Saving Trees and Capitalism Too

By Michael Barker

“Describing a group funded by the world’s leading capitalist elites as grassroots demonstrates how desperately well-meaning environmentalists cling to the illusion that by working with capitalists (not the grassroots) they will be able to counter the destruction wrought on the planet by capitalists (evidently for the benefit of the grassroots).”

Capitalism requires trees, but trees do not need capitalism. Following this logic, one can opt to save trees by promoting a thoughtful capitalism that protects limited parts of the natural environment to ensure sustained economic growth, or one can promote an alternative to capitalism adopting an ideology not premised on endless economic growth. The former approach conserves capitalism (and some trees), while the latter envisages the creation of an alternative political system that counters the present environmental catastrophe posed by capitalism. Applying the same idea to a related matter; capitalism requires workers, but workers do not need capitalism. Consequently, during the Progressive Era longsighted robber barons recognized that the most effective way to save workers for capitalism would be to encourage the growth of workplace rights via their support of corporate-backed unions and the like. Capitalists still of course waged direct attacks on organized labor (most especially anti-capitalist radicals), [1] much in the same way that capitalists ostensibly concerned with saving trees simultaneously destroy many more trees than they protect. Sadly the historical lessons that should have been learned from the Progressive Era have not penetrated popular consciousness, and so many overworked citizens who are concerned with the destruction of the environment have ended up supporting proponents of neoliberal environmentalism. Capitalism is yet again undergoing a miraculous rebranding, and the robber barons of old are now the savours of the planet, now being widely touted as the Eco Barons. [2] By reviewing the activities of leading tree protectors, the Rainforest Action Network, this essay will demonstrate how the activism promoted by eco barons though such groups ultimately works to conserve capitalism and create the powerful illusion of progressive social change.

Formed in 1986, the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) was the brainchild of environmental activists Randall (Randy) Hayes and Mike Roselle who created it to “protect rainforests and the human rights of those living in and around those forests.” Of the group’s two founders, Roselle was the more experienced environmentalist having previously cofounded Earth First! in 1979; Hayes on the other hand was a relative latecomer to environmentalism, bursting onto the scene to establishment acclaim in 1983 when as a student of environmental planning he co-produced the award-winning documentary The Four Corners. [3] Informed by the consumer activism of the 1970s,
The government has not been willing to do anything. They are so big and bureaucratic and so political that they are often hard or impossible to move. Corporations on the other hand have customer bases, they have advertising they invest a lot in burnishing their brand. So what we try to do is take the luster off of it, affect their bottom line, and then we can get them to the bargaining table. [4]

Roselle has long been a vocal critic of corporate environmentalism, most especially the activists of the “Big Green” groups, so it is perhaps a sign of the times that an ostensibly radical group like RAN should now be working in partnership with the very groups they once critiqued so vehemently. For instance, one of RAN’s first actions “highlight[ed] the destructive lending practices of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and global ‘free trade’ agreements.” This is significant because Hayes now serves on the board of directors of a free-market group called Forest Trends, whose staff includes many World Bank representatives (including not least their current president and CEO). Another curious example of RAN’s “success story” (taken from their Web site) occurred in 1998, as they point out how years of campaigning resulted in “Mitsubishi Motor Sales America and Mitsubishi Electric America pledging to end use of old-growth forest products and phase out use of tree-based paper and packaging products in favor of alternative fibers.” [5] One might assume that Mitsubishi has now improved their environmental credentials, especially given their representation on the board of directors of Forest Trends, but unfortunately only two American Mitsubishi subsidiaries were forced into making environmental concessions. As Boris Holzer observes...

...the American subsidiaries are probably two companies with only minor involvement in timber activities. Their positive approach is basically in line with their long-standing efforts to improve their environmental records. Thus, the agreement did not necessarily hit the most destructive parts of the Mitsubishi Group. [6]

This example provides an elegant illustration of the problems associated with single issue, media-driven campaigns that target individual “bad” corporations. [7] Indeed while similar RAN campaigns have regularly come under criticism from conservative think tanks, among less rabidly free-market friendly liberal elites such activism is popular precisely because it does not pose a serious threat to capitalism. In this respect RAN is akin to many of the big green corporate environmentalists that it rhetorically sets itself apart from. One need only delve into their latest annual report to see their major donors include the Roddick Foundation and the Sandler Family Supporting Foundation, and minor funders like the Tides Foundation, with 74 per cent of their $4.4 million annual budget derived from such grants, and only 18 per cent supplied via public support and membership. [8]

Other notable major funders of RAN – that is philanthropic bodies that have given them more than $100,000 in any given year – include the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Wallace Global Fund, and the Rudolf Steiner Foundation. Money talks, as RAN activists well understand; although RAN activists are perhaps not quite as conversant with the cooptive influence of liberal philanthropy as that of conservative foundations. As Joan Roelofs observes “almost all civil rights, social justice, and environmental organizations” are dependent on “corporate and foundation funding.” While the various recipients of corporate monies may not feel pressured to conform to elite priorities, all the same “funders are anxious to help radical protesters and oppressed minorities while transforming their goals and removing any threat to corporate wealth and power.” On this point Roelofs notes that when former Ford Foundation president, McGeorge Bundy (1966-79), was testifying before Congress in 1969, he was asked why Ford supported radicals, he replied:

