ENVIRONMENT

forest lands are not going to small farmers or landless peasants.

The fundamental cause for the destruction of rainforests is in large-scale, capital-intensive industrial agriculture dominated by multi-national corporations and governments. The chief inspirations for exploitation are beef cattle (for export), hardwood (for export), cheap fast-growing pulp (which, ultimately for export, is planted to replace hardwood), and the easy cash from tax-financed multi-lateral banks.

Brazil and its Amazon region are typical of this exploitation: under the name of resettlement and development for landless people with funds from the World Bank, Brazil continues to create huge plantation areas (4.5 percent of Brazil's landowners own 81 percent of the farmland). There and in Indonesia -- the two largest rainforest resettlement programs in the world -- a second policy is to establish national sovereignty in frontier regions. As one member of the former Brazilian junta said, "When we are certain that every corner of the Amazon is inhabited by genuine Brazilians and not by Indians, only then will we be able to say that the Amazon is ours."

Beef cattle is a major cause of deforestation in Central America as well. Latin American governments, Christian missionary groups, and international development agencies have all accepted the idea that cattle for export is a panacea for tropical forest development. Now it appears this is untrue. While profitable for a small elite, increased beef production in tropical countries has come to mean decreased local beef consumption and an undermining of the local populations' ability to produce their own food. Most Latin American beef is exported to the United States, western Europe, and Japan in 60-pound boxes of chilled or frozen cuts and is distributed to food processing plants to be converted to hamburger, hot dogs, luncheon meat, and pet food.

Corporations involved in beef production in tropical Latin America include Anderson Clayton, United Brands, Gulf and Western, Goodyear, King Ranch, Borden, Standard Brands, Swift, National Bulk Carriers, Heublien, Sifco, Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Tsuzuki Spinning, and Volkswagen. Corporations can receive generous loans for clearing and development from the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the U.N. Development Fund, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

But all is not rosy in the exploitation business. The World Bank has overextended itself to a dangerous degree. It finds itself in a Third World debt crisis with $415 billion in loans out and probably unpayable in 56 Latin American and African nations. The World Bank's answer to date is to press for more large scale cattle production to help in repaying the huge loans. In Africa, this is leading not only to deforestation, but also to the destruction of natural grasslands, wildlife, and native peoples.

The World Bank is susceptible to pressure. It is using your tax dollars and can be held responsible for any misuse. Demand that the funding of culturally and ecologically destructive projects be stopped (of its 2,500 employees, the World Bank has only one ecologist to review projects).

Get directly in touch. Write them (Barber Conable, Jr., President, World Bank, 1818 H St. N.W., D.C., 20443) or, if possible, bring your friends and join us at the World Bank on September 30th!

What to Expect What to Do

How can we prevent the destruction of the remaining rainforests and natural lands left to us? How can we possibly alter the forecasted climatic changes which will end all human life on earth within a few centuries? How can we halt the breaking up of the earth's protective ozone layer?

These can be accomplished only through a radical reduction of the consumption of unnecessary and destructive products; by a drastic reduction in the use of fossil fuels; and by an end to the use of poisons and the by-products of the nuclear arms and chemical warfare industries.

If we do away with the weapons, fuel, petro-chemical, and packaging industries, will there be a world-wide economic collapse of commerce as we know it? Certainly -- unless the rapid transition to a practical low-consumption, steady-state economy can be made.

If we do not create an intelligent transition, will there be increasing social and political disruption, a tendency toward state dictatorship, a spread in thuggery and gangsterism as environmental conditions worsen? Most certainly.

Could the creation of an ecologically-balanced and restorative economy be achieved -- while preventing state and party dictatorships, renegade and gang rule -- by letting society reorganize itself into radical democratic communities to allow for low consumption and relative regional self-sufficiency? Of course.

Who could possibly start such a social-ecological revolution? We could.

What would be our first goals? To start, a 50 percent reduction in all community and regional electric use. A one third reduction in the use of all private transportation. A 75 percent reduction in the use of packaged goods. A 50 to 100 percent reduction in flesh food consumption.

These changes across "affluent" North America and Europe could begin the process. But communities would then have to be prepared to create their own social and work cushions (community-based cooperative production; occupation of empty buildings; new jobs in conservation; reduced work week; etc.) necessary for the mass unemployment which would certainly result from these first steps.

Remember the crucial principle of non-violent direct action: the more serious and profound the expected change -- therefore the more radical the destruction of established patterns -- the more essential it is to undertake counter and parallel constructive efforts of a very high order.

To prevent counter-revolutionary dynamics, it is incumbent upon the activist to concern h/erself with both the opponent's problems and those forced onto the general population.

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