

The Ecologist

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- A "Model" Indian Coal Mine
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EDITORIAL OFFICE,
AGRICULTURE HOUSE, BATH ROAD,
STURMINSTER NEWTON, DORSET,
DT10 1DU, ENGLAND, UK.
TEL +44-258-73476 FAX +44-258-73748
E-MAIL ECOLOGIST@GN.APC.ORG

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My Enemy's Enemies . . .

In opposing destructive developments within their own communities, local peoples are often cannily opportunistic in the actions they take and the alliances they forge to increase their bargaining power. Rivalries between those who would impose a project — different government departments, for example, or companies competing for the work — may be exploited to good effect; outside pressure groups approached to bring their support to the local cause; the vanity (or genuine doubts) of officials played up to in order to obtain inside information; and the cause of individual species or particular social groups few had previously concerned themselves with adopted as symbols of resistance, if to do so wins the day. Who, for example, had heard of the snail darter before opponents of the Tellico Dam in the USA found that its possible extermination by the dam offered the opportunity of using legislation on the protection of a threatened species to stop the project in its tracks?

Such opportunism is often cynical and frequently manipulative, but it is eminently human. Faced with a direct threat to one's livelihood, and confronted by forces more powerful than oneself, it is not always possible to insist on the luxury of "keeping one's hands clean" in what can quickly become a very dirty world, however much one might like to remain aloof from compromise and unsavoury deals. In such circumstances, the old dictum that "My enemy's enemies may not be my friends but they may be useful" can become a key consideration in deciding the tactics of opposition.

Even in the context of a local fight against a local project that will have a local impact — be it a dam, an incinerator, a shopping centre or a road — opportunistic alliances are not to be entered lightly: whatever the short-term advantages, supping with one's enemy's enemy can disastrously backfire. There are too many examples of communities which have made common cause with city-based environmentalists to stop a forest being logged or submerged by a dam, only to find those same environmentalists subsequently clamouring for the forest to be made a national park and declared off-limits to local people. Not surprisingly, who gains and who loses from specific tactics, who is empowered or disempowered by possible alliances, are generally subjects of heated debate within communities — though the debate may not be framed in these terms. The personality clashes, backbiting and in-fighting may appear frustrating and morale-sapping to outsiders, but for the community itself, they are often an inescapable part of the process whereby factions within the community attempt to place checks and balances on each other. Where livelihoods are involved, the question of *who* sets the campaign agenda and *how* is, in many respects, as important as the campaign itself — for, win or lose, the community must ultimately live with the consequences of the alliances it forges and the tactics it adopts.

"Saving the World"

The same is not necessarily true for "professional" campaigners, those employed full-time in pressure groups (*The Ecologist* included). Ungrounded in the struggles of a specific com-

munity, our campaigns are often not a response to direct threats to our livelihoods or to an environment on which we depend for our immediate needs, but to threats to other peoples' livelihoods and environments — or even more abstractly, to "people" and "nature". The issues we professional campaigners tend to embrace are not limited to achieving specific objectives (stopping a dam here or banning a given harmful chemical there) but are driven by open-ended, amorphous ones — "saving the planet", "social justice", "human rights", "gender equity", "fair trade" or whatever. And, just as the global reach of multinationals permits them to evade political control by any given community, so there is a danger that the very globalism of our concerns makes our work equally unaccountable. Increasingly driven by the organizational needs of the groups we work with (be it the need to raise funds, maintain a high public profile, or increase our credibility within government circles), support for the struggles of local communities is too often given not out of unconditional solidarity, but because it serves as a means of promoting the goals of our organizations — on the assumption that what is good for, say, Greenpeace or *The Ecologist*, must be good for the environment or oppressed peoples. The "grassroots" comes to be viewed not as the political base to which we are accountable, but as convenient political muscle to be mobilized in support of an agenda set by professional campaigners. The key question, "Who does our work empower or disempower?" is set to one side.

Empowering Whom?

Yet, in ignoring — or glossing over — that question, there is a danger of professional campaigners, however well-intentioned, pursuing tactics or promoting policies that actively undermine the attempts of local people to reclaim their commons (see *The Ecologist*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1992). In India, Medha Patkar, a leading activist against the Sardar Sarovar Project, warns of "an upcoming breed of 'neo-bureaucratic NGOs' who live in urban areas, profess solidarity with the downtrodden, have the right 'contacts' for funding, give up nothing and still [call themselves] activists."¹ Likewise, as Mark Dowie reports of the US environmental movement: "Grassroots activists complain that the nationals have become arrogant, élitist, insensitive to local efforts and more concerned with wildlife than human life. At best the nationals are seen as service organizations providing occasional legal or moral support in grassroots issues or projects. When nationals do get involved in local campaigns, however, decisions are often made in Washington, where deals are struck in private without local consultation and without concern for local consequences."²

Dowie goes on to give the following example:

"Recently, in North Carolina, such collusion took place when the state Department of Agriculture, advocates for the agro-biotech industry, and a representative of the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) met to draft the North Carolina

Genetically Engineered Organisms Act (and accompanying regulations). The law, a consensus bill that took roughly a year to develop, explicitly prohibits municipalities throughout the state from blocking the release of genetically-engineered organisms in their county. The EDF representative approved this precedent-setting provision and EDF leaders believe to this day that the best interests of the environment were served by the bill. According to grassroots environmentalists, however, EDF aided and abetted the enemy, guaranteed the unchallenged commercial introduction of genetically-engineered organisms into local environments, and traded away community rights for a few dubious short-term gains. In such cases, when the environmental movement is approached by industry to 'negotiate', local representatives ask only that they be invited to sit at the table.¹³

Alliances which Disempower

Some campaigners may riposte that they would never become involved in such compromised deals. Yet, compromise is an integral part of alliance building, and whilst it is possible to limit the extent of compromise when making alliances with friends, the opposite is often the case when alliances are forged between those whose only point of contact is opposition to a third party. In such fragile alliances, the pressure to set to one side discussion of issues that are potentially divisive is enormous: one's enemy's enemies may cease to be so friendly if, for example, one begins to question their sources of power, or to speak out about the role that *they* might play in causing environmental destruction. Such pressures are all the more acute where one's enemy's enemies enjoy greater prestige or power than oneself — for example, where an NGO believes it has found common cause with an industrial lobby or a faction within government.

In such circumstances, the dangers of making compromises that *disempower* local peoples and *empower* the interests they are fighting, increase the more one becomes distanced from local struggles. The concerns that are central to many local communities — issues pertaining to control over land and other natural resources, for example, or to popular participation in decision-making — become bargaining chips, to be taken up only when the occasion suits. Even where such issues are taken up by one's partners in an alliance, they may be dropped once one enemy's enemies have achieved what *they* want — and you are no longer useful to them.

This is not to say that tactical alliances should be avoided — nor that one's enemy's enemy may not indeed be useful. Nor is it to underestimate the pressures that lead us into compromising alliances. It is, however, to argue that in cases where alliances are forged without being grounded in grassroots concerns; where common ground is found only by setting aside issues that might bring into question the power enjoyed by any one party; and where those who make the alliances do not have to suffer their consequences; that such alliances may be a force for marginalizing those for whom political struggle is not just another campaign but a defence of livelihood.

Nicholas Hildyard

1. Sekhar, R., "An Interview with Medha Patkar", *The Eye*, Vol. 1, No. 3, May-June 1992.
2. Dowie, M., "American Environmentalism: A Movement Courting Irrelevance", *World Policy Journal*, Winter 1991-92.
3. Ibid.

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Maastricht

The Protectionism of Free Trade

by

Nicholas Hildyard

In 1986, the twelve member states of the European Economic Community signed the Single European Act which committed them to dismantling all legislative barriers to the free movement of goods, services, capital and people between them by 31 December, 1992. The Single Market now in force has created a free trade zone encompassing 340 million people, a market constructed to protect the multinational interests that have long lobbied for its creation and which are now the dominant economic and political force within Europe. The Treaty on European Union — commonly known as the Maastricht Treaty after the Dutch town where it was signed in February 1992 by EEC heads of government — will, if ratified by all member states, give those multinational interests the legal powers and administrative apparatus of a full-blown state.

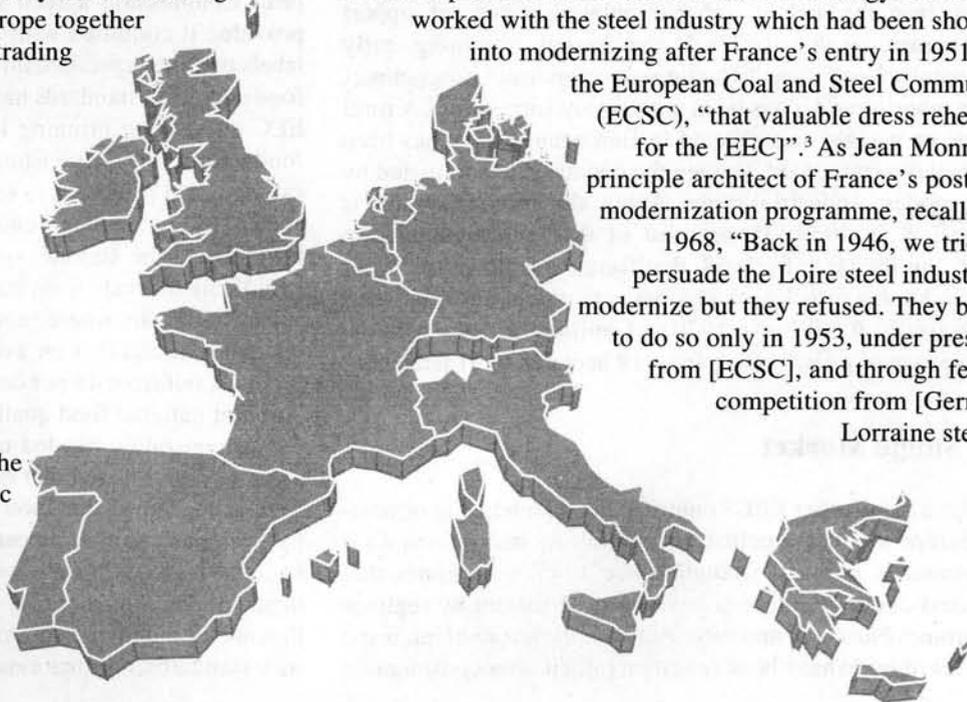
Europe is a construct, defined by economic and political interests rather than physical geography or a common "culture". This construct has varied throughout the region's history: for the Ancient Greeks, Europe was the land mass behind the Greek mainland; later, it was the domain of the great European powers — the Holy Roman Empire, Napoleon's France or the Austro-Hungarian Empire of the Hapsburgs.

In 1957, Europe acquired a new definition when six countries founded the European Economic Community (EEC) under the Treaty of Rome, another six joining by 1986.¹ Europe (as it is understood in the boardrooms of Tokyo or New York, or in the pubs of Britain) now means the EEC. Greece, although separated from the rest of Europe by a host of non-European (that is, non-EEC) countries, is nonetheless part of Europe; Finland, although it features on maps of northern Europe, is not; Britain was "out" but is now "in", and Norway is still deciding.

The glue that holds this new Europe together is a set of mutually-advantageous trading arrangements, ranging from open borders to common standards, between the most powerful economic interest groups in the 12 individual states that now make up the EEC. National regulations to protect home industries have gradually been replaced by Europe-wide regulations that protect those industries with "European" (and, increasingly, global) reach. The nation state has been pushed into the background as the unit of economic administration: sovereignty has shifted to pan-European factions within government and business, operating through the institutions that make up the EEC.

Modernization and Change

From its inception, the EEC was set on turning its members into dynamic, industrial economies, able to compete on the world market. In the case of France, joining the EEC was part of a wider plan to transform the country from a largely rural society into an industrial state, initiated by a core group of government technocrats under the slogan "Modernization or Downfall". By ripping open the protectionist cocoon around France's major industries, the EEC would force them to compete, allowing the few "enclaves of modernism" that had emerged out of post-war reconstruction to break free from the shackles of "La Vieille France" — the France of pampered national industries, of "lazy" peasants who refused to leave the land to supply labour to industry, and of rural, guild or family-based businesses, content to produce for the local market.² The strategy had already worked with the steel industry which had been shocked into modernizing after France's entry in 1951 into the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), "that valuable dress rehearsal for the [EEC]".³ As Jean Monnet, a principle architect of France's post-war modernization programme, recalled in 1968, "Back in 1946, we tried to persuade the Loire steel industry to modernize but they refused. They began to do so only in 1953, under pressure from [ECSC], and through fear of competition from [German] Lorraine steel."⁴



Pete Sonderskov

Within two years of signing the Treaty of Rome, France was transformed from one of the most protectionist economies in Europe to one of the most "open", its tariffs being cut by 90 per cent. The impact on the economy was dramatic: between 1958 and 1962, France doubled its overall exports and trebled its exports to other EEC members. In chemicals and automobiles, French exports to Germany alone rose more than eightfold. As John Ardagh, writing in 1968, commented in his book *The New France: De Gaulle and After*:

"In every field, the average French firm's attitude to exports and productivity has changed strikingly in the last ten years . . . With the coming of the [EEC], many smaller firms have hurriedly joined forces to create new export subsidiaries, and for the first time are stirring outside their frontiers."⁵

Those businesses which could not compete against foreign or domestic rivals were rapidly edged out of business. Thousands of "inefficient" small family businesses — often committed to high craftsmanship but low sales — were pushed into bankruptcy, taken over or forced to merge.⁶

Even where EEC programmes overtly aimed to preserve the status quo — as, for example, in the Common Agricultural Policy's commitment to maintaining farmers on the land by ensuring a fair standard of living for the agricultural community — the underlying rationale was still one of modernization and change. As David Goodman and Michael Redclift note in their seminal book, *From Peasant to Proletarian*:

"During the 1950s and 1960s, the attempt to design 'European' agricultural policies in the countries of the EEC, although a political stumbling block, was also in some respects a *sine qua non* for re-establishing a viable industrial economy, as well as a means of gaining the tacit support of much of the rural population for supranational planning. Without increases in agricultural production, largely effected through price supports and subsidy mechanisms, it would have proved more difficult to provide a 'breathing space' in which population shifts could occur, and without which industry would be starved of manpower."⁷

The thrust of the EEC's agricultural policy has thus been to *manage*, rather than stem, the displacement of small family farmers from the land through manipulating prices and support programmes, on the one hand, and through retraining, early retirement schemes and "structural development" programmes on the other — and it has been remarkably successful.⁸ A rural exodus on a scale unparalleled in European history has been deliberately stimulated, leaving the countryside dominated by large, modern, industrial farms. Again, the French example is illustrative. In 1939, 35 per cent of the French population worked on the land; by 1968, that figure was down to 17 per cent; and today, it is less than 5 per cent, the number of farms falling from 1.6 million in 1970 to 1 million in 1990, with the average size of a farm rising from 19 hectares to 31 hectares.⁹

The Single Market

In France, as in other EEC countries, the restructuring of post-war Europe was never politically neutral. As multinationalism has grown in political strength since 1945, so regimes that protected *domestic* interests have been edged out by regimes that protect *European* and increasingly *multinational* interests: the rules of trade have been rewritten (albeit after considerable

political wrangling) to create what free traders call "a level playing field" — a pitch that is "level" for those whose commercial interests demand untrammelled access to markets within Europe and abroad. For those who rely on local markets, however, or who find themselves on the periphery of this Europe, the playing field is far from level: from their point of view, it is deliberately inclined against them.

Nowhere is that bias more evident than in the rules and regulations that have come into force as a result of the 1986 Single Act, under which EEC member states agreed to dismantle all remaining national legislative barriers to the free movement between their countries of goods, services, capital and people (the "four freedoms") by 31 December, 1992. By signing the Single Act, the 12 EEC countries effectively agreed to subordinate their national or regional interests to the longer-term (and supposedly shared) interests of creating an EEC-wide free trade zone out of which, it was hoped, European-based companies of sufficient size and strength would emerge to "rise to the competitive challenge posed by the USA and Japan".¹⁰ In future, the sole benchmark for deciding on what constitutes a barrier to the four freedoms would be the competitiveness of European companies in the Single Market.

*For those who rely on local markets,
the "level playing field" is deliberately
inclined against them.*

The project was business-driven from the start — the proposal for the Single Market was drafted by, among others, Wisse Dekker, the Chief Executive of Philips, and Giovanni Agnelli, head of Italy's FIAT conglomerate¹¹ — and business has used the process of setting up the Market to boost profits at the expense of product quality; to drive smaller companies out of business; and to undermine (or block) environmental and public health measures deemed onerous to business.

To facilitate the free flow of goods between countries, the process of making product standards the same in each country ("harmonizing" in Eurospeak) was moved up the agenda to become a top priority. In the area of food standards, the European Commission agreed that any foodstuff could be sold, provided it complied with certain public health rules and its label contained specified information for consumers.¹² National food and drink standards have thus been abolished in favour of EEC ones, often bringing lower costs for business but lower food quality for the consumer. Germany's beer producers, for example, are projected to save 22 per cent of their production costs,¹³ following the rescinding of the country's age-old "pure beer" laws, the Reinheitsgenbot, which stipulated that beer could only be made from hops and barley, with no additives or sugar. In Britain, where food standards were scrapped in 1986, one study found that on average the amount of meat in meat products fell from 46 per cent to 31 per cent following deregulation of national food quality rules.¹⁴

Harmonization has led to a lowering of standards in other areas as well. The number of EEC permitted food additives has been expanded, so that food producers in Germany and Greece, for example, can now choose from 412 additives whereas under national legislation they were restricted to using just 120 of them. As Dr. Tim Lang of the British-based consumer group Parents for Safe Food comments: "In the negotiations for EEC-wide standards, multinational food manufacturing interests have



Although EEC law requires environmental impact assessments for development projects, no assessment was carried out for the Single Market project. Yet its environmental impact is likely to be severe: transborder lorry traffic alone is estimated to increase by 30-50 per cent and motorways by 12,000 kilometres, all leading in turn to a dramatic rise in greenhouse gas emissions.

got what they wanted. Consumers have been urging a reduction in additive use: industry has got an expansion.” In several instances, banned additives will be legal again: Britain, for example, will be obliged to allow the import of foods containing cyclamate sweeteners, despite contrary government health department advice because cyclamates are suspected carcinogens.¹⁵

Conversely, where larger industries have seen an opportunity to use tighter standards to squeeze smaller competitors, they have seized it. In the meat industry, more stringent hygiene standards have been pushed through the EEC with the support of large slaughterhouse interests.¹⁶ Unable to afford to implement the new regulations, half of the estimated 600 slaughterhouses in Britain, many of them local, family-owned concerns, will in all likelihood be driven out of business, their trade being picked up by the larger abattoirs. Local butchers are likely to be affected too, since the larger slaughterhouses tend to sell direct to supermarkets, further concentrating the meat industry into fewer and fewer hands.

Cries of “trade barrier” have also been raised against laws to protect the environment. In 1987, the Belgian province of Wallonia was taken to court by the European Commission for prohibiting the import of toxic waste into the province, a block to the free movement of goods between community members (under EEC law, waste — however toxic — is deemed a legitimate and tradeable “good”). In October 1992, an EEC-wide compromise was reached by EEC environment ministers under which national authorities may prohibit the importation of waste for *disposal* but not for *recovery* (for instance, through recycling or processing). However, this leaves the law wide open to legal abuse: as Greenpeace notes: “For any waste stream, a ‘recovery operation’ can be invented to justify its export no matter how technologically or environmentally senseless.”¹⁷

Corporate Concentration

With the playing field levelled in their favour and capital free to move throughout the EEC, multinational interests have received in abundance what the Cecchini Report, a 1988 analysis of the projected economic benefits of the Single Market, promised them: cheaper costs and more convivial standards.¹⁸ One result has been a spate of take-overs and mergers — Europe’s 1,000 leading firms more than doubled their mergers and acquisitions between 1986 and 1989 — creating multinational giants whose influence on government, and whose control of trade, is pan-European.¹⁹ Larger firms have snapped up smaller ones to gain control of local distribution networks or to get rid of rival brand products. In banking, soft drinks and paints, the top five companies now control 38 per cent, 50 per cent and 25 per cent of their respective markets. Of the 39 companies that dominated the European trade in household appliances in the 1970s, 34 had

been swallowed up by 1990, leaving the five largest in control of some 60 per cent of the market.²⁰ In other areas too, there have been mergers. In two of the biggest cross-border deals of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Siemens of Germany and Britain’s GEC jointly acquired Plessey, the British electronics firm, while Carnaud of France and Metal Box of Britain merged to form CMB packaging.²¹

Core and Periphery

As a union of multinational business interests rather than a “union of the peoples of Europe” (the stated objective of the Treaty of Rome), the EEC has split its domain into a core and a periphery. The result is not One Europe but several.²² Running through the centre lies the EEC’s productive heartland — the industrial belt that begins in northern Britain, runs down through eastern France and western Germany and ends abruptly in northern Italy. Within that belt lies the Europe of the service industries, of banking and administration — the so-called “golden banana”²³ stretching from London through Brussels to Milan. Outside those core areas (and, embarrassingly, also within them) lies Peripheral Europe: run-down black spots whose industries are not competitive; areas whose peasant way of life does not match the EEC’s vision of the future; areas deemed fit only to supply cheap labour to the pan-European commercial interests that dominate the core.