There is a very important proposition here that for institutions and organizations which are young and which are not fully shaped as to their direction it can make a great deal of difference as to the degree and way in which they develop if when they have a responsible and constructive proposal they can find support for it. If they cannot find such support, those within the organization who may be tempted to move in paths of disruption, discord and even violence, may be confirmed in their view that American society doesn’t care about their needs. On the other hand, if they do have a good project constructively put forward, and they run it responsibly and they get help for it and it works, then those who feel that that kind of activity makes sense may be encouraged. [9]

To be fair, many environmental activists are not aware of, or choose to ignore, the
deradicalizing influence of liberal philanthropy, and a good example is provided by popular environmental writer George Monbiot. [10] Thus it is ironic that many of the groups that RAN has pressured into adopting socially responsible practices are intimately connected to such liberal philanthropists. So in 2004 RAN “declare[d] victory after a four-year campaign” when Citigroup announced “its ‘New Environmental Initiatives’, the most far-reaching set of environmental commitments of any bank in the world.” This activist victory is particularly intriguing as in the same year Citigroup recruited the president of the Rockefeller Foundation, Judith Rodin, to their board of directors. Likewise Alain Belda, who has served as a board member of Citigroup since 1997 and had acted as a trustee of the Ford Foundation board member from 1997 until 2009; while longstanding Citibank board member Franklin Thomas was the president of the Ford Foundation from 1979 until 1996. More recently, in 2009, Thomas retired from Citibank’s board of directors, and their new board chair was none other than Richard Parsons, an individual who presently serves as an advisory trustee of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Similarly, in 2005 RAN took credit for JPMorgan Chase releasing a “comprehensive environmental policy that takes significant steps forward on climate change, forest protection, and Indigenous rights.” Yet from 1969 until 1980 David Rockefeller – liberal philanthropist extraordinaire – had served as the CEO of Chase Manhattan Bank, a bank that was merged with J.P. Morgan & Co. in 2000 to form JPMorgan Chase. These examples are not meant to imply that most RAN activists were not sincerely engaged in vigorous efforts to encourage financial giants like JPMorgan Chase and Citibank to support green capitalist ideologies, but the fact of the matter is that some of the liberal elites managing these corporations were the same people who have expressed a longstanding commitment to coopting the environmental movement to serve capitalist interests. Viewed in this light it should come as no surprise that in 2005 RAN boasted that by “[w]orking closely” with Goldman Sachs it became “the first global investment bank to adopt a comprehensive environmental policy”.

Goldman Sachs’ commitment to capitalist conservation was clearly not entirely due to RAN activism, as the former chairman and CEO of Goldman Sachs (1999-2006), and subsequent Secretary of the US Department of the Treasury, Henry Paulson, served as the chair of the Nature Conservancy’s board of directors from 2004 until 2006 (a noted member of the “Big Green”). [11] In addition, Paulson had served as the chair of the Peregrine Fund, an environmental group he had been connected to since 1990. The close working relationship between Goldman Sachs and the Nature Conservancy continues to this day, and since 2008 former Goldman Sachs managing director, Mark Tercek, has served as the president of the Nature Conservancy. Likewise, Tercek’s commitment to free-market environmentalism means that he presently sits on the steering group of the Prince of Wales Rainforest Project, on the board of directors of Resources for the Future, and serves on the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Chilean advisory council. [12] Tercek’s latter service, with regard to Chile, is particularly noteworthy as prior to heading up the Nature Conservancy he had headed the Goldman Sachs Center for Environmental Markets and its Environmental Strategy Group. This is significant because in late 2004 Goldman Sachs donated a sizable chunk of Chile to the Wildlife Conservation Society – using land which it had obtained by purchasing defaulted bonds from US forestry company Trillium Corporation. On these Chilean conservation efforts Tercek would have worked closely with the current chair of Resources for the Future, Lawrence Linden, who while based at Goldman Sachs worked in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society to create a massive 735,500 acre nature preserve on the island of Tierra del Fuego, Chile.

