

**PHILOSOPHY  
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SOCIAL ACTION**

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*Articles published in PSA are indexed in Sociological Abstracts, and in  
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*Articles, Communications, Discussions and Reviews, etc., published here  
express the views of their authors, and not necessarily of the Establishment.*

PHILOSOPHY  
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EDITORIAL

## Power Tends to Corrupt

BRIAN MARTIN

Lord Acton's often-quoted saying that "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely" nicely summarises the articles in this issue. The issue was originally intended to focus on "corruption and social action," which seems like a topic on which there would be a lot to say. Perceived corruption has often been a trigger for mass action against governments and other bodies: India 1975, Fiji 1987, Yugoslavia in the 1980s and China 1989 are only a few of the numerous cases of interest.

There are many questions that can be asked about such events. Does corruption (for example among police) hinder social action? Why are certain things considered corruption by social activists and others not? What can grassroots activists do to oppose corruption? Does opposing corruption really make things better? (For example, is an honest repressive regime better than a corrupt military regime?) How can activists use corruption to struggle for more just social structures?

There is a considerable academic literature on corruption, but little of it is of interest to activists. The regularly recurring outrage against corruption has benefitted little from research, partly because the research is more oriented to other researchers than to activists. The accounts of journalists are usually more useful, but they often lack the theoretical incisiveness necessary to improve activist strategy.<sup>1</sup>

Maduabuchi Dukor and Marie Pauline Eboh tackle the issue of corruption in Nigeria from the point of view of *social action*. The role of perceived corruption in triggering discontent is apparent, the crucial role of *students* in social mobilisation is highlighted, and the failure of riots and military coups to address the roots of the problem is shown. There is a need for more studies such as these, particularly with reference to India and other Third World States, and for the analysis to be taken further to examine the implications of corruption for social action.

Another aspect of corruption and social action is corruption in *social movements*. Three articles in this issue deal with centralisation of

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power in environmental groups. To some this can be called corruption; I prefer Lord Acton's maxim, since the key is a struggle for *power* and its consequences. The main issue here is not diversion of monies or promotion of cronies, though these do occur, but rather the temptations of power for attaining the short-term goals of the movement by actions of the environmental organisations corrupts internal democracy.

The authors of the three articles, Hazel Notion, Timothy Doyle and Lorna Salzman, are all committed environmentalists. Their critiques are aimed not at discrediting environmental groups but rather at exposing the dangers of elitism. They also seem to agree that elite environmentalists are well-meaning. It is not generally a question of opponents or evil conspirators infiltrating and subverting environmental organisations (though this is possible) but rather of well-meaning figures in environmental groups using power-brokering techniques to achieve their aims.

The issues raised in these articles are fundamental ones, often confronted in social movements but seldom written about.<sup>2</sup> The authors believe that voicing criticisms is a way to strengthen environmentalism, and that keeping quiet is simply to acquiesce in the continuing power-plays that undermine the prospects for long-term social change towards an environmentally sound society.

Their analyses are supported by other evidence. Hazel Notion writes about Greenpeace in Australia.<sup>3</sup> Greenpeace in Seattle, USA, acted like a typical exploitative employer towards office staff in 1988, demanding that workers soliciting donations through telephone calls use high-pressure selling tactics and introducing electronic surveillance of the phoners. When the Greenpeace employees formed a union, they were sacked.<sup>4</sup>

Lorna Salzman's account of Friends of the Earth in the USA is supported by an analysis in the journal *Earth First!*.<sup>5</sup> Yet even the organisation Earth First! has its own tendencies towards centralisation of power.<sup>6</sup>

Timothy Doyle's careful description of elites in an Australian environmental campaign had an interesting fate when he attempted to raise the issues for a wider audience. He originally wrote on this topic in 1987, and prepared a short version for the weekly Australian newspaper *Times on Sunday*, which often published investigative journalism. But rather than publishing Doyle's paper, the *Times on Sunday* assigned one of their journalists to the story, who contacted the environmental organisations involved and wrote the story.<sup>7</sup> The environmental elites denied the implications of the analysis.<sup>8</sup> It was a year later when evidence supporting Doyle's contention was published in the media.<sup>9</sup> This evidence provided proof that there had been massive corporate donations to leading environmental organisations.

