming practices and potentially valuable natural resources are being forgotten, or lost. Lynx habitats are examples of the best conserved ecosystems in Europe. The situation of the Iberian lynx is thus a litmus test of the health of our own environment.

The scrubby hills are rich not just in wildlife but also foods and medicinal plants. The berries of the strawberry tree – an important part of the lynx habitat – are the most concentrated source of vitamin C available, but local communities have been unable to develop this market through lack of investment.

Cork forests – used by female lynxes to rear their young – not only absorb a significant proportion of Europe's greenhouse gases, they are also a critical barrier against desertification. Cork bark is a natural and effective insulation material, and could help reduce energy use and global warming yet further. Yet these forests continue to be cleared to make way for holiday home complexes, industrial estates and water sports facilities. The heavy promotion by stealth of plastic stoppers by big supermarket chains threatens to undermine the future of rural communities – and lynx habitats – once and for all.

The failure to save the lynx is a failure to recognise the importance for humans of these rich, complex and unique ecosystems. Political neglect has led to many people abandoning

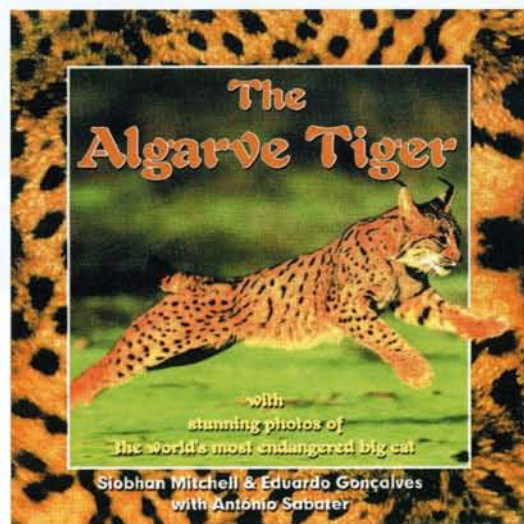
their homes and farms in search of work elsewhere, leading to widespread landscape degradation and the deterioration of habitats. If just a proportion of the billions of euros, dollars and pounds spent subsidising logging companies and building big dams were invested in local communities, both the lynx and rural areas could perhaps have a future.

The world stands on the brink of the first of perhaps many future extinction crises. Few may have thought it could happen so soon and so close to home, or that its causes could be so closely related to the models of 'progress' and development that we take for granted.

For the 'Algarve Tiger', time is fast running out. By the time David Beckham kicks off at the Euro 2004 Championship to be held in Portugal, it could be gone. The misty winter nights in the hills of the Iberian Peninsula will fall silent forever. The phantom of the forests will be a spirit and no more.

And the leaders of the developed world, who insist on conservation programmes to protect wildlife and habitats in other parts of the globe, will suddenly discover – they have scored the biggest own goal of all.

Eduardo Gonçalves is a Portuguese journalist and writes the 'Sick Century' column for The Ecologist. The Algarve Tiger, by Eduardo Gonçalves and Siobhan Mitchell with António Sabater, is published in English and Portuguese by Vista Iberica Publications, £10.95, ISBN: 9728044402 (tel: +351 282 340 660, email: vistaiberica@vistaiberica.com). Proceeds go to SOS LYNX, a non-profit conservation group working to save the Iberian lynx from extinction. For more information, visit www.soslynx.org or contact sos lynx@clix.pt.





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BETTER THE DEVIL YOU KNOW?

Zubeida Malik reports from Afghanistan on the new horror of ethnic cleansing in the wake of the Taliban's fall.

Suhail sits in the dust, surrounded by two of his six remaining children; he seems oblivious to the flies, the dirt, the hunger and misery of what remains of his family. Any hope and energy has been used up making it to the border with Pakistan. He's walked all the way, occasionally hitching a lift, from Mazar-e-Sharraf to Peshawar in Pakistan. Suhail's voice is emotionless as he describes how his wife and two daughters were kidnapped and raped by men fighting for local warlords, his sons were killed because they were men. Asked why this should happen to him, he says, 'because I am a Pathan'.

His is not an isolated story. Many other refugees I spoke to had chillingly similar tales to tell, of incidents that had happened to themselves or friends and family. Afghans are now making their way to the border with Pakistan at Peshawar and Quetta in their thousands. It's not just US bombing they are trying to escape, but the looting, killing and rape that has been unleashed upon them. The retreat of the Taliban has led to the return of the warlords and of ethnic rivalries.

Over 60 per cent of the population in Afghanistan is Pashtoon, known locally as Pathan, who by and large support the Taliban. The rest is Tajik, Uzbek and Shi'ite. The Northern Alliance is made up of these minority groups. The Soviet withdrawal and the onset of civil war in Afghanistan laid bare these ethnic divisions. The five-year rule of Kabul by the Northern Alliance saw robbery, murder and rape as an everyday occurrence, and ended once and for all any possibility of the Pashtoons accepting Northern Alliance rule ever again.

With the Northern Alliance in power once again, controlling most of the country, stories are beginning to filter out of Pashtoons being killed by warlords

and anti-Taliban forces. Refugees tell stories of men being rounded up and killed, women being taken away and raped, children being mutilated. The numbers may be small but in any other war this would be called ethnic cleansing.

Jamshaid, a refugee in Quetta, tells of how he saw soldiers in Herat kill a group of Pashtoon men, and then tell people that they were Taliban fighters. As he says, 'they were just ordinary men, yes they had guns, but everyone has guns here... by calling them Taliban it makes it easier for no one to ask why they were killed'. His friend Abdullah nods in

'Refugees tell stories of men being rounded up and killed, women being taken away and raped, children being mutilated.'

agreement. He talks of a similar incident when three men were killed in the bazaar for no apparent reason.

Many of the ordinary people I spoke to in Jalalabad said they were already tired of the fighters, they didn't pay for their food and lodgings, and roamed around the city harassing people. One shop-owner said he was frightened of asking the men for money because they would kill him. Another was telling me how he missed the law and order that the Taliban ensured. While he was talking to me a Northern Alliance soldier came up to him and started shouting and pushing the man for saying anything positive about the Taliban. The man quickly changed his story.

The 'soldiers' that we met were not disciplined in any way and were capricious in the way they enforced law and order, demanding money from

people and truck drivers at checkpoints.

As for the women, they were terrified of going out on their own for fear of being raped. Those that I met in Kabul still wore the Burqa. When asked how they felt about the Northern Alliance being in control of Kabul again, they were horrified and begged the West to send in the UN or an international peace keeping force... anything, they said, but Rabbani and the Northern Alliance. Noor, a doctor in a women's hospital told me, 'it isn't safe for women to go out now, the Taliban were strict but at least they didn't touch us'. I asked if she had heard of women being attacked, she nodded yes, but said it was 'shameful' to talk of these things.

Southern Afghanistan is now in anarchy, a patchwork of fiefdoms controlled by warlords. Elsewhere, armed gangs roam the land, backed by local warlords who in turn have the tacit support of the US. Mazar-e-Sharraf is under the control of the Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who has made his hatred of pashtoons clear.

Eastern Afghanistan is under the control of a 'shura' – or council. We heard stories from refugees from all these areas, all of them spoke of random killings, rape and mutilations.

No wonder neighbouring Pakistan is worried. It has a substantial Pashtoon population and over two million Afghan refugees. If these stories of ethnic cleansing spread then there is real concern that the conflict will widen.

And so the bombing raids go on. The hunt for Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden continues, but no one wants to talk about the ethnic cleansing that is gradually being unleashed in Afghanistan.

*Zubeida Malik is the reporter on Islamic issues for BBC Radio 4's **The Today Programme**. She was the first British broadcaster, and the only woman, to interview the Taliban during the war on terrorism.*



RED AND GREEN SHOULD NEVER BE SEEN

Rob Whitley wants Green politics to emphasise its distinctive identity.

Red and Green should never be seen' has long been a fashion designer's rule of thumb. For myself, as a Green Party activist and Parliamentary candidate, these words have also acquired profound political importance. They signify a danger that Green politics is too closely associated with the left – the authoritarian and 'politically correct' left especially – and this is inhibiting our development as a political party.

There are many reasons for this perceived Green/left axis. One is a failure of tone, an inability (as yet) to maintain a distinctive voice. Another is, perhaps, a form of political laziness or indiscipline. As a party, we have failed to apply our philosophy outside a few narrow areas. Instead, we have tended to poach from a longer-established radical tradition. This provides us with a ready supply of new activists who are prepared to work hard for the party. Since the accession of Blair, for instance, we have acquired more than a few Labour leftists, for whom the New Labour project provides a less than friendly environment.

Many of our activists, therefore, do come from the Far Left. For the most part, their rejection of capitalism has led them towards a wider critique of economic growth and the consumer society. This means that they oppose the materialist, growth-oriented aspects of socialism almost as much as they do the ravages of global capitalism. Some, however, still regard themselves as 'red-greens'. They believe that the Marxist conflict of classes can converge with political ecology, or that unsustainable economics stem from private ownership of production, instead of a human-centred ethos that transcends property or 'class'. This approach dilutes Green politics, which is not about conflict between human beings but about reconciling humanity with 'the rest' of nature. Furthermore, there is a tendency amongst red-greens to favour authoritarian, centralising policies which enlarge the role of the state,

despite the failure of state socialism to address, still less resolve, ecological problems. They can also reduce individuals to stereotypes, derived from 'gender' or 'race' as well as class, whose lives can be transformed by one-size-fits-all solutions, whether they want these or not.

Green politics in Britain has nonetheless acquired a new confidence. As in continental Europe and North America, some distinctive Green or ecological ideas are now recognised well beyond environmental ideology. As well as 'straight' party politics, they encompass areas such as education, housing, spirituality and religion, and even defence. Many who did not previously think of themselves as 'Green' have seen the relevance of ecology to their lives. Capitalism and state socialism, the great 20th-century ideologies, have failed humanity and the planet and appear morally bankrupt. Despite an adverse electoral system for Westminster, the Green Party held 10 deposits in the 2001 election, doubling its percentage of the vote from 1997. Where some form of proportional representation exists, as in Scotland, Greater London and the European Parliament, the Green presence is felt. Our elected members offer alternatives to the prevailing growth mania and are increasingly respected for so doing. They are quietly living out the old ecological motto: 'Think global, act local'.

That is the 'good' news. But the gains are relatively small and patchy, even when the odds stacked against a party-political 'alternative' are taken into account. Sometimes, it seems that as a population we are as reluctant to change our voting patterns as we are to reduce our consumption of the Earth's resources. We vote for the 'grey' parties for much the same reason that we continue to use the car when we could walk: because we have 'always' done so. Certainly, this interpretation has elements of truth, and it gives comfort to 'deep' Greens, some of

whom veer dangerously close to misanthropy. Yet it is not enough to blame public apathy, and nor should we wish to do so, for a democratic party should work with 'the people' as they are, not as some of us might wish them to be. Even the concept of 'the people' is somewhat suspect. Society is made up of individuals – and local communities – with complex, varying needs that cannot be answered with simplistic slogans or the group-think that has been all too characteristic of the left.

This year, the true electoral victor was the party of apathy. Amongst 18–30-year-olds, for instance, fewer voted in the General Election than in the poll for *Big Brother*, the 'reality' TV show. But many young people are 'natural' Green supporters. They are concerned about the environment and critical of shallow materialism. They are fed up with cynical politicians, embrace cultural diversity and reject the rigid ideologies of Left and Right. But they will not vote Green if the party appears to berate them for being politically incorrect. Likewise, many potential Greens are genuine liberals, or 'small-c' conservatives who value the link between conservatism and conservation and so despair of modern Tories. But they will never vote for the Green party if they perceive it as left wing.

As a movement, the Greens are at once radical and conservative. We have some radical policies, such as Basic Income For All and the legalisation of cannabis. Equally, we have a 'conservative' belief in cultural variety, local identities, tradition and continuity. We are for co-operatives and craftsmanship, but against totalitarianism, be it socialist or right wing. Rather than trapping ourselves in a left-wing ghetto, as we tend to do, we should revive the original spirit of the German Greens: 'Neither Left Nor Right – But In Front.'

Rob Whitley is a Green Party activist and is president of the Federation of Young European Greens.



GREEN AND RED ARE BETTER OFF WED

Ecology and socialism can, and should, work together, argues **Mark Seddon**.

So what have the Reds and Greens got in common? There is no easy answer, and a great deal may hinge on what variety of 'Red' or 'Green' we happen to be, because I believe that there is frequently a meeting of minds between ecologists and socialists.

What have 'New' Labour and the Green Party in common? The answer is – not a lot. Michael Meacher might be an environmentally-friendly minister, but as far as the Green agenda is concerned, he is surrounded by philistines. Having ditched the socialist Clause Four of the Labour constitution – 'To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their labour' – Tony Blair's New Labour pays only lip service to what might be described as the 'producer interests' of the union movement. New Labour has hitched a ride with 'turbo-capitalism', and in many respects the fundamentals of economic policy remain as the Thatcherites left them.

So if market fundamentalism has captured the Labour Party (albeit temporarily), what of the Greens? New Labour sees itself as all-embracing, yet there is still another, better Labour Party out there biding its time. But the Green Party? Shouldn't we ask *which* Green Party? If Labour is ideologically at sea, what side do most Greens come down on? Do a majority subscribe to a 'no economic growth' fundamentalism, or do a majority believe – as do many of us on the Left – in sustainable growth?

This is a question being asked with some urgency in Germany, where for the past few years the Greens have shared power with the ruling Social Democrats – a Red-Green Alliance which has been showing its strains most notably over German military involvement in the former Yugoslavia.

But it is also a question that needs to be asked here, where historically the Greens have been a weak electoral force, but who now face the new opportunities afforded by proportional representation

(PR). PR is also an opportunity for the disillusioned Left. On matters ecological, Labour's historic record has been mixed. In government it paved the way for Britain's National Parks, yet it has failed to move against hunting with dogs. It has played a leading role in promoting the Kyoto accords while at the same time acquiescing to the agenda of the road-building lobby. Labour's much vaunted – and sensibly Green – integrated transport policy is now gridlocked. So it is hardly surprising that many Greens are deeply disappointed at the lack of progress.

'Old' Labour was very much married to the trade union movement – and by necessity the agenda of safeguarding and improving the jobs and conditions of workers. Many of these jobs were in heavily polluting industries such as steel and coal. Today, Britain's Indian restaurants employ more people than coal, steel and shipbuilding combined. But to this day, trade unions will often put jobs before environmental considerations. Witness the continuing support for the nuclear industry, or union backing for Heathrow's Terminal 5 building. 'State socialism', which favoured central planning, also took a dim view of the environmental agenda, but despite its post-war dominance, this statist approach cuts little ice with today's libertarian Left.

I count myself as a democratic socialist. I believe in the redistribution of power and wealth, but I don't believe that a centralised state is the answer. For this reason, I identify with those organisations and practices that favour local democracy and accountability. I suspect that many Greens would subscribe to this view.

To this end, new forms of social and co-operative ownership have to be championed, as a counterweight to global capitalism and the increasing homogenisation of society and culture. In the same way that farmers' markets have cut out the middlemen and stuck

two fingers up at the supermarkets, older ideas of co-operation must be championed. Reds and Greens have a common interest in taking on the corporate agenda – which is the effective privatisation of everything.

From Seattle onwards, I have been impressed at the way in which the Left and the environmental movement have worked together. But I am under no illusions. Outside of our shared hostility to globalisation, there has been little joint thinking about how we might organise for a sustainable future. I suspect that co-operation will grow, because it is fast becoming apparent that globalisation is beginning to threaten life on the planet. If the corporations know no boundaries, neither does their pollution. Resource wars may become more common in this century, there is little sense of real urgency as the forests burn and the oceans die. So beyond the more localised agenda of sustainable development, there must be a global view, one which starts with the premise that too many of the global institutions are unaccountable and variously in hock to the interests of the transnationals.

This requires an ideological input from the Greens. The Left does at least have an ideological base from which to work. I am not sure that the same may be said of the Green Party. And until Greens can persuade voters that they are not anti *all* growth, the movement is unlikely to break out from its core support.

Reds and Greens have more in common than many would suppose. We are co-operating in the anti-war movement and we share many similar political and social aspirations. Any return to 'armed' camps not only reeks of the worst sectarianism to which factions of the Left frequently fall victim, but means that forces far more powerful than individual governments can continue to get away with – literally – murder.

Mark Seddon is editor of Tribune magazine.



THE MAKING OF FUNDAMENTALISTS

Business Studies, says **Jeremy Seabrook**, may be the ruination of conservative cultures.

You see them everywhere on the streets of the big cities, Dhaka, Jakarta, Cairo, the boys with their qualifications, a Masters in Personnel, a Diploma in Management, a Degree in Marketing. You meet them on the battered buses, in the dusty parks, in the flyblown eating-houses, clutching copies of their 'biodata' in plastic folders, falling apart where the documents have been folded so many times. They are on their way from house to house, giving tuitions to the children of the middle class; representatives of the pinched under-employment of a generation raised on the promise that if only they study business, they will be sure of a managerial job, big money, a security greater even than that guaranteed by government service.