Here it is appropriate to introduce American multimillionaire Douglas Tompkins, as this key bankroller of environmental activism (and the “dean” of the new eco barons) has similarly bought hundreds of thousands of acres of forest land in southern Chile though his Conservation Land Trust to create a reserve called Parque Pumalin. Over the years Tompkins’ Foundation for Deep Ecology (which was formed in 1989) has been an important funder of forest activism including, to name just a few, the work of RAN, Earth First!, and Amazon Watch. Indeed, in 2008 at RAN’s 14th annual World Rainforest Awards Ceremony, Tompkins and his wife Kristine were honoured as environmental heroes. Consequently it is of more than passing interesting that an influential critic of deep ecology, the late Murray Bookchin, was of the opinion that with regards to deep ecology, “no other ‘radical’ ecology philosophy could be more congenial to the ruling elites of our time.” [13] To take just one example, the interest of leading “humanitarian” capitalists in deep ecology was illustrated when Tom Brokaw

Wild Earth author, Tom Butler, presently serves as the editorial projects director for the Foundation for Deep Ecology, but had formerly been the editor of Wild Earth magazine (1997-2005). Launched in 1990 Wild Earth magazine was set up by Earth First! founder Dave Foreman, former Earth First! journal editor John Davis (1986-89), Reed Noss, David Johns, and Mary Byrd Davis. [15] John Davis served as the founding editor of Wild Earth until he passed the reigns to his life-long friend Tom Butler (in 1997), so John could serve as the biodiversity and wilderness program officer for the Foundation for Deep Ecology. Not surprisingly John has served on the board of directors of Tompkins’ Conservation Land Trust; a group who’s most notable current board member is Peter Buckley, who is the chair of the David Brower Center – a center whose other board members includes RAN cofounder, Randall Hayes. While for many progressive activists the environmental career of the late David Brower (1912-2000) is beyond criticism, it is worrisome that like his deep ecologist counterparts he apparently became fixated on Malthusian analyses that blame procreation, not capitalism, for environmental devastation. I say this because Brower was a former member of the advisory board for a controversial group called Californians for Population Stabilization. [16] The current president of Californians for Population Stabilization, Diana Hull, serves on the advisory board of two more openly racist groups, NumbersUSA and Federation for American Immigration Reform. [17]

Deep ecology is of course an important ideology that has helped popularize concern with human population growth, so it should come as no surprise that RAN’s advisory board has been host to a host of leading environmental Malthusians. Two particularly noted individuals are Norman Myers, who is a patron of Optimum Population Trust, and former Sierra Club treasurer (1999-2000) Anne Ehrlich, who is married to Optimum Population Trust patron Paul Ehrlich, the author of the book *The Population Bomb* (Sierra Club, 1968).

Such Malthusian (mis)reasoning has long been popular within the environmental movement and is exemplified by a recent statement by Paul Watson, the founder and president of the Tompkins backed Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. (Tompkins is an avid supporter of the Sea Shepherd work having recently spent Christmas and New Year on the Antarctic high seas, as their vessels acting quartermaster.) Returning to Watson’s comment: writing in 2005, in response to the famous essay ‘The Death of Environmentalism’, Watson wrote that while global warming “will certainly be a major contributor to this mass global extinction [facing the Earth] … it is a problem caused by the first major threat and that is escalating human population growth.” [18] While certainly problematic, this capitalist-friendly argument sounds eerily reminiscent of the populionist views of the Sea Shepherd’s land-based counterpart, Earth First!; opinions that Watson and Foreman no doubt internalized during their “environmental” forays with the Sierra Club during the 1970s. Like their radical environmental “offspring” the Sierra Club to this day remains embroiled in immigration controversies stemming from their long-term commitment to Malthus. Watson himself played an important role in this propagating such Malthusianism as he served a board member of the Sierra Club from 2003 until 2006, and was the endorsed candidate of anti-immigration body, Sierrans United for US Population Stability. [19]

As one might expect the Shepherd Conservation Society and RAN share more in common than the eco baron and social engineer Douglas Tompkins, as Watson and Randall Hayes both sit on the advisory board of a philanthropic body known as the Fund for Wild Nature. This Fund’s president, Marnie Gaede, is a former director of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, while other notable Fund for Wild Nature board members include Mary Anne Hitt (who is the deputy director of the Sierra Club’s national ‘Move Beyond Coal’ campaign), and former Fund president Dave Parks (who has been involved in political campaigns with both Earth First! and RAN). Other interesting Fund for Wild Nature advisors include Louise Leakey, who additionally serves as a Sea Shepherd advisor, and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s (Republican-California) environmental appointee, Terry Tamminen. [20] Incidentally, Tamminen served for five years as executive director of the Environment Now, a group whose four key staff members include two former Foundation for Deep Ecology employees, Caryn Mandelbaum and Fund for Wild Nature board member Douglas Bevington. The latter individual’s backgrounds emphasize the cognitive dissonance that resonates within many of the staffers of the organizations that have been discussed in this article as Bevington recently completed a PhD in sociology for a dissertation titled
One of the primary groups examined in Bevington's study was the Center for Biological Diversity (formed in 1989), and which in 2008 received support from elite philanthropic bodies that included the Foundation for Deep Ecology, the Environment Now Foundation, Tides Foundation, ExxonMobil Foundation, The New York Times Company Foundation, and even the "big green" environmental outfit, The Wilderness Society. Corporate funders of the "grassroots" Center for Biological Diversity included the likes of Goldman Sachs, the Bank of America, and Microsoft. The fact that Bevington describes a group funded by the world's leading capitalist elites as grassroots demonstrates how desperately well-meaning environmentalists cling to the illusion that by working with capitalists (not the grassroots) they will be able to counter the destruction wrought on the planet by capitalists (evidently for the benefit of the grassroots). Needless to say it is hardly surprising that the Center for Biological Diversity was pleased by the fact that Edward Humes "devot[ed] a fourth of his book" *Eco Barons* to their history and achievements.