Doyle's experiences, like those of others who have protested against uses and abuses of power in social movements, show that movement organisations are not exempt from Lord Acton's dictum. □

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## Corruption and Social Action in Nigeria

MADUABUCHI DUKOR

**This paper is essentially a case study of corruption and social action in Nigeria. It is primarily concerned with actions of individuals and groups outside of government against corruption and government. It hopes to focus attention on the genesis of corruption in Nigeria since independence and on an alternative system for action against corruption in traditional African culture. It takes only a sheer courage to say that leadership and government in Nigeria since independence have been hamstrung by corruption. The system, ipso facto, has been a monumental failure. It is, therefore, incumbent on concerned philosophers and social thinkers to begin a search for an alternative system of political philosophy. It is the intention of the author to set the ball rolling on this agenda by x-raying the problem inherent in the status-quo.**

Since independence, corruption has been on the increase in Nigeria. Nigerian pre-capitalist culture and post-independence western capitalism made her become an ultra-capitalist country. Unfortunately too, it is among the periphery nations in the global economic system. In consequence of her peripheral and capitalist status, the majority of Nigerians are illiterate, poor, and oppressed. Characteristically, there is a wide disparity of income among her citizenry. Corruption in the country can, in the main, be linked to tribal and ethnic rivalry, religious bigotry, nepotism, favouritism and so on.

Political and economic independence in Nigeria is therefore a mirage. According to Alexander Madiabo, "The Federation of Nigeria, as it exists today, has never really been one homogeneous country, for its widely differing people and tribes are yet to find any basis for true unity. Thus, for administrative convenience Northern and Southern Nigeria became amalgamated in 1914. Thereafter the only thing these people had in common became the name of their country. That alone was an insufficient basis for

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true unity”<sup>7</sup>. And according to Adewale Ademoyega, “Nigeria’s political problem sprang from the carefree manner in which the British took over, administered, and abandoned the government and people of Nigeria. British administrators did not make an effort to weld the country together and unite the heterogeneous groups of people”<sup>8</sup>. Just as the global socio-economic system is structured to make the rich nations richer and the poor nations poorer, so also the Nigerian domestic socio-economic system is designed to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Against this background, economic planning in Nigeria since independence has been bourgeois and capitalist economic planning.

Oil, a major revenue-yielding sector in the Nigerian economy, serves the interests of the capitalist and the privileged classes instead of being utilised in the communalistic way of African culture. Christianity and Islam have either encouraged this neo-capitalist or imperialist system or remained criminally quiescent in the face of it. Mass media, governments and other institutions have been inadvertently encouraging the system. It seems that the problem of Nigeria is a problem ideology, and whose perception and practice of the status quo is epistemologically and ontologically alien to African culture. It could be argued that Nigeria has had no leadership since her independence from the colonial masters. And the absence of the status of any Nigerian leader in the British hall of memories, where there are many other African leaders like Nkrumah, Gadafi, Nyarere and so on, could testify to the lack of leadership in Nigeria.

### **Corruption and Changes of Government in Nigeria**

It is interesting and objective enough to observe that the sociopolitical history of Nigeria since her independence shows a history of corruption which invariably leads to socio-political instabilities. Professor A. Adeyemi of the Department of Public Law, University of Lagos, says this of corruption in Nigeria: “Corruption has now become a major factor contributing to the Country’s present state of under-development, a major consequence of this being the breeding of an inefficient and lax favouritism, rather than an efficient productivity. All of which again, leads to the entrenchment of graft in the body politic and expressed in the rapid depletion of the public treasury inflationary trends, unemployment and depression of the economic”<sup>9</sup>. It is pertinent to ask: What is corruption? It is defined by Oxford Dictionary as “routeness, putrid matter, impurity, bribery . . .”<sup>10</sup>. This definition is very significant in Nigerian context. When for example, there is bribery in a socio-political system, it means that the system is rotten; it also means that it is a state of impurity and so on. Socio-politically, corruption in Nigeria is a condition where there is bribery, favouritism, discrimination, religious bigotry, tribalism, ethnicism and so on. The commonly conceived notion of corruption as bribery, embezzlement and fraud cannot exist in isolation from the tripartite constitutional framework bequeathed to Nigeria, for it is



regionalism, ethnicism, tribalism and favouritism that that abet, if not cause, embezzlement, bribery and fraud. As a result of the ethnic and tribal diversities in Nigeria, individuals lack the patriotism and love for the whole.