Free to go anywhere they want to in Europe, companies have sought to invest their capital wherever it will earn the highest returns. High technology sectors such as the electronics industry are favoured over less productive sectors; areas of cheap or unorganized labour over areas where wages are high or where trade unions are strong. Poorer rural areas with low wages or where farmers find it hard to remain on the land are thus targeted for “development”. With the average worker paid less than \$4 an hour in Portugal, compared with \$13 in Germany and almost \$16 in Denmark, it is “no wonder that German companies now seem keener on sunnier climes.”²⁴ As with investment by Northern interests in Third World countries, the major beneficiaries are primarily those in the metropolitan “core” areas to which profits are repatriated.

Demands for higher wages are met by threats to transfer production elsewhere. As the World Council of Churches (WCC) notes:

“Manufacturers can, with the benefit of new technology, divide up their operations between different countries and shift production from one country to another when economic conditions dictate that they should . . . This has been done against the odds until now because of the many fiscal, technical and other barriers that still exist between the EEC countries; it will become extremely simple after 1992.”²⁵

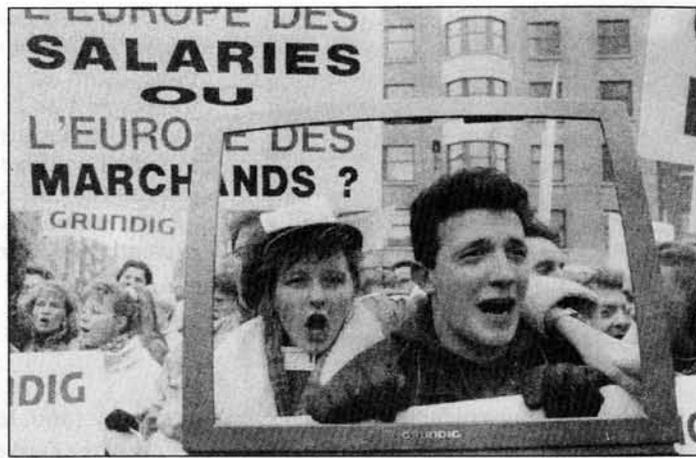
For employers, Europe's labour market is now a "buyer's market", as areas of high unemployment seek to attract investment by undercutting their competitors' pay and conditions. The 1993 decision by Hoover Europe to close its Longvic plant in France and switch production to Cambuslang near Glasgow, for example, was secured in large part by the Scottish workforce agreeing to accept limited period contracts for new workers, constraints on the right to strike, cuts in overtime, a year-long freeze in wages, flexible working time and practices and the introduction of video cameras on the factory floor.²⁶ Such "beggar-my-neighbour" tactics — however understandable — have led to accusations of "social dumping" as workers in one region find themselves losing their jobs to a more compliant workforce elsewhere. Yet the jobs created by social dumping will generally have little security. As the WCC notes:

"The new workforce predicated by 1992 consists of a slimmed down, highly trained and skilled core of workers for electronics, research and 'sunrise' industries, and a mass of 'flexible' unskilled workers in, for example, building and construction, service industries, garment manufacture and food processing, who can be taken on, laid off, employed part-time, and moved around the Community as required."²⁷

Increased Marginalization

The increasing migration of workers in search of jobs and the widening of economic differences between poor and rich regions is likely to be greatly exacerbated by the economic and monetary union proposed under the Maastricht Treaty. At present, an EEC country which is faced with high production costs relative to its other EEC partners can devalue its currency, increasing the cost of its imports and decreasing the cost of its exports. With the adoption of a single European currency — a central plank of the Maastricht Treaty — that option will no longer be available. Uncompetitive countries will have little option but to adjust their economies through wage restraint, further deregulation, increased productivity, lower taxation and higher unemployment.²⁸

For free marketeers, such enforced restructuring is a necessary — if painful — step in forging a leaner economy to compete on the world market. But others are less sanguine. They point to the experience of countries such as Italy where the adoption of a single currency (albeit over a century ago) has contributed to a widening of the disparities between rich and poor regions. Not only has available capital from the poorer regions been sucked into the richer areas, but employment opportunities in the more competitive Northern states have attracted the unemployed from the South, fuelling a xenophobic backlash and creating an underclass of despised and exploited



French Grundig employees protested in early February against the company's decision to transfer jobs elsewhere. If more workers have to move to other countries where the jobs are, more protests are likely, some not so peaceful . . .

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economic migrants. To prevent such migration, the Italian government has sought to subsidize the South through social funds — further fuelling Northern resentment against the South since much of the money is generated by Northern industry.²⁹ One result is the emergence of separatist movements, such as the Lombardy League, the Venetian League and the Tuscan League, all of which now capture a major proportion of votes in national and regional elections. Grounded in a hostility to "foreigners", such separatist movements,

many of which are neo-fascist, will be further boosted both by Maastricht's commitment to encourage the free movement of workers (in effect, economic migrants) and by social dumping. As such movements gain ground, so racial violence and ethnic tensions will be greatly increased.

Social Funds: Further Disparity

Recognizing the centrifugal tendencies of the Single Market and monetary union, Article 130C of the Maastricht Treaty provides for increased central funding of regional development programmes,³⁰ while other articles, such as the Social Chapter, aim to "protect" the citizens of Europe from the likely social and economic fallout of economic union.

It is a moot point, however, whether the beneficiaries of regional development funds are Europe's citizens or EEC multinationals, because such funding has been used to break open local economies and force local communities into the economic mainstream. In Spain, for example, the EEC's structural funds have been used to introduce intensive, export-oriented agriculture at great cost to local livelihoods, exacerbating regional inequalities and transforming cultural diversity into economic disparity.³¹

Maastricht's social programmes are similarly biased towards industrial goals. Under the heading "Economic and Social Cohesion", Article 130A directs governments to reduce the "backwardness" of their "least-favoured areas", in particular "rural areas", with the assistance of the EEC Structural Fund.³² Grants made from the proposed European Social Fund are aimed at restructuring the workforce to meet the demands of industry: to "improve employment opportunities for workers in the internal market . . . to render the employment of workers easier, to increase their geographical and occupational mobility within the community."³³ To that end, an EEC-wide vocational training programme will "facilitate adaptation to industrial change, ease integration into the labour market, facilitate access to vocational training, encourage mobility of instructors and trainees, stimulate co-operation between training establishments and firms, and develop information exchanges."

Maastricht's Social Chapter offers more of the same. It may provide for workers' rights, but like its 1989 predecessor, the Social Charter, it is concerned primarily with ensuring a pliable

workforce. Of the Charter, Frances Webber has written:

"Just by looking at the stated aims of the Charter, we can see that it is not interested in people, but only in efficient and productive units of labour: that it is not interested in the economically inactive, but only in workers; and that it is not interested in democracy or giving people any control over their own lives, but is basically about management [and manipulation] . . . There is, for example, no right to housing, no right to education (as opposed to vocational training), no right to health facilities outside of work, and no political rights whatsoever."³⁴

The same criticism may be made just as forcefully of the Social Chapter.

Shifts of Power

With completion of the Single Market, the political economy of Europe has been dramatically reshaped. Implementation of the Maastricht Treaty will shift power still further from national interest groups with domestic constituencies to multinational interest groups, unfettered by local allegiances. The process has been self-reinforcing. Firstly, as economic power has become concentrated in the hands of an ever smaller group of multinational companies, so their grip on EEC economic policy has grown. Secondly, as more people have become dependent for their livelihoods on inter-European trade, so political support for multinational factions within government and commerce has broadened and deepened within Europe. And, thirdly, by providing a power base outside of national politics, the EEC has enabled multinational interests that may be relatively powerless in any given country to increase their bargaining power by building up alliances with like-minded groups in other member states, using the European Commission rather than national governments to push for policies favourable to their goals.

Even non-EEC states have been unable to remain aloof from the process: the gravitational pull exerted by a powerful trading block such as the EEC has undermined national sovereignty, regardless of Community membership. The pressure on the Swiss to develop their transport infrastructure for the benefit of the EEC is symptomatic of the process as the country is drawn inexorably into the European nexus. As *The Economist* also comments:

"What is the point of Switzerland priding itself on secretive banking laws, when the big Swiss banks, now multinational, have to reveal all in countries where the rules are different . . . The greater the intimacy, the more meaningless it becomes to distinguish trade with neighbours from commerce at home, and the less feasible it becomes to regulate commerce nationally. For good or ill, the technology of moving goods, services, people and money around has ousted the European nation as the convenient unit of economic administration."³⁵

Maastricht and The Multinational State

Another reason why national governments are no longer convenient is because, despite being EEC members, they cannot be



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. . . Extremist violence directed against foreign workers and asylum-seekers is increasing. On Germany's streets last year, Nazi slogans were chanted.

relied upon to implement EEC rules where they conflict with still powerful domestic interests. In 1991, Italy, for example, failed to implement 22 of the European Court's rulings on fair trade practices. In mid-1991, only 37 of the 126 Single Market laws that should have been implemented were operating in all 12 member states.³⁶ As Zymunt Tyskiewicz of UNICE, the largest federation of European industrial interests, complains, "There are key sectors in which progress [towards a borderless market] has been blocked, such as harmonization of Value Added Tax. This is very frustrating for businessmen."³⁷

The new power brokers of Europe, the business community, are thus seeking political institutions and fiscal arrangements which suit their needs — new governing bodies, beholden to no national constituency and beyond the control of ordinary citizens. It is precisely such new

arrangements that the Maastricht Treaty will provide. National sovereignty, having been "pooled" through the Treaty of Rome and the Single Market, will now be dissolved away for good through the acid bath of political and fiscal union. The new sovereigns will be the multinational managers, their administrative capital will be Brussels, and their flag of convenience that of the EEC.

Concentrating Power

In post-Maastricht Europe, national governments will surrender all control over monetary policy to an unelected body, the European Monetary Institute (EMI) which will formulate "the overall orientation of monetary policy and exchange rate policy."³⁸ Its proceedings will be confidential and its decisions binding.³⁹ Policies currently favoured by multinational interests — essentially monetarism and free trade — will be *required* of all member states *by law*, the Treaty stipulating that the EMI:

" . . . will operate without prejudice to the responsibility of national authorities for the conduct of monetary policy. Its primary objective will be to maintain price stability . . . It will act in accordance with the principle of an open market economy with free competition, favouring an efficient allocation of resources."⁴⁰

Once a single currency — much favoured by business, since it will save an estimated \$13 billion in currency conversion costs⁴¹ — has been achieved, the EMI's role will be assumed by a European System of Central Banks (ESCB), comprising a European Central Bank (ECB) and the central banks of EEC states. The ESCB will essentially be governed by the unelected officials of the executive board of the ECB,⁴² the deliberations of which will be confidential. "Members of the governing bodies and the staff of the ECB and the national central banks will be required, even after their duties have ceased, not to disclose information covered by professional secrecy."⁴³ As in all the other institutions set up under Maastricht, the Treaty requires that "neither the ECB nor a national central bank will take instructions from EC institutions, governments or any other body."⁴⁴

The ECB will have the sole right to issue bank notes within the community and will act as an internal International Monetary Fund (IMF), supervising national economies and ensuring that they adhere to the Central Bank's monetarist policies. Governments will be required to balance their budgets, a budgetary deficit exceeding three per cent of GNP being forbidden unless "the deficit reflects investment".⁴⁵ Where a member state persistently fails to reduce its deficit, the European Council of Ministers, acting on the recommendation of the ECB, may "require it to publish information before issuing bonds, invite the European Investment Bank to reconsider its lending policy, require the member state to pay a deposit, and impose fines."⁴⁶ In effect, governments will only be able to borrow money for productive investment: borrowing money for social programmes which do not yield a financial return — health programmes, for example, or higher pensions and welfare benefits for the poor — will be almost impossible.

Power from the People

EEC institutions, with their bias towards multinationalism, will also gain control over other crucial areas of policy. Under the Treaty, the legislative framework, which national legislation cannot conflict with, for 17 key areas of policy will be set by the European Commission, a body of 13 unelected bureaucrats "chosen for their general competence"⁴⁷ and obliged by law "neither to seek nor take instructions from any government or from any other body."⁴⁸ All legislation proposed by the Com-

mission must be submitted to the Council of Ministers, a body of ministerial representatives of each member state who would have the authority to make decisions on behalf of that member state.⁴⁹ The Maastricht Treaty extends the areas where the Council can act by a qualified majority rather than by unanimity, thus weakening the power of member states to veto legislation and policy.

The new sovereigns will be the multinational managers and their flag of convenience, that of the EEC.

Once adopted by the Council, proposals must be referred to the European Parliament, the only EC institution whose members are directly elected by the peoples of Europe.⁵⁰ Although the Maastricht Treaty extends the areas over which the Parliament currently has a right of veto, its new powers are in many respects illusory. On the major issues of state — those relating to economic and monetary policy, foreign affairs and defence, fiscal policy, trade agreements with foreign countries, competition policy, taxation, state aid to industry, export policies, measures to protect trade or implement subsidies, Third World development — there are no rights of veto. In these areas, the role of the Parliament is either purely consultative or restricted to making amendments only; if the Parliament rejects a proposal in any of these areas, the Council can (on a unanimous vote) still adopt it.⁵¹

The powers surrendered by national parliaments under Maastricht — powers which allow elected representatives to have a say over all areas of policy — are not recovered by the European Parliament. Any checks and balances on the Commission have been framed in such a way that fundamental societal choices will be left to a handful of ministers and bureaucrats. Far from creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, "in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen",⁵² Maastricht will strip decision-making away from elected bodies, concentrating it in the hands of a cluster of institutions that are largely unaccountable and which have only come into existence to promote the pan-European multinationalism that lies at the heart of the EEC.

Proponents of Maastricht counter such charges by pointing to the Treaty's commitment to political "subsidiarity", article 3B stipulating:

"In areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the community shall take action in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed acts cannot be sufficiently achieved by the member states and can therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved by the community."

The concept of subsidiarity, however, remains ill-defined (if defined at all); if intended to ensure that decision-making is taken at the lowest level, it is over-ridden by virtually every other provision in the Treaty.⁵³ Indeed, if the subsidiarity principle is exercised, it seems likely to be invoked to support business interests seeking to undermine "interfering" EEC legislation intended, for example, to mitigate the environmental and social impacts of the Single Market. Thus Britain, for example, has already hinted that it will use Article 3B to support its case for watering down domestic legislation required under the European Commission's Bathing and Drinking Water Directives.⁵⁴

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Growing Unease

Despite the dominance of multinational interests over today's European economy and their increasing control over its political institutions, the Maastricht project is faltering — primarily as a result of citizen concern, often in alliance with threatened domestic interest groups, at the lengthening of the distance between them and these institutions. The Danes have rejected the Treaty in its present form and the French only narrowly voted in its favour. In Britain, it is having a rough ride through Parliament. Hasty summit meetings have been convened by Europe's heads of states to clarify the Treaty's application so as to make it more acceptable — but despite minor amendments, the substance remains the same.

The failure of Maastricht would undoubtedly be a severe setback to the forces of multinationalism. But there would still be major challenges to overcome: with or without Maastricht, the Single Market would still remain in force and with it, social dumping, a growing gap between Europe's core and periphery, and a Europe ripe for those who would exploit such social tensions to further their own political ends. In France, the National Front, which has capitalized on Maastricht to spread its message of xenophobic nationalism, lurks in the political wings, whilst in Britain the main opponents of Maastricht seek not to check market forces but to find means of extending them without the sovereignty-sapping institutions proposed by the Treaty.

In such circumstances, it is all the more urgent for opposition to the Maastricht Treaty to be seen within the frame of the more general struggle to reclaim the commons, to regenerate local markets and production, to protect the environment, to ally the fight for the environment to the fight for social justice, and to bring decision-making back to the local. The issue is not "protectionism versus free trade", since all trading systems are protectionist of someone's interests: the issue is who should control trade and in whose interests — multinational élites, national élites or local people and their communities?

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Piparwar

White Industries' Black Hole

by
Satinath Sarangi and Carol Sherman

The history of South Bihar over the last 150 years has been one of exploitation of the local people and the environment. Most recently, the Australian company, White Industries Ltd., has won a contract to build a highly mechanized, open-cast coal mine at Piparwar, on the Damodar river — the first of 23 proposed for the area. While the company predicts substantial profits, the project is causing damage to the local environment and homelessness and unemployment for local inhabitants.

South Bihar is one of the richest areas in India with large deposits of coal, iron ore, mica, bauxite and china clay, and it contains some of the densest forests in Asia. However, the natural resources of this area have been systematically exploited, first by the British, then by Indian industrialists, such as the Tatas, and more recently by the Indian government with funds from the World Bank. The local people, who are predominantly tribal or of low caste, are amongst the poorest in the country. Over decades, they have been deprived of the ownership of their lands and their communities have been broken, resulting in loss of culture, values and identity. The few who have benefited from these developmental initiatives are the *dikus* or outsiders through whom economic exploitation and political control is mediated. The mining industry has been a major cause of land alienation and displacement. For example, Tata Iron and Steel has displaced nearly all original inhabitants around their massive complex in Jamshedpur.

North of Jamshedpur lies the Karanpura Valley in the Chatra district of South Bihar. The northern part of this valley has been described in the *Hazaribag District Gazette* as "containing some of the best riceland in the district . . . still decently clad with jungle." The ricefields are the domain of minority communities like the Mohammedan Ansaris (weavers) or semi-Hinduized aboriginals such as the Kurmalis, Kurmees, Ghatwals, Bhogatas, Dediya and Bhulyao. Along the outskirts of the forested areas there are settlements of the semi-nomadic Jagghi Birhor, animist tribals who live by hunting, trapping and gathering food. Mundas, Oraons and Manjhi Santhals, exclusive to the district, are part agriculturists and part food gatherers who live in the vast game-filled jungles of the Moahodi hill range on the north bank of the Damodar river.

Energy for Urban Industry

The south bank of the Damodar in the Karanpura Valley has, for the past few decades, been an area of extensive open-cast coal mining carried out by Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL) of India and other companies. Consequently there has been severe deforestation, soil erosion and disruption of groundwater channels and the effects are now being felt by the inhabitants of the region. The forced acquisition of farming and grazing land has

left many people without land or work. In 1992, over 30 people are reported to have died of starvation in Chatra's neighbouring district, Palamau.

Mining is now spreading to the north bank of the Damodar with the development of the Piparwar mine, a project which dwarfs the earlier mines in the area and which signals a new era for India's coal industry. The Piparwar mine covers an area of 6.38 sq km with accessible reserves of 197 million tonnes; annual targeted production will be 6.5 million tonnes of raw coal and 5.5 million tonnes of power grade coal. Productivity levels will be unprecedented, five to six times more efficient than current mining operations in India. Piparwar is the forerunner of another 23 proposed mines in the valley; land is already being surveyed and acquired for these projects.

As in past projects, the natural resources and profits will be transported out of the area. The Piparwar mine will be the main supplier of two thermal power plants at Yamunanagar in the state of Haryana and Dadri in the state of Uttar Pradesh, situated over 1,000 kilometres away from Piparwar, and both financed in part by the World Bank. These stations will service the needs of industrialists and the elite of Delhi's society.

The new mines are part of a massive expansion of India's energy sector which over the last decade has absorbed 30 per cent of all government spending. The government aims to double coal production by the year 2000, a projection which will have major environmental impacts in India. According to a conservative calculation, 70 per cent of the area scheduled for coal exploration for the next ten year period involves forest lands. While India's energy needs are large, the bulk of energy expenditure continues to be ploughed into industries producing consumer goods for the wealthy upper and middle classes and for the cities. The massive increases projected for energy production will not be advantageous to the majority of the Indian people, and certainly not to the people of the Karanpura valley.

The Australian Connection

The Piparwar project, costing an estimated 500 million Australian dollars, is a joint-venture between the Australian firm, White Industries of Sydney, and CCL, a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd (CIL), the government-sponsored body charged with the development of coal resources. The deal between Australia

Satinath Sarangi and Carol Sherman are environmental activists from India and Australia respectively.



The black hole of Piparwar: the first of 23 new mines proposed for the Chatra area, 150 miles east of Calcutta.

Sarangi/Sherman

and India, was clinched because of the unique “in-pit crushing” technology developed by White Industries, which enables the coal to be crushed at the coal face, thus avoiding the need for a heavy truck-hauling system. The upper coal seams will be extracted by a 10 cubic metre shovel and transported by 120 tonne dumper-trucks to the coal handling plant attached to the washery. From the washeries, coal will be mechanically conveyed to the railway and transported out of Bihar. This highly mechanized process will generate few jobs: one mechanical loader replaces about 500 manual workers.