Considering the depths of elite intrusion into the heart of US-based activism it is critical to ask: how has this situation been ignored by so many critical and progressive intellectuals and researchers for so long? The answer cannot simply be that progressive historians are too busy to undertake research into the influence of liberal philanthropy on the processes of social change, as no historian in their right mind could accidentally forget to examine so big a topic. There is no doubt that critical researchers have been correct to focus on the influence of for-profit corporations on society, producing research which is necessary to undergird any successful attempts to hold corporations accountable to the public. However, although writers have noted the powerful influence wielded by conservative not-for-profit corporations (like the John M. Olin Foundation), they have totally neglected the equally important liberal side of the philanthropic equation. Thus, leaving aside conservative commentators, who have provided what seems like an endless volume of criticisms of liberal philanthropy, critiques of liberal philanthropy from the political Left are almost invisible. For instance, there have been no critical investigations of the background of one of the Left's most important coordinating and funding bodies, the RAN connected International Forum on Globalization.

The International Forum on Globalization is a particularly important group to study within the confines of this article as it was formerly headed by RAN cofounder Randall Hayes, who now presently serves as their senior strategist. Furthermore, the International Forum on Globalization has been heavily supported by Douglas Tompkins' eco-philanthropy, and former Foundation for Deep Ecology staffer, Victor Menotti, presently serves as their executive director. Formed in 1994, the Forum's Web site notes that it was set up because of a "shared concern that the world's corporate and political leadership was rapidly restructuring global politics and economics on a level that was as historically significant as any period since the Industrial Revolution." The key person involved in establishing this critical Forum was Jerry Mander, a former president of a major San Francisco advertising company and 'Grateful Dead' promoter who decided to turn his talents at manipulating symbols and images to protecting the environment in the late 1960s (initially working with David Brower while he was based at the Sierra Club). In addition to Mander’s work at the International Forum on Globalization, he also found the time to briefly serve as a program director for the Foundation for Deep Ecology. Perhaps Mander's most influential book, vis-à-vis the alter-globalization movement was his co authorship with Edward Goldsmith of the edited volume, *The Case Against the Global Economy and For a Turn Toward the Local* (Sierra Club Books, 1996) – some of the many contributors to this book included Maude Barlow, Richard Barnet, Wendell Berry, John Cavanagh, William Grieder, David Korten, Ralph Nader, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Jeremy Rifkin, Kirkpatrick Sale, and Vandana Shiva.
published another powerful and widely read book, Joshua Karliner’s *The Corporate Planet: Ecology and Politics in the Age of Globalization* (Sierra Club Books, 1997), which contains radical criticisms of liberal elites like Maurice Strong, whom Karliner writes insists that business, not environmentalists, must act to “redefine environmentalism in its own way if the world is to resolve the immense problems it faces.” However, while Karliner is opposed to “top-down, technocratic, managerial solution[s]” he is not opposed to top-down funding of activist organizations. [26]

Indeed, Karliner’s work on this book catalysed the formation (in 1996) of CorpWatch – a group that he headed from 1996 until 2002 – that has, with the strong support of elite funders, steadfastly refused to submit not-for-profit corporations to the same critical scrutiny that they apply to their for-profit counterparts. [27] Thus it is hardly surprising that two CorpWatch advisory board members, Andre Carothers and Allan Hunt-Badiner, both sit on RAN’s board of directors (the former as RAN’s board chair).

Carothers is also a board member of International Rivers, a group whose Latin America campaigns are directed by Glenn Switkes, the former coordinator of RAN’s Western Amazon oil campaign. International Rivers board is chaired by Martha Belcher (who directed the recent creation of the David Brower Center), but their most intriguing board member is David Pellow, co-editor with Robert Brulle of the book *Power, Justice, the Environment: A Critical Appraisal of the Environmental Justice Movement* (MIT Press, 2005). This is because Pellow and Brulle’s book contains powerful warnings about the cooption of radical environmental groups: for example, within the book Robert Benford writes:

> On the one hand, the problems diagnosed and attributions proffered by the environmental justice movement represent a radical critique of entire social systems at the local, regional, national, and global levels. On the other hand, by framing solutions primarily in terms of “justice” the [Environmental Justice Movement] places its faith in the efficacy of using extant legislative and judicial systems to remedy problems – an ironic commitment to, and reaffirmation of, the systemic status quo. Audre Lorde, a famous black feminist, eloquently outlined the pitfalls of seeking to transform such a corrupt system from within: “For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.” [28]

International Rivers’ even includes Drummond Pike, the treasurer of one of the master’s leading democracy-manipulating tools known as the Democracy Alliance, on their US advisory board. Finally, it is interesting that former International Rivers executive director, Juliette Majot, presently serves with Josh Karliner on the steering committee of Environmentalists against War, alongside others like International Forum on Globalization staffer, Claire Greensfelder, and the RAN’s executive director Michael Brune.