Against the background of corruption, tribalism and lack of patriotism, social actions among individuals, groups, students and the military have taken place at various times as circumstances demand. Among others, it is believed that the coup d'état of 1966 led by Major Nzeogwu was an action against the corruption of the first republic; the overthrow of the governments of Gowon and Shagari in 1975 and 1984 respectively were as a result of the systemic corruption then.

The Nzeogwu-led coup d'état of January, 15th 1966 was the inevitable consequence of the chain of political and social misadventures and myopia of the first leaders of the republic of Nigeria. The 1964 election was not only the immediate cause of the coup, but also was the singular and last event that betrayed the corrupt tendencies of the leaders and the privileged class. As it were, there were alliances up on alliances among the political parties to gain control of the national and state governments for their selfish and personal interests. Consequently the stage was set for this selfish adventure chiefly between the UPGA (United Progressive Grand Alliance) based mostly in the South and NNA (Nigerian National Alliance) mostly based in the North. As a prelude to social action by some military boys, social action among the common people found a fertile ground among the Yoruba ethnic group in Western Nigeria where there had been a lot of infighting between the late Chief Akintola and the late Chief Awolowo. While chief Akintola was for NNA, Chief Awolowo was for UPGA. Since the politics of the first republic was on tribal and ethnic lines, Chief Akintola was perceived as having been bought over by the Northern dominated and controlled party, NNA. Since NNA could never win a fair election in the West, it was alleged that elections there were systematically rigged with techniques that had been perfected for many years. According to *Help Magazine*, "At the polling booths opposition polling agents were prevented from being present in the booths. It was arranged that their identity discs should not be signed by the appropriate official. So that only government agents were admitted to the booths. Thousands of ballot papers disappeared from stores, to find their way into government ballot boxes. When all else failed and an opposition candidate was elected, the last resort was to reverse the result and declare the winner"<sup>5</sup>. Historians and political observers argue that through this method, Chief Akintola, then the incumbent premier, got entrenched again as the premier of Western region. Consequently, the people of western Nigeria embarked on actions including riots, political murders and arson, resulting in over two thousands deaths. This happened around August 1965.

Apart from corruption-motivated political rascalism, corruption itself had been so evident among political leaders and the privileged classes that the ordinary person was helpless. Nigerian foreign assets were looted and

depleted with reckless abandon. Economic analysts observed that by 1954 when Nigerian founding fathers assumed authority in the regions, the country's total assets were £243.7 million. But by 1960, this fell to £174.2 million and fell again to £76.8 million by 1964. The dwindling of the foreign assets was attributed to the drawing of the capital resources of the country by Britain and other foreign companies and banks with the active collusion of Nigerian leaders. Nigerian leaders were also alleged to have given active support to oil companies to underprice Nigerian crude oil. Corruption was so evident at both national and state levels that one might be right to argue that the politics of the first republic was the politics of self interest. Public and governmental institutions were not left out; they were all corrupt. Adewale Ademoyega, one of the leaders of 1966 coup, observed; "The safety valves of the nation were reposed in such institutions as the courts, census commission, the electoral commissions the police and finally the Armed forces. But the sanctity of these institutions was being politically assailed, assaulted, and dragged in the mud, so that the national leadership was nearing collapse"<sup>6</sup>. He also observed; "Under the system, the vast majority of our people, that is to say, about ninety-nine percent were extremely poor and lived in abject poverty; while a few millionaires were being created here and there all over the country, by using their political connections to divert government money into their hands"<sup>7</sup>. All that can be deduced from the foregoing is that crisis, whether social or political, is a crisis of self-interest and personal gains at the expense of the masses.

By 1965, the nation was drifting purposelessly. It was alleged that the election rigging in the western region was nationwide to the extent that the incumbent prime-minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was re-elected. The then President and the Commander of Armed forces council was in a dilemma as to whether to swear the Prime Minister in again in a second term or not. It is argued that he did not want to do so because there was evidence of mass vote rigging all over the country. Some Political analysts argued that he had no power to do so as a ceremonial President. But one thing that is obvious is that the authority of the government had been weakened by the disillusionment of the masses. It was under these circumstances that Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu led four other majors to overthrow the national government of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa on January 15, 1966. First of all they used Kaduna as the base for their military action. As a result the parliamentary cabinet decided to hand over power to the most senior military officer, Major General Aguiye Ironsi. Before then, Nzeogwu and his team of revolutionaries had killed some prominent politicians which included Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (Prime Minister), and Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, both from the North. This further weakened the position of the new head of state, Ironsi, who came from the Ibospeaking area of the south. The further consequence was the killing and maiming of the Ibos in the north by the aggrieved