The Piparwar project, first proposed in 1985, is Australia’s largest overseas development project. It is financed through a concessionary loan package devised by Australia’s Export Finance and Insurance Corporation which blends commercial credit with a grant of Aus\$61.5 million from the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB). By far the largest part of Australia’s aid programme to India is channelled under AIDAB through the Development Import Finance Facility (DIFF), a scheme whose objectives are economic and commercial rather than focused on social development. A three-year programme, costing Aus\$35 million, announced by former Prime Minister Hawke during his visit to India in 1989, has been slow to start because of difficulty in identifying suitable projects, but Piparwar has now become a major focus. The DIFF has lately been criticized by several major Australian environment and development groups concerned with levels of commercially-oriented aid: its budget has increased from Aus\$16.4 million in 1986 to an expected Aus\$120 million in 1992-1993. Piparwar is an example of the type of aid project that Australia looks set to fund in the future.

A Black Record

Had this project been executed in Australia, it would have been mandatory for an Environmental Management Plan to be released to the public and approved in law before mining began.

But the Australian government has shirked any environmental responsibility, claiming that environmental and social issues associated with the project are the responsibility of the Indian government.¹

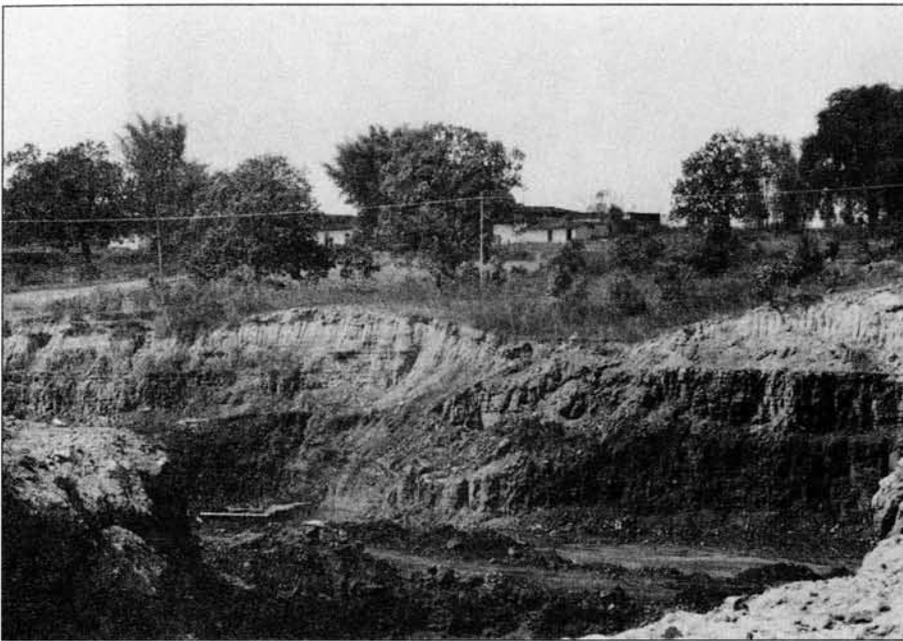
The Indian government-sponsored mining companies, however, have an appalling track record. “Go for a tour of CCL and CIL mines,” says one environmentalist, who has lived in the region for many years. “Go to Dakra, Urimarhi, to Kuju and Kedla, to the Bermo coalfields, to Dhanbad and see an environmental destruction that in speed and intensity must be unparalleled in the world.”

CCL’s Dakra site has now closed. Around the mine, there are no signs of land rehabilitation, no landscaping, no trees. Noticeboards announce tree-planting on haul roads, but nothing stands on the dust-strewn areas around the signs. The Indian National Trust (INTACH) claims that no soil conservation measures will be able to restore the land at Dakra, now or in future, since the top soil was not separated and protected from erosion when the mine was open. In the Jharia coalfields, also in South Bihar, more than 70 fires are raging in the coal seams, leading to a loss of more than 37 million tonnes of coal. A total of 1,850 million tonnes has been blocked forever as a result of the fires, the equivalent of more than US\$20 million worth of coal.

When confronted with the environmental damage their company has caused in the past, CCL officials state that they are not obligated to address the destruction because it took place before any environmental legislation was in place. They also declare that no environmental rehabilitation is now possible as money was never earmarked for such work.

Broken Promises

One of the most disconcerting aspects of Piparwar has been the secrecy surrounding the project. There has been minimal consultation between project authorities and local people, who have been given very little information about the project plans



The mine has advanced to within a few metres of the houses of Magardaha, which are scheduled for demolition . . .

or about their own future. AIDAB refused to disclose information on the grounds that "White Industries have indicated that the feasibility study for this project was given to the Bureau in confidence."² Neither the companies involved nor AIDAB have yet revealed any plans for environmental protection and rehabilitation or resettlement. There appear to be no plans to monitor the waters of the Damodar regularly, to counteract the risks to farmers of a lowered water-table or to guard against a possible increase in the incidence of malaria.

There is even some confusion over the legality of the project, for although construction and mining are in full swing, there has been no formal clearance of an Environmental Management Plan by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. In February 1991, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade announced that "when the site work on the project begins later this year, development activity will be closely monitored."³ Yet, at the time of writing, the mine had already been operating over a year and, according to CCL's former Director of Planning and Projects, U. Kumar, one and a half million tonnes of coal had already been mined.

One of the main reasons why the project has not been granted formal clearance is because of the difficulty of obtaining land for compensatory afforestation. In accordance with the terms of the Forest Conservation Act 1980, CCL claims it will provide equivalent land to the Forest Department for compensatory afforestation. But so far, out of 186.5 hectares of land required, only 13.11 hectares have been found. The CCL Director of Planning and Projects has remarked that land needed for reforestation schemes is simply not available, and that the problem could be solved by reforesting existing forest lands.

Spare land cannot be found because it is all either under forest or reserved for agriculture. Some of the land earmarked for "afforestation" is located in the middle of Chama, a dense forest 35 kms away from the project site. Two other designated afforestation plots are extremely small parcels of land fenced off at the mine site, where even the previous vegetation is dying under the constant assault of coal dust. Clearcutting has also occurred as a result of the diversion of the Magardaha and Benti streams. This was not accounted for in project plans and

possibly took place without the knowledge of the Ministry of Environment.

Supposedly, the Piparwar project is to be a model for Indian projects in "environmentally sound mining." Plans include a process of back-filling mining strips as the process of mining advances in order to minimize land degradation. As Bulu Imam from the local branch of INTACH points out, "back-filling requires separation of the topsoil from the rest of the overburden so that it does not get mixed with sand and rocks that lie beneath." Although White Industries insisted that the topsoil would be protected and preserved by means of polythene sheet coverings, overburden has been dumped along the river and washed into the Damodar river, topsoil remains unprotected and dust, supposed to be minimized through the new technology, continues to shroud the site in a black cloud.

Meagre Compensation . . .

The question of compensation and jobs remains one of the most disturbing aspects of the project. With so little information available, villagers are fearful for their future. White Industries and CCL claim that only two villages need to be relocated, with possibly a third partially affected in four or five years time, and that less than 3,000 people will be disrupted by the project. But locals calculate that at least 11,000 people will be severely affected, and according to the District Commissioner's Office in Chatra, nine villages are involved.

Unlike the villagers on the south bank of the Damodar river who have been uprooted by successive CCL projects at such places as Rai, Bachra and Churi, the people who live around Piparwar were until recently self-sufficient in terms of food and work and rarely sought employment outside their villages. Even when their lands were acquired for the mine after 1986, the villagers continued to cultivate them. But with the mine now operating and roads and workshops under construction, they have to find alternatives.

There is considerable uncertainty as to who will be entitled to compensation. Many villagers have been cultivating the common lands (classified as *gair mazrua* by the government) around Piparwar for the past 40 to 50 years, but have no recognized legal right to this land. The Indian government has a policy of authenticating plots of *gair mazrua* lands in the name of cultivators. However, with the commencement of the project, such facilities have arbitrarily been withdrawn from the area. This means that up to 40 per cent of the affected population, who have been sustaining themselves on small parcels of common land for two generations, will not be entitled to compensation for their lands.

These and other landless households have been promised a pension of US\$20 per month from the company — about 6,000 rupees per year, 400 rupees below the poverty line established by the Indian government in 1985. This amount is not only insufficient, but will cause numerous problems in its disbursement. Landless labourers will be required to appear at the Piparwar offices of the responsible authorities in order to

receive their pension, causing enormous problems for those who will be forced to leave the area in search of work. It also remains unclear as to how long these families will be entitled to receive pensions. In addition to the *gair mazrua* cultivators, tradespeople such as carpenters, potters, weavers, blacksmiths and shopkeepers, who have been an essential part of the community life, will receive no compensation for the loss of their livelihoods.

The plight of those who have received compensation for their land is little different from those who have not. Compensation has been paid at rates far below those prevailing in the market. In Magardaha, villagers were paid as little as 700 rupees per acre for land worth five or six times as much. Farmers were paid for a smaller area or lower quality land than was actually acquired from them. Compensation rates have now been raised in response to local protests, but this is too late for those

forced to accept compensation in 1987. Thegua Bhuiyan, a low caste villager from Magardaha, sums up many of the problems occurring at Piparwar:

"For the past 40 years I have been living in this hut on 0.2 acres. Since 1970, I have been cultivating on 4.66 acres of land but the sahibs in the project have paid me only for 0.82 acres in 1985. They have not offered me any job and the money they had given me has been long spent. They gave me 5,427 rupees. Now I'm forced to live on *mahua* fruits that I gather from the forest. I have been visiting the general manager's office almost daily and the officers there tell me that they are waiting for directions from Ranchi, [a nearby town]."

The payment of lump sums has had disastrous consequences for many oustees. Unaccustomed to handling large amounts of money, Jittan Oraon, a tribal from the same village, spent a major part of his compensation on a motorcycle for his son. With scant opportunity for gainful investment Jittan then spent the rest of the money on cheap liquor for himself. It is unlikely that his death one and a half years later, due to drinking, has been included in the "costs" of the project. The motorcycle lies idle today for want of money for petrol.

The majority of villagers affected by Piparwar are not used to budgeting large sums or dealing with banks. It is reasonable to predict that within a relatively short time, many of the Piparwar oustees will have squandered their payments and joined the ranks of landless labourers living well below the poverty line. Even if a family does have the capacity to use the compensation to their advantage, it runs the risk of being cheated by middlemen acting as mediators between the company and the village. Commission is also likely to be taken out of the lump sum by officials employed to disburse the amounts.

... Poor Job Prospects ...

The high degree of mechanization in the Piparwar project has brought about a policy change with regard to the provision of jobs for the oustees. In contrast to previous mining projects, jobs



Sarangi/Sherman

... but the villagers are sitting firm and refusing to move; only five families have so far relocated to the new site.

are offered only to those from whom at least three acres of land has been taken. *Gair mazrua* cultivators, artisans and shopkeepers are thus excluded. According to official records, out of the total number of oustees, 294 males have been given employment; yet in Benti village alone, the village council submitted a list of 550 men in the age group of 18-30 seeking employment. Those who are taken on, since they have no educational qualification or technical training, are given the menial jobs. Piparwar has little use for non-technical hands, and therefore most of those employed have been sent to CCL projects away from the area. This has led to breakdown of families in a number of cases. Out of the 200 males employed from Benti village, only 60 have been given poorly-paid jobs in the local area.

The other mines in the area have employed a substantial number of women as loaders and haulers. The increasing mechanization of mines and the consequent shortage of employment have hit women hardest. Not far from Piparwar, next to Bokaro steel city, is an entire village of prostitutes, many of whom are women who have been thrown out of traditional livelihoods by mining projects and offered no other employment. In the Piparwar project hauling is to be done by machines and loading operations are carried out by giant mechanical loaders. Not a single woman oustee has found employment in the Piparwar project.

For those who received jobs as compensation, there is also uncertainty about the duration of employment. CCL is cutting back staff and the chairman of CIL, M.P. Narayanan stated in April 1990 that surplus labour was one of the main reasons for mining losses in recent years. A reduction of over 7,000 workers was targeted for March 1992 and a study is under way to ascertain the scope for further reduction of the workforce.

... and Slum Conditions

Since the commencement of work on the project in January 1990, the adjacent villages have been severely affected. Magardaha is right on top of a deep pit: the deafening noise of machinery and blasting shakes the ground, destroying houses

and sending the villagers who have refused to move scurrying outdoors for safety. Seven of the eight wells in Magardaha have run dry and the stream has been diverted to prevent water filling the mine site, forcing women to trudge to the Damodar to get drinking water. The pits and overburden dumps have cut off access roads to the river and to other villages. The villagers are not entitled to receive compensation until they have dismantled their homes

Many of the villagers at Magardaha are refusing to relocate, even though they are not entitled to compensation until they have dismantled their houses. About 120 families are scheduled to move to a 12 acre site at Chiria Tand, not far from the mine. Conditions will be similar to an urban slum with house plots measuring only one-twentieth of an acre, barely enough for a one-roomed house. Only five families have so far moved there. Conditions at the other relocation site near Benti will be much the same.

Rising Resistance

The North Karanpura Valley is geographically and culturally part of what has come to be known as Jharkhand (land of forests). Comprising 32 districts from South Bihar and the neighbouring states of West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, the Jharkhand has a 150-year history of militant struggle by local tribals against the steady suppression of their cultures, in the name firstly of colonization and subsequently of development.

Opposition to the Piparwar project began in June 1990, when at a public meeting in one of the affected villages, the principal demands of adequate compensation, jobs for all and proper relocation, were drawn up. Mobilization around these issues was met with bureaucratic assurances and police brutality.

From 14 December, 1990, over 15,000 tribals, led by officials of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), a regional organization that has been articulating the demands of tribal people for the past 20 years, participated in a 10 day sit-in and stopped the mechanical loading of coal at the Churi railway siding. The December demonstration was resumed on 16 January, 1991 and took a more active turn six days later, when protesters started loading the coal manually with baskets on their heads, as was the practice before mechanization. In response, contractors working for CCL, with the tacit approval of company officials and the police, opened fire on the people, killing one young man and injuring six. Although the demonstration was not directed against the Piparwar project as such, the participation of substantial numbers of people from affected villages served to warn the project officials of a possible recurrence.

Although it enjoys popular media attention and wields considerable political clout, the JMM is also riddled with factionalism and corruption. Officials of the mining project have bought out the leaders of the local unit of JMM with direct and indirect bribes. It has not taken long for those affected by the project to lose faith in its leader, Kameshwar Pandey, who now travels by car and collects protection money from contractors engaged by the project. Disenchantment with the JMM has prompted the formation of a new organization called the Karanpura Ghati Bachao Jana Andolan (People's Movement for the Protection of Karanpura Valley). Formed in July 1992, this group has a more sincere leadership, a more democratic structure and a policy that is radically different from previous organizations of people affected by mining in the area. In particular the Andolan does

not see the mining project as a potential source of employment.

Previously, a key demand of groups affected by mining has been the provision of jobs. The labour-intensive mining methods of the past satisfied the demands of the oustee population to some extent; but with the introduction of heavy machinery, mining projects are now seen not as job-givers, but as livelihood-takers. Given CCL's policy of reducing "surplus manpower", Piparwar is likely to be a model for other mining projects in the area. Although the Australian high-tech machines are not yet fully operational, the local people have come to realize that it is unrealistic to expect jobs and pointless to make such demands.

Consequently, direct action against labour-replacing machinery, as in January 1991, has set the tone of an emerging militancy. On several occasions since the formation of the Andolan, large groups of protesters have forced mine-related work to stop. Opposition to the project has been further fuelled by the accidental death of a local worker, Ram Ji Mochi, by a car carrying Mike Ryan, the general manager of White Industries at Piparwar, on 20 August, 1992. Despite repeated demands made by local activists, the family of the deceased has not yet been paid any compensation and no action has been taken against Mr Ryan who, according to police records, is "absconding." On 7 December, 1992, all work on the Piparwar mine was brought to a halt to protest against continued official and police inaction in this matter.

The Piparwar project is by no means a *fait accompli*; it is still in the initial stages of implementation. Much of the Australian machinery is reported to be still sitting at the docks in Calcutta with more to be transported. The growing mobilization in the area to oppose the mine outright is becoming a major threat to the success of the project. Tribal people in the area have successfully stopped other destructive development projects: the Koel Karo dam not far from the area has been stopped by community action, and the Tandwa Super Thermal Power Project, a few kilometres away from Piparwar, has been abandoned after concerns were expressed about the damage to the Damodar river by INTACH. It may be that Piparwar, the high-tech Australian model for the Indian coal industry, will meet the same fate.

Express your concerns about this project to:

John Kerin, Minister for Trade and Overseas Aid, Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2601, Australia;

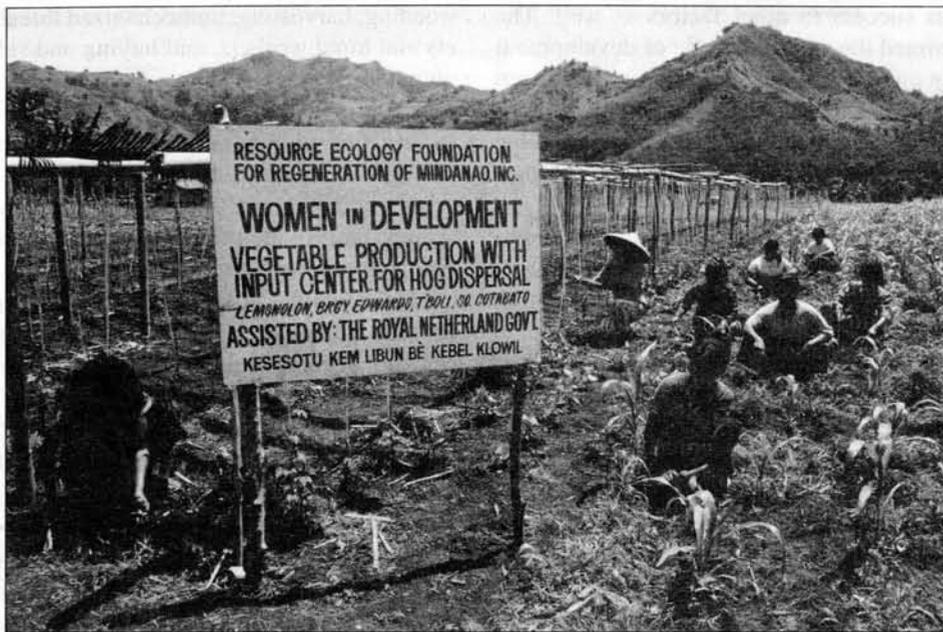
or Travis Duncan, Managing Director, White Industries Ltd.,
Victoria Cross Building, 60 Miller Street, North Sydney, NSW 2060
Australia.

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Ron Gilling/Panos Pictures

Canadian Aid, Women and Development Rebaptizing the Filipina

by

Colette St-Hilaire

Although the "Women In Development" approach has led to occasional gains for women in overcoming poverty and sexual oppression, it has mainly served to institute sophisticated mechanisms to manage women. These mechanisms inscribe women in economic, social and political structures which are beyond their control, and which, via the development industry, manage their fertility, sexuality and productivity. Although the SHIELD community development project in the Philippines spelled out every aspect of women's social and economic life, it did little to improve the conditions of the majority poor. The women's use of various tactics to evade the project can be seen as resistance to development.

In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan celebrated his "discovery" of the Island of Cebu by putting up a great wooden cross in the central village square and ritually baptizing all the men of the island.

"After dinner, our chaplain and some others of us went on shore to baptize the queen. And she came with forty ladies, and we led them on to the platform, then we caused her to sit on a cushion, and her women about her, until the priest was ready. Meanwhile, we showed her a lady carved in wood, holding her child (which was very well made), and a cross. The sight of this gave her a greater wish to be a Christian, and asking for baptism she was baptized, and named Joanna, like the emperor's mother. The prince's wife, the daughter of that queen, had the name Katherine, the queen of Mazzua, Ysabeau, and all the others had each her name."¹

With the baptism of Joanna began a long process of integrating Philippine women into the Western colonial project during which such renaming has been re-enacted repeatedly. As "de-

velopment" succeeded colonization, Joanna was renamed "Third World Woman", "beneficiary of credit" or "recipient of family-planning methods".

For a long time, development was gender-blind, based on the invisibility of women. A specific discourse² on women and development did not appear until the publication in 1970 of Esther Boserup's *Women's Role in Economic Development*. Later the United Nations designated 1975 as International Women's Year, and 1976 to 1985 as the Decade for Women, throughout which women were observed and interviewed, their behaviour was measured, and a multitude of interventions, classified as development, were directed at them.