Somewhere along the line progressive activists seem to have forgotten that to undertake radical analyses one needs to dig to the root of the sinews of power that comprise the capitalist system. Thus the limited reformist agenda of supposedly radical activists like those based at RAN and International Rivers has been adequately vocalized by RAN’s executive director Michael Brune, who observed in 2007:

> I sometimes like to think of RAN as “hopeful skeptics”; we believe that corporations and governments can transform themselves, and can actually play an important role in slowing down climate change and protecting forests and the rights of their inhabitants. At the same time, we won’t be fooled by double-speak and false promises of future action. This attitude is the motivation behind much of our work. [29]

The sad irony is that many activists, like Brune, are already being fooled by the double-speak and false promises of not-for-profit corporations. So while Kenny Bruno – who co-authored two books with Joshua Karliner (in 1999 and 2002) – is well-known in progressive circles for producing the seminal critique of corporate greenwashing, the tables have turned and he is now acting as corporate greenwasher in his capacity as the campaign director for Corporate Ethics International. [30] The executive director of this greenwashing initiative is none other than former RAN board member Michael Marx (see footnote #6), an elite conservationist who was recently critiqued in Macdonald Stainsby and Dru Oja Jay’s excellent self-published report, “Offsetting Resistance: The Effects of Foundation Funding and Corporate Fronts,” (July 2009). [31] Marx’s organization Corporate Ethics International, ties many of the groups examined so far together through its project known as the Business Ethics Network, which includes
Amazon Watch, CorpWatch, and RAN.

Such connections should hardly be unexpected when one casts a quick eye over RAN’s board of directors, which includes Anna Hawken McKay (who is the wife of Rob McKay, the founder of eco baron hangout, the Democracy Alliance), and James Gollin (cofounder of the Social Venture Network, a group which is “committed to building a just and sustainable world through business”). Yet the most interesting RAN board member is Martha DiSario, who is the secretary of ActiveMusic, an activism marketing group with “ties to the music community [that] saw music as a means to draw people to the causes they were working with.” ActiveMusic’s cofounder, Richard Wegman, manages Global Green USA’s finances and administration, and in addition to this stellar connection to the eco barons, ActiveMusic’s vice chair, Brian Wesley Ames, is a division chief in the African department of the International Monetary Fund (yes that’s right the IMF!), while one of ActiveMusic’s advisory board members is none other than RAN cofounder, Randall Hayes. [32]

RAN’s connection to ActiveMusic is most appropriate given that RAN considers image manipulation to be a vital part of its activism, so their honorary board of directors draws upon the celebratory prestige of five well-known entertainers: former singer with the Grateful Dead, Bob Weir, American blues singer-songwriter Bonnie Raitt, former drummer for The Doors, John Densmore, actress and Yoga-guru Ali McGraw, and actor Woody Harrelson, who recently starred in the film Battle in Seattle (2007). Harrelson’s link to the latter film is important, as David Solnit, one of the organizers with the Direct Action Network that was involved with preparing for the real Battle of Seattle, observed that the film was hardly supportive of activism: and he wrote the “movie implies that the activists ‘won’ because police were caught by surprise, were too lenient, and waited too long to use violence and chemical weapons, and to make arrests.” [33]

Here it is important to recall that the Ruckus Society (which was cofounded by RAN’s Mike Roselle) “provided the first physical forum for the Direct Action Network which coordinated the [Battle of Seattle] demonstrations, and itself trained many of the participants.” [34] Moreover as John Sellers, the former Greenpeace activist and former head of the Ruckus Society points out: “When we first started, it was almost entirely folks from Greenpeace or Rainforest Action Network, with a few EarthFirsters.” (Greenpeace having disbanded its direct-action office in 1991.) According to Sellers, after Ruckus was founded in 1995, the former CNN boss cum eco baron, Ted Turner, “carried Ruckus on his back” for their first few years. Thus Sellers who is well-known for saying: “F–k that s–t! You’re corporate sellouts!” to journalists “just to gauge their reaction,” evidently does not see how ironic his litmus test of corporate cooption really is. Likewise greenwash guru, Kenny Bruno, who currently acts as the media and strategic campaigning trainer for the Ruckus Society, appears to see no contradiction in working for an organization whose former long serving trustee is corporate greenwasher extraordinaire, the late Anita Roddick.