northerners over the killing of their leaders and then finally the resultant civil war between the rest of Nigeria and the successionist Ibos (Biafra). The revolution started by Major Nzeogwu could not achieve its aim because it was perceived by the other parts of the country as a pre-meditated Ibo coup. The confusion and crisis saw the rise of Yakubu Jack Gown as the Nigerian head of state until he was overthrown by another social action against corruption under his regime.

The reaction against injustices and corruption in the first republic was something that was either supported or carried out by groups and individuals. As records shows, it all started in the western region by the students and the common people in the street. The mass-media played its role too. In Nigeria under military regimes, the mass media is less active in social action than under civilian administrations. Under the first republic civilian government, the newspaper and electronic media were owned by different federal and state governments. These media were therefore loyal to the governments in control of their states. What this means is that these media were being sponsored by political parties. The advantage of this to social action therefore is that the media of the opposing parties would be exposing the weakness of the party in government, thereby informing and mobilising the masses for action. This was what actually happened during the 1964 election. The military boys got the support of the masses because they were informed of the corrupt tendencies of the leaders.

Although the military action was not successful, it shows that there were revolutionaries in the Nigerian Army then. Adewale Ademoyega, one of the five majors who planned the coup, in his book *why we struck* cited revolutions that have been carried out by the Armed forces in other countries to support their action. According to him, Genghis Khan's Army in the thirteenth century wielded the divided tribalistic mongols of central Asia together. The Cromwellian Army of the seventeenth century developed the parliamentary system in Britain. The Napoleonic Army of the nineteenth century rescued France from anarchy and established the principle of liberty and fraternity. The Bolshevic Army of Russia inspired by marxist principles established the rule of the proletariat. Other revolutionary Armies include the People's Liberation Army of the China and Dr. Fidel Castro Army of Cuba.

General Yakubu Gowon, who became the Nigerian military head of state in 1967 following the confusion and crisis generated by corruption and tribalism, was in power until 1975. His tenure of office immediately after the civil war in 1970 was a period of oil boom and this perhaps clouded the regime's sense of leadership and accountability to the people. Historians recall that "Gowon's regime witnessed an unprecedented rise in corruption in the country's body politics, nurturing a coterie of powerful Nigerian millionaires—the veritable fat cats"<sup>8</sup>. It is said that in 1974, the Federal government needed 2.9 million metric tonnes of cement through the Nigerian National Supply Company, but placed an order for 16.23 million metric

tonnes. Although Nigeria was supposed to be paying £40 per tonne, actually, it was gathered that instead by 75 per tonne was being paid. This means that someone was being enriched by \$75 per tonne for 16.23 metric tonne. It was obvious also that state military and civilian administrators, federal and state commissioners were irresponsibly enriching themselves, because after all there was money as a result of the oil boom of the decade.

At this point, students, individuals groups and some military officers were becoming disenchanted with the system. Some individuals resorted to the use of court affidavits in a bid to expose corrupt officers. Such individuals include Godwin Daboh and late Aper Aku. Consequently, a Federal Minister of Communication in Gowon's regime, J. S. Tarka, fell when he was forced to resign in 1974 over serious allegation of corruption. Students were not left out in the social action. In Nigeria, they usually take over the role of mass media especially under military regimes where the press and the electronic media are highly gagged and censured. In 1970, students at Ahmadu Bello University protested against the administration of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ishaya Audu. In February, 1971 students at the University of Ibadan used the cafeteria issue to go on rampage, during which one student, Kunle Adepeju, was killed by a police bullet. It was believed "that the anniversary of the incident was to provide excuses for the protests against the then increasingly unpopular Gowon administration"<sup>9</sup>. In 1974 and 1975 students at the University of Lagos demonstrated against the increasingly unpopular Gowon's regime. As if he was trying to perpetuate his regime and invariably corruption, General Gowon postponed his proposed handover to a democratically elected civilian government in 1976 to 1979. The outcome of this corruption was the overthrow of Gowon's regime on July 29, 1975 by General Murtala Mohammed. Unfortunately, he was assassinated within a few months in office by some retrogressive members of the armed forces in an unsuccessful coup attempt. He was therefore succeeded by his second in command, General Olusegun Obasanjo.