Have women benefited from this attention? Or is it a strategy to subjugate them to development? The answer is complicated. The progress of Women In Development (WID),³ as this discourse has come to be called, within development institutions is the result of many different, often contradictory strategies. Women of the North and the South have struggled, spoken out and made demands; WID is a manifestation of the strength and vitality of the women's movement and feminism throughout the

Colette St-Hilaire is completing a doctorate in political science at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

world. But it owes its success to other factors as well. The United Nations proclaimed the second decade of development in the 1970s, focussing on basic needs. Since women were seen as most directly involved in the tasks required to satisfy those basic needs — drinking water, food, fuel, health, housing — the development experts suddenly became interested in their participation.

There are several responses to the perspective that WID is a mechanism to manage women's participation in development: one is that the problem lies in "bad" development and that another "positive" development ought to be possible; another is that the very concept of development encompasses a vision of progress which is fundamentally marked by patriarchal Western values. I prefer to consider development as a collection of theories, institutions, practices and procedures from which individuals and collectivities are constituted, organized, managed and controlled.⁴ These include theories of structural adjustment, and gender and development; institutions, such as the World Bank and NGOs; procedures, for example, feasibility studies, plans and reports; and practices, such as livelihood projects and community organization. Within this field, individuals and groups of people are continuously appearing, either as objects who can be acted upon or as subjects who eventually will be capable of managing themselves, once they have adapted to development. But because they are enmeshed in development's web of power relations (North-South relations, class conflicts, gender relations), these individuals and collectivities can also resist actively, for example, by demanding land reform, or passively, by not repaying loans.

Rather than being a desired but unattained condition to be striven for, development, according to this view, is a mechanism to manage underdevelopment.⁵ WID is more a modification of this mechanism than a step towards women's empowerment.

Creating a Filipina Identity

The integration of women in development is fully under way in the Philippines. Since the early 1970s, the Philippine women's movement has become a major force in society, composed of many feminist organizations with a variety of orientations and class bases. At the same time, a growing number of discourses on women have emerged, particularly in the universities, where a vast production of case studies and analyses has constituted the Filipino woman as an object of science and of development.⁶

This expansion in sociological research has led to the establishment of a new knowledge dealing with Filipino women which is in no way free of the power relations which characterize development: the theories, concepts, methods, project funding and hiring of researchers were, for the most part, deployed under the auspices of the Marcos government, the US Ford Foundation or the WID section of USAID.

In 1977, Jeanne F. Illo of the Institute of Philippine Culture denounced the "stereotypes developed over the years" and called for the constitution of a scientific knowledge on women, based on "clear-cut empirical information drawn from a broad spectrum of scientific observations".⁷ In the late 1980s, Illo undertook an investigation among women in the Bicol River Basin region, the site of a major irrigation project on Luzon Island, south of Manila. The woman described in this research is profoundly integrated in agricultural labour. Her tasks include raising fowl and swine, transplanting and planting,

weeding, harvesting, unmechanized threshing, contacting buyers and hired workers, and buying and selling farm inputs and outputs.⁸

There is no denying the benefits of all this research. These studies helped, for example, to dispel several myths about Philippine women and to reveal their contributions to the economic and social fabric of Philippine society. But the research also provided development institutions with a plethora of data and created new categories and areas and an additional clientele which could be subordinated to development. The Filipino woman herself gained little in the way of autonomy, but she did become more "manageable", better adapted to the operations of planned development.

WID discourses herald a new trend towards the social management of women.

This increasing visibility of women led to a mobilization of resources to manage them, particularly in economic areas. In 1975, the government of Ferdinand Marcos created the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), an event which inaugurated a large and heterogeneous collection of practices which, for the most part, have been directly incorporated by the state and international organizations, and serve today to extend the tentacles of development into the most marginal and radical women's groups.

For example, during the 1970s and 1980s, the NCRFW and the Ministry of Agriculture created the Division of Home Economics Programs to integrate rural women in development. Some 2,400 technicians were deployed to lend assistance in household management and to support 300,000 women organized in Rural Improvement Clubs. These Clubs continue to this day to provide training in rural areas based on the traditional roles of women.

The newly-created Women's Commission received a cool reception from the women's movement: "too little, too late" concluded the Philippine Women's Research Collective in an evaluation of the Commission's achievements.⁹ On the economic front, its record was not impressive: projects were set up without any prior study of women's needs; in an export-oriented economy, control over the marketing of the goods inevitably escaped the women who had produced them, falling instead into the hands of commercial interests. Furthermore, leadership of the women's groups was tied with local politicians and Imelda Marcos' projects.¹⁰

Corazon Aquino's surprising victory in the 1986 elections led to a complete reorganization of the Commission. Women who became known as "Cory's girls", most of whom were close to the feminist group Pilipina, flooded the Commission. In 1989, the Commission published its *Philippine Development Plan for Women* (PDPW), elaborated on the basis of a vast consultation which targeted everything from infrastructure and technology projects to employment and social services. After much work and delicate negotiations, the document was officially recognized by the government as "a companion plan" to the *Mid-Term Philippine Development Plan*. The result, however, was a double-edged sword: the PDPW's acceptance opened the doors to the integration of women's concerns in all government programmes and structures, but it also contributed to their confinement in a state structure otherwise committed to structural adjustment, debt repayment and militarization. One of the main participants, Karina Constantino David,¹¹ concluded:

"For as long as the PDPW is caught in the web of a government that is rapidly isolating itself from its own people, for as long as the women's movement remains a fractured minority, for as long as the NCRFW, despite its screams, remains a whisper in government, the PDPW will stand as a testimony to our dreams and a legacy we have yet to fulfil."

The Philippine Development Plan for Women is, in fact, transferring the struggle against problems such as violence against women, images of women in the media, or the lack of women working in the media, from the small premises of women's groups to the offices of development agencies. In the process, it has shifted the problems out of the arena of struggle, constructing them in such a manner that the path to their resolution necessarily passes through development programmes.¹²

The Filipina Imagined in Canada

The process by which women are defined and mobilized in development is illustrated by one integrated community development project in the Philippines, SHIELD (Sustained Health Improvement through Expanded Livelihood Development).¹³ Comprising health and socio-economic programmes, SHIELD covers approximately 100 villages in Mindanao in the South of the Philippines and is funded by the Canadian government's International Development Agency (CIDA) to the amount of 70 million pesos (US\$2.8 million), 20 million of which goes to the University of Calgary in Canada as project administrator.¹⁴ SHIELD was officially founded in 1988, designed and supervised by the Institute of Primary Health Care (IPHC), affiliated to the Davao Medical School Foundation of Davao City.¹⁵

SHIELD is open to both sexes, but women are particularly encouraged to participate, and are expected to be the primary beneficiaries of the project. In practice, almost all the community health volunteers, the core of SHIELD, are women; 73 per cent of the members of the quality circles — the structural foundation of the project — are women; and 66 per cent of recipients of SHIELD loans are women.¹⁶

Women participating in SHIELD said that they recognize the benefits it has brought them: training in and knowledge of hygiene, nutrition, and immunization have enabled them to advise others in their community on everyday health problems such as diarrhoea and coughs and to dispense basic medicines. Their self-confidence and sense of self-worth have increased and they have acquired a sense of being more useful to their families and community. Women's participation in SHIELD, however, is strictly controlled: planning, implementation, supervision and evaluation of the project have all been minutely defined well before the women beneficiaries enter the picture. Participation and benefit are not necessarily synonymous.

Analysis of the SHIELD discourse

SHIELD is an elaborate text in both a metaphorical and real sense: it includes a general project description and strategy, and



Ron Gilling/Panos Pictures

To implement SHIELD, 45 project organizers go to the villages to supervise local community health volunteers, organize them into "quality circles" and ensure the management of the projects according to SHIELD principles.

a detailed work structure from project management to evaluation, which covers, among other things, training and information activities. It establishes a framework for analysis of project goals, planned activities, outputs, means of verification and important assumptions at each stage, and sets a schedule of project activities and goals for each quarter over a five year period. It also includes a project organization chart and an evaluation framework.¹⁷ The text of SHIELD can thus be compared to a civil or criminal code; everything is provided for in the most minute detail, all behaviour has been normalized, all project activities have been structured, even the nature and quantity of results have been predetermined.

The multitude of categories in SHIELD's discourse is crucial to the process. Peasant women become participants or non-participants in the project. As participants, they find themselves labelled as health volunteers, members of "quality of life circles", recipients of family-planning methods, or pregnant or lactating women. This use of categories determines the nature and degree of development to which women will be required to submit or which they will be able to impose on others. As a community health volunteer, for example, a woman gains access to the quality circle, training sessions and regional politicians, not to mention credit programmes to launch income-generating projects. As a member of a quality of life circle, she benefits from health counselling and becomes the object of strict surveillance; her skills as a housewife are evaluated, her children are weighed and measured. As a non-participant, she is branded as being anything from apathetic to a guerilla sympathizer.

The problem, however, is not so much one of labelling itself — all social processes involve labelling — but rather how the labels are articulated within the relations of power. In the context of development, these labels are stamped with the seal of rationality, technique and efficiency. In SHIELD's case, the multiple labels — "lactating woman", "borrower of funds" — cut women peasants off from their history and reorganize them according to categories and relations over which they have no control, a condition for gaining access to resources.¹⁸

Besides categorization, SHIELD includes a complex series of control mechanisms to measure, if not the integration of

women in development, at least the management of their underdevelopment. At the entrance of each village is a large noticeboard approximately 10 feet high and 10 feet wide on which each participating family (those who receive regular visits from the community health volunteers) is represented by the symbol of a house. Beneath each house, laid out in bright colours for all to see, the family's health condition is detailed on the basis of six indicators: nutrition, immunization, drinking water, sanitary installations, maternal health and family planning. A red column indicates danger — the children are not growing, the parents are not practising family planning, or the house has no toilet facilities. These boards are in fact measuring the domestic work of women and their fertility.

What is excluded from SHIELD is as important as what is included. The project does not support the autonomous organization of women or the setting up of cooperatives; it does not cover any education on the national debt, militarization, human rights, women's rights in the areas of sexuality and reproduction, or agrarian reform. Sexual abuse is not tabulated on the statistical boards, nor are figures on domestic labour or peasant exploitation.

These few examples demonstrate how SHIELD and its disciplinary techniques exercise power, by studying, measuring

and controlling women, feeding on medical and sociological knowledge and supporting the existence of an army of officials and specialists whose actions objectify the Filipina, fragment her identity and reconstitute her as an object and subject suited to development.

The Dream Life of Quality Circles

The quality circle is the central concept of SHIELD. To be eligible for loans from SHIELD, women must first be organized into "quality of life circles", each composed of seven or eight members. The origin of the quality circle is acknowledged in SHIELD's project manual to be an organizational form, created in Japanese factories after the Second World War, in which small numbers of workers were grouped together to find solutions to problems they encountered in the production process. The circles have had remarkable success in increasing productivity — and in marginalizing trade unions.

By 1990, SHIELD had organized some 200 circles, members of which receive extensive training from local SHIELD organizers in problem analysis, the art of presenting problems to higher management, designing a socio-economic project and micro-business accounting — all concepts borrowed from the world of business.

Motivation techniques are revealing. Leonida told us how, during her training, she was asked to draw a ladder describing her present situation and the stages she envisaged in reaching the goals she had fixed for her family. The first stage of Leonida's ladder shows her family as poor, landless and without plans for the future. At the second stage, they rent a small plot of land, but still lack the money for the children's education. Up to the third rung and the family owns a hectare of land and a small house. With continued improvements, the farm has five hectares by the fifth rung. At the top of the ladder (the standard ladder has six rungs), all the children are in school, the family is helping out its neighbours and has even hired domestic help.

Leonida's ladder bears a striking resemblance to the example in SHIELD's training manual (on the top rung of the manual's model is a picture of a pretty bungalow and a family car). SHIELD acts as a dream machine, constructing an "image" for the peasant woman — which fits in well with the five-year plan of the Philippines' government and Canada's projects in the Philippines.

The Failure of Income Generation

The loan mechanism adopted by SHIELD contributes further to this phenomenon. IPHC has opted for another concept from the world of business: venture capital. To obtain a loan, women must put up some of their own capital towards the project and agree to pay a percentage of their profits into a social development fund, intended to replace IPHC eventually as an independent source of finance for the community's health and development projects, until their loan has been paid off. Loans are given for individual agricultural production or craft industries, selling or other income-generating activities. We found many projects for a *sari-sari* store (small goods sold over a counter in the owner's house), although these small businesses abound in the communities; other projects were mostly craft industries and selling various products such as pastries, charcoal or dresses.

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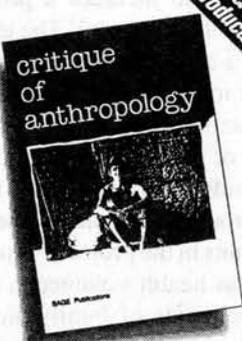
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We met several women who were frustrated at the complicated forms and endless approvals required, although the loans are small, ranging from 800 to 3,000 pesos.¹⁹

The case of Lyda is instructive. Lyda received a loan for 3,000 pesos, to be repaid within two years, to start a business selling eggs to the workers of Bunaply, a plywood factory located next to the squatters' area of Bunawan. Lyda does not raise fowl herself; she merely buys and resells her eggs. When we met her, she was selling up to 30 eggs a day which brought in 15 pesos. From this amount, however, she deducted her salary, her share to the social development fund, and her loan repayment. Furthermore, in an effort to outdo her competitors, Lyda had been selling on credit and was owed 500 pesos. Like many other women involved in SHIELD, she had diverted part of her loan to repay urgent debts, thereby compromising the success of her business from the outset.

SHIELD excludes any education on the national debt, militarization, human rights, women's rights in the areas of sexuality and reproduction, or agrarian reform.

This venture capital formula excludes poor women, since they have no goods or services to put up as their investment share. Furthermore, those whose capital share is small compared to IPHC's have to pay out a larger share of their profits to the social development fund. Sofia, a woman living in Babak, who had put up only 15 per cent of the capital investment to set up her *sari-sari* store, found herself paying 85 per cent of her profits into the fund. The burden of building up the community fund thus falls on the shoulders of the poorest beneficiaries.

Every single one of the women we spoke with who was involved in buying and selling had similar stories to tell. These projects have only increased the competition between women and, at most, redistributed the meagre commercial income available in a poor village. No real wealth has been created, only poverty redistributed.

In cases where projects are economically viable, the participating women rarely reap the economic benefits. In the farming community of Conception, for example, where most of the loans were for agricultural production, the women were accomplishing their tasks as community health volunteers, participating in the quality circles and were burdened with all the administrative paperwork of SHIELD, while their husbands took control of the borrowed funds. One SHIELD beneficiary told us that her husband was spending the equivalent of at least one day's wages per week on cigarettes and alcohol. In such circumstances, socio-economic projects have not only to face problems of income generation but also to deal with the question of who controls that income.

SHIELD's socio-economic programmes are thus marginal and unlikely to have any real impact on the economic conditions of women, although the project was intended to provide a foundation for the emancipation of women and for community development. Such programmes can endanger even slight successes on the social front. In Bunawan, for example, one woman, who was responsible for the distribution of free medicines in the community, made a project proposal to SHIELD to transform her distribution centre into a private business,

allowing her to sell the drugs at a modest profit. The socio-economic component of SHIELD also fails to take into account the needs of the communities. The women of the fishing village of Babak, for example, want to buy boats; those of Conception need an irrigation pump, but there is no place for such projects in SHIELD.

SHIELD's vision of development is clearly over-optimistic. The peasant women of Conception, the fisherwomen of Babak and the unemployed women of Bunawan are expected to launch prosperous businesses, accumulate capital, dominate their markets and build a successful social development fund — in effect raise their entire community out of poverty — simply by applying, on the local level, the golden rules of free enterprise.

The Paths of Resistance

Thinking about quality circles and venture capital, it is not easy for peasant women to consider agrarian reform or collective organization. Cut off from a long tradition of struggle²⁰ and detached from her community, the woman inscribed in SHIELD finds herself objectified as an individual and member of a nuclear family, nurtured on financial pipe dreams. As a subject, she becomes an agent of the economic plans of the Philippine elite and of technocrats employed by transnationals.

SHIELD may try to be all-encompassing, but there are cracks in its armour. The images dreamt up in the meetings of the quality circles do not match the figures in the monthly income statement; the discourse on health improvement is contradicted by the disastrous figures in the community health volunteers' investigation; the integration of women in development means 20 additional hours of work a week without pay.

Resistance to SHIELD takes place in myriad ways: in women's stubborn and tireless refusal to understand the project's basic concepts, or simply in their neglect of loan repayment. Women do not see why they should pay half or more of their profits into a community social development fund, which, in any case, they do not distinguish from the supervisory institution, IPHC. Profit-sharing is read as interest payments, and, in many cases, is higher than the rates offered by local moneylenders. The community health volunteers have protested loud and long against venture capital and have developed a number of ways to resist it. "They wanted collateral, but I have nothing. I showed them my brother-in-law's boat over there. It worked," a woman in Babak confided to us. It is not easy for SHIELD to keep track of women's actual income to determine how much of the profit should be shared with the social development fund, something which many women clearly have no intention of doing anyway, nor of repaying their loans. The treasurer of a Bunawan quality circle, responsible for collecting loan reimbursements and contributions to the social development fund, had all but given up her task: "I should have collected 1,000 pesos this month, but I don't even have 200 pesos. I am not welcome anywhere, they insult me," she told us.

Women resist when they invent the statistics for the big health charts to escape the inquisition of the evaluation team, or simply to save time. The imaginative ladder charts become a necessary tool to acquire the funds the women so desperately need to survive in a world that does not function according to the rules of development. Women resist when they refuse to participate in the project or decide to collaborate with the New People's Army, the Marxist guerilla movement active in the country since 1968.

Gender And Development

The experience of a Philippines group, Development Initiatives for Women and Transformative Action (DIWATA), which comprises two networks of mostly women's groups and development NGOs working with women, can be included in the present trend towards a Gender And Development (GAD) approach.²³ DIWATA is not a traditional development project; its very existence is an act of resistance. The project resulted from a long process of debates and consultations through which the Philippine women were able to impose on CIDA not only a feminist orientation, but a structure which respects the diversity and autonomy of the women's movement.

But DIWATA remains nevertheless a development project. To obtain CIDA funding, the group spent many months consulting with their members to formulate their development goals. They produced hundreds of pages summarizing the process and analyzing the results — only to have the CIDA machinery take over, rewrite and normalize it all. Today, DIWATA speaks the language of integrating women in development: project descriptions, strategies, logical analysis frameworks, reporting schedules, supervision plans, revisions and evaluations — more or less the same language as the SHIELD manual. Women's contributions have been co-opted and ways of implementing the project transformed. For example, where the Philippine women had written "to confront the patriarchal structures", CIDA preferred "to challenge the

structures that perpetuate gender inequity"; where the women had described a concrete process of consultation and participation, CIDA substituted its standard methods of supervision and control, to which were simply attached the terms "empowerment" and "participation".

While the acceptance of CIDA's language could be regarded as merely a tactic which should not affect DIWATA's work, such a view underestimates the dominant discourse. Several women involved in DIWATA complain that they now spend hours on formulating objectives, meeting deadlines and filing reports, based on categories which are foreign to them, even before they can begin to devise ways to resist the management of women and to position themselves to create new identities languages and projects.

Through the diversity of the organizations DIWATA mobilizes and through its aims and activities, it is in the vanguard of change and is contributing, in practice, to the construction of a democratic and pluralist society in the Philippines. Through its ties to development institutions, however, DIWATA articulates the traditional view of development. At the intersection of contradictory interests, it thus opens a space for struggle where various definitions of development confront each other and from which emerge multiple women-subjects, simultaneously managers of a feminized underdevelopment (WID) and agents of a feminized development (GAD).

The women's combined use of lies, ruses and evasions can be characterized as resistance only if we break with a traditional view of resistance — which is limited to conscious articulated opposition such as demonstrations, strikes and open revolts — and if we take into account the complexity and contradictions in the actions of SHIELD "beneficiaries". In a study of the trend towards a return to the veil among Egyptian women, Arlene E. MacLeod writes:

"Consent, or the lack of overt and organized political opposition, is actually a blanket term that can cover a range of possible consciousness and political activity, from active support to passive acceptance to submerged resistance."²¹

MacLeod defines these women's actions as accommodating protest which is what seems to be happening in SHIELD. Even while inscribing themselves within the categories of SHIELD, the women of Conception, Bunawan and Babak are distorting the procedures, subtly transforming the relations of domination, undermining from below the view of development. Through her silent resistance to SHIELD, the Filipina adds a new dimension to her identity, adopting an evasive strategy towards development and government agencies and local political structure. In the midst of a project which makes use of everything to subjugate and objectify her, a part of her emerges as a resisting subject.