Business culture has seized the imagination of the young all over the world. It has brought new hope to a generation whose educational aspirations have been transformed by its revelations of wealth-creation. They carry textbooks, published in the US, in an impenetrable English, pages of which they learn by rote. A learning as remote from their experience as the study of Tudor History was in the colonial era. Many are from poor families, from small towns and distant villages, who have sold precious land or gone into bottomless debt for the sake of the better life this will provide for their children. For them, to study in the capital enhances prestige – distance from the home, it seems, adds value, no matter how academically thin the object of study, no matter how shaky the institution in which it takes place.

It is already clear that most of these young men will not find the place they covet in the global economy. They are dupes of the latest fad to reach the Third World, a reach-me-down form of study formulated in the West, and now a major export commodity, of only

marginal value to the countries whose young have taken it up with such zeal. Global business culture is calculated to pacify yet another generation of impatient young people. Bangladesh, Indonesia, India are full of unemployed graduates. They prowl the streets of the capital, hungry, predatory, angry, their trousers frayed, fake logos on their dusty trainers, haunted by a social injustice which the dogmas of their teachings require them to interpret as personal failure.

One consequence of all this has been a profound disturbance to their sense of self, an injury to their identity. Some deal with this by a determination to leave the country of their birth, to find a job, any job, as long as it is far from personal witnesses to their humiliation – a driver in Riyadh, a security guard in Singapore, a cook in Abu Dhabi.

But other able young men have been readily enlisted by criminal gangs, often attached to political parties. Extortion, blackmail, protection money are part and parcel of the daily life of the slums. When the Bangladesh National Party won the elections in October, the first big changeover of personnel was not in the ministries, but among the 'mastaans', or gangs, running the river ghats, railway terminals and bus stands.

Gang warfare sometimes leads to business opportunities for former students in the lengthening shadow-world cast by the market economy. Killings are to be made, it turns out, often literally: bodies are found on garbage dumps from kidnappings that go wrong, contracts for the murder of territorial rivals, or disputants over the right to a consignment of smuggled goods.

But there is an alternative for those disgusted by a world which has rejected their attempts at self-improvement. The politicising of religion offers another kind of self-expression. The money that has poured

in from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States in the past two decades has led to the construction of thousands of madrasas (Islamic schools) and mosques, and the setting up of Islamic charities, many of which are informed by fundamentalist ideology.

The zeal and passion of those who see in the emanation of Western culture – its vision of glamour, sex and self-indulgence – symbols of decadence, lead many young men to the austere purification rituals of a backward-looking version of Islam. The 'purely' economic prescriptions of the IMF, World Bank and WTO have repercussions far beyond the merely economic sphere: they profoundly affect social relationships, culture, religion – no area of life remains untouched. Many people see in these a fundamental assault on the sensibility and tradition of the people; a form, indeed, of the very fundamentalism which they call forth in response, and which is met with astonished incomprehension in the West.

In this way, the mendacity and illusion of an ideology of business promoted by the West, serves as a recruiting-agent for a vengeful fundamentalism, for versions of religion and faith unrecognisable to tradition and piety alike. The purveyors of the elegant doctrines of self-enrichment dissociate themselves from the consequences of their role in the cycle of hope, disappointment and anger which, in the vacuum left by the extinction of socialism and the decay of secular cultural ideologies, has found only in the disciplined asperities of a regressive version of Islam a hopeful, and sometimes murderous alternative.

*Jeremy Seabrook's book **Freedom Unfinished, Fundamentalism and Popular Resistance in Bangladesh Today**, is published by ZED Books.*



POLISH PEASANTS AND BRUSSELS BUREAUCRATS

Small farms that have survived the centralised communist state are now under threat from the EU and the WTO, warns **Julian Rose**.

Anyone who has visited Poland will have been struck by the thousands of little strips of land that criss-cross the countryside. They might also have noticed the occasional prairie-like expanse, without a tree to be seen. The contrast is explained by history. Peasant farmers have traditionally owned their land in Poland and mostly continue to do so, dominating the landscape with patchwork farms. However, invaders of the last century and, since 1989, predatory transnational corporations have ensured that some of the best land has fallen into foreign hands. Asset stripping and monocultures have followed. Notably, the Communists failed to 'factory farm' much of Poland in the manner achieved in other Eastern Bloc countries such as Hungary and the then Czechoslovakia. On the land, the Poles survived the worst of nationalisation and came through with much of their traditional lifestyle intact.

The peasants form the majority of Poland's 2.5 million farmers. Around 1.6 million have small farms averaging just 5–7 hectares. These farms are typically mixed and self-sufficient, with only very small surpluses left over to sell. In my travels around Poland, I have visited many of these holdings. They typically sport three or four cows, a boar and four to five sows, laying hens and one or two workhorses. All animal feed is grown on the farm. The farmhouse is adequate in size and comfort and has, more often than not, been built by the farmer, his family and neighbours. Hot water, TV and a car are the norm. These people know how to survive. They waste nothing, turning a skilful hand to food preparation and traditional curing and preserving of meats and fruit. Most cannot afford pesticides, so they don't use them. This means that vast tracts of Poland are organic by default. Their dependence on fossil fuels is minimal, small tractors and horses still work the ground and hand labour is not thought of as demeaning. Farming and forestry

form the main employment in many rural areas of Poland, especially those well distanced from large conurbations.

All this however is on the brink of change. Poland is under attack from three directions: the EU, the WTO and the transnational corporate invader. These three share one thing in common. They all believe that Poland is a country in need of 'developing' and 'modernising' to conform to standards enjoyed by US and Western European societies. It is a familiar story. Thinly disguised neo-colonialist ambitions move in under the pretext of bringing much needed investment; but in reality, establishing profitable outposts for self-serving corporate interests.

The scars are already visible. A high percentage of Poland's manufacturing assets, including food processing plants, have been sold off to US and European companies keen to exploit a cheap and hardworking labour force with relatively good transport links between Western and Eastern Europe. Great 'malls of convenience' have started to sprout ignominiously, superseding small shops and open markets. The dominant supermarket chains are increasingly evident in most large towns, and in hideously-conceived out-of-town sites, surrounded by the standard package of international, no-holds-barred shopping precincts. The largest single Coca-Cola advertisement in the world fills the side of a 40-storey Warsaw office block.

Essentially the argument goes like this: Poland is in line to be one of the first of the new accession countries to join the EU, possibly in 2003. The EU takes the view that drastic restructuring will be essential if Polish farming and the rural economy are to come into line with Western European standards and incomes. Reaching this target, it has been calculated, will involve stripping about 1.2 million farmers of their land to create larger, more 'viable' units and fewer people expecting an income from them. Under current CAP 'first pillar'

support programmes available to all EU farmers, production subsidies are designed to help underpin economic returns and support production of commodities favoured by Brussels. If Poland were to enter the EU, and gain the same economic benefits, she would have to conform to the same regulations and standards as the rest of us.

The majority of Poles are unable to grasp the significance of what joining the EU will actually mean. Their politicians are seemingly intent on entry. They believe it will help bale Poland out of an awkward financial downturn and give prosperity to the middle classes. Perhaps it will, although this is a dubious and distinctly risky gamble. Once a nation has lost control of its agriculture and primary industries, then it will also ultimately lose the confidence and support of its people.

If the Polish countryside is to face its future with a bold and creative spirit, it needs to do so now. Poland has the potential to become Europe's leading organic food producer, renewable energy generator and eco-tourist attraction. It is uniquely placed to act as a bridge between East and West and to offer a realisable model of sustainability, self-sufficiency and food security to Third World nations. It stands halfway between an 'overdeveloped' West and an 'underdeveloped' East. Its peasant farmers can serve as an example of how we can 'live within our means', not as an outdated concept of hand to mouth survival, but as a sensible and diverse way of keeping the countryside populated with skilled workers whose ability to maintain the diversity of the landscape will always be vastly superior to anything that tries to replace them.

We should not ask the Poles to follow us. Rather, we should turn our heads to the East and consider following them.

Sir Julian Rose is co-director of the International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside.

ANTHRAX: SPRAYING ON OUR FEAR

THE DISPROPORTIONATE SCALE OF THE PANIC OVER THE HANDFUL OF RECENT ANTHRAX VICTIMS RISKS SETTING OFF A NEW WAVE OF ANTI-MICROBIAL PARANOIA, AND FURTHER DISTANCING US FROM BOTH THE NATURAL WORLD AND THE RURAL POOR OF COUNTRIES SUCH AS INDIA, WRITES **TOM WAKEFORD**.



initiated, his 'pasteurisation' process for cleansing milk of TB bacteria continues to this day, even though we would get better nutrition without it.

An intensely political animal, Pasteur once stood as a candidate for the French Senate. In his characterisation of bacteria, he adopted terminology that could not fail to endear his ideas to his fellow aristocrats. He shared their terror of the mob – that mass of faceless peasantry, whom he charged with murdering his king during the previous century's revolution and instigating the Terror. Humanity was, he told senators, under threat from bacteria – unpleasant and quick-to-grow, yet invisible. Citizens could only be safe if bugs were cleaned off and kept at bay – confined as the decomposers of

Anthrax is one of a number of diseases that has infected susceptible humans ever since we started keeping cattle. Likewise, a cure was developed in the nineteenth-century by the French medical researcher Louis Pasteur, whose genius also led to vaccines for other microbially-transmitted diseases such as tuberculosis (TB), cholera and the plague.

However, he was also a propagandist whose rhetoric lies behind the wave of anti-microbial paranoia that swept the global media in the wake of the of 11 September. In fact, Pasteur single-handedly spawned the anti-bacterial age in which we now live. During the 20th-century, this fear of anything in nature over which we cannot have complete scientific control became a deep social malaise which now threatens us all far more than terrorists or their biological weapons. Our ever-increasing cult of cleanliness prevents us seeing our microbial associates as anything other than invisible assassins. Yet biologists have converged upon a general law of nature over recent years to which anthrax and other biological warfare agents are the rare, terrorist-enhanced, exceptions: Be it in immunology, pollution clean-ups or probiotic foods, bugs are more our friends than our foes.

Pasteur present

Pasteur's anthrax vaccine was developed in 1881 to protect French sheep farmers who, like the poorest Indian farmers today (see box), had a poor diet and were in daily contact with infected cattle. Though some of his first and most notable achievements were to improve management of the highly productive bugs that were the active ingredient of the sugar distilling and wine industries, Pasteur is most famous for renaming bacteria 'germs'. Because of the hygiene fetish he

dead bodies, destroying order only after all life in it had naturally gone. Pasteur's legacy as a scientific genius, and would-be microbe-killer, has cast a shadow over public health in the 20th-century. Now a handful of prominent deaths in the US risks creating new generations in fear of life itself.

Enemies within

Epidemics of disease afflicted those successive waves of European immigrants who, often malnourished, arrived in the US, first from Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia – in the 19th-century, then Italy, Eastern Europe and elsewhere continuing well into the 20th-century. Little surprise then, that among the most enthusiastic followers of Pasteur's germ theory of disease were doctors in the cities of the US East Coast.

In the 1920s and '30s this enthusiasm reached fever pitch. At the same time as Stalin was purging his country of potential intellectual 'enemies within', America suffered a collective wave of anti-bacterial hysteria, fed by the newspapers and books of the day. Most famous of these was *The Microbe Hunters* by Paul de Kruif, published in 1926. He described bacteria as 'invisible assassins' who, like the Chicago gangsters of the time, should be shot 'with magic bullets'. Perhaps this is why the anthrax panic took hold so powerfully in the US during the autumn, and why it has proved such a tempting target for hoaxers.

De Kruif's book is a brilliant crime novel, in which scientists are cast as the defenders of private property, while bacteria play the part of thieves and murderers. He concluded that these germs were 'more efficient murderers than the guillotine or the cannon of Waterloo'. His book has remained in print in

the US virtually ever since and influenced successive generations. But research over the past few years has shown de Kruijff's account as being a gross misrepresentation of biological reality as disease-causing bugs make up only a tiny fraction of the total diversity of microbes.

A randomly-chosen bacterium is far more likely to be digesting your domestic sewage or supplying oxygen for you to breathe than it is to be making you ill. The vast majority of bacteria live harmlessly and unobtrusively on the surface of our seas and in our gardens, quietly undertaking biological processes crucial to every ecosystem. Many species are essential to the production of, and our gut's digestion of, almost all of the kinds of food that we eat, the recycling of our wastes, and the fertility of our soils. Metaphors that cast all bacteria as germs have obscured our biological understanding for too long.

Many older Britons remember a phrase from their childhood: 'You've got to eat a peck o' dirt before you die.' Its perhaps unintended message – that germs had a positive as well as negative side – was long discounted by medical science. But this is one old saying that turns out to have been right. Its dismissal was a product of 20th-century science's tendency to develop technologies that allowed us to kill microbes rather than understand our complex relationship with them.

Our choice of a largely sterile lifestyle has given rise to an epidemic of immune-related diseases now sweeping the western world. Asthma was a rare disease 30 years ago, yet its symptoms now affect around a quarter of the populations of Britain and Australia. In the US, asthma claims the lives of as many people every year as were killed in the 11 September attacks. Similar trends are being reported in rates of other allergic conditions such as hay fever and eczema. Irun Cohen, an immunologist at the Weizmann Institute in Israel, has carried out research suggesting that our hygiene fetish could even be pushing up the incidence of more serious autoimmune diseases such as early-onset diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis. Her explanation lies in what has been called the 'hygiene hypothesis'.

Hygiene hypothesis

During most of our evolution by Darwinian natural selection our immune system has been bombarded with microbes from the very moment we are born. Our mammalian immune system has learned not only to live alongside our resident bugs, but also rely on them to maintain our sophisticated network of chemical

pathways and specialised immune cells. According to the hygiene hypothesis, it is when this microbial stimulation is removed that things start to go wrong.

According to Graham Rook, an immunologist at University College London, myxobacteria may be what save the muckier among us from asthma, hay fever and other allergies. Myxobacteria are a group of bacteria

SACRED HERD, UNSEEN PEOPLE SAGARI R RAMDAS REPORTS ON INDIA'S FORGOTTEN ANTHRAX VICTIMS.

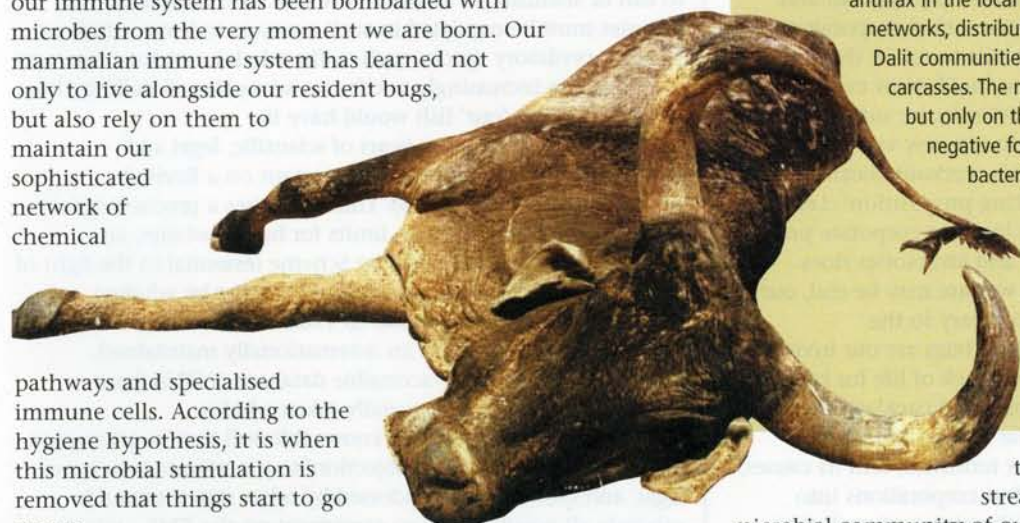
Anthrax has been endemic in parts of rural India for centuries. The people at highest risk are the poorest Dalit (untouchable caste) communities whose means of livelihood is the removal and processing of dead carcasses and who are therefore in particular danger if the carcass comes from an animal that has died of anthrax. From the moment an animal dies in a village, the members of this Dalit community are informed. They come to the cattle shed and physically remove the carcass and process it. Cutting it open, and removing the skin and bones have traditionally been their work. They cannot afford gloves, masks or other equipment to protect themselves, so are in danger of inhaling huge numbers of anthrax spores. Yet if they contract anthrax, they will die without anyone knowing which disease it was that killed them. Their untouchable status makes them invisible.

For centuries, successive governments, the ruling classes and the majority of the scientific establishment in India have remained completely indifferent to the regular threat to these Dalit communities, and other livestock-owning farmers. This is because these Dalit communities, along with indigenous peoples (known as adivasis) are at the bottom of the caste system and utterly powerless. Every year at the end of a prolonged drought or the onset of cyclones or floods, the rate of anthrax rises in the affected areas of the Indian state within most of our NGO's work lies – Andhra Pradesh. Given that Andhra is chronically prone to cycles of cyclones and drought, anthrax is worse here than in many other of India's states.