General Obasanjo's regime was not corruption free. Mr. Femi Falana, a Lagos-based lawyer, argued that General Obasanjo did not maintain the spirit of his predecessor against corruption. He says, "As soon as Murtala died, the succeeding regime institutionalised corruption in Nigeria by promulgating Decree No. 11 of 1976 (Public officers Protection against False Accusation). The decree was to become a ready instrument of coercion for General Muhammadu Buhari's regime seven years later, in the form of Decree No. 4 of 1984"<sup>10</sup>. It is believed that during Obasanjo regime between 1976 and 1979, corruption was on the increase, and it was during this period that 2.8 billion oil money went missing from the NNPC accounts as reported by the Senate majority leader in the succeeding Shagari civilian administration. Obasanjo's regime was, however, not forcefully removed in office as a result of any social action against corruption; it swiftly but calculatively handed over the government to the democratically elected government of

Alhaji Shehu Shagari.

It has been observed that Shagari's regime saw another dimension of corruption unprecedented in the country's history, as a Federal Ministers, State Commissioners and elected legislators awarded themselves fat salaries and at the same time engaged in contracts through proxies. "It is little wonder that this country has since then witnessed an orgy of brazen and wanton display of opulence, gluttony and mindless greed by Nigerian rich and powerful"<sup>11</sup>. The *Weekly Star* of 15 May 1983 was quoted as saying that "keeping an average Nigeria from being corrupt is like keeping a goat from eating yam"<sup>12</sup>. It was the same year that the Minister of Communication, Mr. Audu Ogbe, was quoted as saying that "the Federal Government is losing 50 million every month as salaries to non-existent workers"<sup>13</sup>. According to *Analyst Magazine* (vol. 2 of 1987), when on Monday Oct. 1, 1979 Shehu Shagari assumed the reins of power as Nigeria's President, "the country's total external reserve stood at 2.30 billion. In the next four years of his rule Nigeria earned about 40.8 billion in foreign exchange. But on December 31, 1983, when he was over thrown, all the external reserves had vanished and Nigerian public external debt stood at 10.21 billion"<sup>14</sup>. Some University intellectuals were actually conscious of the brazen act of indiscipline and corruption among the politicians and the general populace. Of significant note was the late Professor Ayodele Awojobi, a mechanical engineer at the University of Lagos, who singularly and on several occasions dragged the Federal civilian Government to courts on several issues. In 1984 too, a Nigerian popular artist, Onyeka Onwenu, co-produced a documentary with the BBC London, *The Squandering of Riches*, which "spot-lights the glitzy life-style and plush opulence of Nigeria's rich, including the jet-owning generation of public officers"<sup>15</sup>.

In awakening the public consciousness against corruption, the press and the electronic media of opposing parties played a very significant role (the usual thing under civilian government in Nigeria). The students of higher institutions were always eager to tell their illiterate, semi-literate and non-chalant parents of the anomalies in any government through demonstration and riots. When one talks of individual social action against the government in Nigeria, Afro-beat musician Chief Priest Fela Anikulapo Kuti is immediately recalled. Since the beginning of his career in music he has shown his disenchantment and disillusionment with all Nigeria governments from 1960 to date. To achieve his aim, he has composed music and documentaries to portray the decadent and corrupt nature of Nigerian governments like the Balewa, Gowon, Obasanjo and Shagari regimes.

It is believed that Nemesis caught up with the second republic politicians of Shagari's regime on December 31, 1983 as General Muhammadu Buhari seized power in a coup d'état. Buhari's regime engaged in commendable, but very stringent, measures against corruptive tendencies like cocaine-pushing and bunkering. The regime also launched a nationwide campaign

against corruption, called the "war against indiscipline"<sup>16</sup>. Discipline and reduced corruption were beginning to be felt when Buhari was overthrown by his Chief of Army Staff, General Ibrahim Babangida, on August 27, 1985. The state of affairs in Nigeria since 1985 has educated Nigerians on the difference between rule with an iron hand (for example Buhari/Idiagbon regime) and rule with a soft hand (for example Babangida regime). To some people, the coercive and undemocratic tendencies of Buhari's regime were bad but to many to day, Buhari's regime would have been the only solution to the decadent and corrupt nature of Nigerian society. On reflection, many have argued that Babangida's brand of democracy is at best encouraging corruption, and as such it is not the kind suitable for Nigeria.