In summary, the Rainforest Action Network and its related cohorts have been highly profitable investments for the world’s leading capitalists. Not only has their small financial commitment to the environment promoted the conservation of capitalism, it has also protected some trees, but only those it does not need. Perhaps more valuably though, this “radical” investment has helped sustain the illusion that capitalism can be green and good for the environment – a win-win-win scenario for capitalism, but not for us. Quite expectedly such good fortune has not been visited upon the environment, and capitalism has barely missed a beat in its profitable consumption of planet earth. That said we should be thankful that capitalism has so far only been able to conserve its ideological domination in the short-term, and with a little genuine grassroots funding alongside popular activism the tables can be turned all too easily. In this manner, it will be possible to expose the delusions that undergird capitalist conservation efforts so we can strive to render capitalists extinct. Such work will enable concerned citizens to protect the planet and the real living organizations that inhabit it, not the ideologies that are destroying it.

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3. *The Four Corners* (1983) was directed by Christopher McLeod, and produced by Christopher McLeod, Glenn Switkes and Randy Hayes.


8. Rainforest Action Network, ‘2008 Annual Report’; Recent annual reports also demonstrate that RAN’s total funding has been steadily increasing since at least 2004 when their total income was $1 million. The executive director of the Tides Foundation, Idelisse Malave, is a former RAN board member.


11. Henry Paulson’s son, Merritt Paulson, is a trustee of the Wildlife Conservation Society. Exhibiting a similar commitment to free-market environmentalism, David Blood, the former CEO of Goldman Sachs Asset Management (1999-2003), serves on the four-person strong board of New Forests, a “forestry investment management and advisory firm currently managing $200 million in assets throughout Australia, New Zealand, the U.S. and the Asia Pacific region.” Chairman and founder of New Forests, David Brand, sits alongside Randall Hayes on the board of the aforementioned Forest Trends, and serves on the board of directors of Environment Business Australia – a “business think tank” that is chaired by the former president of WWF Australia (1999-2006).

12. For criticisms of all these influential free-market environmental outfits see: http://michaeljamesbarker.wordpress.com/environment/


14. Tom Brokaw is a board member of two groups that promote what has been referred to by critics as humanitarian imperialism; these are the International Crisis Group and International Rescue Committee. See Michael Barker, ‘Imperial Crusaders for Global

16. Other than David Brower the only two emeriti advisory board members of Californians for Population Stabilization are the late Garrett Hardin (1915-2003), and his co-author and wife Jane Hardin (1922-2003). Professor Eric Ross has undertaken a valuable task in tracing the evolution of Garrett Hardin’s work and suggests that when his work is considered in its entirety one can see how this book “embodies all the cardinal qualities of Cold War Malthusian thinking: it is anti-socialist, anti-democratic and eugenic.” Unfortunately, although the myth of the tragedy of the commons has now been discounted, it still remains popular, no doubt in part because of its compatibility with elitist concepts of environmental management. See Eric Ross, *The Malthus Factor: Population, Poverty, and Politics in Capitalist Development* (Zed Books, 1999), 73-78.


20. Louise Leakey is the daughter of Richard Leakey – a pioneer of “coercive conservation” – thus it is appropriate that Louise’s husband, Emmanuel de Merode, is the chief executive of Wildlife Direct, a group who founder and chair is Richard Leakey and includes among their board members Walter Kansteiner III, the former US assistant secretary of state for African affairs. For a discussion of the principles of coercive conservation, see Nancy Lee Peluso, ‘Coercing Conservation’, In Ken Conca and Geoffrey Dabelko, eds., *Green Planet Blues: Environmental Politics from Stockhold to Kyoto*, 2nd edn. (Westview Press, 1998), 350-1.

Terry Tamminen is a trustee of Waterkeeper Alliance, a environmental group who board of directors is chaired by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who is in turn the vice chair of a New York-based environmental organization simply known as Riverkeeper – a group that works closely with the Natural Resources Defense Council. Incidentally, Alex Matthiessen, the president of Riverkeeper and board member of Waterkeeper Alliance, formerly served as RAN’s grassroots program director. So in keeping with RAN’s own tight connections to liberal philanthropists, Riverkeeper’s board is awash with elite conservationists, like for example, Jeff Resnick (who is a managing director at Goldman Sachs), Renee Rockefeller (who is a trustee of the Rockefeller Family Fund), Hamilton Fish (who currently serves as president of The Nation Institute, the foundation associated with The Nation magazine), and their board chair George Hornig (who is the chief operating officer of Credit Suisse First Boston Private Equity). Finally, Harrison Ford serves as the Riverkeeper’s first airborne watchdog: for a detailed critique of

22. Center for Biological Diversity cofounder, Todd Schulke, presently serves as their forest policy analyst, and also serves as a board member of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance – a group on whose board Dave Foreman had formerly served.


24. Another illustration of the manner by which concerned activists trust that elite funders will fund revolutionary social change is provided by the Center for Biological Diversity’s climate campaign coordinator, Rose Braz. This is because Braz helped found and was the campaign and media director for Critical Resistance, a group seeking to bring an end to the Prison Industrial Complex with funding derived from George Soros’ Open Society Institute. This relationship shows exactly how underfunded and desperate such radical activists are, especially given that Critical Resistance regularly work with INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (see note #21). For a deeper and more critical analysis of the same issues, see Joan Roelofs, Foundations and Public Policy: The Mask of Pluralism (State University of New York Press, 2003).