Gender and Development

Resistance to "Women In Development" in general is emerging at various levels, in particular, in the form of "Gender And Development" (GAD), an approach elaborated by academic researchers and professionals in non-governmental organiza-

tions who are critical of the WID approach. The GAD approach considers power as central; fundamental social structures such as patriarchy, class and North-South relations are challenged. Woman as participant is supplanted by woman as agent of development. Articulating the practical needs of women in terms of their strategic goals, GAD seeks to avoid co-optation; integrating women in development is replaced by feminizing development — but development itself is not necessarily questioned.

Will GAD eventually replace WID as a channel to manage women, especially as it is increasingly taking root in development institutions? Advocates of GAD who are caught in rigid institutional structures find themselves making so many compromises that their interventions, by their own admission, are barely worthwhile. Furthermore, foreign NGOs and aid organizations have enormous training and financial resources to spread their WID and GAD analyses among Third World women's organizations.

NGOs and women's organizations in the countries of the South are being transformed into conduits for development to reach a new clientele and tackle new problems.²² When the costs are too high, or where the way is closed to government machinery, NGOs and women's organizations are called in to fill the gap. Flexible, with strong roots in the people and dynamic staff prepared to provide unpaid labour, these groups, which often include former political activists, take up the slack from government, adapt to its discourse and constitute a private sector branch in the management of women. This is the case in the Philippines, where increasing sums of money are being channelled to NGOs, which are thus viewed more and more as complements to state structures in the administration of foreign

aid. In this context, it is difficult to imagine gender analysis actually weakening development and strengthening the autonomy of women. It is more likely that GAD, having been appropriated, will adapt itself to and reinforce traditional development programmes.

Even in its most radical forms, some philosophical assumptions underlying GAD may be problematic. Any attempt to define a global feminism, for example, which would integrate all struggles and take into account all the varied experiences of women may degenerate into yet another totalizing model. Although the GAD approach in development projects represents a sincere feminist desire to defend the interests of women in development, it is launching a new series of discourses and procedures which, although produced in the North, wrap themselves in the mantle of global feminism and its subject — poor women of the Third World.

There is no option for women of flesh and blood (as opposed to women defined by development) but to stand our uncomfortable ground on the margins of development and of feminism. The recognition of differences should not hinder us from supporting each other's struggles and forging alliances based on our common interests. But this solidarity and these alliances bear no pre-established or absolute significance; like our identities, they remain precarious, unstable, in constant flux, displacing and being displaced as they come into contact with other differences, whether of class, race, sexual preference, age, nationality or mobility. This solidarity demands that we are always prepared to abandon old definitions and are always working to create new ones. GAD may still hold promise, but the best strategy is not to settle too comfortably into its shelter.

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13. This study of SHIELD was conducted with the approval of the project management in the Philippines and Canada. It was completed with the collaboration of the members of the Women's Studies and Research Center and the Community-Based Health Services of Davao City in Mindanao, and a Quebec author, Robert Majzels; the use of plural personal pronouns in the text indicates the collective nature of this aspect of my research. The field work was done between 15 February and 31 March 1990 in three places where SHIELD operates: Concepcion, a peasant community in Davao del Norte province; Bunawan, a squatters' community in Davao City of fisherfolk and the families of factory workers; and Babak, a fishing village on Samal Island near Davao City.
14. This amount seems inordinately high for the administration of a project being implemented by a major Philippines NGO, which is already earmarking 40 per cent of its funds to the administration and evaluation of the project.
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The Decline of Diversity in European Agriculture

by
Renée Vellvé

There is a wide discrepancy between the claims of seed companies that European agricultural diversity is being maintained and the perception of consumers that a dwindling variety of fruit and vegetables is now available in shops. Precise figures on the state of genetic diversity in Europe as compared to a century ago are hard to find. But there is little doubt that the standardization demanded by modern agricultural methods is diminishing the number of species and varieties grown as well as the genetic distinctions between varieties.

Less than twenty years ago, one could drive through the villages of Germany or France in autumn and find a plethora of regionally adapted apples: some were good for baking in pies, some for making cider or sauce, some for eating right off the tree. Certain types favoured high altitudes, others were less resistant to the cold. Some kept exceptionally well in the attic or cellar, while others had fruit that matured unevenly over several months.

Today, however, most supermarkets and food shops in Western Europe stock essentially three types of apples: a red one (the Starking, from the USA), a yellow one (the so-called Golden "Delicious", also from the USA) and a green one (the Granny Smith, or pippin, from Australia). When packaged together, they look like a traffic light signalling to the consumer: this much variety, no more.

Not only do varieties of edible plants seem to have disappeared, but also species. Recently, a survey undertaken in the south-east of France showed that until this century, the Provençal diet comprised 250 plant species, including vegetables, fruits and herbs. Today, barely 60 are cultivated in the region, of which only 30 make up the bulk of local consumption.¹

Examples such as these have elicited widespread public and scientific concern about the declining genetic diversity of Europe's agricultural seed stock. However, some modern breeders claim that there is no cause for alarm. One of these is Michel Desprez, of the Desprez family which, in the 1940s, developed Cappelle, a variety that can be traced in most of today's French wheats: "I don't believe that the variability of cultivars has been reduced. On the contrary, for many plants, such as wheat or barley, the genetic basis of the varieties marketed now is much wider than the same basis thirty years ago."²

The debate over the extent of diversity loss is befogged by a lack of information. No one has a clear idea of how many species have been lost; and no one has a clear idea of what is now extant. As the French scientist Louis Jestin observes: "Reliable data are simply lacking, and imagination should not replace facts".³ Agreed; but excessive caution should not prevent us from confronting the magnitude of the problem.

There are several ways to assess genetic erosion on the farm in Europe. One is to look at the number of crop species being grown in a given region or country. Another is to look at the number of available varieties. A third is to examine the degree

of genetic difference that exists between different varieties. But before pursuing these questions, it is helpful to consider the modern plant-breeding industry in its historical context, and to assess the changing role that breeders have played in European agricultural development.

Corporate Control of the Seed Industry

Farmers have been breeders ever since agriculture began; but breeders have been scientists for only about two hundred years. The genetic combinations that underpin modern crop improvement started to be deciphered in the 18th century. Among the main pioneers was the Vilmorin-Andrieux family in France. They opened their first seed house in Paris in the 1770s, and over the next 150 years perfected the technique of "pedigree" breeding. Traditionally, farmers carried out mass selection of choice individuals, taking what they liked best and reproducing from there. Pedigree breeding arranges a marriage of two plants to create new kinds of offspring. The Vilmorin's crosses of hardy English wheats with early-maturing varieties from Aquitaine produced hugely successful varieties like Bon Fermier (1905) and Vilmorin 27 (1927), from which most modern French wheats are descended.

From the 1920s onwards, plant-breeding became a much more widespread activity, and networks of farming families became specialized in selecting, multiplying and selling seed to other farmers. This was the birth of the seed industry as an activity divorced from crop production. These family firms were backed up by work performed at public research institutes and universities. Some companies were able to make a fortune off the back of this vigorous public activity: the French cooperative, Limagrain — now the world's fourth biggest seed company — built its empire round LG11, a variety of maize released by France's National Institute for Agronomic Research (INRA) after World War II.

The turning point came in the 1960s with the increasing use of chemicals and petrol-based products in agriculture. Agribusiness started booming on a global scale, and it was not long before the chemical, food processing and pharmaceutical giants took an interest in seeds as a logical area to invest in. The grain traders and food processors, such as Cargill or Continental Grain, could get a better grip over the food chain, from seed to harvest. The chemical and pharmaceutical houses could strike a

Renée Vellvé works for Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN) in Barcelona.

better marriage between their main product lines and specifically bred varieties. It is simply cheaper, quicker and easier to adapt a plant to chemicals than chemicals to a plant.

In the space of just two decades, from 1970 onwards, an enormous wave of industrial concentration and corporate investments transformed the face — and orientation — of plant breeding in Europe and in the rest of the industrialized world. Worldwide, more than 500 family businesses have been bought out completely and another 300 have been the subject of financial investments.⁴ The old-time names of Clause, Hilleshog or Van der Haave are still printed on the seed packets, but their owners and capital investors are now Rhône-Poulenc, Sandoz and Suiker Unie, respectively. Twelve of the top 19 seed companies are owned by companies whose main business is in chemicals, pharmaceuticals or food distribution.⁵ The top 10 companies control one-fifth of the market and the top 15 nearly a quarter. This might seem little, if compared, for example, to the concentration in the pesticides industry, where the top 12 companies control 80 per cent of the sales. However, taking into consideration the short time in which the takeovers have taken place, and the intrinsic difficulties involved in establishing centralized control of a biological, site-specific input, the concentration of the seeds industry is tremendous.

The increasing ability of large companies to command research and development for the future of agriculture is accompanied by a precipitous decline in the public sector's role in this field. Since the 1970s, many West European governments have been slowly abandoning critical areas of social development such as education, health care and scientific research to the private sector.

In 1987, the British government sold off the prestigious Plant Breeding Institute (PBI) of Cambridge to Unilever after a lengthy quest for the highest bidder. What to do with the genetic resources held in the public domain by PBI appeared to be a secondary consideration. Probably in fear of public and professional dissent, the government and Unilever agreed to entrust the collection to the John Innes Institute, a registered charity. A similar process nearly happened a few years later in France, when the National Institute for Agronomic Research was rumoured to have conducted two years of quiet negotiations with the French chemical giant, Rhone-Poulenc, to sell off all or a number of its public plant breeding stations. At the last moment, INRA apparently got cold feet and backed out.

The rise of the private sector at the expense of government research and of the thousands of now defunct family seed businesses is part of the increasing homogeneity that characterizes industrial agriculture. The concentration of the food industry fosters standardization and uniformity. By its very nature, the private sector will only invest where there is a quick profit to be made. In plant breeding, this is largely limited to applied research on annual crops that can be hybridized at a reasonable cost and marketed over the largest area. There is little incentive for it to invest in crops that industry finds unprofitable, or to serve the more marginal market niches, such as farmers on marginal areas and farmers that cannot afford expensive technology.

Fewer Crops

Traditionally, farmers used to vary their cropping patterns continuously in response to changing demands from their families, environments or external markets. In the process, they

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AS EXHIBITED at the INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, EDINBURGH, 1890,
and at the EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE DE PARIS, 1889.

Suttons Seeds

An 1889 display of pedigree wheat varieties bred by James Carter & Co, showing the parents and progeny of each variety. Founded in about 1816, Carters was taken over in 1966 by Cuthberts, who had earlier taken over Dobies Seeds. In 1976, Cuthberts merged with the giant Swedish chemical company Kema Nord, to become Europe's largest seed company at the time. In 1985, it was acquired by Suttons Seeds, which is in turn owned by Procordia, a company that has cross-holdings with Volvo.

adapted new crops and abandoned old ones. However, that process was never geared towards uniformity to any great extent until the last century; since then the range of cereals, vegetables, fruits and medicinal plants — not to mention forest and industrial crops — that used to form part of an ordinary farming system in Europe has shrunk considerably. As mixed cropping systems succumb to monocultures, and specialization in only one or two crops takes over, the range of species in our food supply is dwindling more and more.

Among species of wheat, for example, the rustic emmers, spelts and einkorns have all but given way to the uniform soft and durum types (for making bread and pasta, respectively). Scientific research throughout the Mediterranean and Central Europe, carried out jointly by Italy and East Germany since 1980, report the rapid decline of these hardy cereals.⁶ They can usually now be found only in mountainous regions of Italy or Greece, and the eastern zones of Moravia and Slovakia where farmers grow them in mixtures that provide great heterogeneity and stability of yield. In Calabria, southern Italy, once a cereal farming zone, rural emigration has been so high that by 1986 only one farmer could be found still growing durum and bread

wheat together, to improve the quality of the flour.⁷ Cultivation of oats and rye is also declining as legumes, maize, colza (rape) and silage take their place. Oats and rye were the backbone of many rural economies in Europe because they were hardy, could withstand difficult environments and provided human food, fodder, litter, thatch and other services on the farm. Today, it is rare to find farms in Europe where cultivated rye is still grown with its wild progenitor *Secale strictum* lining the edge, or even planted in the middle of the field, to promote the natural exchange of genetic characters.⁸

The regression of medicinal and aromatic plants has also been marked in most countries over the last few decades. In pre-war Germany, 10,000 hectares were devoted to the cultivation of medicinal plants. Today, that figure has dropped to 1,100 hectares of which 700 are in Bavaria.⁹ The situation may well be similar in other European countries and valuable folk varieties will be lost if local gardeners do not pass them on.

In Spain and Portugal, as well as other Mediterranean countries, farmers have long grown the main kinds of legumes such as vetch peas, cowpeas, lupin beans, broad beans, lentils and chickpeas alongside cereals, to provide a staple diet for people and animals and to fertilize the soils with nitrogen from the air. Together with a whole range of minor legumes, including chickling vetch, bitter vetch and lentil vetch, they were a traditional part of farming systems until a few years ago. Except for the common *Phaseolous* bean, and to some extent lucerne, genetic erosion has been great in most of these crops, and many species and varieties have disappeared from the farms.¹⁰

In The Netherlands — one of the few countries for which detailed information is available — agricultural production is now highly concentrated on just a few crops. Depending on the region, wheat is often sown in rotation with two root crops, sugar beet and potato, while livestock holders grow maize as fodder. Dutch farmers grow wheat, not so much for the income they derive from it, but simply to ensure a healthy rotation with root crops such as beet and potato. This reflects the high level of simplification and specialization in Dutch agriculture. Eighty per cent of Dutch farmlands are sown to merely four crops.¹¹

Few other comparable data on crop use in Europe are available, but it is unlikely that the situation in The Netherlands is an exception. Dutch agricultural policy is guided by the agricultural and pricing policies set out by the EC, and other EC members have to operate within the same constrictions. The concentration on fewer crops may increase under the new directions enshrined in the reform of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). More and more agricultural production will be moved to those areas where it is cheapest. A situation might evolve where the Dutch provide all the milk for the EC, the French the wheat and the Germans the potatoes. On a regional basis, this would certainly narrow down still further the variety of crops that farmers are sowing.

Fewer Varieties.

If data on what crops European farmers are sowing are hard to get, information on the varieties they use is even more difficult to find. The general picture, however, is frightening. For example, the *Cruciferae* family — including cabbage, cauliflower, radish, turnip, mustard and rape — has traditionally been one of Europe's prime sources of vegetables and oils. Yet the enormous variability of local seed populations developed by farmers

are ceding to the economic attraction of potentially high-yielding F1 hybrids — a one-shot offspring of two parents that gives exceptionally high yields, but only for one generation. An inventory carried out in France in 1986 discovered almost 300 farmer-populations of cauliflower still in cultivation.¹² But many of them were on the verge of being lost as small farmers went out of business. This was particularly the case in Brittany, which along with Italy represents one of Europe's prime centres of genetic diversity in cauliflowers. The bulk of Europe's cauliflowers now come from a few specialized farms in Brittany and Italy, which use a handful of uniform hybrids. Unfortunately, while the old genetic complexes often carried important sources of disease resistance, today's cauliflower grower has to use fungicide sprays to compensate for these lost characteristics.

Among the legumes, edible lupins have a particularly long history in southern Europe. Four thousand years ago, it is thought, farmers in the Balkans selected white lupins for their pigment-inhibiting gene.¹³ Blue lupin, extremely rich in protein and less bitter than the others, used to be widely cultivated in the Mediterranean for fodder and was diversified into many local folk varieties. But today, Thrace and Macedonia have experienced severe genetic erosion in this once important pulse crop, mostly due to over-grazing and expanding wheat cultivation. Villagers still remember the old varieties but they are now untraceable.¹⁴ In Spain, local variation in the white and yellow lupins is on the decline as newly-introduced sweet varieties, such as Tremosilla, take over.¹⁵ When the organic farming proponent Philippe Desbrosses commenced his crusade in the early 1980s to rehabilitate the cultivation of blue lupin in the Sologne region of France, the national banks refused him credit. Governments prefer that innovative European farmers ignore possibilities for self-sufficiency in protein crops and continue to use Brazilian soya.

In fruits, the replacement of traditional cultivars with more uniform types is rampant throughout Europe. Many of the varieties of drupes (fruit with stones), nuts, apples and pears are now only found in private family gardens, since commercial orchards rely on mechanical harvesting and synchronized ripening, which demand modern strains. Today, 93 per cent of France's apple production is assured by a few imported varieties, mainly from North America, of which the Golden Delicious alone accounts for 71 per cent. Almond producers in Spain and southern France have almost all converted to using a few high-yielding varieties from California.

Statistical information for cereal varieties is sparse, but is nonetheless alarming. In many cereal crops, Dutch farmers sow almost 90 per cent of their acreage to only three varieties. With the sole exception of fodder maize, at least three-quarters of all major Dutch crops are sown to no more than three cultivars. In some crops, such as spring barley (and also potatoes), one single variety dominates over three-quarters of the area sown to that crop.¹⁶

The situation is similar in France, although there is a somewhat lesser degree of uniformity than in The Netherlands. Two varieties of durum wheat, Cando and Ambral, account for more than 50 per cent of the surface area cultivated, and the ten leading varieties occupy 88 per cent. Of bread wheat, France's major cereal crop, two varieties represent almost a third of production and ten just over 70 per cent. Two barley cultivars, Plaisant and Express, account for over 42 per cent of the crop while the leading ten are close to the 75 per cent mark.¹⁷

In the United Kingdom, the national potato crop is dependent

on just a few top-selling varieties. Among the first early varieties sown, the three most popular cover 68 per cent of area devoted to them. Among the second earlies, three claim 71 per cent of the surface. In both of these cases, the number one potato varieties — Maris Bard and Estima — cover nearly 40 per cent of the area. British farmers and gardeners growing potatoes during the main season plant 49 per cent of their holdings to just three cultivars.

These are alarming figures. If agriculture in France, Britain and The Netherlands depends on just a handful of different crop varieties, many of them genetically not very distinct from each other, there is no reason to believe that the situation in other European countries is substantially different. Although the data are patchy and incomplete, the conclusion remains that crop production in Europe is something of a genetic time-bomb. The sameness plaguing our fields is an open invitation to pandemic disease.

Narrowing the Genetic Base

The private sector, with its incentives to invest, is often said to provide more varieties for the seed market, and thus increase diversity. A look at the brief history of industrial plant breeding shows that this is certainly not always the case. A simple way to assess the state of the genetic base of European farming is to look at the number of varieties actually offered by the breeders. In France, Vilmorin-Andrieux alone offered, in its 1925 catalogue, almost as many varieties of some vegetables as the entire French national list in 1981. For some vegetables, such as certain beans, cabbages, garden beet, melon and onion, this single family company had more varieties to offer 70 years ago than are now available on the entire French seed market.

While numbers can be revealing, a more complex and significant factor to consider is how genetically diverse the different varieties really are. It might be reassuring to have hundreds of different wheat varieties on the market, but how genetically distinct are they from each other? Do they have different forms of resistance to rusts or mildew, or identical ones? Are they built on the same yield complexes or distinct ones? What proportion of hybrid maizes or sunflowers are derived from a common inbred parental line? Only at this level can we assess true genetic diversity among cultivars. Again the picture for European agriculture is hardly encouraging.

Generally speaking a progressively smaller number of plant-breeders, who have a preference for reusing the same well-performing germplasm, are leading agriculture into a genetic downward spiral, called by some "the funnel effect". Starting with a relatively wide selection of landraces, or folk varieties, collected from farmers and gardeners throughout Europe, institutional breeding has been an exercise in perfecting and reperfecting that material to such an extent that almost all the top breeders are basically using only highly purified and stable "élite" material — which is extremely uniform. While major corporations usually do not reveal exactly what germplasm they

are using, this overall impression was recently confirmed privately by a representative of Ciba Geigy.¹⁸

The narrowness of the genetic base of wheat is equally shocking. In 1986, a survey was carried out among European breeders of the onion family (*Alliaceae*) and of barley, to determine what kind of genetic materials they use and how useful genebank collections of varieties are to them. The results are disturbing: for both crop groups, breeders predominantly use élite materials composed of breeders' lines and advanced cultivars from breeders' collections.¹⁹ Breeders are often reluctant to use wild species and landraces, as it is difficult to transfer the right gene from a wild source into a well-adapted cultivar without transferring a lot of genetic garbage along with it. They are much happier working with an already proven and predictable breeding base, which means they are recycling uniformity. This is exactly the kind of breeding approach that reinforces the funnel effect.

Researchers at the INRA station in Clermont-Ferrand, studying the pedigree of French wheat and barley down to the molecular level, confirm the general impression: "Genetic variability of French wheat cultivars has decreased, the breeders having crossed only a few well-known progenitors."²⁰ Researchers have shown that all France's current wheats are descendants of one folk variety called Noé (or Noah), developed



A still and barrels beside the award-winning Burrow Hill cider orchards in Kingsbury Episcopi, Somerset. Up to 40 different varieties of apple, with names such as Porter's Perfection, Dabinett and Brown Snout, are used to make a traditional cider.

by the villagers of Odessa in the Ukraine, last century.