### **The May 1989 Riots**

General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida is a complex and intelligent army officer, a political demagogue and military strategist and at best a politician. On coming to power, he opened a public and democratic debate on whether Nigeria would take the IMF Loan or not, and when it was rejected he adopted an equivalent, the Structural Adjustment Programme, as suggested by London and Paris clubs (all of which promote capitalism in all of its ramifications). The structural adjustment programme came into being around August 1986. The Government believed that the only way to reverse the economic misfortune that had plagued Nigeria since 1980 is through SAP: "SAP is the answer to our \$30 billion debt and to the amputated state of the economy"<sup>17</sup>. It seems that SAP could really be an answer to Nigerian economic doldrums. It is an economic philosophy that could make Nigerians look inward in order to resuscitate themselves from their economic misfortune. It requires Nigerians to be hard-working, to be creative and to cut their coats according to their sizes. It requires every one of them to be content with whatever one has; this involves everybody, no matter what position, rank or state of birth. Ultimately, it entails the full utilization of Nigerian agricultural and human potentials. All this would conserve the nation's hard earned foreign exchange, reduce inflation and increase the standard of living of an average Nigerian. A few months after SAP went into operation, an apologist argued that "cocoa and other farmers are busy smiling their way from the farm to the banks; . . . that SAP is a check on profligacy, the terminal disease of Nigerians and that many Nigerians are now looking inwards rather than to Europe or America for deliverance; and that there has been a fantastic boom in non-oil exports"<sup>18</sup>. The public were informed of the adverse effect of SAP, but they were told that these would be short-lived and that everybody would be involved in making the sacrifices. "The cumulative adverse effect of these measures is a run away inflation, high prices of essential goods, abrogation of such cushions as subsidies"<sup>19</sup>.

Following the mechanistic configuration and calculations of SAP, the inflation did come, prices of essential goods skyrocketed and subsi-

dies on some essential commodities reduced. University students were among those badly affected, and as mass-mobilisers under military regimes, they are always sensitive to government actions. Food is outrageously costly, and text-books were scarce and expensive to buy. In short the poor parent's child could no longer dream of going to university. The number of naira equivalent to an American dollar has risen from four to about fifteen. "Food items, especially the staples—gari, yam, cassava etc, have continued to go beyond the reach of most Nigerians"<sup>20</sup> Paradoxically and ironically, SAP turned out to be a blessing to the privileged classes in Nigeria. SAP could not stop corruption in Nigeria. It instead encouraged it; businessmen, some government officials, cocaine pushers, and people with various connections were getting richer than ever. Business was booming for privileged people as there was always a big chunk of money coming from any business transaction. This partisanship and lopsidedness of SAP was evident in the way many big businessmen and privileged workers import various brands of Belgian, American, Japanese and British cars like Mercedes and Honda Accord. Different types of housing of western architectural designs were erected here and there in areas specially meant for privileged classes. In fact, the disparity between the poor and rich became unprecedented in Nigeria. The rich were becoming richer and the poor poorer.

The common people not only felt the impact of SAP, they also knew and saw that some others were living higher above average than before. They may have been willing to act, but for their illiteracy and lack of sense of direction. But it was the university students, whom I regard as mass media and mass mobilizers in Nigeria especially under military regimes, that ignited the flame of the May 1989 mass riots in Nigeria.

The mood of Nigerian country people was already tense. The conceptual environment for the civilian action against the government was already in existence when the National Association of Nigerian Students gave an ultimatum to the government to end SAP by May 29th. To stimulate and mobilize the public to action, hand-bills were distributed. They are believed to have originated from Benin, more precisely from among the university students of the University of Benin. From where the students got them or who gave them to them is still a mystery today. One of the hand-bills was alleged to have contained material lifted from the May 1989 edition of the American *Ebony* magazine alleging "that President Babangida is very rich and has lots of money abroad. It also alleges that his children go to school in Zurich Switzerland (which is true), and that he and his wife, Maryam, own business concerns abroad....."<sup>21</sup>. And the other hand-bill alleges that the Chief of General Staff, Augustus Aikhomu, "has money abroad and that he ordered the detention of a businessman Bashir Mohammed under the provision of Decree 2 not because he was a security risk, but because of a business deal between Mohammed and Aikhomu....."<sup>22</sup>.