During the autumn of 2001, the Indian media elite, like those all over the industrialised world, suddenly became scared of becoming targets of these bacteria. During November, there have been numerous reports of anthrax bacterial spores mixed in white powder form and being sent to different targeted persons in letters. Even though they had never lifted a finger to help the Dalit communities at risk from the disease, nor even informed them of the symptoms, the English-language dailies were now full of discussion of the topic, because it was seen to now affect the urban middle class. None of this prosperous fifth of India's population contracted a single case of anthrax, yet hundreds of lives of Dalits could be saved every year if they knew how to recognise if an animal has died of the disease, and so not cut it open.

For over 10 years now, organisations such as Anthra have been using all manner of ways to inform these marginalised groups. This year too, soon after a cyclone hit Andhra Pradesh in October, after a prolonged period of drought, we immediately printed thousands of handbills on anthrax in the local language – Telegu – and through our networks, distributed it to inform the farmers, especially the Dalit communities who would be handling the dead carcasses. The mainstream media did not focus on this, but only on these handful of letters (all of which tested negative for anthrax), which were feared to contain bacterial spores.

Sagari R Ramdas is one of India's leading vets working with Dalits and indigenous peoples. She is director of the rural empowerment NGO, Anthra (email: anthra@hd2.dot.net.in), based in Hyderabad.



that live in soil, pond water and streams, but are not part of the normal microbial community of our gut. Instead they interact with the immune system in our air and food passages. Whereas in the past, as today in developing countries, healthy drinking water contained up to 1 billion myxobacteria per litre, in the water of the chlorinated industrialised nations numbers are

negligible. Exposure to myxobacteria early in life train an infant's immune cells so that it is able to both fight off infections in later life and be less prone to inappropriate allergic reactions to pollen and housedust mites.

Whereas our children used to play in fields, ponds, and streams, now they are kept in the microbially-depleted environment of a car or an indoor climbing frame. The urban populations of rich industrialised nations hardly come across any myxobacteria during childhood. Women have long understood the benefits of using live yoghurt cultures to discourage the fungus that causes vaginal thrush. It is a case of one microbe being used to reinstate an ecological balance within a microbial community. Yet in most of our daily lives, we may well have inadvertently shielded our immune system from the essential learning process that it needs. As Rook points out, city people don't have gardens – either in the back yards where they live or in their guts.

The guts of a three-day-old baby born into the slums of Lahore, Pakistan, are chock full of bacteria of all types, whereas a baby born in a city in Sweden may have no bacteria at all, even after one week. Immunologist Agnes Wold, at Gothenberg University in Sweden, who made these observations, thinks it is the Swedish baby who is, at least in this aspect of its health, deprived. The paucity of gut bugs not only exposes the growing child to asthma, but, Wold suggests, also to food allergies and other immune-related diseases that are currently skyrocketing in industrialised countries.

Meanwhile, TV adverts bombard us with promises of ever more powerful 'anti-bacterial' additives to our lives. The presence of such chemicals in our washing-up liquids, kitchen utensils and even our underwear is meant to make us feel safe. Yet the vast majority of bacteria in our households are benign. When corporations add low-level antibiotics to our everyday products they merely increase the vulnerability of our bodies and hospitals to larger outbreaks of the real killer bugs, such as TB. TB rates are on the increase, especially among the poor. Detergent manufacturers spend vast sums of money inducing fear of these superbugs, yet such bacteria are becoming harder to kill partly because of the antibiotic-laced household products manufactured by these same companies.

When, in the 1970s, the distinguished US physician and essayist Lewis Thomas accused pharmaceutical corporations of maintaining our fear of contact with dirt to retain their market share, he might have seemed a bit paranoid. Now even mainstream magazines such as *New Scientist* are suggesting that such companies are encouraging us to use new ways of avoiding giving our immune systems a workout because, says the magazine, 'it is not a moneymaking proposition'. Letting your kids play in the garden doesn't increase corporate profits, whereas buying disinfectant, bleach and antibiotics does.

While the dangers from biological warfare may be real, our continuing anti-bacterial crusade is contrary to the fundamentals of our own biology. These bugs are our invisible equals and have been a basic building block of life for billions of years and the human cost of the bacterial backlash resulting from this pointless assault could be far worse than from terrorist attacks. In our drive to defeat terrorism, and its causes, we should not be frightened by ruthless corporations into fighting an un-winnable war against the atoms of evolution.

Tom Wakeford is a biologist at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. His book on microbes, humans and evolution, *Liaisons of Life*, has just been published by John Wiley.

TO WHALE OR NOT TO WHALE 2



IN RESPONSE TO
LAST ISSUE'S FOCUS,
MARINE BIOLOGIST
SIDNEY HOLT
PROBES ICELAND'S
MOTIVES FOR
REJOINING THE IWC.

Although an Icelander, Sigrún Davíðsdóttir (*To Whale or Not to Whale*, Vol 31/10) is sadly misinformed about the activities and the situation of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). This is not surprising, considering the spin regularly expressed in the reports of the Icelandic observers back to their government. This spin included, in 2001, incorrect information about the Commission's response to Iceland's attempt to rejoin IWC conditionally, and a slanted account of the politics of the search for agreement on the conditions for eventually modifying the present moratorium on all commercial whaling.

No government seeks to deny Iceland's right to conduct commercial whaling. What is at issue is the requirement that this be done within the provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to which Iceland is party, and those of the IWC itself, which Iceland aspires to rejoin. Under the UNCLOS no country has an unconditional right to exploit whales, even within its own 200-mile wide Exclusive Economic Zone. All whales are classed as 'Highly Migratory Species', the exploitation and conservation of which is regulated by the appropriate inter-governmental organisation, in this case the IWC. Being classed also as 'marine mammals' it is entirely legitimate for the responsible inter-governmental organisation to enact conservation measures more strict than would pertain to fish or shellfish. In addition, the UNCLOS mandates that fisheries must be regulated in such a way as to leave sufficient food for predatory species such as the whales, not the other way round, as the increasingly vociferous advocates of 'culling' them because they eat 'our' fish would have it.

The IWC is, after many years of scientific, legal and diplomatic labour, close to an agreement on a Revised Management Scheme (RMS). This comprises a precise formula for calculating annual catch limits for baleen whales, an effective International Observer Scheme (essential in the light of so many documented revelations of cheating by whaling nations before the declaration in 1982 of a moratorium on all commercial whaling) and an internationally maintained, supervised and publicly-accessible database of DNA from samples of the meat from legally-taken whales.

The Icelandic government knows full well that its attempt to re-enter the IWC with an 'objection' to the moratorium is not legal, and that if it were endorsed by other states it would preclude all possibility of an agreement on the RMS – which, while maintaining the default quota at zero, would probably reopen some whaling under strict controls – and indeed of any past or future binding decisions. Perhaps that is what the present government seeks – essentially the marginalisation of

the IWC or even its collapse. The present impediments to completion and formal adoption of an RMS are not the intransigence of the non-whaling nations but rather the reluctance of the two remaining whaling countries to accept constraints which would remove their present freedom to do exactly as they please. For example, Norway is already killing twice as many minke whales as would be allowed under the IWC's agreed formula for calculating catch quotas, and is actively preparing to increase its catches still further as soon as it succeeds in getting the current ban on international trade in whale meat lifted.

The 'objection' procedure under the IWC Convention was very carefully crafted, in 1946, to prevent misuse by parties which may seek to gain unfair advantage to their own interests at the expense of others, and especially to ensure equity among the parties. Iceland's recent move flouts that basic intent.

In 1982, Icelandic public and political opinion accepted the moratorium decision, and the government did not object to it when it had the opportunity to do so. Subsequently, the pro-whaling party gained the upper hand, and in 1986, when the moratorium was about to come into force, the Government reneged on its earlier decision and began the well-known avoidance of the intent of the 1946 Convention by allowing Hvalur hf to continue catching large whales, for profit from exports, as 'scientific samples'. (Interestingly, the Government extended no such benefit to the small-type whalers who had been hunting minke whales). This only ceased when a boycott of Icelandic fish by European and North American consumers and fish-traders brought Iceland's very important – and, incidentally, well-managed – fishing industry to the edge of economic disaster. Subsequently the Icelandic authorities tried to argue that the moratorium decision lapsed by default in 1991, which it clearly did not (being subject merely to a requirement for 'review'). On that occasion the legal advisers to the government were, unfortunately for the dignity of Iceland as a normally responsible nation, made to look ridiculous, incompetent or both. Iceland initially participated in the effort of the IWC to develop a safe management procedure, at least at the scientific level, but withdrew when it became evident that the leaky procedure it was pushing would not be acceptable to the IWC's Scientific Committee.

If Iceland seriously wants to undertake managed whaling then surely it should rejoin the IWC unconditionally. There it could work with other nations (including the six – Brazil, Spain, Chile, South Korea, USSR and Peru – that halted their whaling after 1982, and who would be disadvantaged by any acceptance of Iceland's self-invented objection process) towards a conservative regime that does not entirely exclude the possibility of legitimising some resumption of commercial whaling. Such a regime should meet international norms of science, reasonable precaution, monitoring and control, and of measures to ensure full compliance. It should also provide that countries deciding to profit from commercial exploitation of a global resource pay the costs of implementing such a regime.

As commercial whale watching in Iceland – mostly sustained by overseas visitors – is now a growing and sustainable use of whale resources, that value will evidently need to be taken into account if and when Iceland decides to resume commercial whaling – whether or not under IWC auspices and control.

Sidney Holt, a world authority in fisheries management, whales and whaling since the 1940s, was responsible for UN activity on whaling from 1960–1997 as a member of the IWC Scientific Committee. He continues to advise international bodies on ocean conservation issues.

MAKING A MESS OF MOX

DESPITE IRELAND'S OBJECTIONS, SELLAFIELD'S MOX PLANT IS NOW IN OPERATION. **PETER BUNYARD** EXPLAINS THE BACKGROUND, AND PROVIDES AN ANALYSIS OF WHAT MOX IS ALL ABOUT.

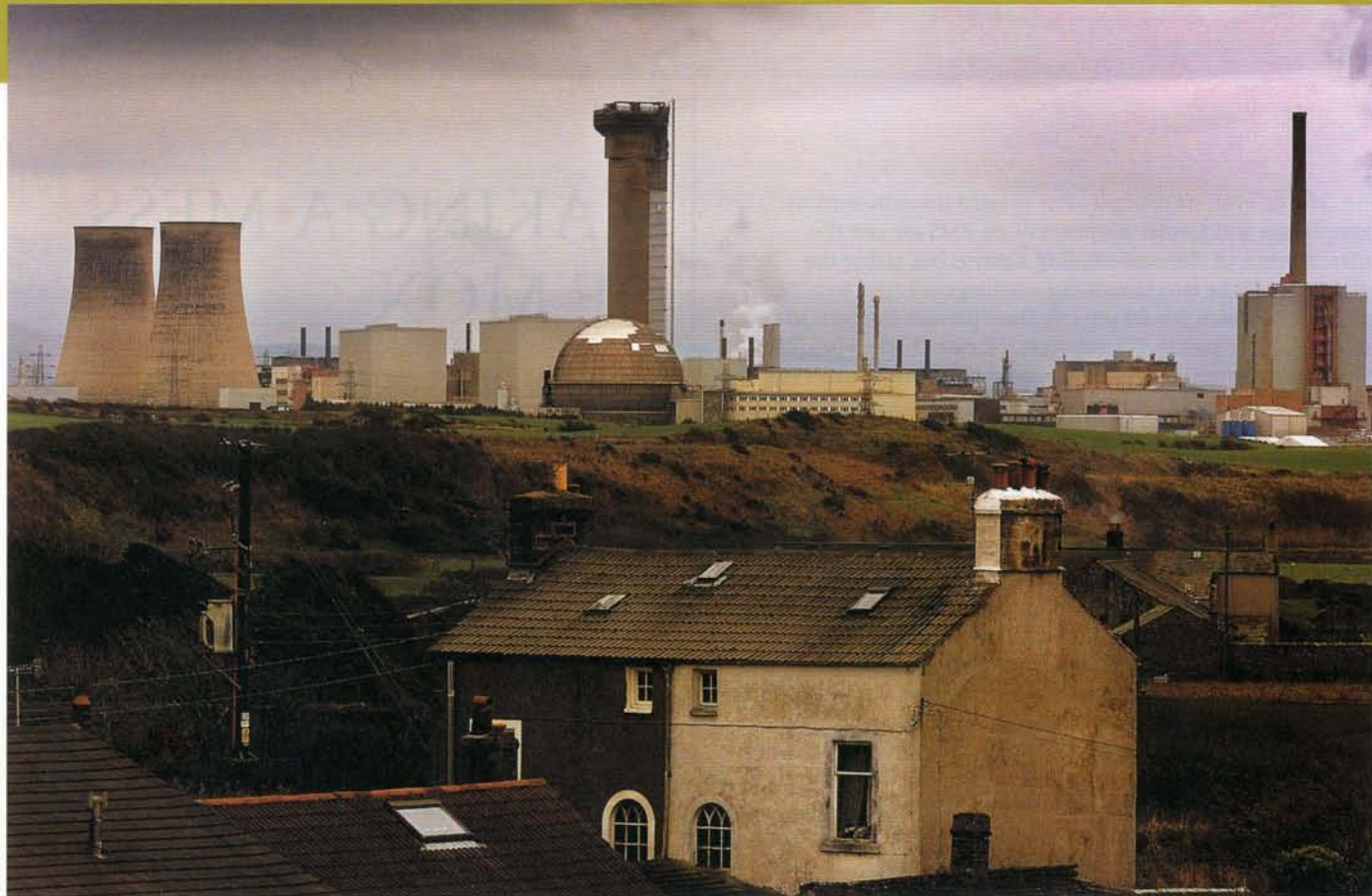
If ever there was folly it must be in the UK government's 13 October decision to grant British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL) a licence to operate its new, wildly unprofitable MOX plant at Sellafield. That decision, following hard on the heels of 11 September and worldwide concerns that terrorist organisations such as Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda may have already procured fissile material for nuclear weapons, flies in the face of what we now know about nuclear power – that its operation is uneconomic, devastatingly dangerous, and the cause of widespread death and disease. Irrespective of all such concerns, on 20 December the Government compounded that folly by allowing BNFL to start up its Sellafield MOX plant.

The UK has most of its nuclear installations along its western shores, including reactors, uranium enrichment, fuel fabrication and, not least, reprocessing and waste storage at Sellafield. For years, Ireland has put up with Britain having turned the Irish Sea into one of the most radioactively polluted seas in the world. For years too, people living in Ireland's County Louth have been bringing in fish contaminated with radioactive waste from Sellafield. More worrying, communities along the same coast have suffered a higher than normal share of genetic problems, including trisomy 21 – Down's Syndrome.

The Irish government has finally had enough; in its opinion, BNFL's appalling record of mishaps and accidents, as well as authorised and accidental discharges from Sellafield, gives it no option but to try to prevent BNFL starting up its £473 million mixed oxide fuel manufacturing plant. Joe Jacob, Irish Minister of State for Public Enterprise, with responsibility for nuclear safety, states that the MOX plant will not only contribute to further pollution of an already polluted sea, but will lead to increased risk of sabotage and terrorism as a result of shipments of plutonium-enriched fuel being transported down the length of the Irish Sea.

In its first attempt to serve an injunction on Britain, the Irish government clearly failed. The 21-judge International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea declared on 4 December that Britain could proceed with its plans to begin fuel production. But, to give time for full discussion between the parties, the judges were reassured that Britain was not contemplating any marine shipments of MOX fuel before the summer of 2002. The tribunal called for the setting up of an arbitration tribunal under the Law of the Sea Convention to examine the issues in more detail.

Britain had tried to convince the court that the case was outside its jurisdiction, however, the court ruled that Ireland had a right to consult on the impact of the new MOX plant. Ireland, meanwhile, is continuing its international efforts to prevent the MOX plant start-up, with Jacobs talking of taking the case to the European Court of Justice, as well as to the



✦ OSPAR convention on maritime issues in the northwest Atlantic.

Norway, concerned in recent years over radioactive pollution of its shores from Sellafield discharges, in particular of technetium-99, which accumulates in lobsters, has expressed solidarity with the Irish, and on 18 December, in a visit to Dublin, environment minister, Borge Brende, pledged support to Ireland's campaign to stop operations at Sellafield.

The tribunal's refusal to uphold the injunction against BNFL was a 'terrible' verdict, says Irish Green MEP, Nuala Ahern. For the second time in a month she is taking a complaint to EU Competition Commissioner, Mario Monti, on the grounds that the UK government has subsidised the MOX operation by writing off the £473 million cost of the plant, a write-off which is clearly against the rules of competition laid down within the European Union. 'At the same time as the Sellafield MOX plant was given the go-ahead with this huge amount of state aid, Aer Lingus and other airlines were being refused. Why,' she asks, 'should the rules be bent in favour of the nuclear industry?'