In Germany, most wheat varieties carry Carsten VIII in their pedigree. Of the seven winter wheat cultivars released in Germany in 1986, five derive from Caribo, itself a cross between France's Capelle and Carsten.²¹ In all these cases, breeders started off with a minimal range of well-adapted landraces, stabilized some top performance breeding lines geared for high yield, and have been recycling this narrow pool ever since. Their motto has been, "Cross the best and hope for the best."²²

Turning to the sugar beet varieties being produced in Germany and The Netherlands today, the narrowness of the germplasm base has breeders openly alarmed. According to Anton Zeven of the Agricultural University at Wageningen,

Seeds and the Law

Among the most controversial forces behind the decline of agricultural genetic heritage in Europe are the legal frameworks that govern activities in the seed sector. There are two basic types of law at work: those that dictate which seeds can be sold on the market; and those that determine who owns them.

Registration

Rules providing for the official registration of superior varieties of seeds date back to 1925 in France, 1933 in Germany and 1941 in The Netherlands. In general they were applied first to major crops such as wheat, maize or potatoes, before being progressively extended to others.

To figure on an official list and be legally marketable, a variety must be proved to be *distinct*, or distinguishable from all others; *uniform*, that is all the individuals of the variety must be the same; and it has to be *stable*, passing on its salient traits from one generation to the next. The enforcement of these principles, and the disqualification of any variety that does not satisfy them, has caused enormous loss of varieties. Heterogeneous landraces and old cultivars, however well adapted they may be to low external input farmers, often have an inherent variability that would upset the "thoroughbred" seed supply. Furthermore the costs of registration prohibit many small breeders and creative gardeners from registering their new varieties. In the UK it costs about \$10,000 to register a new variety for ten years, and in France it costs \$40,000.

The most disastrous loss of diversity occurred on 30 June 1980, when bureaucrats in Brussels amalgamated EC national lists into a Common Catalogue. More than 1,500 plant varieties from 23 vegetable species were deleted on the grounds that, according to the seed companies, they were duplicates of other varieties. But the UK-based Henry Doubleday Research Association took a closer look and concluded that only 38 percent were synonyms for the same variety. Nearly 1,000 distinct vegetables were being earmarked for extinction because it gave "the new seedsmen a golden collective opportunity to not only 'rationalize' their own offering, but also to get rid of the low-profit competition offered by non-hybrid or non-proprietary varieties: Europe's traditional cultivars that belonged to nobody".

That was 12 years ago, and it could happen again. Grumblings are being heard once again among EC administrators about the excessive volume of the Common Catalogue.

Ownership

In the 1920s, professional breeders began clamouring for some legal protection of their work. As a result a unique form of intellectual property called Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) was drawn up, which attempted to mediate the needs of both breeders and farmers. PBRs give breeders monopoly rights over the commercial use of varieties, but only for seed production. Protected varieties could freely be used by other breeders to develop new varieties. And farmers, though they had to pay royalties to buy seed, were assured the right to use part of their harvest as seed the following year. These two derogations were designed to guarantee access to genetic resources so as to encourage further innovation.

However, in 1991, this system was totally overhauled by the revision of the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants. PBRs were given more the status of patents: farmers became obliged to pay royalties if they wished to use the second generation seed; and breeders are can now only freely use other breeder's varieties if they make major, rather than just cosmetic, changes to the plant's genome.

Even before these new restrictions, PBRs did not promote innovation in the breeding sector to the degree anticipated. While it may have stimulated corporate involvement in the seed industry, this has ultimately meant that there are fewer actors competing on the market. And while PBRs may have promoted the development of more nominal plant varieties on the market, there is no guarantee that there is more genetic diversity among those varieties.

The danger of the PBR system is that it may have nudged open the door leading to the fully-fledged patenting of plants and animals. This is not yet a legal reality in Europe, but we are on the precipice and much will be decided by the fate of the European Commission's proposed directive on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions, which is about to be voted on by the European Parliament.

"European sugar beet cultivars all carry the same genotype for beet yellow virus susceptibility," a major threat to beet production.²³ Researchers in Germany also point out that today's sugar beet hybrids carry the same identical source of cytoplasmic male sterility (CMS).²⁴ This is not a minor problem: in 1971 a fungus caused a 15 per cent harvest loss of American maize, due to widespread use of one source of CMS there.

As to the cabbage family, breeders only maintain and use highly uniform inbred lines, despite the wealth of landraces developed by European farmers and gardeners over the centuries. Breeders themselves fear that large-scale hybridization of

cabbage-related crops could replace these landraces, if they are not collected, and ultimately could wipe out a treasure chest of resources for future breeding.²⁵

Breeding Uniformity

There is really very little "scientific" evidence available to paint a clear picture of how diverse (and secure) or narrow (and insecure) the genetic base of our food supply really is. No serious research has been carried out to assess where crop breeding is going with respect to genetic diversity. The little

information we have often seems anecdotal and there are huge differences of opinion as to what diversity really is and how you measure it. Part of the problem is that the privatization of plant breeding has brought with it the privatization of germ plasm collection and information about breeding programmes. Another part of the problem is that no one has taken this question seriously enough to find an answer to it.

A further problem is that so much of the diversity of the past has disappeared. Anton Zeven asks, "Is the genetic variation of the present day cultivars in The Netherlands less than that of all the landraces grown here before? Nobody knows."²⁶ And we may never know, for many of those landraces are gone for ever. Many people think it is likely that there was greater genetic variability among our complex folk varieties and locally adapted landraces than among our current hybrids and highly élite seeds, which are so genetically close to each other except for a chromosome here or an enzyme there. Yet to others, that single chromosome or minute enzyme makes all the difference in the world between one tomato and another. Is this diversity?

The answer is important both for farmers and for consumers, but at present we can make judgements based only on general impressions. It is clear that today's breeding system is producing an identifiable kind of uniformity. Breeders are pressured to service an increasingly homogenous and intensified agriculture, where the single major focus has been yield, to the detriment of taste, nutrition and disease resistance. The assumption has obviously been that susceptibility to disease can be compensated through chemical treatments, which indeed have become necessary with this type of breeding. The big breeders of today look for quick and cheap solutions to problems in the field or in their market share. This leads to a narrow fascination with single, quick-shot super-genes rather than working with broad variation, obsolete or wild materials and complex genetic structures.

The true genius of plant breeding lies in the development of vast genetic complexes, such as those our great-grandparents handed down to us. These farmers did not know the science of genetics as we now know it, but they worked with whole plant populations within complex environments and with multiple objectives. Many modern breeders place their hopes on genetic engineering to bring more diversity into the European crop sector. But moving a microscopic fragment of DNA from one plant cell to another will not create genetic, or biological, diversity. Nor will it return to millions of farmers the stability, security and ecological dynamics that have been removed from their fields.

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A trug of rare and illegal tomatoes grown by the Henry Doubleday Research Association. White and yellow tomatoes are often tastier than red varieties.

HDRA/ERIC Crichton

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The Philippine Snail Disaster

by
Bridget Anderson

The introduction of exotic plants or animals can seriously disrupt a country's ecology and its rural economy. One of the most disastrous experiments of this kind has been the promotion in the Philippines of the edible Golden Apple Snail. Viewed by some as a means of improving the conditions of the landless without resorting to land reform, the snail's proliferation has proved to be an ecological catastrophe which has widened the gap between rich and poor.

Ten years ago impoverished Filipino farmers were offered a new, low cost source of protein: the Golden Apple Snail, a hybrid aquatic snail originating in the Amazon Basin. The native *Ampullaria luzonica*, a small black snail found in rice fields all over the Philippines, is a traditional supplement to the rural diet, but its numbers had been declining because of the increased use of pesticides. The Golden Apple Snail (*Ampullaria canaliculata* and *Ampullaria cuprina*) was to be a bigger and better version. Easily farmed and requiring virtually no inputs, it took only a few months to grow to the size of an apple. Its creamy golden flesh was not only nutritious but much acclaimed by Manila's top chefs and restaurateurs. Moreover, the increasing popularity of the *escargot* in Europe and the US, where indigenous snail populations were declining, suggested a huge export potential. The snail promised easy cash for big business and small farmer alike.

But the snail soon proved to be a disaster. Its large size, rapid growth, prolific rate of reproduction, adaptability and hardiness — qualities which once promised so much — have turned it into one of the greatest curses of Philippine agriculture. For the Golden Apple Snail is a voracious eater of rice, the Filipino's staple food.

Since the Golden Apple Snail was introduced into the Philippines in about 1982, it has proliferated wildly. Its life span is some three years, it reaches sexual maturity in 60 days and it is an indefatigable breeder: in one year one snail will commonly produce 15,000 offspring. Despite their large size, the snails can survive very crowded conditions: they have two breathing organs, a gill and a lung that is attached to a three inch snorkel-like

tube. This can extend to above water level to take in oxygen from the air, enabling the snails to thrive in stagnant pools at a concentration of as many as 1,000 mature snails per square metre.

Day and night they move in search of food to satisfy their phenomenal appetites: an infestation of snails can destroy a field of newly-planted rice overnight. In 1989, the Department of Agriculture estimated that the snail had infested 500,000 hectares, nearly 15 per cent of rice land.¹ In some areas of the country the snail has destroyed 75 per cent of the rice crop.² It has spread all over the Philippines, from the mountain ranges of northern Luzon to the island of Mindanao in the south and it has now become the major rice pest, causing greater damage than locusts, green leafhoppers or rice tungro virus.

Selling the Snail

The snail's rapid proliferation is a measure not only of its adaptability, but also of the intensity of its promotion. It was first introduced to the Philippines via Taiwan. The main dissemination of the snail was spearheaded in 1983-4 by the government, in particular by the Department of Agriculture. Imelda Marcos herself appeared on television eating the snail and extolling its virtues. The national press carried articles such as "How to raise 250,000 snails in a 12-square-metre backyard pond" almost daily. The National Science and Technology Authority promoted it nationwide through their Regional Technology Development Program. The Philippine Agricultural Journalists group ran seminars on snail raising, and the press featured interviews with successful entrepreneurs who had made their fortunes out of snails, promising initial investment recoverable within

three months. Department of Agriculture technicians promoted the snail as they travelled from village to village, breeding and selling snails to farmers.

The island of Negros in the south of the country provides a good example of intense regional promotion. Until recently, Negros' economy was almost completely dependent on large sugar estates or *haciendas* owned by a wealthy elite, with labour provided by an impoverished, landless majority, supplemented at harvest time by *sacadas*, temporary workers who came in their thousands from the neighbouring islands. These people were the poorest of the poor, many in debt bondage to labour contractors, and some earning as little 10 pesos (40 US cents) a day, less than a seventh of the minimum agricultural wage. When the world sugar market collapsed in the early 1980s, many of the sugar labourers were starving to death. The area thus became a stronghold of communist insurgency, and demands for land reform from organizations such as the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) have been particularly forceful. The promotion of the Golden Apple Snail was in part a response to these combined challenges to the government and the local elite; here was nutrition without land reform.

In 1984, the head of the Rural Growth Outreach Program of the Central Philippines University (CPU) in Negros, Ruth Corvera, was approached by "a friend" who offered the programme money donated by the Asian-American Free Labour Institute (AAFLI) through the right wing National Congress of Unions in the Sugar Industry of the Philippines (NACUSIP). She admits, "I doubted the source of the money, because I thought AAFLI was CIA funded." But the project seemed too good to turn down. It had two components: the introduction of the African

Bridget Anderson is a freelance researcher and writer.

crawler, an earthworm that produces organic fertilizer, and the introduction and propagation of the Golden Apple Snail. NACUSIP were particularly enthusiastic, as it offered an opportunity for them to boost their membership at the expense of the NFSW.

An AAFLI consultant and former Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr. Romeo Tabanlar, brought the snail from Manila, together with the information that they were fetching 45 pesos a pair in the capital's top restaurants. NACUSIP installed a demonstration tank in their office and, with the help of the CPU, began to organize seminars on "workers' ideology" and snail propagation. The three day sessions were held twice a month for six months in 1984-5. They were attended by an estimated 800 farmers from all over the Visayas islands and Mindanao. The participants left with a four metre plastic sheet and two dozen snails apiece, donated by the AAFLI sponsors.

The organized introduction of the snail was paralleled by less official propagation. Wealthy *hacenderos* in Negros gave their *sacadas* a handful to take back to their homes. The *hacenderos* had a business as well as a political interest in the cultivation of the snail: many were turning to prawn farming as an alternative to sugar, and crushed snails make an excellent feed for prawns.

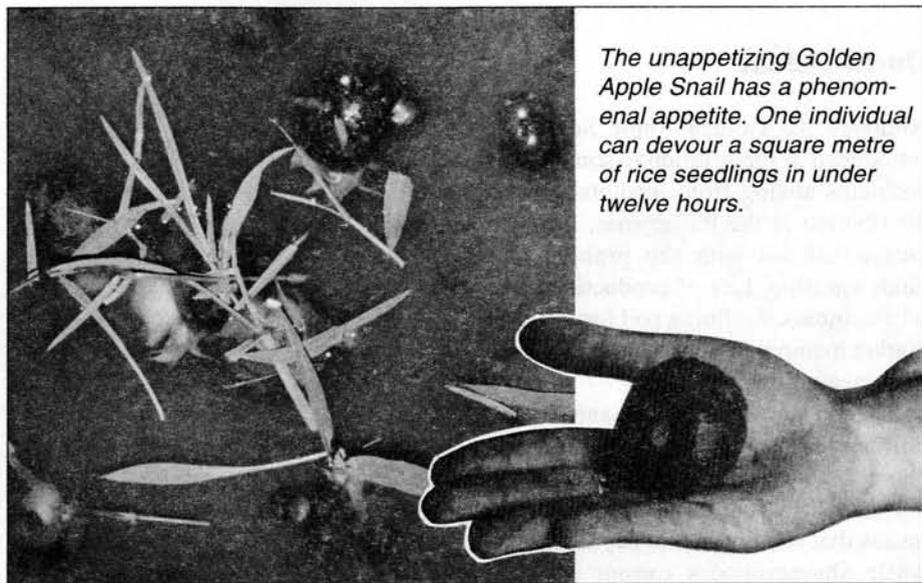
Local entrepreneurs were also active in its promotion. Ruel Almoneda, an officer of the Department of Agriculture in Negros, takes personal responsibility for bringing the very first snail to the island in 1982. At the time he worked for a Metro Manila based company, the River Land and City Development Corporation, which produced "snail support technology" and provided free breeders at seminars. Small companies pioneered the snails, but when they became popular in 1985, the Department of Agriculture began to distribute them.

Chemical Solutions

The zealous government and NGO promotion of this untested innovation was taking place not only in Negros but all over the Philippines. But by 1986 it was becoming clear that the snail was no money-maker, but a national disaster. The snails were proving difficult to sell both at home and abroad. Stringent health regulations in First World markets meant

that the snail was not suitable for export. In Manila, the elite fad for the *escargot* soon faded, while rural Filipinos never developed a taste for it. The rural poor, who had seen their rice devoured by the snails and poured chemicals on them in an attempt to stop them proliferating, were not inclined to eat them. A common complaint was that the native snail, which had previously formed a regular part of

quickly with its own solutions to the Golden Apple Snail, with predictable results. The first popular molluscides were Brestan and Aquatin (made by Hoechst and Planters Products respectively). Both of these are organotin substances with potentially serious health hazards. The two were originally marketed as fungicides for use in fish ponds and on bananas. However, mixed to ten times



The unappetizing Golden Apple Snail has a phenomenal appetite. One individual can devour a square metre of rice seedlings in under twelve hours.

Bridget Anderson

their diet, had been all but wiped out in some areas by the use of molluscides to deal with the Apple Snail.

Farmers also complained that they were not warned of the risks of snail propagation, and were often not even informed that the snail ate rice. Even if they had been properly informed, the snails would inevitably have found their way into rice fields: the Philippines endure frequent typhoons and floods which carry snails from well protected backyard tanks into paddy fields.

Once the snail has escaped into rice fields, it is very difficult to control. It thrives in rivers, streams and particularly the irrigation canals which water much of the Philippines' lowland rice. Having devoured one rice field, it can thus quickly move on to the next. Draining the fields does not provide any long-term protection because the snail can survive drought for many months by burying itself in the mud. Indeed water management becomes a much more difficult business altogether: the snail thrives when the water is high, and whereas previously farmers used to control weeds by flooding the fields, such measures now risk encouraging snail infestation, and expensive herbicides are used instead.

The pesticide industry has moved in

their fungicidal strength, they can kill the Golden Apple Snail. By 1987 they had leapt from being little known products to their companies' best-sellers, and had doubled in price. From 1987 to 1990, Filipino farmers spent \$10 million on molluscides. According to the Philippine based Centre for Environmental Concerns, by 1990 molluscides were absorbing 20 per cent of a farmer's average income. The chemicals were originally promoted by Department of Agriculture technicians, who, according to farmers, are often accompanied on their village visits by pesticide company representatives.

The economic hardship caused by the need to buy these products was not the only problem. Farmers soon realized that the molluscides had serious effects on their health. Organotins are highly dangerous compounds, even when used with modern safety equipment. For a peasant equipped only with a tin spray can and a gauze mask, they can be lethal. There were reports of fingernails and toenails peeling off, severe headaches, nausea, shortness of breath, skin burns, blurred vision and total blindness. On 2 February, 1991, it was reported that 20 peasant women had been found dead in ricefields recently sprayed with Brestan. This was some six months after Brestan, Aquatin

and two other molluscides had been banned by the Food and Pesticides Authority — the banned products were still available under the counter. Peasants also use the dangerous organochlorine, endosulfan, although this is not designed for killing snails; a recent attempt, by the Philippine government, to ban it was blocked by legal action from its makers, Hoechst.³

Ducks Deluxe

Although the Golden Apple Snail was introduced as the solution to some of the problems arising from inequitable land distribution in the Philippines, it has in fact combined with the problems of landownership, lack of production capital and inputs, declining soil fertility and market manipulation to exacerbate these very inequalities.

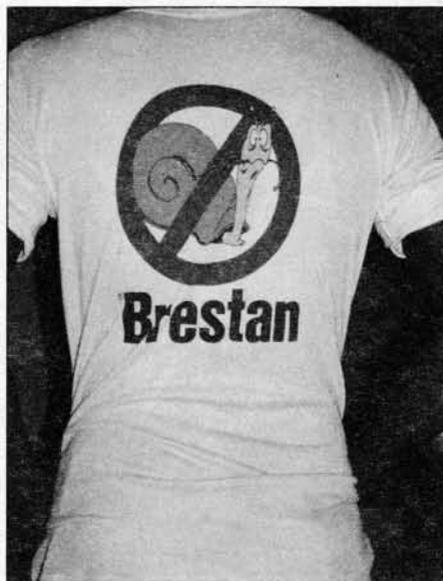
The 80 per cent of peasants in the Philippines that are tenants, sharecroppers or labourers have been hardest hit by the snail. Snail infestation commonly means that tenants cannot pay their rent, while sharecroppers cannot produce enough to survive. In either case, they must borrow, at interest rates of between 50-80 per cent. Both these groups are heavily dependent on supplementing their diets with food from the wild, such as mudfish, freshwater crabs and native snails, though numbers of these have been declining because of the increased use of pesticides.

Tenants commonly supplement their income by working as farm labourers on other plots. This is one of the few opportunities for earning cash income, but it is becoming increasingly difficult because snail control is very labour intensive and so extra labour time has been significantly reduced. For example, in many parts of the country, the traditional method of sowing rice is by broadcasting the seed. But as it is the young rice seedlings that are vulnerable to the snail, the preferred method now is to keep a nursery bed and transplant the rice to the paddy fields only when it is tougher and less succulent. Transplanting is usually done by women who squat all day in the heavily sprayed nursery beds, haunch deep in water. It is also women who are usually responsible for finding the household's supplementary food, and they have to go further and further afield to find it.

Pulatin or "picking" is now a regular part of the farming day: a family can

spend four hours a day, for one month before transplanting and one month after, picking the snails by hand from the fields. The broken shells of the snails are sharp and labourers' feet are sliced with scars which can develop into serious health problems if the field has been sprayed.

Large landowners in contrast have in many cases positively benefited from the snail, albeit indirectly. Many of them are



Brestan, unfortunately, kills farm-workers as well as snails.

also traders and moneylenders, who benefit from the increasing number of labourers and tenants forced to take out loans because of lower yields and cost of inputs. Sometimes the loan will be paid directly back to the trader to buy pesticides or rice, repayable with interest at harvest.