The National Association of Nigerian students demonstration planned for 29th May started ahead of schedule on 24th May as a result of these handbills (which may or may not be true). Students at the University of Benin demonstrated peacefully on 24th May, but the following day saw the city of Benin in flame. Students, illiterate people on the street, unemployed youths, motor drivers, touts, madmen, market women, secondary and primary school children and workers were on the streets wreaking vengeance on real and imagined enemies of the society identifiable through their flamboyant life-style. The Bendel state House of Assembly and some Ministry buildings were set ablaze. "The city was in turmoil unrivalled since the 1978 'Ali must Go' episode"<sup>23</sup>. The mob, moving from street to street and shouting, "Babangida Must Go!" "SAP Must be Abolished!"<sup>24</sup>, found ready supporters in market women, motorists and even those in the lower cadre of government services. Motorists on the Benin road to other cities and workers were made to hold green leaves aloft in solidarity for the action. Prisoners numbering about 809 in federal prisons were set free and gari, rice, tomatoes and beans in the prisons were looted. The rioters later set the prisons on fire. The government of the state, Col. Tunde Ogbeha, was said to have ordered the police to "shoot at sight"<sup>25</sup>. The police, in obedience to their masters, unleashed their own terror on the demonstrations. It is said that about fifteen people including a police man were killed and many wounded. About 154 protesters were arrested and flown to Makurdi, in Benue state.

As the demonstrations and riots at Benin were going on, most Nigerian students believed the allegations against Nigerian leaders and distributed the hand-bills all over the country especially in the Southern parts of the country like Lagos, Ibadan and Enugu. At Ibadan, students were in the lead in mobilising the public. They first of all alleged that there was one Mike Uyi who was an agent of state security service, SSS, and called for his expulsion. They also alleged that his real name was Harrison Ugbile. But as Mike Uyi, he was the national president of the students Peace Movement of Nigeria and also of the peace commando, both of which were government sponsored movements. The students went to Uyi's room at the Sultan Bello Hall, "packed his property and burnt them".<sup>26</sup> By 28th May, the demonstrations and discontent on the campus had spiralled into the township of Ibadan. Like in Benin there were road-blocks, burning and the looting of government properties. By 30th May, the University was closed down.

According to *Newswatch Magazine*, by "Monday, May 29, an uneasy calm hung over the University of Lagos, Akoka. Students who were seen in groups, were busy discussing the turmoil that had engulfed institutions of higher learning in some parts of the country"<sup>27</sup>. Before then, students of other higher institutions in Lagos like Lagos State College of Education and Lagos State University had been demonstrating against their authorities over issues that were purely internal. But by 30th May, students of the University



of Lagos, Akoka had mobilised the public, Yaba College of Technology and Lagos Polytechnic all in Lagos, for actions against the alleged self-enrichment of Nigerian leaders. The demonstrators, "who had now been joined by primary and secondary school children, touts, thugs and other undesirable elements paralysed commercial activities in Lagos. They went from street to street chanting the slogans 'Babangida Must Go!' 'SAP Must Go!'"<sup>28</sup>. Federal government vehicles were burnt and the two-storey building which housed the Federal Inland Revenue was also damaged. Many government houses in different parts of Lagos were ransacked and damaged. "At Fadeyi, Yaba, for example, the head-quarters of the International Telephone and Telegraph., ITT, Nigeria Limited largely own by M.K.O. Abiola, was vandalised. Eye witness said assorted equipment were carted away from the block of offices"<sup>29</sup>. Lagos city was in total crisis; it seemed as if the government was about to be overthrown by the people. I was coming back from my office at Lagos State University when I saw the masses on the road with green leaves. I also looked and noticed that every motorist had green leaves on his or her car. I had to stop and collect a good quantity of green leaves and put them in front of my car (a Nigerian common person's car, a Volkswagen) since that was my passport to home.

The mass riot in Lagos lasted for over three days and the result was that business in most parts of Lagos was severely paralysed: "Banks, private and public offices and shops had to shut their doors. Schools, too, were shut as many children joined the demonstrators"<sup>30</sup>. It was a fierce battle between the police and the public. In most cases, police men were said to have fled when they saw troops of demonstrators chanting war songs and "Babangida Must Go".