Nuala Ahern is right: such a write-off of debts is no longer deemed acceptable in the competitive market of air travel. Yet, the UK government, through forming a Liabilities Management Authority, is to take over all of BNFL's £35 billion-worth of civil nuclear liabilities as well as its assets. The assets include BNFL's magnox and THORP reprocessing plants as well as the new MOX fuel plant, which can now be operated as if its construction had not resulted in massive cost overruns. At the present time, BNFL's financial liabilities for clean-up work outstrip assets by as much as £1.7 billion. Despite such an appalling legacy of nuclear costs, BNFL insists that it can continue to pay its way. Whether we like it or not the taxpayer is again being called upon to sustain an intractably dirty industry.

Why MOX?

Plutonium extraction has been the name of the game since World War II. Britain's first ventures into the nuclear scene

were unabashedly military and the two plutonium piles at Windscale, as the Sellafield site was then called, had one purpose alone, to generate military-grade plutonium. The piles, air-cooled, with a graphite moderator, used unenriched uranium metal fuel, the first coming on stream in 1950. All went reasonably until October 1957, when one of the piles caught fire, sending a plume of radioactive debris, including cancer-causing iodine-131, across the countryside. The piles have remained shut-down ever since.

A year before the fire, the Atomic Energy Authority had begun operating the first of its Calder Hall nuclear reactors. Those reactors, as with similar ones across the border at Chapelcross in Scotland, are still operating, nearly 50 years on. Like the piles, the magnox reactors of Calder Hall, of Chapelcross and of others around the country, use unenriched uranium metal fuel, clad in a magnesium alloy, with graphite as the moderator to slow down the neutrons. These slow neutrons bring about the fission of the uranium-235 isotope in order to sustain the chain reaction. Magnox reactors are essentially dual purpose: they accumulate plutonium and, by circulating hot CO₂ gas across boilers, they generate steam for electricity production.

With the plutonium piles no longer in operation, Britain obtained its plutonium for weapons building from its magnox reactors. But the plutonium had first to be extracted, and that led inexorably to the reprocessing of all spent reactor fuel and, in the process, to the production of a liquid stream containing intensely radioactive fission products. Having dissolved the spent fuel in nitric acid, special solvents are then applied in order to separate the plutonium and uranium out from the rest of the waste.

A plutonium stockpile

Worldwide, more than 1,500 tonnes of plutonium have been generated, of which some 250 tonnes have been extracted for bomb-making and another 250 tonnes extracted as a result of reprocessing the spent fuel from 'civilian' reactors. Apart from its military-grade plutonium, which is relatively pure in the

239 isotope, Britain now has some 50 tonnes of lower quality reactor-grade plutonium contaminated with other, less readily-fissionable isotopes such as plutonium-241.

All plutonium, whether weapons- or reactor-grade, can be used to make a nuclear bomb. The difference lies primarily in the size of the device needed to bring about an equivalent explosion. As Frank Barnaby points out in the CornerHouse Briefing (No 17, December 1999, cornerhouse.icaap.org) the world's nuclear powers, namely the US, Britain, France, Russia and China, have accumulated more than enough weapons-grade plutonium for bomb manufacture. Yet, because of the continued reprocessing of spent reactor fuel in commercial reprocessing plants in Britain, France, Russia and Japan, the world will have some 550 tonnes of separated civil plutonium by the year 2010, enough, says Barnaby, to produce 110,000 nuclear weapons.

Depending on the sophistication of the device, a few kilogrammes is all that is required for a bomb, hence the concerns that terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda will one day, if they haven't already, lay their hands on sufficient fissile material to make an effective bomb. Mixed oxide fuel, containing up to five per cent plutonium, is ideal material for terrorists, being no more than mildly radioactive compared with spent reactor fuel, and in a form from which the plutonium can be easily extracted. Just one MOX fuel assembly contains some 25kg of plutonium, enough for two weapons. A reactor, modified to take the plutonium-enriched fuel for up to 30 per cent of the reactor core, has 48 MOX fuel assemblies.

Currently 23 light water reactors – five in Germany, three in Switzerland, 13 in France and two in Belgium – have been converted to use MOX fuel. Five countries, Britain, Belgium, France, Japan and Russia, are manufacturing the fuel. With BNFL's new MOX plant up and running, supply will exceed demand by a factor of two, at least until 2015. That excess will force prices down below costs, hence the scam of the UK government taking over the capital costs of the plant and so turning a loss-making venture into one that would appear to be profitable.

As it happens, the world is awash with cheap uranium and it is therefore much cheaper for reactor operators to resort to a 'once-through' cycle in which the reactor is fuelled with new uranium fuel and the spent fuel is stored intact before disposing of it in a permanent repository. Such disposal at least avoids the double nightmare of having to deal with the liquid effluent that accrues from reprocessing and from having to protect the extracted plutonium from saboteurs and terrorists.

BNFL claims that the use of MOX fuel will help burn up stocks of plutonium, including those from dismantled weapons. But the very operation of civilian reactors, with their load of the plutonium-generating uranium isotope, the 238 isotope, makes it inevitable that more plutonium is generated than is consumed. According to Barnaby's calculations, a 900MW pressurised water reactor which has been modified to take MOX fuel will burn a little less than 1 tonne of plutonium every 10 years, whereas plutonium production will be about 1.17 tonnes.

Since 1993, BNFL has been operating its MOX Demonstration Facility. For safe operation, the plutonium must have to be uniformly well mixed with the uranium in each of the pellets that are contained within a fuel rod. Some 289 fuel rods make-up one fuel assembly. If the plutonium is not well mixed certain parts of the rod could overheat during operation and so damage the cladding. Quite aside from problems with

controlling a reactor core that is running unevenly, fission products will escape from damaged cladding and add to the radioactive discharges from the reactor into the immediate environment.

Testing the fuel for discrepancies is expensive and time-consuming and BNFL routinely inspects about one pellet every 40,000, and as many as 20 per cent are not up to standard. Quality control of MOX fuel became a major issue when Japanese customers discovered that BNFL had falsified the inspection data. BNFL were forced at great cost to bring the fuel back to the UK. As Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace point out, the new Sellafield MOX plant will always operate at a substantial loss, while adding horrendously to the problems of security against the hijacking of the fuel in transport and the subsequent use of the plutonium in a terrorist weapon. Furthermore, the Sellafield MOX plant can operate only in tandem with spent fuel reprocessing and hence must be associated with BNFL's discharges into the Irish Sea.

Chernobyl – low dose radiation and disease in France

Fifteen years ago, the French government denied that any part of French territory had received substantial radioactive fallout from Chernobyl and then told lies about the level of contamination found in the vicinity of some of its nuclear power stations. Cruas, for instance, received 250,000 becquerels of caesium-137 per square metre of ground, as measured by Electricité de France, but the government's nuclear safety service claimed that the contamination was seven times less.

Appalled at the deceit, a number of scientific researchers created CRIL-RAD, an independent commission to investigate radioactivity in the environment, and began detailing the level of fallout across France, so as to warn people of the dangers from exposure to contaminated land and farm produce. The commission found considerable fallout in the Haut Rhin region, as well as the eastern part of Corsica, inland from Porto Vecchio. Up in the mountains, where the fallout had been most intense because of the heavy rains, the community lives mainly from its own produce, in particular from goats and sheep cheese. On the basis of known rates of intake of iodine-131 into children's thyroids, and given their diet, some Corsican children will have received at least five times the equivalent of the natural radiation dose during 1986.

Now, 15 years on, health statistics show that the cancer rates for the liver, lungs and thyroid in the Haut and Bas Rhin regions have more than doubled. For women, the liver cancer rates have gone up by 182 per cent, lung cancer by 120 per cent and thyroid cancer by 283 per cent; while for men the corresponding statistics are an increase of 225 per cent for liver cancers, 272 per cent for the lung and 86 per cent for the thyroid. Meanwhile, between 1985 and 1995, in France as a whole, thyroid cancers actually doubled.

In October 2001, some 130 people, suffering from thyroid cancer, took their case to the French courts. The judge, Mme Bertella Geffroy, is now procuring information from the various ministries to bring to light exactly how much fallout fell on France during the heavy downfalls in May 1986, following the Chernobyl accident. Hopefully that investigation will reveal how much the citizens of France were exposed to radiation they might have avoided, had they known. It would seem that a little dousing with radiation is not quite as harmless as the nuclear industry would have us believe.

Peter Bunyard is science editor of The Ecologist.

DOUBLE-DEALING IN DOHA

FOR THE RECORD: **DAVE TIMMS** ROUNDS UP EVENTS AT QATAR.

For much of the WTO's six-day ministerial meeting, held in Qatar, negotiations were on the edge of collapse. At various points France, India, some Caribbean and African countries, Honduras and Ecuador all threatened to scupper the meetings.

But on 14 November, running 24 hours late, after 48 hours of continuous negotiations and with several delegations having already caught their flights home, the remaining members of the WTO agreed to launch wide-ranging new negotiations on the environment, industrial tariffs, regional trade agreements, subsidies and agriculture and more.

The EU immediately proclaimed the agreement 'a development round', WTO Director General Mike Moore christened it 'The Doha Development Agenda' and Robert Zoellick, the US trade representative who led the US delegation, said: 'We have removed the stain of Seattle'. However the celebrations were far from universal: Edward Rugumayo, Head of the Ugandan delegation left Doha saying, 'The EU has been the major victor, and the United States has also won'. Meanwhile, Martin Khor of the respected Third World Network said it 'had everything in it but development'.

The Doha Declaration marks the start of the first new round of negotiations since the Uruguay Round that set up the WTO began in 1986. That took eight years to complete. The Doha Round is timetabled to take just three.

In the final hours of the meeting on 14 November it became clear that India was unwilling to let the EU get its way and launch new free trade agreements on investment, government procurement, competition policy and trade facilitation. Up to 90 developing countries had voiced their opposition to these Singapore Issues (named after the venue of the 1996 Ministerial meeting where they were first discussed) in pre-Doha statements. Throughout the small hours of 14 November up to 20 countries had stood alongside India demanding the EU dropped the issues. In the end India was alone in being prepared to scupper the entire meeting in order to keep the new agreements out of the Final Declaration.

The EU went to Doha determined to protect the Common Agricultural Policy which is much criticised for allowing the EU to dump heavily subsidised food into developing country markets. Developing countries (and a few developed ones) fought to launch negotiations with a view to eventually 'phasing out' EU export subsidies. They succeeded, only to have the EU insert a spoiling clause to say that nothing in the Declaration 'prejudges' the outcome of the negotiations.

On trade in services (GATS) the timetable for completion of current negotiations was accelerated. Countries have until June 2002 to make bids enabling their multinationals to have increased access to other countries' markets. This is followed by a March 2003 deadline for countries to decide which of their 160 service sectors they will offer for liberalisation.

The big issue in Doha for many developing countries, particularly African ones and those with domestic pharmaceuticals industries such as India and Brazil, was a clarification of the intellectual property agreement (TRIPS) enabling them to break patent laws on drugs when faced by public health emergencies such as AIDS. The WTO's defenders claimed that securing this clarification against fierce resistance from the US and its pharmaceutical industry was proof that

developing countries could win at the WTO. Campaigners and developing countries widely welcomed the clarification, some pointing out, however, that it isn't legally binding. Others, such as ecologist Vandana Shiva, are angry that developing countries' demands to renegotiate the agreement to protect traditional medicines and guard against biopiracy by rich countries were ignored.

The environment section of the declaration includes negotiations on the relationship between Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and the WTO. The declaration includes the statement that 'negotiations shall not prejudice the WTO rights of any Member that is not a party to the MEA in question'. There is considerable concern that this gives the US a get-out clause on agreements they have not signed, such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Biosafety Protocol.

Developing countries have consistently pointed out that they do not have the capacity to engage in negotiations of this scope. Namibia, for example, has a Department of Trade consisting of just eight people. Only one of these deals with the entire WTO and with all the problems of implementing its 28 constituent agreements. Namibia is one of 30 countries that are too poor to staff an office at the WTO HQ in Geneva.

While developing countries were more organised than in Seattle their demands were systematically excluded from the agenda. The WTO Director-General's open advocacy of the trade agenda of the US and EU breached the understanding that the WTO Secretariat would serve the interests of all members impartially. In negotiations poor countries were vastly outgunned. The total number of delegates from the G7 nations in Doha was almost twice the negotiating strength of the combined delegations of the 39 Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

As if to sum this up, Robert Zoellick came to Doha stating that failure to reach agreement was not a problem for the US as it could continue its agenda through trade agreements such as NAFTA. This was never an option for developing countries as Iddi Simba, Trade Minister for Tanzania and chair of the LDCs made clear when he said: 'We need the multilateral trade system far more than the rich countries'.

The World Development Movement's Barry Coates accused the US and EU of effectively 'playing Russian Roulette' with the global trading system: 'In mounting huge pressure for their own agenda they pushed the meetings to the brink of collapse. In the end developing countries had no choice but to sign up. It was more acquiescence than consensus.'

Dave Timms is Press Officer for the World Development Movement.



Out with the old: a demonstrator makes an ironic point as he throws out the trash.

AP PHOTOS

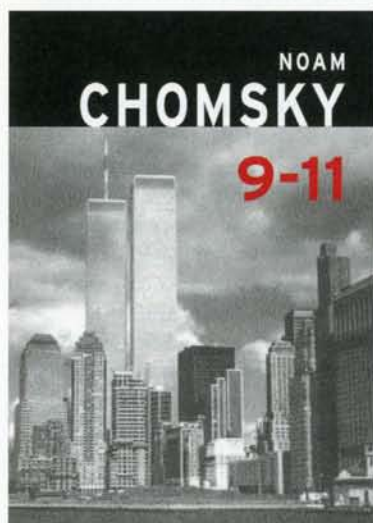
Reviews

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This month: 9-11 Noam Chomsky • **The Field** Lynne McTaggart • **Ill Nature** Joy Williams • **The Simultaneous Policy: An Insider's Guide to Saving Humanity and the Planet** John M Bunzl • **The Testament of Yves Gundron** Emily Barton • **Defying Corporations, Defining Democracy** Edited by Dean Ritz • **Political Nature** John M Meyer

9-11

by Noam Chomsky
SEVEN STORIES PRESS 2001/£6.99
ISBN: 1583224890



'Ha ha ha to the pacifists', wrote Christopher Hitchens in November, as Kabul fell to the combined might of US bombers, the Northern Alliance, and the BBC's 'Simpson of Kabul'. Two months later, the victory celebrations continue tirelessly (almost manically), as the 'first virtual war' draws to a close. It was 'an instant, foolproof, bloodless recipe, like Delia Smith for bombers', crowed the *Observer's* Mary Riddell, demonstrating due respect for the untold numbers of civilian victims incinerated by US bombs and starving to death in the frozen hills of Afghanistan.

But, once again, history will not end here. And, as Noam Chomsky makes clear in this tiny, essential book of interviews, history is sure to swallow the vapid cries of 'Victory!' in its vast and bloody maw.

The folly of the course on which we are set is hidden from the public by years of suppression and omission of embarrassing truth. First, there is the

sheer scale and depth of the hatred ranged against the US and its allies. In mid-1979, President Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski began secret support for the Mujahadin – later to become the bin Laden network – fighting against the government of Afghanistan. The objective was to draw the Soviet Union into an 'Afghan trap', Brzezinski boasts. The US and its allies assembled a huge mercenary force, 100,000 or more, powerfully armed by the CIA, and drawn from the most militant sectors of radical Islamists.

By 1989, these radical Islamists had succeeded in their Holy War against the Russians, only to turn with equal ferocity on the establishment of US bases in Saudi Arabia (seen by them as comparable to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan). In 1983, they had already attacked the Americans in Lebanon. In 1997, they murdered 60 tourists in Egypt. They are now active in North Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans, Central Asia, western China, Southeast Asia and the US. This, Chomsky points out, is *one* group. There are many others.

'It's entirely possible that bin Laden's telling the truth when he says he didn't know about the operation...' Chomsky suggests. 'Even if bin Laden is killed – maybe even more so if he is killed – a slaughter of innocents would only intensify the feelings of anger, desperation and frustration that are rampant in the region, and mobilise others to his horrendous cause.'

An easy 'victory' in disbanding the Taliban in Afghanistan may yet prove to be a terrible defeat for peace and security in the world.

So what would Chomsky do? Well, he asks, what was the right thing for Britain to do when IRA bombs exploded in London?

'One choice would have been to send the RAF to bomb the source of their finances, places like Boston, or to

infiltrate commandos to capture those suspected of involvement in such financing and kill them or spirit them to London to face trial.'

But that, Chomsky notes, would obviously have been 'criminal idiocy'. Similarly, bombing Sicily would be an absurd way of dealing with the Mafia. Another possibility, the sane course, would be 'to consider realistically the background concerns and grievances, and try to remedy them, while at the same time following the rule of law to punish criminals.'

But different standards apply when dealing with the Third World. Chomsky identifies a hidden and deeply disturbing truth about mainstream commentators: 'It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that at some deep level, however they may deny it to themselves, they regard our crimes against the weak to be as normal as the air we breathe.' This Chomsky sees as one of the profound effects of 'several hundred years of imperial violence on the intellectual and moral culture of the West.'