In Negros, and on other islands, wealthy farmers benefit from the snail as feed for ducks. Ducks find the young snails quite delicious and benefit from the calcium in their shells to give a much higher quality egg. Ducks, however, are expensive to buy and to keep, and are certainly not within the means of the average farming family. Large landowners have been buying flocks of ducks, and, for a small fee or even for free, pasturing them on snail-infested fields.

Keeping the Snail at Bay

When local officials realized the problems of promoting molluscides, they started looking for solutions. They took to organizing Golden Apple Snail recipe competitions, and offering rewards for the village that collected the largest weight of snails. One local beauty contest was

decided by supporters voting with snails — the woman who collected the heaviest weight was the winner. But these frivolous responses only serve to convince farmers that the Department of Agriculture does not have a proper policy for dealing with the pest.

Chemical manufacturers have been hard at work producing new brands of snail killers. Home-made molluscides, particularly those using ash and tobacco leaves are also being applied, but farmers need such large amounts of ingredients that they are not proving practical — though they joke that the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in 1991 must benefit them somehow. Some farmers' cooperatives insert traps in irrigation canals to prevent the snail moving from one field to the next, though these soon get clogged with the sheer volume of snails. The snails like to lay their eggs on taro plants and many farmers are planting it around the rice to attract the snails and make them easier to pick. Ducks are popular with those who can afford them, but they can eat only the smaller snails and cannot be let loose at the critical time when the rice seedlings are young, as they trample the tender shoots and eat the rice seeds and young plants themselves.

The best way of keeping the snail at bay seems to be a combination of the above together with handpicking. This is very labourious, but for the moment there seems to be no alternative. In the Philippines it is now common to see sacks of snails by the roadside waiting for trucks to come and run over them. Research on methods of control is urgently needed, but so far it is the pesticide manufacturers who are devoting the most resources to developing a solution. For the poor farmers of the Philippines, the Golden Apple has proved to be a poisoned apple.

The author wishes to thank AMIHAN, Peasant Women's Federation, 701B Tandang Sora Avenue, Old Balara, Quezon City, Manila; and the Center for Environmental Concerns, 71-E Timog Avenue, Quezon City, Manila. The research was originally compiled for Old Street films, 43-44 Hoxton Square, London N1.

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Books

SAP's Side Effects

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT, by David Reed (ed.), Earthscan, London, 1992, £15.00 (pb) 209pp, ISBN 1-85383-153-0; Westview Press, Boulder, CO, \$34.95 (sc), ISBN 0-8133-8702-7.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank developed "structural adjustment" programmes to address the very serious balance of payments' crises, faced by many borrowing nations, by stabilizing their macroeconomies. Hastily drawn-up loans were disbursed to ease short-term pressure on capital; public spending was cut back to reduce domestic demand; currencies were devalued to encourage exports and discourage imports; and overall economic efficiency was promoted through reformed macroeconomic policies.

Controversy surrounds the economic contribution of adjustment policies, and has done particularly since the publication in 1987 of a UNICEF study showing that women, children, and the poor "bore the brunt of economic contraction associated with adjustment programs."

According to Reed, structural adjustment is not in itself a bad idea, and, in fact, policies could be reformed. What is flawed, he says, is their current design which has had "at best, a random impact on the environment and, without qualification, has failed in putting adjusting countries on a sustainable development path." Because in the short- and medium-term, structural adjustment policies do not alleviate poverty but make it worse, and because impoverishment leads to environmental destruction, it is logical to

conclude that the policies are environmentally damaging.

Reed contests the idea that environmental degradation is a necessary side effect of development during early stages of economic growth, a theory, sometimes known as the "environmental Kuznet's Curve". This he describes as "a dangerous concept if this notion is used to assert that incomes have to reach a certain level before environmental degradation can be addressed in policy dialogue, let alone halted and reversed."

He concludes by offering wide-ranging recommendations to promote sustainable development. To change the policy focus of structural adjustment, he calls for increased sector productivity, particularly the use of economic strategies to alleviate poverty and to stabilize and strengthen the agricultural sector. Structural adjustment must begin operating on "basic principles safeguarding sustainable use of resources." Adjustment must "increase the attention given to rebuilding natural capital, restoring degraded natural resources, improving institutional capability for planning and managing resource utilization."

Appropriately, his recommendations go beyond structural adjustment and address needed reforms in the practices of official lending institutions, thus challenging the foundations of "adjustment's political dimension." The recommendations are less concerned with factors already considered in development policies than with those that are absent:

"Unless public involvement in managing the environment is drastically expanded—a change premised on access to information—fundamental improvement in the management of the local, regional and global environment will continue to prove elusive."

Ironically, the book itself suffers from poor access to information. Its arguments rest on three case studies covering Côte d'Ivoire, Mexico and Thailand, prepared by the London Environment and Economics Centre. Yet these are strangely lifeless, inconsistent, and in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, almost bereft of data.

Still, there is strength in Reed's conclusions, particularly when he ventures into political economy. "These studies reveal that an important cause of policy failure in the natural resource sector is that the policies often reflected the interests of the most powerful sectors of a given society, not the interests of society

as a whole," he says. Quite so. Critics have long argued that structural adjustment policies have not merely failed to address distributional inequities but that they have actually made matters worse. By exposing the link between that failure and environmental destruction, Reed makes a good case that current structural adjustment policies do not contribute to sustainable development.

Juliette Majot

Juliette Majot works with the International Rivers Network and is editor of the *World Rivers Review*.

Stop the McWorld I Want to Get Off!

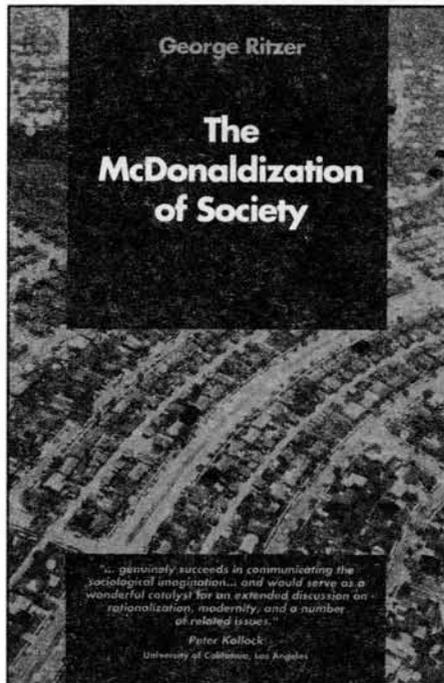
THE MCDONALDIZATION OF SOCIETY, by George Ritzer, Pine Forge Press/Sage Publications, California, 1993, £5.95 (pb), 176pp. ISBN 0-80399-000-6.

McDonaldization is an ugly neologism whose constant repetition on almost every page of George Ritzer's book is an irritating reminder of the omnipresence of McDonalds on our high streets. Ritzer flogs the concept *ad nauseam*, efficiently and without subtlety, and what could be more appropriate?

McDonaldization is "the process by which the principles of the fast food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society, as well as the rest of the world". For those of us who have yet to encounter its more extreme manifestations, Ritzer provides a perversely fascinating catalogue of what lies in store: unstaffed scan-it-yourself computerized supermarket tills; "Grade A Wins a Cheeseburger" student incentive programmes; Nutri-System Diet Centers where qualified counsellors prescribe freeze-dried foods—and he explains how McDonald's techniques are being applied by burgeoning chains of McDoctors, McDentists and McChild care centres.

Four "basic and alluring dimensions" characterize McDonaldization—efficiency, quantifiability, predictability and control. It combines the garish attractions of "Disneyfication" and the global reach of "Coca-Colonization" with the ruthless application of assembly-line methods

pioneered by FW Taylor and Henry Ford. In Ritzer's view, McDonaldization "tends to become a dehumanizing system . . . irrational and unreasonable", and it is not as efficient as it makes itself out to be. Yet he concludes that "there is little genuine hope of overcoming the liabilities of McDonaldization or of halting its spread throughout the world."



For all its extensive detail and its critical but resigned stance, Ritzer's book is disappointing in its analysis. His perception of the inefficiencies of McDonaldization is of the shallowest kind: "Is it efficient for us to push our own food over the supermarket scanner and bag it ourselves? Is it efficient for us to pump our own gasoline?" These are trivial questions of customer convenience. Nowhere is there the searching analysis of the ergonomic tail-chasing that modernity imposes, as examined, for example, by Ivan Illich in books such as *Energy and Equity*.

More surprisingly, the ecological implications of McDonaldization are barely touched upon. There is no mention of the environmental chaos caused by the world wide mania for the casual consumption of beef — of which McDonalds is the undisputed pioneer. There is little mention of the indispensable part played by the private motor car. In short, there is no examination of the extent to which McDonaldization encourages overconsumption and places impossible demands upon world resources.

In one paragraph, however, Ritzer does hint at forces that lie outside his analysis: "There is a lot of emotional baggage wrapped up in McDonalds . . . It now

proclaims itself as part of our rich tradition rather than, as many people believe, a threat to many of those traditions." Note the use of the word "our". This is not the editorial "we", but the American "we". Being a US citizen, Ritzer is too close to his subject to notice that the rest of the world already has a word that is almost a synonym of McDonaldization — that word being "Americanization". Nearly every example he uses originates in the United States and many are consciously designed to be "all-American" institutions.

Yet nowhere does Ritzer pause to consider why US capitalism — in other respects no more inventive than the European variety — should have spawned this messianic enthusiasm for combining vulgarity with efficiency. Nor does he seem aware that large numbers of people and cultures throughout the world are deeply resistant to McDonaldization and to the cultural imperialism that it implies. How does he imagine people in France, or indeed almost anywhere, will react to his extraordinary assertion that "it is impossible to go back to a non-rationalized world, if it ever existed, of home-cooked meals . . ."? Or Muslims to the prospect of Disneyland as "the middle-class haj, the compulsory visit to the sun-baked holy city"? One of the articles Ritzer quotes from is entitled *Jihad versus McWorld*; it is a pity he does not develop any of the themes implicit in this title.

Ultimately this book is itself a product of McDonaldization. It is a neat little package, each chapter following the same format, each ending with a brief "conclusion" that is in fact a resumé. The book is tailored — and this is confirmed on the back cover — for the burger-loving US undergraduate, fighting for grades in the same "factory-like universities" that Professor Ritzer condemns. In this respect, it is well-pitched: it offers, not a polemic from an outraged European intellectual, but a critique that Americans brought up on McDonalds may appreciate.

But the book has greater value than that. Whatever its inadequacies, it delineates — and more importantly, it names — a key social phenomenon of our age. McDonaldization has remained anonymous for so long, because it is so unspeakably obvious and vulgar that no European sociologist has had the gall to make it the focus of a book. Ritzer had done the world a great service — by giving McDonaldization the name it deserves.

Simon Fairlie

Conservation versus People

RESIDENT PEOPLES AND NATIONAL PARKS: Social Dilemmas and Strategies in International Conservation by Patrick C. West and Steve R. Brechin (eds.), University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1991. 443 pp. (hb) \$45.00 ISBN 0-8165-1128-4.

Originally conceived as an exposé of the often disastrous impact of National Parks on local communities, this stimulating collection of studies has evolved into a more subtle and useful challenge to Western-style conservation. Although conservation organizations rhetorically acknowledge the need to respect local peoples' rights and to ensure that protected areas meet their needs and demands, examples of projects initiated by conservationists which have reconciled conservation goals with local peoples' livelihoods are hard to come by. The editors do not cast doubt on the sincerity of conservationists' commitment to social justice, but they do forecast troubled times ahead.

"What we suspect is that the international conservation movement is in for a second major revolution based on shock therapy in the face of harsh reality. It is not quite so easy to harmonize natural area protection, cultural preservation and true rural development for resident peoples. The gap between rhetoric and reality is not so easily closed."

This book should help close the gap, for it is wide-ranging in subject matter and geographic scope. Thirty-one contributors from different countries provide a variety of case studies and some stimulating thematic discussions. The editors' main concern is with the imposition on the Third World of Western conservation models such as US style of National Parks, in which resident peoples are expelled and wildernesses preserved for trekker and tourist. Another Western model of landscape protection practised in the British National Parks, in which not only are traditional farming practices encouraged but private tenure rights secured, has not been widely applied in developing countries, even by the British. In India, the stimulus to create protected areas came from hunting enthusiasts and

foresters, who used hunting and forest reserves as their model. Tribal people and other resident groups continue to struggle to regain rights of access to the resources in these areas.

Apart from inflicting suffering upon excluded local people — exemplified by the Ik, alienated from their hunting grounds in the Kidepo National Park in northern Uganda — neglecting social issues may also undermine conservation goals. Case studies show that valued species and ecosystems are maintained by regular use such as grazing, browsing and even firing. Over enthusiastic attempts to separate humanity from nature are to the loss of both. Contributors challenge the countervailing myth of “primitive man” living in harmony with nature according to an ancient “conservation ethic”. The editors point out that social systems achieve balance with their natural environments through a wide range of forces, even though this may not be an explicit goal. When this balance breaks down, it may not be the local peoples’ fault, as much as external pressures from unsustainable economies.

As the case studies illustrate, conservationists have experimented with a wide range of management options to reconcile human use with nature protection. The common approach seems still to be predominantly top-down and prescriptive. Conservation goals have absolute priority; and while “limited human use” may be tolerated, the emphasis is still on “education”, “comprehension” and “conflict management”. From a conservation viewpoint some of these projects — which often include “community forestry”, “ecodevelopment” and “ecotourism” — have been quite successful; but from a social and political perspective, local people may not be benefiting as much as is claimed. Profits from ecotourism in the Galapagos and in Korean parks have bypassed locals, while the projects have brought them serious problems.

The editors’ sympathies clearly lie with more radical approaches based on joint management or self-determination. Where local people have a strong say or even control over a protected area, they more readily recognize the need to modify their own lifestyles to moderate their pressure on the environment. Unfortunately, the crucial questions raised by such an approach — the kinds of land tenure and social institutions that lend themselves to effective community management — are only briefly explored.

Too often conservationists substitute the rhetoric of “participation” and “consultation” for genuine local control. The co-option of indigenous élites or the creation of artificial consultative structures may divide local communities and result in few real benefits reaching the majority of those affected.

The cases make clear that careful attention needs to be paid to existing social institutions regulating land use, ownership and decision-making if interventions are not to be harmful or disruptive, and this requires that the conservationists subject themselves, and those through whom they chose to work, to checks and balances to ensure that they are accountable to the people themselves. This will require some swallowing of pride by those whom some of the authors clearly perceive as latter-day imperialists.

This broad, stimulating and well-researched book deserves to be widely read by the conservation community for, even if its findings are unwelcome, it makes clear that if the conservation movement is to realize its goals, a more socially sensitive approach is essential.

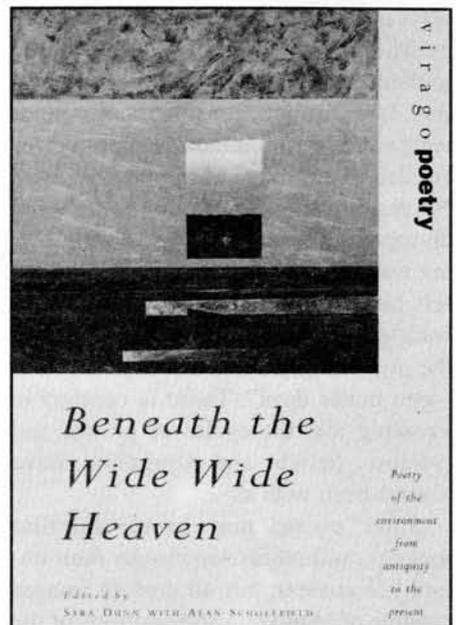
Marcus Colchester

Marcus Colchester is director of the Forest Peoples’ Programme of the World Rainforest Movement.

Beyond the Chimney pots

BENEATH THE WIDE WIDE HEAVEN: Poetry of the Environment from Antiquity to the Present. Sara Dunn with Alan Scholefield (eds.), Virago, 1991, 246 pp. £7.99, ISBN 1-85381-304-4.

For all of us engaged in thinking, reading and writing about the state of the Earth, there are times when the ugly statistics and irreversible destruction become overwhelmingly depressing, and the world we have created out of the fabric of the planet seems just an incurable mess. At such moments, it is easy to lose sight of the defiant and irrepressible Beauty which co-exists alongside the excrescences of humanity. This anthology of



nearly two hundred poems, each a unique perception of a time, a place, and a relationship with Nature, provides a source of refreshment.

In a concise and stimulating introduction, Sara Dunn discusses the ways in which our current concern with environmental problems on the global scale have caused the concept of “Environment” to become abstracted, so that our own intimate relationship with the here and now is lost in the vision of planetary apocalypse, and the astonishing variety and mystery of the world becomes shrunk in the mind to a mere “bundle of issues”. It is only by regaining and maintaining the dialogue between human perception and the mystery itself that we can hope to keep our spirits fuelled for the long fight ahead.

The anthology includes over 150 poets from early Chinese to modern European, with contributions from writers such as Basho, Ibn Simak, Pasternak, Stevie Smith, Dorothy Parker, Pablo Neruda and Gary Snyder. Some old favourites are included, such as Wordsworth’s *Ode Composed Upon Westminster Bridge* (“Earth hath not anything to show more fair . . .”). But there are many less well-known poems and intriguing curiosities: Ray A. Young Bear’s *The Reason Why I am Afraid Even Though I am a Fisherman*, or *Verses on Hearing that an Airy and Pleasant Situation Near a Populous and Commercial Town was Surrounded with New Buildings* by Maria Logan (*floruit* 1793).

The poems have not been chosen to simplify or romanticize the often difficult

ways in which Nature communicates with us. The grouping of the poems according to their emotional colouring — Celebration, Loss, Anger, Consolation, Contemplation, Observation and Disquiet — gives an idea of the range of interactions with Nature. Grumbles, griefs, discomforts and disappointments are all represented, giving reassurance that all we feel has been felt before. Many poems, some dating back to earliest recorded times, deal with the prevailing feeling that the Earth has “seen better days”. There is comfort in knowing that the cycles of growth and collapse, delight and depression, have always been with us.

Some poems may mirror familiar feelings, and others surprise by their unfamiliar context, but all contain images capable of exploding stale notions of the “known” world and enabling us to react towards Nature in fresh and powerful ways. We need fresh perspectives if we are not to slide into clichés and crude assumptions. The politics of environment tends to produce neat, all-purpose images which flatten, or even discard, the personal dimension of our involvement with the world and standardize our reactions to it. Spaceship Earth is one such metaphor, but are we just passengers? Are we reacting automatically to an image? The poetry of the environment, with its distilled subjectivity, its ability to include apparent contradictions and create a whole from the random fragments of experience, reminds us that beyond doctrine and beyond the mass sense of global crisis, a place still survives where:

“the miraculous comes so close
to the ruined, dirty house —
something not known to anyone at all,
but wild in our breast for centuries”
(Akhmatova)

A hundred and fifty voices from desert, forest, suburb, tundra, mountain and city, out of green lands and badlands, ancient and present times, speak here of their passionate engagement with our mutual reality. In articulating our primary relationship with Nature, and dismantling our convenient abstractions, they remind us that, out there beyond the chimneypots, something truly huge is going on. And we are part of it.

Gill Barron

Gill Barron lives in North Yorkshire and is secretary of the Institute of Metamorphysics, UK.

BOOKS DIGEST

- **THE FUTURE OF PEOPLE AND FORESTS IN THAILAND AFTER THE LOGGING BAN:** edited by Pinkaew Leungaramsri and Noel Rajesh, Project for Ecological Recovery, 77/3 Soi Nomchit, Nares Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand, 1992, \$8.00 (pb), plus \$6.00 postage and packing, 202 pp.

This comprehensive report examines the reasons for the continued destruction of the country's forests, even after a 1989 logging ban. It delineates the inherent contradictions between national forestry policy and development policies such as commercial tree plantations, cash crops, aquaculture, tourism and infrastructure development.

- **BUSH BASE: FOREST FARM: *Culture, environment and development*,** edited by Elisabeth Croll and David Parkin, Routledge, London, 1992, £12.99 (pb), 263 pp. ISBN 0-41506-657-3.

Anthropological case studies from Asia, Africa and Russia challenge the widely-held dichotomy between human settlement — the base or the farm — and the external “natural” environment — the bush or the forest. Considering rituals, beliefs, ideas, the construction of knowledge and power, and the pressures behind choices and decisions, the anthropologists' perspective may enlighten developmentalists and environmentalists alike.

- **THE PESTICIDE HAZARD: *A Global Health and Environmental Audit*,** compiled by Barbara Dinham, Zed Books, London and New York, 1993, £12.95 (pb), 228 pp. ISBN 1-85649-202-8.

This report, based on worldwide research by the Pesticide Action Network, documents near epidemic levels of pesticide poisoning of humans and the environment, despite higher standards and trade controls introduced during the past decade. Illustrated by nine country studies, it should convince even sceptics of the need for more non-chemical methods of pest management.