26. Joshua Karliner, The Corporate Planet: Ecology and Politics in the Age of Globalization (Sierra Club Books, 1997), 32; Karliner seeks to obtain “democratic control over corporations and economies” by utilizing a small proportion of their overall profits for activist purposes, not by working to abolish capitalism.

27. An unaffiliated British organization with the similar name Corporate Watch, although predominantly focused on for-profit corporations, recently devoted a special issue of their newsletter to a critical investigation of not-for-profit corporations. See Corporate Watch, ‘The Art of Funding’, Issue 43, June 2009. http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/?lid=3397


“movement organizations are not authentic community representatives, this limits and compromises the independence of these movement organizations. The mobilization of citizens to create political demand for change can easily be replaced in professional organizations to targeted advocacy activities. Members become seen as something to be managed and as a source of funds solicited via mass mailings. Foundation funding also becomes an appealing source of funding. As the source of fund- ing shifts, the social movement organization is increasingly controlled by external organizations with their own agendas. So instead of serving as all authentic voice of the community, a social movement organization can become subordinated and controlled by external organizations. This can limit the civic capacity and political power of the organization.” (216)

 enviromentalists continue to push 350.org for meaningful campaigns


http://s3.amazonaws.com/offsettingresistance/offsettingresistance.pdf


http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/purple-america/the-battle-for-reality

For an alternative activist-produced record of the Seattle protests, see This is What Democracy Looks Like (2000) – a film narrated by ‘actorvist’ Susan Sarandon.

http://newleftreview.org/A2334
http://www.stateofnature.org/savingTrees.html

Lorna Salzman Says:
July 19, 2010 at 5:33 pm

Back in the 1970s we invited an Italian composer, Luciano Berio, to visit us on eastern LI via his own power boat. So one day he and his very young daughter set out from...
Weehawken NJ, rounded the tip of northern Manhattan into Hell’s Gate and then into LI Sound and then headed northeast around Montauk Point and into the Atlantic Ocean, going south and eventually steering into our small creek off a south shore bay.

In order to cook us his special Genoese seafood dinner, Luciano had put out a very large dragger net behind his boat. After he arrived, he unhooked the net, hung it up between two trees, and proceeded to pick that evening’s dinner out of the net. There were indeed a few decently sized edible fish, but most of the net was hung with immeasurable numbers and unidentifiable species of sea creatures, most of which had to be discarded. Later Luciano threw everything that appeared edible into a big pot and boiled the bejeeusus out of the whole thing, creating a barely edible soup of some fish, lots of scales and mostly bones.

The article below reminds me of nothing so much as this scaley bony fish soup; into this pot the author, clearly a leftist of significant proportions, has thrown just about every name he came across in Google that had any connection at any time to anyone who was ever involved in any environmental cause or group. He has indeed netted a few edibles alongside some innocent, marginal or useless hangers-on. For Barker, the Six Degrees of Separation has ballooned into Six to the Sixth Power Degrees, wherein apparently anyone who ever held a cocktail party conversation or shared a beer with someone who herself shared a cup of coffee with someone else who once was at a meeting with someone else who had some aura of villainy about him is automatically guilty by association.

I knew many of these individuals, some of them personally, some professionally, and I worked for the most illustrious one who, though beyond any taint, manages to get some mud thrown on him by Barker, namely Dave Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth, for whom I worked for over a decade starting in the early 1970s. Here is what Barker says about Brower, this country’s most principled, committed, informed and inspiring environmental leader:

“While for many progressive activists the environmental career of the late David Brower (1912-2000) is beyond criticism, it is worrisome that like his deep ecologist counterparts he apparently became fixated on Malthusian analyses that blame procreation, not capitalism, for environmental devastation. I say this because Brower was a former member of the advisory board for a controversial group called Californians for Population Stabilization.”

In classic marxist fashion, the fashion that has allowed the left to not only ignore and denigrate environmentalism but smear the whole movement, Barker attempts to diminish Brower for his being one of the few people at that time who had the insight and foresight to understand the unfolding disaster of overpopulation. First, let’s be clear about Malthus. What he theorized was that unchecked population would eventually outrun resources, all other things being equal.

DUH. Every scientist since then, Darwin included, knows, as a result of evolution and natural selection, that unchecked breeding will outstrip food supply. The only reason that the world has been able to reach the unsustainable 6 billion in numbers today has been advances in nutrition, health and, to a lesser extent, birth control. There is a clear and indisputable connection between the fact that western societies and cultures have achieved the highest standard of living in the world and the fact that they have successfully lowered their birth rate in the past century.