There is a high price to pay for this moral degradation. The *New York Times* locates anti-US sentiments in 'hatred for the values cherished in the West as freedom, tolerance, prosperity, religious pluralism and universal suffrage.' It matters not that bin Laden and others are clear that they are fighting a Holy War against the corrupt, repressive, 'un-Islamist' regimes of the region; that they are fighting against the devastation of Iraqi civil society by Western sanctions, and against the ruthless Israeli oppression of the Palestinians. Because we are morally blind to the horrors for which we are responsible, we cannot understand the depth of the hatred our policies have generated, and so we call inflicting yet more violence on that already suppurating wound, 'victory'.

Thus Chomsky was lambasted far and wide for comparing the atrocities of 11 September with Clinton's August 1998

■cruise missile attack on the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Sudan. The attack was considered trivial in the West and has been long forgotten. And yet half the pharmaceutical production capacity of Sudan was destroyed by those missiles. 'Tens of thousands of people – many of them children – have suffered and died from malaria, tuberculosis, and other treatable diseases,' writes Jonathan Belke of the *Boston Globe*. The German Ambassador to Sudan reports: 'It is difficult to assess how many people in this poor African country died as a consequence of the destruction... but several tens of thousands seems a reasonable guess.' Tens of thousands of dead and next to nobody knows or cares in a society where such crimes are indeed 'as normal as the air we breathe.'

The media consensus may now be that the campaign in Afghanistan has been a resounding success. But Chomsky reminds us that in 1914 the soldiers on both sides marched off to the slaughter with enormous exuberance, encouraged by the intellectual classes and a public mobilised in support of the war: 'We should not underestimate the capacity of well-run propaganda systems to drive people to irrational, murderous, and suicidal behaviour.'

Another defeat in 'victory' could prove to be the emboldening and entrenchment of dangerous reactionary forces in society. George Bush's administration is deeply rooted in militarism and big business, particularly the oil industry. Perceived success in 'the war on terrorism' could lend even more, and perhaps terminal, strength to centres of power that are successfully opposing action on climate change.

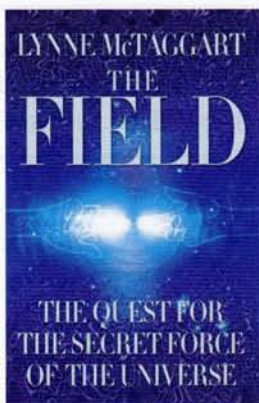
How should social activists react to the horrific events of 11 September and thereafter? If we want to escalate the cycle of violence and increase the likelihood of worse horror to come, then we should curb our criticisms and disengage from involvement in these issues, Chomsky says. On the other hand, if we want to reverse the current, insane strategy we should intensify our efforts. As he puts it:

'It is important not to be intimidated by hysterical ranting and lies and to keep as closely as one can to the course of truth and honesty and concern for the human consequences of what one does, or fails to do. All truisms, but worth bearing in mind.'

David Edwards is co-editor of Medialens.org

THE FIELD

by Lynne McTaggart
HARPER COLLINS 2001/£17.99
ISBN: 0722537646



The wilder shores of science have always been where the action is. Cutting edge science is, almost by definition, rebellious and heretical. It challenges conventional wisdom, takes human imagination to the brink, investigates wild hypotheses, and proves the 'impossible' possible. That's the excitement of it, but history has many examples of scientists whose research was reviled or ignored because it defied prior 'evidence', and suggested something seemingly outlandish, such as that the sun does not circle the earth.

Heresy is still as unwelcome in science as in the Catholic Church and some of the research covered by *The Field* is no exception. For few shores are wilder – or more relevant to all of us – than those traced by this fascinating, provocative and highly readable book. Lynne McTaggart shows how, for decades, top flight scientists have been risking their reputations and academic positions by researching a subtle energy which could transform science and medicine, and challenge us to rethink life itself, and how we live it.

This is not the first book on the universal energy known as the 'zero point field', but it is probably the most readable, for a non-scientist. An experienced science editor and communicator, McTaggart has selected discoveries which make a good story and can be told through the people and situations behind them. *The Field* covers some of the same work as Ervin Laszlo's brilliant book *The Whispering Pond*, but takes a different approach. To illustrate 'the field' at work Laszlo gives us supercooled superfluids and a Nobel Prize-winning discovery of coherence among semi-conductors, whereas Lynne

McTaggart gives us communication between plants and the measurable coherence in human minds when OJ Simpson was declared not guilty of murder:

'OJ... broke into a triumphant smile...[he] was cleared on both counts... The television audience [of millions of people around the globe] was stunned by the jury's decision, and so were five other silent observers.'

The 'silent observers' were computers designed to register disturbance in 'the field', just as a computer registers the intensity of earth tremors. Though at widely separated universities, they simultaneously registered strongly at key moments in the trial, peaking when OJ was declared not guilty (as a scientist tells me they also did when the World Trade Centre was hit in September).

For computers to pick up the 'signals' from millions of highly complex human organisms, which carry an electric charge seems, perhaps, no odder than for our TV sets to pick up signals from far simpler BBC transmitters. However, that is only the tip of a very intriguing iceberg. Research on 'the field', at top universities from Princeton to Tokyo, in companies such as Sony, and in organisations such as the Mid-American Heart Institute, touches on almost every aspect of life and ranges from cutting-edge quantum physics to experiments you could do at home.

Starting with Einstein's realisation that matter itself is 'extremely intense', and that the fundamental reality is the underlying energy field, the book goes on to illustrate a universal field at work with research showing, for example, that plants react when other plants are cut, that positive thoughts from others make patients recover faster, that plants, yeast and bacteria respond to human beings, that the structure of water changes after being held by a skilled healer, and that even baby animals can attract or repel a robot which they 'like' or 'dislike'.

Although some of Lynne McTaggart's examples need more rigorous handling, and stronger research exists than she sometimes gives us, she nonetheless offers a persuasive body of evidence that we need to re-think basic assumptions.

'One by one, through painstaking experiment and trial and error, each [scientist] had eventually come to the position that... [the] bedrocks of physics were probably wrong... A substructure underpins the universe that is essentially a recording medium for everything to communicate with everything else... People are indivisible from their

environment. Living consciousness is not an isolated entity. It increases order in the rest of the world... has incredible powers, to heal ourselves and the world... At the lowest level of mind and matter, each of us creates our world.'

The 'substructure' postulated is, of course, the Zero Point Field, a 'field of fields' comprising all the particles and energy fields of the universe. A field of dynamically-interacting sub-atomic particles which we, and our thoughts, both manifest and live within. Still controversial ideas, to some, and *The Field* exposes the censorship and ostracism often faced by scientists who have had the courage to question the scientific orthodoxy. Clearly the Holy Inquisition still stalks the corridors of academe, and sits on the peer review boards which try to control what will – and will not – become public knowledge.

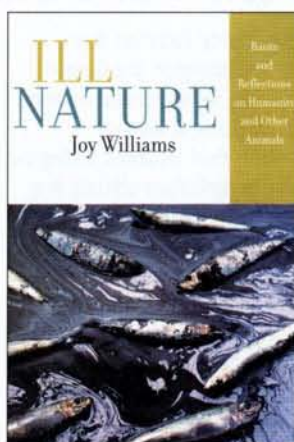
Such opposition is predictable, for the theory may promise the 'Holy Grail' of energy research – limitless clean energy – and adds up to the strongest possible environmental warning. That is, if everything is a unity, whoever damages the environment, or creates trade rules that starve or exploit the others, also damages those close to them. Equally, anyone who treats themselves, or others, badly, damages the earth. And everything counts. Not a message most global corporations would want spread around – but it makes *The Field* one of the most thought-provoking reads of 2001.

Moyra Bremner is the author of *GE: Genetic Engineering and You*.

ILL NATURE

RANTS AND REFLECTIONS ON HUMANITY AND OTHER ANIMALS

by Joy Williams
THE LYONS PRESS 2001/\$24.95
ISBN: 1585741876



In this collection of essays, dealing mostly with human abuses of nature, the critically acclaimed author of *The Quick and the Dead* and other novels tackles a host of controversial subjects underlying the present ecological crisis, which she defines as essentially a 'moral issue' rooted in contemporary culture and character – or lack thereof.

While most of us are resigned to watching the rape of tropical forests and the pollution of our oceans and waterways with a feeling of impotence and

inevitability, Williams does much more. With razor-sharp wit and impassioned anger, she sounds the alarm over the disconnection from the natural world that the consumer culture has created. The culling of elephants, electron-probed chimpanzees and vanishing wetlands are some of her subjects. In one chapter, 'Save the Whales, Screw the Shrimp', Williams maintains that the ecological crisis cannot be resolved either by politics, science, or technology. In her view it is caused by our 'twisted attitudes toward nature', and a fundamental change in personal consciousness is needed; we must 'live lightly upon the earth and treat it with respect.'

In the chapters entitled 'Safariland' and 'The Killing Game', Williams assails the hubris which arrogantly asserts that humans are masters of the universe. In the US, a nation that has more guns than

'Williams has thrown a formidable gauntlet into the face of every blinkered but blind-sided consumer'

On *Ill Nature*

people thanks to the untiring efforts of the NRA to misrepresent the Second Amendment and buy votes in Congress, this attitude is not surprising. But when supposedly intelligent people, like Jose Ortega y Gasset in his *Meditations on Hunting*, spout such intellectual blather

EcoKids

Aside from the obvious urgency of protecting the rainforest, its inherent beauty makes it ideal for introducing children to the marvels of the world, and hence the relevance of saving it. To this end, there is no better place to start than with The Rainforest Action Network, one of the most vocal and vital of campaigning NGOs. The children's pages on their website, www.ran.org/kids_action, feature information on what rainforest is, which companies are destroying it, and seven things you can do to stop this happening. The Action Centre provides an excellent introduction to the possibilities of individual involvement, featuring stories of children's actions from all over the world, examples of letters that children have sent companies, and an art gallery of paintings and drawings vividly expressing just how much children do indeed care. Kids can even subscribe to their own email alert from RAN, keeping them up-to-date on how their actions are helping, what else is happening, and what more they can do. At a time when so many supposedly



'environmental' education resources are produced and distorted by multinational companies with a vested interest in only one side of an issue being discussed, RAN's efforts provide an essential and eminently attractive antidote.



Anything you can do... part 2

EDUARDO GONÇALVES CONTINUES HIS TALE FROM LAST MONTH OF GOVERNMENTAL TERRORISM

Having pumped out 'dirty' radiation over populated areas of Washington and Oregon states back in the 50s, secretly contaminating farmland, crops and water, a team of government scientists then set about finding out the results. Posing as agriculture officials, they visited local farmers. As one former team member recalls: 'I was to simulate an animal husbandry specialist who had the responsibility of testing a new portable instrument based on an unproven theory that by external readings on the surface of the farm, the 'health and vigour' of animals could be evaluated... I was to concentrate on the high readings – thyroid, of course – and furnish those for recording when not being observed.'¹

The readings showed that radioactivity levels were hundreds of times above normal permissible limits. Tom Bailie, a farmer who grew up and still lives near the plant, later showed government investigators an area he called the 'death mile'. Here, he said, '100 per cent of those families that drank the water, drank the milk, ate the food, have one common denominator that binds us together, and that is thyroid problems, handicapped children or cancer.'²

In Britain, similar tests were carried out from nuclear facilities at Harwell, the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) headquarters in Oxfordshire, Windscale (now Sellafield) in Cumbria, and Winfrith in Dorset. Experiments began in 1952, when radioactive Argon-41 gas was deliberately released into the environment from Harwell.³ That same year, a large amount of radioactive iodine was released via the cooling towers at Windscale. In both cases, government scientists then went out 'into the field' to determine the level of local contamination. In both cases, the readings were high and in one instance, two of the scientists discovered large quantities of iodine-131... in their own children.⁴

In 1955, just as the Americans had done at Hanford, 'radioactive particles were blown into the cooling air past the filters and discharged to the atmosphere. Further substantial emissions took place in the summer and autumn of 1956 and in early 1957', according to declassified documents.⁵ They show that contamination readings on local farmland were up to 70 times expected levels.

Scientists also released radioactive iodine over cricket pitches. Thousands of curies of xenon-133 and krypton-85 were discharged from the plant

at Winfrith, along with iodine and radon gas, often in the face of opposition from alarmed government officials. As one senior civil servant wrote: 'The extension of your experimental work involving releases of xenon-133 is noted with regret and it is only reluctantly that we accept the discharges because they are so necessary for the furtherance of your developments at Winfrith.'⁶

In fact, many releases were never reported to government officials, according to government papers,⁷ and took place as often as once a week. In spite of Whitehall pleas that 'the experimental releases should be kept to a minimum',⁸ larger discharges were carried out. In 1964, for example, a 'controlled discharge' of a single batch from the 'dirty gas receivers' was set up in a way so that the discharge 'might be as much as one thousand curies' although in 'unfavourable' weather conditions this could rise to 'some 1600 curies'.⁹

In none of these cases were local people informed or consulted beforehand. In fact, only now – many years after the event – are some documents in the public domain, although doubtless the details of more secret operations will remain under lock and key. The British government says it no longer releases radiation deliberately into the environment for experimental purposes. Instead, a government spokesman told me, 'discharges of radioactive waste from power stations and plants like Sellafield are going on all the time and these lead to radioactivity being detected in the environment. Many of our research studies utilise this radioactivity for investigation'.¹⁰

If this is not reassuring, then consider the plight of those like the Inupiat Eskimos of Point Hope, Alaska, where radioactive materials were deliberately sprayed over plots of land as part of a bizarre experiment to carve an Arctic seaport out of the ice using 'peaceful' nuclear bombs. As one villager there says: 'I have lived in Point Hope all my life and eaten the food from the sea and the land and drank the water of Cape Thomson, along with the others. I have to wonder about my health, what impact the poison on the earth will have all through my lifetime, emotionally, physically, and most of all for my children and my grandchildren.'¹¹

Eduardo Gonçalves is a Portuguese investigative journalist.
References on page 82.

as 'One does not hunt in order to kill; one kills in order to have hunted', she thinks it's high time to secure the safety catch on their addled brains. Then again, it may be too late for such common sense options: the game is almost gone, and its demise will spell the end of the 'killing game'.

Williams saves her most scathing sarcasm for the millions of supposedly savvy and sophisticated women who, in a society bursting at the seams with surplus population, still believe that their primary purpose in life is to be broodmares. She is just as contemptuous of those wannabe Dr Franksteins who help infertile couples satisfy their parental urges by in vitro fertilisation – what a punster might call a fetus under glass. In the words of the author: 'While legions of other life forms go extinct, human life bustles self-importantly on.' Babies have gone way beyond being 'God's gift' – they have become assembly-line products created in labs by pseudo-scientific techno-shamans known as fertility doctors. Thus, a formerly barren woman in Iowa was able to make the pages of the *Guinness Book of World Records* by giving birth to septuplets. In recognition of this mind-boggling and tummy-stretching athletic achievement, she and her hubby were given a new house, plus seven cribs and layettes, and a year's supply of diapers, totaling 18,200 non-biodegradable pollutants destined for a local landfill. Some source of pride! But then, 'if the unborn have rights, it follows that the *unconceived* have rights.'

As the bean-counters at the UN have figured out, world population will double in forty years at current growth rates. But while overpopulation poses the greatest threat to all life forms, it is simply not politically correct to suggest that women should have fewer babies. (On a more positive note, a recent survey reveals that about one quarter of US women of child-bearing age have decided against having any children. Perhaps it dawned on them, after spending the equivalent of one work-week every year in traffic gridlock commuting to and from their job, that the one thing this world does *not* need is more people!)

Ill Nature may not be for the squeamish or easily offended, but Joy Williams has thrown a formidable gauntlet into the face of every blinkered but blind-sided consumer – a challenge often hard to accept, but impossible to ignore.

Gard Binney is a columnist for The Ecologist.

The world is already awash with 'simultaneous policies' (SPs). We have SPs for armaments, for war preparations, motorways, car manufacture, nuclear energy, junk food, GM crops and, well, you name it. John Bunzl wants to change all these bad SPs for good ones, but of course, there is a snag. What are the forces promoting these bad ones and how can they be persuaded to adopt his new ones?

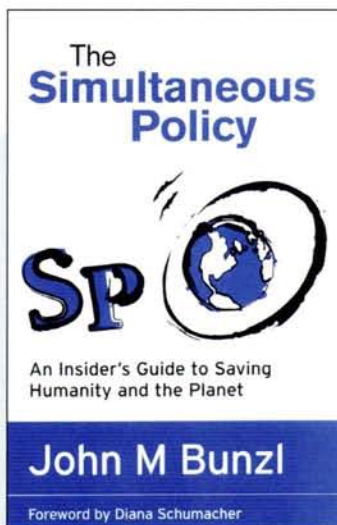
Quite suddenly we are not in the realm of politics, ecology, economics or agriculture, we are in the quicksands of discussion about morality. What is morality? How does it work? What are the conditions which enable morality to determine policy, rather than to be marginalised by forces of greed and power-seeking?