- **POLITICS AND TECHNOLOGY** by John Street, Macmillan Press, Basingstoke, 1992, £10.99 (pb), 212 pp. ISBN 0-33353-498-0.

Starting from the premise that political interests are directly linked to the development, introduction and impact of technology — which encompasses more than just nuclear power and computers — Street assesses some practical implications in a democratic political system, such as risk assessment and accountability. A thought-provoking and lively volume.

- **INVENTING WOMEN: *Science, Technology and Gender*,** edited by Gill Kirkup and Laurie Smith Keller, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, £11.95 (pb), 342 pp. ISBN 0-744560-978-3.

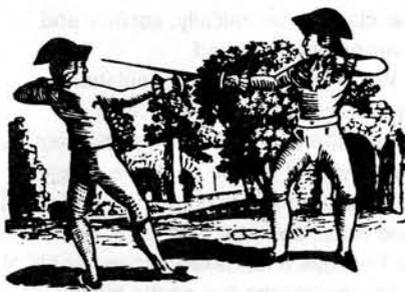
Some of the foremost scholars in their respective fields provide an insightful introduction to diverse aspects of science and technology, in particular, how they affect gender, race, class, caste and place.

- **THE ANIMAL RIGHTS/ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS DEBATE: *The Environmental Perspective*,** edited by Eugene C. Hargrove, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1992, \$14.95 (pb), 273 pp. ISBN 0-79140-934-1.

Do wild animals have rights? Does Nature? Collecting together many of the significant articles written on the topic, this book follows the history of the recent philosophical debate in the English-speaking world on the links and divisions between humans, animals and nature.

- **ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN THIRD WORLD CITIES** by Jorge E Hardoy, Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite, Earthscan, London, 1993, £12.95 (pb), 302 pp. ISBN 1-85383-146-8.

Contaminated water, inadequate sanitation, garbage, overcrowding and pollution are conditions for some of the most life and health-threatening of human environments. The authors contend, however, that cities can be healthy without imposing unsustainable demands on ecosystems and that representative local government could achieve much of this at low cost.



Letters

Life on the Margins

Two inadvertently related sentences in the articles "Tunnel Vision: The Lessons from Twyford Down" and "Chemical Weapons Incineration in the United States" (*The Ecologist*, January/February 1993) could form the springboard for a wider debate about the health — or otherwise — of the mainstream environmental movement in Britain today.

The Dongas of Twyford Down are "scathing about environmentalists who . . . whinge endlessly about the plight of indigenous peoples in the Amazon or Africa and forget their own," their own being people in Britain — the homeless, those in or near poverty and those from Black and ethnic minority groups — who are marginalised as indigenous people are on the periphery of their societies.

In the USA where, "the grassroots toxics movement is composed of predominantly African-American, Asian-American, Native-American, Pacific Islander, Latino and poor white communities which are hardest hit by hazardous and solid waste disposal," such a movement developed precisely because middle-class, white America refused to take domestic toxics seriously.

Both these sentences focus on disaffection with the agenda and consequent campaign activities of the larger environmental organisations in Britain and the USA, and with these environmental movements in general. They reveal the widening gulf between the rhetoric of the British environmental movement and the present environmental, economic, social and political realities of Britain today. This movement preaches the values of caring, sharing and sustainability, but shows no interest in caring for, sharing with or sustaining those people for whom "environment" is not Ecover, ecology or E

numbers, but is the medium through which their daily struggle to survive occurs.

Few if any of these people grace the membership lists of environmental organisations or have a voice in the biggest social movement in Britain today, because all share a common characteristic: their lowly structural and socio-economic position in British society. Unless they riot, peddle drugs, kill each other or affect the middle classes, they have little chance of being heard. They too, however, have environmental concerns — inadequate, unsafe and poorly designed housing or the lack of it; lack of playspaces and greenspaces; poor public transport; pollution; litter; lighting and associated safety concerns; graffiti; dog mess and associated health hazards; and fly tipping — concerns which are not as global as those of mainstream environmentalists and which are clearly related to their immediate surroundings and the improvement of their "quality of life".

The comment of Dave Gee as Director of Friends of the Earth that "we've got to shield the poor from the negative consequences of essential change" (emphasis added) reflects the liberal paternalistic concern of most environmentalists but singularly fails to address the underlying political and ethical issues of a lack of social justice, discrimination in all its forms and the inequity of resource allocation in Britain.

But poverty is not just about a lack of money and access to resource and advocacy channels. It is about the impoverishment of peoples' life experiences, environments and opportunities. This applies as much in rural and urban Britain as it does in Bolivia, Bangladesh or Benin.

The British environmental movement is, as Jonathon Porritt recently noted, "denying political reality" which "is as dangerous as denying ecological reality", the link between politics (essentially the ownership of land) and ecology (the use of that land) being both obvious and necessary. The majority of environmentalists campaign on issues which they carefully disengage from any wider political context because they want to avoid the "controversy" of aligning with what they see as domestic socio-political issues which they consider outside their remit. This is because the environmental agenda is set by an environmental movement of predominantly well-educated, middle- and upper-class, middle-aged, white people who, together with politicians, and advertising and marketing executives, are keen to keep the environmental agenda off social issues because

of a myopic belief that getting involved in "wider" issues will dilute their message, or because "green" sells products, social or political issues don't.

But if the move from NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) to NOPE (Not On Planet Earth) is to happen, every community, group and individual, marginal and mainstream, must be empowered to organise and protest. Campaigning simply cannot be left to the "experts" because they only campaign on those issues which they and their organisations have decided are worthy of attention. This does not usually include the "quality of life" issues which are the most pressing environmental needs of many people in inner cities and increasingly in rural Britain.

The ecological/political complacency of the major British environmental organisations requires urgent and long-term attention. Acknowledging the political, social justice and equality roots of environmental issues, including poverty, would be a step in the right direction because there will never be environmental quality until there is human equality.

Julian Agyeman

Black Environment Network

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Regent's Wharf

8 All Saints Road

London N1

UK

The Flood Action Plan

While the article by Peter Custers entitled "Banking on a Flood-free Future?" (*The Ecologist*, September/October 1992) raised many highly relevant issues and contained several excellent descriptive pieces on Bangladesh life and provocative, if questionable, socio-political interpretations of the country, its coverage of the Flood Action Plan suffered from factual errors and some omissions. In the interests of professional judgement, we would appreciate the opportunity to correct a few facts and provide the missing information.

The Flood Action Plan (FAP) belongs firmly to the newly-elected, democratic government in Bangladesh. Before officially endorsing the FAP concept at the Second Flood Action Plan Conference in March 1992, the Government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia asked for a detailed presentation of FAP aims and objectives and arranged for their review by

a multi-party Parliamentary Select Committee. Further, the Government has organized meetings throughout the country where individual members of parliament and the public at large can discuss the various development options with the FAP study teams. These teams have already involved a wide range of potential beneficiary groups (farmers, fishermen, small boat operators, landless, etc.) and the development options have been shaped by this interaction. The discussion process is expected to continue until early in 1993 when FAP will be the subject of a full parliamentary debate. The future of FAP is expected to be governed by the decisions of this democratic process.

The role of Bangladesh's development partners in the FAP has been to finance the twenty-six studies and pilot projects in the initial phase of the Plan (1990-1995). Fifteen countries and international agencies are involved (Canada, Denmark, the European Community, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank). The World Bank's role has been to coordinate the effort of the other development partners, manage the expert review panel and, together with the Government, provide a transparency to the FAP process through organizing conferences/seminars and by providing public access to all reviewed documents at the Bank's mission in Dhaka.

There is no "hidden" agenda to the FAP. Neither the Government nor its

development partners have made any financial commitment to FAP beyond the \$150 million set aside for the study phase and the \$350-400 million expected to be needed for full repair of the infrastructure damaged by the 1987 and 1988 floods and the 1991 cyclone. Indeed, it has been publicly stated that potential FAP investments will, in the context of the overall development program, be judged on equal terms with proposals from other sectors. Specific guidelines for project assessment are being used to bring consistency to project analysis throughout FAP and these include guidelines for environmental impact assessment (EIA) and people's participation. EIAs have been made mandatory for all potential FAP projects and the guidelines on people's participation are believed to be one of the first attempts anywhere at a national level to provide clear planning instructions on this subject.

Unfortunately the debate in connection with embankments in the FAP has tended to be argued on emotional and ideological grounds rather than from a professional standpoint. Embankments, built by governments and local communities, have been used for flood protection in Bangladesh for hundreds of years and they have been responsible for saving many lives and livelihoods. However, there have also been instances where embankments have had severe negative impacts on the environment. The multi-disciplinary regional study teams have been asked to explore all options for flood control and improved water management, including embankments, but the Government and its FAP development partners have required

that proposed solutions be technically, financially, economically, socially and environmentally sound.

With the Bangladesh population expanding at about three million per annum, there are immense settlement problems and people are increasingly being obliged to live on land with very high flood risks. Contrary to what its critics say, the FAP has undertaken a major study of those people who live on the highly vulnerable river islands (*char* lands) and measures to alleviate their plight are now being incorporated into the regional study proposals. Many rural non-governmental organizations have been interviewed by the study teams and their concerns are reflected in the reports and recommendations. FAP has provided the needed impetus for the long-planned cyclone impact studies to get underway and one of these will address the difficult issue of relative costs of saving lives through structural intervention (eg. shelters, safe havens, embankments) as compared to investments in non-structural activities such as early warning systems and improved health and sanitation services, both in the cyclone-affected areas and elsewhere in Bangladesh.

Although the FAP was conceived as a plan principally to mitigate adverse impacts of floods and cyclones, it has been asked, by many differing interests groups, to provide definitive solutions to problems which affect most development activities in Bangladesh. On the complex issues of land rights and land tenure reform, where improvement should be accelerated but would not deliver anything like the widespread of well-being that Peter Custers seems to assume, the FAP has focused its work on studying the problems of land acquisition and resettlement. However, on the preservation and enhancement of common property resources, the FAP is undertaking detailed study work on ways and means to improve the floodplain fisheries that are predominantly utilized by the landless and economically disadvantaged. This fishery resource has been under pressure for many years and it is hoped that new water management technology (controlled flooding), gazetted and protection of fish breeding areas, and annual restocking may provide practical support for this valuable source of food and income for rural people.

From its inception, the Bangladesh Government and its development partners have been committed to making FAP a transparent planning process where the issues are openly debated with a wide range of interested parties. The March



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1992 Conference in Dhaka clearly demonstrated this commitment and it is hoped to hold another open conference in 1993.

Ross Wallace

Resident FAP Coordinator

The World Bank
Resident Mission in Bangladesh
3A Paribagh
GPO Box 97
Dhaka 1000
BANGLADESH

Community Population Control

Neither your critic Bill McCormick nor your good selves seem to come anywhere near the heart of the crisis of human numbers on this already overloaded planet (*The Ecologist*, January/February 1993, *Letters*) You all seem to see it as some kind of technical problem which is susceptible to some kind of technofix solution; you miss out altogether on the human dimension, especially as expressed in a value and political context.

It should be self-evident that begetting children is a matter touching our innermost feelings; what we have to take on board is that those feelings are not going to be much affected by decisions made by the United Nations or, for that matter, by *The Ecologist* or Bill McCormick. What does affect them is an awareness of the consequences of our actions on the local community in which we live.

For that to be operative, certain conditions are necessary. First there must be a community, by which I mean a human-scale entity, the life of which is dominated by the personal relationships of its members and, as a result, by their values and their moral judgements, and the decision of community members must be effective in determining the pattern of life the community itself wants.

None of these vital conditions today obtain. We do not live in communities at all, instead we have our being in mass forms of society, the most dangerous, destructive and unilluminated forms of life ever to have surfaced. What empowered local community would allow a motorway to run across its territory? Or allow a nuclear power station to be sited within its borders? Or allow its soils to be degraded with chemical fertilizers? Or its waters to be overfished? And what empowered local community would allow its food supplies and its social services to be swamped by an excess of its own numbers?

It is local forms of power and the forms of economic independence imposed by the limits of technology, which made it impossible to rely on outside sources for food, which have been chiefly responsible for limiting human numbers. These local forms of power have been destroyed by centralised forms of political and economic power. As a result, local peoples' decisions no longer determine the shape of their lives and they are led, quite erroneously, to assume that whatever problems erupt, centralised experts will solve them.

They will not, however, solve the population problem, the major consequence of disempowering local people. The problem is not technical or primarily economic; it is political. And it will not be solved by experts (well defined as those who make bigger cockups), but by people having control of their own lives.

John Papworth
Fourth World Review

24 Abercorn Place
London NW8 9XP
UK

Green Taxes

The advocacy of taxes on nitrogen fertilizers in Tracey Clunies-Ross's article (*The Ecologist*, January/February 1993) with an emphasis on the restructuring of agriculture is most welcome. But I do not think the case is helped by the apparent acceptance of such taxes as a special form of taxation, by implication additional to ordinary taxation. This gives too much ammunition to opponents, both those in national treasuries who hate "hypothecated" taxes on principle (even if it is not clear what the "principle" is) and people who fear that their industrial interests might suffer. Such opponents welcome any chance to get advocacy of resource taxes identified in the public's mind with advocacy of high taxation.

Taxes exist to fund services which are perceived as necessary or desirable. Changing the form of taxation does not in itself alter the total revenue which has to be raised. Imposing any new tax means that an existing one could be removed or reduced, or that some tax increase which would otherwise have been necessary can be avoided. The basic philosophy should be that while a tax is the downside of the public services it helps to finance, any tax which yields positive benefits in the collecting as well as in the spending of the revenue starts with a huge advantage. When the effect of the tax would also

reduce the need for public expenditure — as a carbon tax would reduce the apparent need for new roads, and a nitrogen tax would reduce the need to de-nitrify water for drinking — that is another bonus. In this light, advocates of green taxes do not have to take on the burden of demonstrating that they have an answer to each and every possible consequential difficulty, only that any such problems are not disproportionately large compared with problems which will disappear or be eased by the abolition or reduction of some other tax. The article discusses, as if this were a problem, a German economist's view that nitrogen taxes might have to be very heavy, up to 400-600 per cent, to be effective in reducing agricultural surpluses; but in revenue-raising terms, it is a positive advantage when a tax rate can be varied without too sharp an effect on the volume of taxable transactions.

Prices for farm produce would have to rise, but the effect on the prices of processed foods in the supermarkets would not necessarily be great, since the primary produce constitutes a relatively small element in the cost compared with packaging and merchandising. (A rough calculation suggests that an extra £10 a ton to a farmer for potatoes would put much less than a tenth of a penny on a packet of crisps). The impact would be much greater on bulk, unprocessed goods like greengroceries, but at least latter-day eco-efficient "peasants" — growers of organic vegetables in a garden or allotment — would see their labours more fairly reflected in shop prices of similar goods.

The most difficult problem might well be the undercutting of prices of home produce by imports from countries without nitrate taxes, although the effect would be partly offset, at least as far as the more labour-intensive forms of food production are concerned, if the yield from resource taxes were used — as it probably ought to be, in the interests of employment — to reduce, in the UK, for example, National Insurance employer's contributions. But the main problem of imports, which arises in respect of many possible taxes on resources or pollution, has to be tackled head-on by putting equivalent levies on imports which have not borne similar taxation in the country of origin, not by compensating subsidies. Such levies would level the playing field, not tilt it.

Roy Cattran

2 Donnington Road
Penzance
Cornwall TR18 4PH
UK

Red or Green?

T. L. Davidson argues that Greens should not become Socialists (*The Ecologist*, November/December 1992, *Letters*). But his argument is weakened by his failure to recognize the diversity within socialism.

While both social democratic reformists and the former communist states have a record of ruthless exploitation of the planet, there are other socialist traditions which have always resisted this. Belatedly, there are strands within the green movement which have always understood the significance of capital's role in degrading the environment and the importance of egalitarian themes within green thought and practice.

The Red-Green Network is one organization exploring the connections as well as the tensions between two traditions which are themselves complex and internally varied. We do so with the aim of contributing to the development of an ecosocialist political movement which is as committed to building ecologically sane forms of social organization as it is to overthrowing the rapacious and unjust structures of the capitalist market. Indeed, we would argue that the two tasks are closely bound up with one another.

Davidson suggests that while Socialists aim to offer electors more, it is the task of a Green Party to make everyone satisfied with less. Put like this, I suspect that Davidson's political project is doomed. Instead, we should aim to strengthen those political forces which challenge capital's definitions of "more" and "less". What we want is more of what matters (including un-degraded environments) and less of what does not.

Barney Dickson
Publicity Officer
Red-Green Network
Cabin W
25 Horsell Road
London N5 1XL
UK

Correction

In the letter "Mad Cow Disease" by Mark Purdey (*The Ecologist*, January/February 1993), the dealer mentioned in paragraph 3, page 36 was from the South-West of England, not from Jersey as implied. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.



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March 17, 1993: Address by Jonathon Porritt **WILL ECONOMISTS DESTROY THE EARTH?** For details contact: Springhill Centre, Cudlington Road, Dinton, Nr Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 0AD. Tel: 0296 748278, Fax: 0296 747360.

March 20-21, 1993: Ayrshire Friends of the Earth invite to a **NEW Ayrshire Green Extravaganza** at the Grand Hall, Kilmarnock. The event hopes to draw together the local community and local and national organisations, and will be a landmark in the campaign for a healthier environment. For details contact: Stewart Bailey, 72 Adamton Estate, Monkton, Ayrshire KA9 2SQ.

March 25, 1993, 8pm: Lecture by John Elkington, Founder Director of the Environmental Consultancy Sustainability: **WHAT FUTURE FOR THE RECESSION-DENTED GREEN CONSUMER?** Tickets £5.00 or £3.50 OAP, etc. incl. glass of wine and light refreshments. Contact Rachel or Bob, The Green House, 5 Station Parade, Harrogate, N. Yorks. Tel: 0423 502 580.

March 30-April 1, 1993: The Centre for Environmental Management and Planning is holding a conference at Lerwick, Shetland on **MANAGING THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT: THE SHETLAND STANDARD.** For details of this and further Seminars and Courses, please contact CEMP, Auris Business Centre, 23 St Machar Drive, Old Aberdeen AB2 1RY, Scotland. Tel: 0224 272483, Fax: 0224 487658.

April 1, 1993: The Institution of Water and Environmental Management is organising a symposium on **THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF COAL MINE CLOSURES.** Time 9am to 4.30pm. Cost for members £100 plus VAT, non-members £115 plus VAT. Applications and all enquiries to The Conference Manager, IWEM, 15 John Street, London WC1N 2EB. Tel: 071-851 3110, Fax: 071-405 4967.

April 26-27, 1993: VII Catalanian Conference for a **FUTURE WITHOUT NUCLEAR POWER**, held at Barcelona, Spain. For details contact: Dr J. Corominas i Vinas, Department de Geografia, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, E-08193 Bellaterra, Catalonia, Spain. Tel: +34 3 5811577.

May 10-13, 1993: **INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND ANALYSIS '93 CONFERENCE**, Wembley Exhibition and Conference Centre, London, UK. Further details from: Labmate Ltd, 12 Alban Park, Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts AL4 0JJ. Tel: 0727 55574, Fax: 0727 41694.

May 24-27, 1993: Eleventh International Lead Conference, Venice, Italy. Programme and registration forms available from the Conference Secretariat, Lead Development Assn,

42 Weymouth Street, London W1N 3LQ (contact: David Wilson or Caroline Baggott) Tel: 071-499 8422, Fax: 071-493 1555.

July 20-22, 1993: Royal Institute of Philosophy Conference: **PHILOSOPHY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**, held at the University of Wales College, Cardiff, UK. Further details from Robin Attfield or Andrew Belsey, Philosophy Section, University of Wales College, PO Box 94, Cardiff CF1 3XB, UK. Tel: 0222 874025, Fax: 0222 874242.

September 23-24, 1993: International Symposium: "World Food: Now and Over the Next Five Decades" and "European Legislation and its Effect on Consultancy and Testing Laboratories". Organised by the Association of Consulting Scientists and Union Internationale des Laboratoires Indépendants. The Symposium will be held at Queen's College, Cambridge, UK. Further details from Dr D. H. Houseman, Chairman ACS, Charnwood Consultants, 7 The Dragwell, Kegworth, Derby DE74 2EL, UK.

September 24-October 1, 1993: 5th **WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS**, a project of the WILD Foundation. Subject: Wild Nature and Sustainable Living in Circumpolar Regions. Venue: Tromsø, Norway. Details and registration forms from: Joint Secretariat, PO Box 190, N-9001 Tromsø, Norway. Tel: +47 83 80811, Fax: +47 83 80618.

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Barbara J. Cummings, *Dam the Rivers, Damn the People: Development and Resistance in Amazonian Brazil* 131pp, paperback, £5.95.

Patricia Adams, *Odious Debts: Loose Lending, Corruption and the Third World's Environmental Legacy* 251pp, 1991, paperback, £8.95.

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