In the rest of the world, due to religion (Islam, the Roman Catholic church, orthodox Judaism), patriarchy, machismo, the lack of women’s reproductive and economic rights, tribal superstition, ignorance, and lack of access to and interest in birth control, the birth rates continue to soar. In Africa and under Islam polygamy means anywhere from ten to thirty children. Even under monogamy, one woman seldom bears less than six children, and health and nutrition programs from abroad have helped most of them survive, despite the persistence of diseases like malaria.

A recent article on the poverty in Gaza, meant to evoke sympathy from the reader, showed a woman and her drugged husband living in a ruined house, and said that she had eight children. EIGHT CHILDREN! How on earth does anyone have the brains, much less the right, to have eight children? And yet in western Europe, loose immigration standards and an overgenerous welfare system are now allowing entry to large families, who will continue to breed like flies in their new country. And the same goes for the USA, where Latino Catholics routinely have three or more children.

So the same screechy marxist theme that dismisses overpopulation – a condition that will punish the poor, not the rich, in any case – fingers capitalism alone as the greatest destroyer of the environment. Yes, indeed, capitalism and its push for overproduction and overconsumption and endless economic growth leading to greater profits, is at the root of the ecological crisis and the global warming crisis.

But that crisis is made far greater because tens of millions of more people have been born
across the world, all of whom will eventually suffer the most when sea level inundates their
cropland, destroys their fresh water supplies, brings insect-borne disease to new areas,
and leashes massive wildfires, floods, and droughts of an unmitigated intensity. Where
will these millions go when they become refugees? Actually, it is the marxists who will
cause their deaths by starvation and disease, simply by pretending that overpopulation
isn’t important.

But let’s back up a little. Let’s go back to the 1970s, when many of the people Barker
fingers as today’s evil doers were first getting involved. One would look in vain for even
ONE LEFTIST OR MARXIST or leftist journal or organization that acknowledged the
validity or importance of the environment. NOT ONE. The whole decade of the seventies,
if you listened to the left, was one in which the left itself promoted THE EXACT SAME
POLICIES AS CAPITALISTS!!! That is, economic growth.

Yes, indeed. Technology and growth were the joint mantra of the left. The only difference
between capitalists and marxists was with regard to ownership of the means of production
and central planning. Many hours of my time as a professional environmental activist,
lecturer and writer were spent arguing with marxists and the left about the issues of
growth, pollution, overexploitation of resources, and on their ecological and social
implications. But to no avail. The left unfailingly attacked environmentalism as an issue of
concern only to the white middle class that was protecting its back yard. THE LEFT
DIDN’T GIVE A DAMN, and for the most part it still doesn’t. Nor is it interested in learning.

So here you have a leftist who has gotten religion, or so it appears.
Capitalism is now, finally, forty years later, been recognized as the main culprit. But the
left still doesn’t get it. Capitalism relies on
ECONOMIC GROWTH. How come the left, and this author, have nothing to say about this
subject? (And I am not even addressing loss of biodiversity, another victim of
overpopulation and overdevelopment, as is the collapse of ocean fisheries).

How come this author can spend so much time on naming the small fry in the big net?
This is a new kind of name-dropping, where you throw out enough names and hope that
by creating an association of these people (deserved or not), you have created an
important social critique. So Dave Brower, the most important leader this country ever
had, becomes suspect because he was on an advisory council to a group concerned
(quite justifiably) about overpopulation. This is nothing more than a marxist gossip
column.

I can’t believe that I am sitting here, forty years later, having to rebut the tired, bearded
irrelevant left which has the good fortune of unlimited access to the internet to spread its
trivilities and nonsense.”Render capitalists extinct”, says Barker. Brave words, brave new
world, but he has no alternative, nor has the left ever had one that didn’t resemble
capitalism closely. The Loony Left, like death and taxes, is always with us. But global
warming moves on. And Nature Bats Last.

Lorna Salzman
trees are most important aspect of giving us healthy and wealthy life. Save trees is the important social awareness now-a-days and have been included in the student’s life through the study. Long and Short Essay on Save Trees in English. Why is the American establishment questioning capitalism now? Could Wall Street ever really embrace Lipton’s once-heretical vision? And if it did, what would this mean for growth, and for the current wave of populism? "I put forward my ideas of stakeholders to save capitalism — not destroy it," Lipton explains. “But if we don’t act now, I don’t think that capitalism will be around in the next 50 years.” If you want to understand what is at stake in this debate, it pays to ponder the original meaning of the word “company”. Today, this invokes images of balance sheets and profit margins. All too often, the debate over consumerism is woefully lacking in precision. So before we can go on, we first must define what exactly consumerism is. For this, we might consult Wikipedia, which is generally useful for the popular definition of things. Capitalism currently holds the patterns of production and consumption dominant in the world. Unfortunately for promoters of this theory, this description of capitalism is quite wrong. Certainly, it would appear to give an accurate view of some industries. Surely, firms offering retirements funds and savings accounts are not less “capitalist” than firms that sell designer jeans. Ebenezer Scrooge would no doubt smile on the retirement fund firms while condemning the sellers of luxury cars.