The author does not stay to consider them, so sure is he that once his advocacy of everyone simultaneously doing the obviously decent thing is accepted in all its beguiling simplicity then we shall have opened up a new path of human progress, the lion will lie down with the lamb, wars will be no more and all our problems will fade in the light of a new day of peace, plenty and prosperity.

It may be perfectly obvious to state that morality is a factor of human relationships, but the obvious does have a way of being overlooked or ignored; so let us be clear, morality is a function of relationships between people. At the risk of sounding pedantic, it is a matter of people in their family and social roles deciding what is right or what is wrong. What is good, or what is bad.

But when people join or are subject to an organisation a quite different factor enters the equation, that of power, and in this context it is important to grasp that since any organisation is an embodiment of power, the question inevitably arises to what extent is moral judgement operative, as distinct from imperatives of power?

We should note that even a village table tennis club is an embodiment of power, that is why it has a defined membership, a body of rules and even a written constitution (and those Britsceptics who want to bury Britain's national identity in a 'Europe' run by market moguls



THE SIMULTANEOUS POLICY

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO SAVING HUMANITY AND THE PLANET

by John M Bunzl
NEW EUROPEAN PUBLICATIONS
2001/£14.95
ISBN: 1872410200

should perhaps note that generally the constitution of such clubs cannot be changed except by a two thirds majority of their members).

We should also note, however, that in the case of local organisations, policies will usually be determined by what we may call the moral consensus rather than the power factor. Members may jockey for the chairmanship or other office and campaign on one issue or another, but the deciding factor will be not the power of the organisation but the moral preferences of the members as expressed in their relationships.

But people today no longer live in meaningful communities where their relationships are a powerful determinative force, where their moral preferences help to establish a moral consensus; they live in what are called mass societies – to be explicit, societies having millions of members all subject to a common centralised authority. In such conditions the moral factor is simply swamped by the power factor.

Instead of society being governed by moral relationships, societal policies are determined by power relationships, all governed by the law which states that 'the bigger the unit, the smaller the significance

of the individual and, conversely, the smaller the unit the larger the significance of the individual.'

In a mass society of millions of people, the significance of the individual is reduced to all but zero, in which case so too is the force of any moral options he may wish to deploy. Yet there remain people like Bunzl – who in this probably represents an enormous majority viewpoint – who persist in assuming that the power structure of any mass society can be governed by moral considerations.

This is to ignore Gandhi's shrewd observation that 'you cannot have morality without community'. Meaning, I take it, without the moral relationships people enjoy in community life and which give way to power relationships in mass societies. The difference here is that whilst community moral relationships approximate to equality, power relationships are decidedly unequal, it is the central governing forces which promote and determine policies.

In this light it becomes clear why political leaders behave as they do. If Tony Blair were to run his premiership on the basis of moral convictions he would be out of office tomorrow. If, for example, he campaigned to cut hospital waiting lists by educating people to the reality of the abominable drug and chemical saturated substances which crowd supermarket shelves in the guise of food, what would happen to the help he currently gets from Lord Sainsbury?

Political and business leaders act as they do because power and profit considerations vastly outweigh moral principles, and because if they gave priority to the latter at the expense of the former they would quickly be replaced by those with a sharper eye for the main chance.

Bunzl forgets this, and that if a project involving giant powers, which only exist at all because of their innate drive for aggrandisement, could all simultaneously be persuaded to be good, then the global crisis which now swirls about our living clay would never have erupted in the first place.

John Papworth is editor of Fourth World Review.

Architecture & morality

Landmark buildings are the most iconic and visible statements of 'progress'. No wonder then that so many are ecological disasters. Starting this month with the World Trade Centre, **George Marshall** takes a closer look.

In 1971, the hideous Pruitt-Igoe housing estate in St Louis was blown up using dynamite. It had been an act of intolerable intellectual aggression on the part of the architect, Minoru Yamasaki, to think that low-income families could be housed in faceless brick barracks of such unrelenting monotony. After 20 years of social decay, the tenants begged that the buildings be demolished and the project started from scratch.

Yet, as the dust cleared in St Louis, a new Yamasaki masterpiece, no less arrogant, was rising from the rubble in New York. Fourteen city blocks of warehouses, brownstones and tenements had been conveniently designated slums and flattened for just two blocks of the World Trade Centre. The towers (nicknamed Nelson and David after the Rockefeller brothers) were 110 storeys (417m) high – the largest, and tallest buildings in the world. They were described as a gateway, as twin 'campaniles' over a 'Piazza San Marco', in reference to the inhospitable windswept pedestrian deck at their base.

Yamasaki modestly declared it 'one of loveliest buildings of our time', having tried over 100 combinations of different sized blocks before deciding on two huge blocks alongside each other. Engineers enthused over the design breakthrough that transferred all the loads to the outer walls. To the delight of the developers, this created wide unencumbered interiors, but left only a miserable 55cm between each column for the windows. The impression inside and out was of an unrelenting shining cage or, as one critic observed,

'the largest aluminium siding job in the world'.

And, to the average observer, it looked just like every other skyscraper – a monolithic and sealed slab; the people inside caught like flies in amber. The style had started with the UN secretariat in 1947, and soon caught the fancy of the speculative developers. It was cheap, disposable, and well suited to a corporate culture of control that saw offices as clerical factories.

From an environmental perspective such buildings are a disaster. They pay no respect to the seasons, to the direction of the sun, to the local climate, to the needs of the users to control their working environment or to have access to fresh air. They overheat in the scorching New York summers, haemorrhage energy in the sub-zero winters. The World Trade Centre, the apotheosis of the sealed slab, needed 40,000 tonnes of air conditioning, using enough electricity, the builders bragged, to light a city of 400,000 people.

Tall buildings are symbols of power and oppression, and so exert a magnetic attraction for suicides, terrorists, and disaster film makers. All three came together on 11 September when Mohammad Atta led the hideous attack that murdered 6,000 people. Atta, a trained architect, had applied his skills to calculating what angle of impact would maximise the structural damage.

The attack confirmed Yamasaki's dubious reputation as a second-rate architect whose buildings achieve lasting fame through their demolition. The end of Pruitt-Igoe was interpreted



by architectural historians as a key event in the death of modernism. Will 11 September mark the end of the skyscraper?

Surely the time has come. The age of the skyscraper almost exactly coincides with the 20th century – it is the architectural symbol of much that was disastrous in that century – astonishing technical virtuosity achieved with immense waste to serve global corporate power and feed real estate markets. Given such a heritage, attempts at 'Green' skyscrapers are not convincing. In 1977, the first major skyscraper in New York after the oil crisis, the Citicorp Center, had a south-sloping roof for solar panels. They were never fitted.

Architects such as Norman Foster and Ken Yeang have broken up the slab, experimented with natural ventilation and inserted vertigo-inducing 'sky gardens'. Whilst they fail to challenge any of the underlying problems, they show some awareness that the real world is changing.

What should replace the twin towers? Discounting suggestions of a memorial garden on the world's most expensive real estate, the most likely proposals go back to Yamasaki's experiments of combinations of different-sized blocks. There is even the block-headed proposal to build an exact replica of the original towers. Surely a fitting memorial for those killed is an environmentally- and socially-sensitive building that learns from the mistakes of the past, is less keen to shout of its size, and more prepared to think of its future.

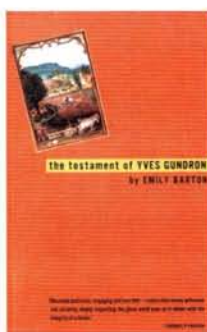
George Marshall works with www.risingtide.org.uk

THE TESTAMENT OF YVES GUNDRON

by Emily Barton
CANONGATE BOOKS 2001/£9.99
ISBN: 1841950939

Step back into the world of Yves Gundron – to Mandragora, located 'not on a map' somewhere north of Scotland, where the people live an archaic existence untouched by the twin wheels of progress and change.

Unchanged, that is, until one day Yves Gundron invents the harness, and in so doing yokes both his horses and his people to the benefits and burdens of technology. Unwittingly, he also sets in motion an uneasy stumble into the present day, a path documented (and intermittently hindered and assisted)



by the book's narrator, Ruth Blum, a young anthropologist from Boston, who, gripped by wanderlust, has set off to find the land her mother once spoke of, Mandragora.

Most 'ecological'

fiction fails for one of two reasons. Either it is written by ecologists with no grasp of narrative, or by second rate thriller writers for whom Biotech is just the next big trope. Not so *The Testament of Yves Gundron*.

It is the strength of Barton's imagination, coupled with her sensitive and balanced handling of the underlying issues, that make this a

beautiful and unique book.

On first encountering Ruth, the inhabitants of Mandragora wonder at the vast tumour upon her back, and we, seeing through their eyes, wonder too. We share their inability to at first comprehend the meaning of what is, we soon learn, Ruth's backpack. But the metaphor also works as an indictment of backpacking itself, of the paradox explained later of someone who has 'resolved both to renounce the world and to set off in search of it.'

Barton has given us both a parable of the inevitability and allure of progress and a paean for 'what we've strayed from, what we once had and have since lost.' Her book is filled with a richness and understanding from which we all could learn.

Jay Forgère is a freelance journalist.

DEFYING CORPORATIONS, DEFINING DEMOCRACY

A BOOK OF HISTORY
AND STRATEGY

Edited by Dean Ritz
THE APEX PRESS 2001/\$17.95
ISBN: 1891843109



If you've ever complained about giant corporations taking over our lives, but wondered what you could do about it, this is the book for you. In *Defying Corporations...* the US activists behind the Programme On Corporations, Law and Democracy have drafted what is, in effect, a manifesto for anti-corporate action.

Writers Richard Grossman, Jane Anne Morris and Ward Morehouse, among others, provide an encyclopaedia of subversive essays, speeches, sermons and letters that turn over the stones under which pale, anonymous corporate executives normally conduct their business in secret. And the authors call for a democratic offensive to oppose this malign corporate influence. The 70-odd short chapters cover subjects such as 'Ending Corporate Governance', 'Citizens Over Corporations', 'Justice For Sale' and – leaving us in no doubt as to their preferred solution – 'Revoking The Corporation'. The book's main strength is its thorough grounding in law, both current and historical, and its grasp of just how corporations play the legal game to outsmart us, the citizens.

The legal case the authors make against corporations and their undermining of democracy is so thorough and so devastating that it leaves one hungry for more concrete details of this or that company subverting the democratic process, bribing elected officials or corrupting the judicial process. A few corporate crooks are named and shamed here, but perhaps there is room for a companion volume listing the guilty and indicting them for their crimes.

Richard Milton is the author of Bad Company: Behind the Corporate Mask.

Reading behind the lines

Not so much recommendations this month, as warnings. New anti-terrorism laws are restricting our right to read what we want at home and abroad – it's censorship, but not as we'd know it.

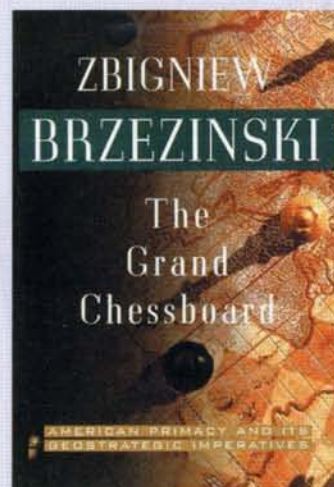
'As it is an ancient truth that freedom cannot be legislated into existence, so it is no less obvious that freedom cannot be censored into existence.' So said Dwight D Eisenhower in 1953, the year that Joseph McCarthy became chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations and began accusing innocent civilians of 'guilt by association'.

All a long time ago. Very different from the free world of today, a world where, on 18 April last year, Mayor of New York Rudolph Giuliani wrote: 'New Yorkers have a unique understanding that the First Amendment protects the right of artists to express their diverse and sometimes controversial views.' Until 11 September, that is, and the introduction on both sides of the Atlantic of repressive laws and orders limiting not only our free speech, but our free thought.

Those implementing such laws argue that it is for our own safety, that the restrictions are there to stop not us, but the terrorists. That is the reason, no doubt, that the US Government Printing Office ordered 1,300 libraries across the states to destroy government records that federal agencies say could be too sensitive for public consumption – such as a CD-ROM with data on dams and reservoirs, and various websites with information on subjects ranging from chemical reactors to the location of hazardous waste sites.

It is also the reason that members of the public who want to use reading rooms at federal agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service must now make an appointment and be escorted by an employee to ensure that information is not 'misused'. And it is the justification behind legislation that allows the FBI to subpoena a bookshop and order it to provide a complete list of all the books a customer has bought from the store. Might make you think twice about ordering that reprint of Chomsky, the biography of Lenin, or even old back issues of *The Ecologist*?

As the Roman satirical poet Juvenal wrote nearly 2000 years ago: 'Censorship reflects a society's lack of confidence in itself'. It is this lack of confidence that 2000 years later compelled the Chinese government to confiscate thousands of copies of *The Clinton Years*, because the



book featured a picture of President Clinton clasping hands and chatting on the White House with the Dalai Lama. And it is the same lack of confidence that has caused Britain to attempt to 'fast track' its antiterrorism laws, and has led George Bush to implement an executive order impeding public access to historical presidential records.

The safest thing to do is therefore not to read books by known dissidents, but by staunch supporters of the dominant elite. And there could be no better place to start than with *The Grand Chessboard – American Primacy And It's Geostrategic Imperatives*, by Zbigniew Brzezinski (Basic Books, 1998). The author, the former National Security Advisor to Jimmy Carter, suffers no lack of confidence when he explains what his book is about: 'America's global primacy is directly dependent on how long and how effectively its preponderance on the Eurasian continent is sustained.' A little oblique perhaps? Try: 'To put it in a terminology that harkens back to the more brutal age of ancient empires, the three grand imperatives of imperial geostrategy are to prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, to keep tributaries pliant and protected, and to keep the barbarians from coming together.'

And there's so much more, all beautifully exposed and analysed by the Centre for Research on Globalisation at globalresearch.ca/articles/RUP111B.html. (But beware, they'll be watching.)

Magazine Rack

Worthwhile reads you won't find in the shops



EARTH FIRST! JOURNAL

is the bi-monthly forum for the non-compromise environmental movement as exemplified in the Sept/Oct issue. Gabe Scott looks behind the scene of the ANWR campaign; and in light of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson's compassionate plea on real refugees at the BP annual lecture, the EFi article on UNHCR's approach towards environmental refugees makes for an all the more illuminating read.

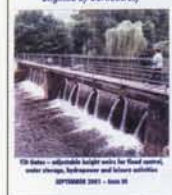
Earth First! Journal, POB 3023, Tuscon, AZ 85702, USA; tel: +1 520 620 6900 or visit www.earthfirstjournal.org

ECOLOGY AND FARMING

is the magazine of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM); published three times a year. Their latest edition features a focus on organic movements in the Mediterranean region as well as a special feature on women in organic agriculture. **IFOAM, Oekozentrum Imsbach, 66636 - Tholey-Theley, Germany; tel: +49 6853 919890 or visit www.ifoam.org**



HYDROPOWER & WATERMILLS



HYDROPOWER & WATERMILLS

Is a limited collection of three issues on low-head, run of river water mills and hydropower. Issue 3, for example, looks into the regulatory problems in the UK and contrasts it with France's water mill revival.

Hydropower & Watermills; Osman Goring, Coaley Mill, Coaley, Dursley, Glos. GL11 5DS; Tel: +44 (0) 1453

890376. Ecologist subscribers can obtain all three issues for £25.

RELEASE

is a new bi-monthly magazine for social justice. The first issue contains, amongst others, a focus on the recent floods in North Korea, an in-depth country profile on Afghanistan and a piece on how Fair Trade works.

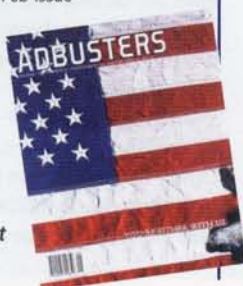
Release, 101a Frankwell, Shrewsbury, SY3 8JS, UK; Tel: +44 (0) 1743 353352 or email release@sojournpublications.co.uk



ADBUSTERS

'The journal of the mental environment' is the highly acclaimed bi-monthly magazine of the Adbuster Media Foundation. The Jan/Feb issue contains a thought-provoking and major culture-jamming session on the events on and after 11 September.

Adbusters Media Foundation, 1243 West 7th Ave., Vancouver BC, V6H 1B7, Canada; tel: +1 604 736 9401 or visit www.adbusters.org



En Garde...



JINGO BELLS, JINGO BELLS!

EN GARDE AGAINST JINGOISTIC OVERKILL...

I wouldn't say that my wife is a psychic, because the word has a certain con-artist connotation. Let's just say she's prescient. She tells me not to worry about the fact that world population has more than tripled in my lifetime, polluting the environment and imposing an unbearable burden on the earth's finite and renewable resources. 'Nature will take care of it,' she says. 'You'll see.' If she were religiously inclined, she could have substituted 'God' for 'Nature'. For more people have been killed in religious wars than in any other kind of conflict. And just one week before the surprise attack on the World Trade Center, she casually advised me that 'Armageddon is coming.' It remains to be seen whether this terrorist act was a precursor to the Apocalypse.

As terrible as the events of 11 September 2001 were, we should put the loss of life in the proper perspective. Every day 40,000 children worldwide succumb to starvation and disease, because most religions oppose the abortion of unwanted fetuses, and in many cases prohibit the use of contraceptives. Conception is considered sacrosanct *per se*, even if it is the bi-product of unbridled lust, and the foetus doesn't stand a chance of surviving. Perhaps if we were to stuff a few thousand of these innocents into some tower of Babel and blow it up on live television, the world would take notice of their appalling predicament.

In Afghanistan, which has one of the world's highest birth rates and its second highest maternal mortality rate — 17 in 1,000 births — 85,000 children die each year from drinking polluted water. Ironical as it may seem, perhaps their adoptive Saudi father figure did them a service by bringing their desperate plight to the world's attention. Because of his dastardly deed, we in the West have literally overnight been made aware of the fact that millions of people in their homeland are starving. And, if the twin towers in Manhattan had not been knocked over, I bet few people would ever have heard about the four-year Afghan drought. Welcome as this sudden attention to the sufferings of the Afghans may be, the opportune timing of the revelation smacks of hypocrisy.

A wise man once observed that: 'People grow angry when they suffer things that they are unused to, and plunge into action on the spur of their impulse. [Americans] are especially likely to act this way, since they think they have a right to supremacy and are more used to destroying other people's land than seeing this happen to their own.' If you substitute 'Athenians' for 'Americans', you might recognise the quote from Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. As that macho Florentine, Niccolò Machiavelli, observed some 2000 years later, there is nothing like fear to unite a people behind their Prince. Thus the junior Bush, thanks to the acts of Muslim fanatics, saw his

approval rating jump from 50 to 90 per cent as the WTC walls came tumbling down, shattering forever the US illusion of being untouchable.

Not one to pass up a golden opportunity, the president, backed by his Republican party, lost no time in pushing through Congress a series of corporate tax breaks, totaling \$1.4 trillion and including thank-you gifts of \$600 million each to two of his biggest election contributors in his home state of Texas. Predictably, the rationale for this fiscal largesse was that old canard from the glory-days of Reaganomics: the trickle-down theory. Meanwhile, more than one million working stiffs lost their jobs last year to Asian sweatshops and Mexican maquiladores, while the Federal Reserve shaved points off the interest rate, a fraction at the time, instead of devaluing the over-inflated dollar to stimulate exports.

Taking a cue from his boss, Attorney General John Ashcroft rounded up more than 1,000 Arab-Americans and locked them up for an indefinite period without charging them with any crime — a flatrant violation of the US Constitution, and a victory of sorts for enemies of those democratic principles which he was elected to protect. To make matters worse, he forbade his minions at the FBI to ascertain whether these 'suspects' had a licence to carry arms. This seeming contradiction was motivated by the fact that over his political career, Ashcroft, a staunch defender of the right to bear arms, had received a total of \$340,000 from the National Rifle Association — and you don't bite the hand that feeds you!

As the taxpayers' civil rights were being severely circumscribed in the interests of national security, the Interior Department lost the right to veto mining projects on public land, and the Bureau of Land Management altered its rules so global mining corporations wouldn't have to worry about the pollution they inflicted on the environment, making this the first casualty of 'America's New War'. One is reminded of the comment made by the then Speaker of the House about one of president Reagan's financial schemes: 'We can't fix the economy by selling pizzas to one another.'

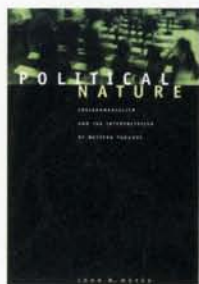
Nor can we do it by abusing our environment. As Ed Ayres, editor of *WorldWatch*, sums it up in a recent editorial: 'Lives are lost regularly in dizzying numbers... not from evil intent but from human [upsetting] of natural balances. As biodiversity loss and climate disruption [increase], we need to understand that the measure of a threat is not whether it is made on purpose, but how much loss it may cause.' Well said, but who will heed the voice of reason? Much easier to chime in with the jingo bells. For, as the radical American writer, Randolph Bourne, observed during WWI: 'War is the health of the state.'

Gard E Binney

POLITICAL NATURE

ENVIRONMENTALISM AND THE
INTERPRETATION OF WESTERN
THOUGHT

by John M Meyer
MIT PRESS 2001/\$22.95
ISBN: 0262632241



It is a common belief among environmentalists that our deepening ecological crises are rooted in a flawed conception of the natural world, and that once this worldview is corrected, vital

political change will follow. In *Political Nature*, John Meyer argues that it's not so simple, that the political process itself deserves equal attention if we hope to see an enlightened natural worldview translated into environmentally sound public policy.

Central to Meyer's thesis is an exposé of the inconsistencies in the two dominant Western interpretations of the nature-politics relationship: the 'dualist', in which politics are completely divorced from nature, and the 'derivative', in which politics are modeled after the reigning natural worldview. The weakness of dualism is obvious – it becomes OK to trash nature, since we're not part of it. The derivative account rests on the dubious assumption that the laws of nature can be applied across the diverse sphere of human activity. Meyer concludes that a hybrid interpretation is called for, a 'dialectic' relationship between nature and politics, where their interdependence is recognised and neither dominates.

While Meyer's lengthy academic analyses of the writings of Thomas Hobbes, Aristotle, and contemporary theorists may be a bit dense for some, the upshot appeals to common sense. The final chapter's three real world examples simply show that environmental movements are most likely to gain momentum when people's wellbeing is overtly threatened. Conversely, given that the majority in Western countries sympathise with environmental concerns, why then, is our political machine still pushing us toward an ecological cliff-edge?

Dan Bertolet is a freelance writer.

Philanthropy
or Villain-trophy?

Every month, *The Ecologist* keeps you updated on what corporate responsibility really means. Application forms are now available for the David Watt Memorial Prize, awarded each year to one of the finest journalists writing in English. So why is it sponsored by Rio Tinto?

In this information-drenched age, it can be difficult sifting the truth from the corporate silt. It takes single-mindedness and a deeper understanding of affairs than most possess. Take the case of journalist Robert Fisk. In December he was pelted with stones at the Afghan border by irate refugees – but while hacks across the world are sinking their trade into a jingoistic mire, Fisk's response was to comment in the *Independent*: 'there were all the Afghan men and boys who had attacked me who should never have done so but whose brutality was entirely the product of others, of us – of we who had armed their struggle against the Russians and ignored their pain and laughed at their civil war and then armed and paid them again for the "War for Civilisation" just a few miles away and then bombed their homes and ripped up their families and called them "collateral damage"'.



For this reason alone, Fisk was no doubt justified in winning last year's David Watt award – presented for 'the outstanding clarification of global events'. However, such justification cannot be attributed to the awards' sponsor, the world's largest mining company and signatory to the Global Compact, Rio Tinto.

Its new, brightly coloured website, www.Riotinto.com, is a mine of disinformation, rebranded as 'responsibly building long term values'. One article presents climate change as an issue over which there is much debate but where the emphasis is very much that things are not as bad as some say. Yet when the company signed

up to the Global Compact in July 2000 it committed to 'undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.'

More illuminating, however, is the image library, a resource offering journalists pictures such as the one below, which makes the Kelian mine in Indonesia look like a jolly nice place to work. Writing on the Corpwatch site last year (www.corpwatch.org/un/updates/2001/riotinto.html), Danny Murphy of Project Underground, the mining and oil company watchdog, commented: 'We find that just at this one mine there are disturbing human rights and environmental abuses that violate the principles laid out in the

Global Compact' – Principle 1 of which requests companies to 'support and respect the protection of international human rights within their sphere of

influence'. Furthermore, according to Mohammed Ramli, spokesperson for the Indonesian Mining Advocacy network: 'The Kelian Mine has consistently manipulated environmental reports.'

According to a Rio Tinto press release, Fisk's winning article examined 'acts of genocide and human atrocity in general' and in particular the Armenian Christian massacre of 1915. Which might make you wonder how on earth a company who sponsors an award won by such an article could possibly be associated with the acts it is accused of in Indonesia and elsewhere?

Well that's the idea, anyway.



Word unheard 'Spells like... victory'

Defusing the language of bombs...

'Daisy Cutter' – makes you think of freshly mown summer lawns and home made lemonade. Oh, and the most powerful non-nuclear bomb ever used, coming now to a wasteland somewhere in eastern Afghanistan. It's what one might call a euphemism, yet another example of our enduring love of sweet sounding syllables to conceal our cruelty.

One might question how many civilians it takes to turn our 'Daisy Cutter' into their 'Weapon of Mass Destruction' (the current *nom de boom* for the enemy's high impact weapons). We'll probably never know the answer, as CNN certainly isn't showing us, and since the offices of Al-Jazeera were 'accidentally' daisy cut on 15 November, neither are they (although you can get a pretty good idea of the effects by visiting www.abunimah.org/ajpics1021).

No, these days if you want the word

on what's happening, it's Hollywood you need. Which is why, on 24 November, President Bush's top political strategist Karl Gove dropped in on Tinseltown's own Movie Mogul Emperors to enlist their help. Their job, as the President of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences put it, was to remind freedom-loving folk (as if there's another sort) that 'America's message is about the strength in our diversity and promoting freedom and liberty.' (Or, to put it another way, drumming up 'Con-Scripts'.)

Gove shouldn't have found the job too difficult. As Mark Crispin Miller, professor of film at NYU, commented: 'Even if Karl Gove hadn't called for this special meeting, the movie studios would still be inclined to depict the US in heroic combat with the forces of international terrorism. The heartless terrorist has been a staple of movies for years.'

Quite. What, after all, would Christmas be without mysterious parcels and lashings of bloodshed on the Box? Furthermore, the word 'Blockbuster' itself may have long been associated with the work of the Hollywood movie machine, but it originally referred to a type of bomb used in World War II that was powerful enough to destroy an entire city block. Knowing that, one can begin to hazard a guess at just how destructive a 'Daisy Cutter' might be, and ask again what it is that distinguishes it from a so-called 'Weapon of Mass Destruction'.

One last question. Does anyone know the origin of the word 'Doodlebug', as used to describe the plane-shaped V-1 bomb, 8,000 of which fell on London during WWII? The *Oxford English Dictionary* says it once meant 'an unscientific device for locating oil', but that can't be it – can it? Any suggestions welcome.

THE Ecologist

RETHINKING BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

"I can't believe what I'm reading - every page grabs my attention. Every article is relevant. You've done a tremendous job in making accessible some of the most censored stories in the British media. I want to congratulate you from the bottom of my heart on the content, style, design and relevancy." Anita Roddick

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SEARCH THE ARCHIVE Already our **ARCHIVE** features virtually every article published in the magazine over the last two years. We are continuing to add articles to it all the time, keeping you as up to date as possible, as well as providing valuable articles from the magazine's 31 year history.

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THE Exchange

The Exchange is a noticeboard for environmental and ethical services and needs, open to all. Entries are FREE for individuals and NGOs, charities and campaign groups. For businesses and educational institutions, the cost is £54 per listing, including a year's free subscription to the magazine. Repeat listings are £20 per issue, £10 extra for a boxed ad. Please send entries – no more than 40 words long – together with cheques where necessary made payable to *The Ecologist*, to Sally Snow, The Ecologist, Unit 18, Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Road, London SW10 0QJ, or email sally@theecologist.org. For more information, call Sally on +44 (0)20 7351 3578. Free listings are allocated first-come first-served, and we reserve the right to refuse any entry. *The Ecologist* does not necessarily endorse the products, organisations or services listed.

APPEALS

URGENT! £15,000 needed to fund Judicial Review against Secretary of State who gave the go-ahead for an out of town, PFI college relocation on 50 acres Grade 1 land, Canterbury, Kent. No Environmental Impact done, contravenes PPG13 and goes against wishes of local people. Cheques to PACE Judicial Review Fund, c/o Dr Meaden, 33 St Stephens Road, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7JD.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Air Pollution 2002

International conference on Modelling, Monitoring and Management of Air Pollution. Segovia, Spain. Paper deadline: 5 February 2002. Conference date: 1-3 July 2002. Website: www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2002/air02/index.html

Brownfields 2002

International conference on Prevention, Assessment, Rehabilitation and Development of Brownfields Sites. Cadiz, Spain. Paper deadline: 23 April. Conference date: 2-4 September. Website: www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2002/brownfields02/index.html

International Symposium on Renewable Energy

Walt Disney World, Orlando, Florida, August 4-8 2002. Visit www.dccc-conferences.ufl.edu/isree8/ or email Sheinkopf@sec.ucf.edu for details. Deadline for abstract 1 March.

CAMPAIGNS

Communities Against Toxics

If you are fighting a clinical waste burner or know of anyone who is (in the UK), could you give me their contact number/address/email. Ralph Ryder, CAT, PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH66 3TX; email: ralph.ryder@communities-against-toxics.org.uk; tel/fax: +44 (0)151 339 5473.

The Fate of the Countryside is in your Hands

Do we want soulless agricultural prairies devoid of wildlife interspersed with golf courses, second homes and theme parks? For more information, contact Action on Industrial Agriculture at agricultureaction@yahoo.com

Please help!

UK company Thames Water has set up a website in association with Water Aid. If 2 million people click on it, they will donate £150,000 to provide safe drinking water for 10,000 people in Africa and Asia. <http://www.givewater.org>

COURSES

Learning in a Global Society

A powerful residential course to help you develop facilitation skills and create effective learning about global issues. Course previously held in London, to be repeated in Manchester in 2002. Funded by the EU; fee £250-£500 (depending on status). Details from Development Education Association. For more details, telephone +44 (0)20 7490 8108; email dea@dea.org.uk

Bat and Bat Surveys: a 3-day foundation course for environmental professionals.

Various dates and locations throughout the UK during Summer 2002. Cost: £490 per person (please enquire for possible reductions) Contact: The Bat Conservation Trust, 15 Cloisters House, 8 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4BG. Tel: 0207 627 2629; email gsargent@bats.org.uk

Low Impact Living Initiative

LILI are offering a range of residential weekend courses in 2002 on practical environmental topics such as biodiesel, compost toilets and solar hot water. Telephone 01296 714184; email lili@lowimpact.org; website www.lowimpact.org

Birkbeck, University of London

As London's leading provider of part-time university courses, Birkbeck offers a broad range of subjects at a variety of levels. For further details of our short courses, certificates, diplomas, undergraduate degrees, and postgraduate taught and research opportunities, call 0845 601 0174.

Opening 26 May 2002 Durrell School of Corfu.

A unique meeting point of the arts and sciences. School will host lectures and seminars by an international faculty of scholars and experts. Assistance with booking accommodation given, also limited number of scholarships available. Further information: USA: Anna Lillios, lillios@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu; Canada: James Gifford, gifford@ualberta.edu; Europe: Richard Pine richardpine@eircom.net; Corfu: Hilary Whitton Paipeti corfiotm@otenet.gr; Durrell School of Corfu, PO Box 445, Corfu 49100, Greece.

DIARY DATES

23 January, London, UK

Organic Food and Farming Rally. A mass rally co-ordinated by Sustain to lobby Parliament in support of more organic food and farming. Tel: 020 7837 1228 or email: otrally@sustainweb.org www.sustain.org

24-26 January, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA

Thinking Ahead: Energy in a Changing Climate Website: www.colorado.edu/center/projects/energy/conference.html

26 January, Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester, UK

Network for Success. This event, funded by the Acorn Trust, will bring together groups and individuals working on every area of social justice – from neighbours working for cleaner streets to animal rights protesters, from asylum seeker support groups to the Ramblers, from NGOs to the smallest, poorest groups. Tel: Networking Newsletter Project +44 (0)161 226 9321, or email info@networkingnewsletter.org.uk

January 28 and 30, Porto Alegre, Brazil
Second edition of the **Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion.**

Mayors from a number of towns around the world will be meeting in Porto Alegre to debate the role of local government in solving problems like poverty, debt, unemployment, and the search for

alternatives to the prevalent neoliberal model. visit: www.portoalegre.rs.gov.br or send an email to: forumdeprefeitos2@gp.prefpoa.com.br

31 January – 4 February, Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York, USA

World Economic Forum. Global summit to decide the political, economic and business agenda for the year ahead, the meeting of the exclusive, un-elected, un-accountable, invite-only think tank that is a main driving force behind the global economy. Contact: WEF, 91-93 route de la Capite, CH-1223 Cologny/Geneva, Switzerland; telephone: +41 22 869 1212 or visit www.weforum.org

31 January – 3 February, Columbia University, New York City, USA

Globalising Justice - National student mobilisation against the WEF. A call for all students, activists and concerned citizens to share their ideas, fears, inspirations and tactics. Conference includes workshops and panels on legal, media and tactical training, forums on history of WEF, globalisation, sustainable development and human rights. Contact the WEF Counter-Summit Organising collective, email globaljustice@peopleforpeace.org or visit

www.studentsforglobaljustice.org for latest updates.

31 January – 4 February, New York, USA
Actions against the World Economic Forum. Working towards an alternative to the violent new world order. Groups currently planning actions: Anti-Capitalist Convergence
www.abolishthebank.org/wef2002.html
International A.N.S.W.E.R
www.internationalanswer.org/news.html#update-wef – Public Eye on New York
www.davos2001.ch/

31 January – 1 February, Brussels, Belgium
The launching Conference of the European Network for Peace and Human Rights will take place at the European Parliament in Brussels. Contact: The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Russell House, Bulwell Lane, Nottingham, UK. Visit www.russfound.org; Email: elfeuro@compuserve.com

31 January – 5 February
World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, Brazil
The second international forum for grassroots groups to look for new answers to build another world of solidarity, social justice and participatory

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31 January – 5 February

World Parliamentary Forum, an initiative organised as part of the first World Social Forum, bringing together parliamentarians from all the continents to discuss important topics in the context of neoliberal globalisation. Email fpm@forumparlamentarmundial.rs.gov.br; telephone +55 51 3210 4486 or visit: www.forumparlamentarmundial.rs.gov.br

1-3 February, Munich, Germany

Munich Security Conference. Protest against the meeting of NATO officials and military strategists. Visit www.buko24.de/contact_eng.htm#support

3 February, Warwickshire, UK

Potato day at HDRA, Ryton Organic Gardens, near Coventry, Warwickshire. A potato extravaganza with over 100 varieties of seed potato to buy. Telephone: 02476 308211; website www.hdra.org.uk

3-22 February, Totnes, Devon, UK

Exploring Globalisation. Contact: Schumacher College, Old Postern, Dartington, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EA, England Tel: 01803 865 934 or visit www.gn.apc.org/schumachercollege

4 February, Devonport, Plymouth, UK

Day of protest focusing on the arrival of the first Trident submarines to Plymouth with HMS Vanguard scheduled to berth on Monday 4th February. The protest is against Trident and against the storage of large quantities of nuclear

waste at the Dockyard. Protest march and non-violent direct action including sit-down protests across all 5 gates of the Dockyard. 12 midday. Telephone 0780 3620390 or email tstaunton@aol.com

4-7 February, San José, Costa Rica

International Conference on the Impacts of Agricultural Research and Development. Sponsored by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre. Email: impacts@cgiar.org or visit: www.cimmyt.org/research/economics/impacts/index.htm

9 February, Brighton, UK

Seedy Saturday – Community Seed Swap. This event is a way of bringing gardeners, seed savers or those wanting to learn more together. Speakers, stalls, demonstrations, seed swap etc. St. George's Church, St. George's Road, Kempdown, Brighton, 11am – 4pm. Tel 01273 882552.

11-13th February, Faslane, Scotland

The BIG Blockade 2002 – Faslane Block 'n' Roll! Three days of protest and non-violent direct action called by Trident Ploughshares, Scottish CND, British CND, Faslane Peace Camp. Phone the Action Line for more information on 0845 458 8361 (local rate); email big_blockade@hotmail.com or visit: www.gn.apc.org/tp2000

12-21 February, New York, USA

UN Commission for Social Development. The 40th session, with the theme of integration of

social and economic policy.

Visit: www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/2002.htm

13-15 February, Cartagena, Colombia

Global Ministerial Environmental Forum. Contact: Beverly Miller, Secretary, UNEP Governing Council. Tel: +254 262 3411 or email: beverly.miller@unep.org

14-17 February, Nuremberg, Germany

BioFach 2002 – World Organic Trade Fair International organic food and natural products conference. Telephone: +49 911 86060; email: info@biofach.de or visit www.biofach.de

15-18 February, California, USA

Youth Summit for Peace and Justice. Student Peace Action Network national student gathering at Southern California Claremont Colleges. "Justice not War. Real Solutions for a Safer World". Southern California Claremont Colleges Workshops include non-violent direct action training for trainers, media and protecting civil liberties, arts in action, street medic and facilitation and consensus in the movement. For more information, visit www.gospan.org/

16 February, Sussex University, East Sussex, UK

Beyond Recycling: Zero Waste One day Conference. Zero Waste is not just recycling and diversion from landfills and incineration but the restructuring of production and distribution systems to prevent the manufacture of waste in the first place. Attend and send your recommendations to the PIU. Email: julijohnson@tiscali.co.uk

17 February, Palermo, Italy

G7 Summit

17-19 February, Nuremberg, Germany

International IFOAM conference on organic guarantee systems **International harmonisation and equivalence in organic agriculture**. Visit www.ifoam.org for conference invitation document.

21 February, Manchester, UK

Raising Money from Trusts. A course looking at different types of charitable trusts, how and why they give support and how best to apply for it. A mix of case studies and interactive group discussion offering guidance on raising money. For information/bookings, contact Directory of Social Change, telephone 0151 708 0117 or email north@dsc.org.uk

21-22 February, Arlington, USA

Agricultural Outlook Forum 2002 US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Graduate School, 600 Maryland Avenue, SW Ste. 280 (IH), Washington DC 20004-2520, USA, telephone +1 202 314 3451 or visit www.usda.gov/oce/waob/agforum.htm

27 February – 1 March, Zurich, Switzerland

BioSquare 2002, Bringing the Global Life Sciences Community Together. This international forum aims to provide more and easier opportunities for business development and research executives from the pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, food, agricultural and financial industries to meet with biotechnology companies. Bayer, Roche, Novartis, Genzyme, GlaxoSmithKline, Genzyme, Serono, Dompe, Danone Dupont, Novozymes – they'll all be there. Contact: E.B.D. Group, telephone: +1 (760) 930 0500; fax +1 (760) 897 2299; email biosquare@ebdgroup.com, website: www.ebdgroup.com/biosquare

23-24 February London, UK

Plan Colombia – Opening the Way to the Multinationals. Conference in London and the AGM of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign. Call

+44 (0)7959 923 448 or email colombia_sc@hotmail.com

27 February 2002, Plymouth, UK

Climate Change and the Environmental and Coastal Resources of the South West: a small business focused Workshop. This is just one of a series of free workshops being held by the Centre for Climate Change Impact Forecasting (C-CLIF) throughout the region. To find out more, call C-CLIF on 01752 232378 or log on to www.c-clif.co.uk. Funded by the European Social Fund.

Spring 2002, UK

Gaia Research is organising a series of events targeting **building designers and cost professionals**. Each is intended to provide useful and practical guidance on how design teams can create more sustainable buildings. For more information, contact Sandy Halliday on 0131 558 7227; email gaiaandy@aol.com or search for CPD at www.GaiaGroup.org

3-4 March 2001, Switzerland

Referendum first on whether the country should become a member of the UN and secondly on the "Yes to Europe" initiative.

5-7 March, Glasgow, UK

Tackling Inequalities: building sustainable communities. Forum designed for those whose work or interests are concerned with promoting the public's health, professionals and non-professionals. Research sessions, workshops, poster exhibition. Visit www.ukpha.org.uk or telephone 0870 010 1932 for details.

8 March, Global

Stop the world and change it. **Global Women's Strike**. Women (and men who support us) are invited to join actions wherever you are. Visit <http://womenstrike8m.server101.com> (English and Spanish).

8-10 March, Tamil Nadu, India

Seed Savers Workshop. Auroville, Tamil Nadu. Aim is to form effective network of Seed Savers. For details, email annadana@auroville.org.in

14 March, Dorset, UK

Kingston Maurward College, Dorchester, 7.30 pm. Talk by Martin Wolfe 'Vegetables in Clover'. To book a place, telephone the college on 01305 215 025. For further information, telephone 01747 811900. Entry is £2 for members of Wessex Organic Movement, £3 non-members.

23 March, Brighton, UK

A day of all things sustainable. Learn more and network with local projects and producers. St Mary Magdalene Primary School, 10am – 5pm. Entry by donation (suggested £5). Contact Val (01273 239418), Alex (01273 685831) or magoose@ntlworld.com

3-5 April, Imperial College, London, UK

Institute of Chartered Foresters conference. Includes on 3rd April "Sustainability and profitability are incompatible" – Oxford-style debate, open to the public. Speakers Charles Secrett and Ben Gill. For further information, contact Neville Elstone on 0131 225 2705 or visit www.charteredforesters.org

17 April, Hanover, Germany

BASE 3rd International Investment forum for Sustainable Energy. For more information, visit www.energy-base.org/forum02

ECOBUS

A national charity offering homeless people long-term work and accommodation. They raise funds by refurbishing and recycling donated goods, saving approximately 3,000 tonnes of waste from



What happens when you turn waste bottles into high fashion fleeces? How can we live well, without destroying the environment? For some inspiring and imaginative answers, take a look at GREEN FUTURES - the leading source of information and debate on the latest in sustainable development.

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domestic tips every year. To find out where your nearest branch is, visit www.emmaus.org.uk

Fairly-traded organic cotton t-shirts

Stylish, fairly-traded organic cotton t-shirts and envelope re-use labels in aid of our campaigns for a fairer world. Call the World Development Movement on 020 7738 3311 or visit www.wdm.org.uk

HOLIDAYS

How about a holiday with a difference?

Farmers' World network is organising a tour of Costa Rica to look at agriculture, rural life and biodiversity. The trip will include visits to fairtrade and organic farms, cloud forests, volcanoes, national parks, multinational agricultural plantations and much more. For further details visit www.fwn.org.uk or telephone 01242 515712.

JOIN

The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management

An independent professional body representing managers and other professionals who are responsible for the stewardship of this country's environmental assets. Becoming a member will give you unlimited access to the key players in environmental management across all sectors. Email membership@ciwem.org.uk or call +44 (0)20 7831 3110.

The Hydrogen Energy Association of UK and Ireland

HEAUKI puts the case for hydrogen, the only feasible non-fossil fuel, clean and climate-friendly. For information and possible involvement, write to Co-ordinator, HEAUKI, 22a Beswick Street, Manchester, M4 7HR; telephone +44 (0)161 273 8595; email co-ordinator@hydrogen-heauki.org

BTCV. Founded in 1959, we enable over 130,000 volunteers every year to take hands-on action to improve both the rural and urban environment. Activities include regular conservation days, UK and international working holidays, a support scheme for local community groups and the new Green Gym programme. Visit www.btcv.org

Kingfisher

Lancashire; under 35, interested in the countryside and environment, and like to extend your social scene? Kingfisher is a new social group in the Pendle and Fylde areas. Details from John, telephone 01253 626268 or visit www.kingenv.org

The Marine Connection – conservation through education, protecting whales, dolphins and the world's oceans for future generations. Visit www.marineconnection.org

PROJECTS

Cannabis and hemp. I propose a meeting in central London to bring together the teachers of the tribes; promoters, news, media and people who have access to helping lift the lid on the true facts. If you are interested in taking part, please contact steve@allishemp.co.uk

Do you have an old mobile phone? We are a specialist organisation assisting in the collection and recycling of old and unwanted mobile phones. Visit www.recyclingappeal.com/uk/phones.htm or telephone 08451 30 20 10 to arrange collection.

The Young Envisionaries Award (YEVA) currently piloting in five London schools, gives sixth form students the much-needed opportunity to initiate environmental projects in their schools and local communities. Visit www.yeva.org which allows students to document and publicise their

environmental campaigns using the latest digital technology. Log on and watch them Go MaD.

Are you working in the field of animal observation?

The BBC are making a ground-breaking series about how new technologies can reveal discoveries in animal behaviour. If you are involved with research involving contact with wild animals or birds, I'd love to hear about your work. Please contact Tania Dorrity on +44 (0)117 974 7570 or email tania.dorrity@bbc.co.uk

Organic Growers to Compete with Supermarkets

A not-for-profit service is under development to enable organic growers to compete with supermarkets. The growers deliver in bulk, but receive close to retail prices. The customer gets tailored orders, fresh, locally grown with minimum packing from their local shop. Contact: Richard Page, Veg-Edible Ltd, 50 Woodend Road, Alloway, KA7 4QR; tel: +44 (0)1292 442300; email: richard_page@ntiworld.com

Eco-lodge and holistic lifestyle vacation

project in New Zealand's South Island. Excellent ethical investment opportunity and a chance to become involved in leading edge 21st century ecotourism operation. Those interested in the investment opportunity or becoming a part of the development team should contact Dougal Crockett at dougal.c@ihug.co.nz

Oaklands Park, Gloucestershire, UK

A Camphill Village Community with a population of 100 people of varied abilities from various nations. We are looking for individuals and families with initiative and vision to take an active part in our community. Please contact Sybille van de Voort, Camphill Village Trust, Oaklands Park, Newnham, Glos, GL14 1EF; telephone +44 1594 516551.

FUSE is a series of cultural events in 2002, organised by Compassion in World Farming Trust in collaboration with Littoral, to stimulate debate on the science that brought us the cloning of Dolly. For details on how you can be a participating artist, contact FUSE, Compassion in World Farming Trust, 5a Charles Street, Petersfield, GU32 3EH. Tel: 01730 268070; Fax: 01730 260791; Email: ciwtrust@ciwf.co.uk; Website: ciwf.co.uk

PUBLICATIONS

Smart Development: Climate Change and the Built Environment

Available free of charge from Sustainability Northwest and can be downloaded in Adobe Acrobat format from www.snw.org.uk/smartdevelopment

An Ethical Career in Science and Technology

Publication by Scientists for Global Responsibility, challenging UK Science to take much greater responsibility for the consequences of its work. For further information, contact Dr Stuart Parkinson, telephone 07941 953640 or email pressoffice@sgr.org.uk

La Causa dei Popoli

The only Italian-language journal devoted to minorities, indigenous peoples and stateless nations. Articles, reviews and conference schedules. Contributors include the most renowned scholars and campaigners. www.popoli-minacciati.it/causa.htm

GE: Genetic Engineering and You by Moyra Bremner. The most thoroughly researched book on the topic, and probably the most readable. To obtain a copy at the reduced price of £6 (inc P&P) call Sally Snow at *The Ecologist* on +44 (0)20 7351 3578 and quote this offer.

RESOURCES

Natural Friends The introduction agency for non-smoking, environmentally-friendly and socially-conscious singles everywhere. Free details on telephone 0800 281 933 or visit www.natural-friends.com

Count the Cost of your Car – Online.

www.travelcalculator.org The aim is to encourage everyone to: reduce the impact of their road transport; get fitter; save money

Personal and Global Change

A Revolutionary Speaker. Talks by Michael Eaglemeare. Spiritual-ecological action. Talks given to groups/seminars/conferences. Enquiries invited from UK/International. No charge is made. Telephone +44 (0)1392 877228; email michael@eaglemeare.org

GreenNet. GN is celebrating 15 years at work. GN News; Strategic use of the internet; Open source software; GN support news; GN project news; GN training; GN events. Visit us at www.gn.apc.org/newsletter/index.asp

SITUATIONS VACANT

Corporate Watch is looking for an Energy Researcher. Knowledge of the energy sector and experience of grassroots campaigning are an advantage; motivation, ability to work co-operatively and attention to detail are essential. For more details, see www.corporatewatch.org.uk or contact pippa@corporatewatch.org

SITUATIONS WANTED

Documentary Producer, Director, Researcher, Photographer seeks ethical/social projects that reflect the ethos of *The Ecologist*. Call Robyn on 07870 675 131 or email robyn24_7@hotmail.com

VOLUNTEERS

www.idealists.org

A gateway to over 23,000 organisations, jobs and volunteering opportunities all over the world.

Can you help at festivals, conferences, meetings in 2002?

We are looking for volunteers to help man *The Ecologist* stands at events throughout the UK next year. Please contact Sally on 020 7351 3578 or email sally@theecologist.org

Greenhouse – Norwich's Environmental Centre.

Are you interested in Organic and Fairtrade issues and developing the local food economy? We welcome volunteers to assist in our shop and café. To find out more about getting involved, telephone 01603 631 007.

Internship available at Environment and Social Development Organisation (ESDO),

national research and networking organisation in Bangladesh. Excellent opportunity to get hands on experiences in implementation of environment related projects and research work. Visit www.esdobd.org to find out about us.



10th annual public health forum
The UK's largest multi-disciplinary conference on public health

tackling inequalities:

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

5-7 March, 2002
Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, Glasgow

WHO IS THE FORUM FOR? Those whose work or interests are concerned with promoting the public's health – professionals and non-professionals alike, at all levels of seniority.

PROGRAMME THEME - 'tackling inequalities: building sustainable communities' will focus on the development and implementation of healthy policy and practice. There have been over 300 abstracts submitted and Parallel Session topics include:

- Urban Regeneration
- Housing, Fuel, Poverty and Health
- Transport and Health
- Rural Regeneration
- Health and environment
- Measuring Health Inequality
- Capacity Building
- Community Development
- Social Inclusion and health
- Workplace Health
- Rural Regeneration
- Strategic Partnerships

Geof Rayner, Chairman of UKPHA - "Tackling Health Inequalities and building sustainable communities is exactly what the UKPHA is about, and that's why the conference is attracting so much interest."

For a programme and registration form, or information about exhibiting at the conference, please contact
Monica Frost Tel: 0870 010 1932
Email: monica@ukpha.org.uk

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The Ecologist special issues

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