On June 19, 1989, the Armed Forces Military Council (AFRC) announced the closure of University of Ibadan, University of Benin, Bendel State University, Ekpoma, Imo State University Okigwe, Lagos State University, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti and other higher and secondary institutions, all in the Southern part of the country. The Majority of the institutions in the North either did not protest or their planned actions must have been pre-empted by the University authorities and the universities closed, and so the riot was limited to the south. This re-echoes the role of ethnicism and tribalism in hindering social action and promoting corruption in Nigeria. It is believed that the northerners tacitly withdrew from the mass riot because the head of state and majority of the leaders came from the North. The government action in closing almost all higher institutions in the South for a long period seems to have given credence to this belief. Social activists like Professor Wale Soyinka, a Nobel laureate, Dr. Tai Solarin and Chief Gani Fawehinmi openly challenged the government action on this matter.

The riot signified the feeling of the public against the government, that is they have been alienated by the Military who have now constituted them-

selves into a ruling class and are wallowing in wealth and opulence instead of solving the economic predicament. A Lagos-based national daily *The Guardian* argued that the "situation was one of a cleavage between the military and civil society as if civil society were an enemy at war with the military. It was a picture of 'them against us'<sup>31</sup>. There had never been such a revolt against a military regime in Nigeria. The military leadership was shocked and surprised to the extent of tightening up security here and there. The President and Commander-in Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces in his speech to the inaugural session of the Armed Forces Consultative Assembly at Abuja on 5th June was quoted as saying "My appeal to you is that the military must not allow itself to fall prey to divisive antics of our detractors. We must not let the military as an institution be humiliated or be disgraced out of office as was the case in some countries which are now back to square one or even worse"<sup>32</sup>. The President must be referring to the civilian protests that led to the overthrow of Gaafar Nimeiry of Sudan in 1984 and the government of Argentina.

Reflecting on the crisis, Professor Wole Soyinka blamed the crisis on the lack of autonomy of Nigerian universities, the lopsidedness of SAP which favours the privileged class and "the uninterrupted flow of V-Boot Mercedes, the lip-service paid to the curtailment of extravagant perquisites by senior government officials, the high level sharing of prime-land, the booming luxury apartment proprietorship of exclusive residential areas by senior army officials"<sup>33</sup>. The uneasiness in the military was evident as a symposium on the alternative to SAP, organised by some social activists led by Chief Gani Fawehinmi and Dr. Tai Solarin, was aborted by the government. Chief Fawehinmi, in whose chamber the symposium was to be held and who had before the riot been championing a crusade against the government and corruption, was thrown into detention for months on 17th June 1989. SAP had become unpopular to the common person and the intelligentsia. Dr. Patrick Wilmot, a former senior lecturer in Sociology at Ahmadu Bello University, says of SAP; "confronted with the obvious contradictions of the structural adjustment policies imposed on many Third World countries by the IMF, the temptation is to believe that this international economic policeman is operating outside the realm of logic and reason. Programmes ostensibly designed to improve economic performance are found to destroy economies; instead of attracting capital, SAP invariably leads to capital outflows; it is said to take time but no one can say how much; if time is involved, there should be signs and indices of progression; but progression, in terms of any acceptable measure of economic performance, is negative massive unemployment, falling standard of living, falling capacity utilization, degeneration of the currency, corruption, widening gap between rich and poor. The real problem for SAP, and one which it cannot make public, is what to do when exploitation reaches a point when returns begin to become negative"<sup>34</sup>. Dr. Wilmot, an expatriate, was retrenched and extradited from Nigeria in

1988 for alleged anti-government activities. His marxist friend and colleague at Ahmadu Bello University, Dr. Bala Usman, was forcefully retired in 1989 for alleged involvement in political activities.

The feelings of the populace and the actions ignited by the students seemed objective enough and justified as evidenced by the response of the government, which, on June 8, announced general measures to ease the pains of the structural adjustment programme. These include slight increases of the housing and transport allowances of workers and the subsidization of the prices of imported motor spare parts to lower higher transport fares. These measures, however, seemed cosmetic and superficial because the crux of the problem with Nigeria still persists; corruption and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Corruption, mass disenchantment and disillusionment, mutual distrust among the inner-circle of the government and the military that preceded the downfalls of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Gowon and Shagari's regimes seem visible in Babangida regime. People wonder whether Babangida could succeed in handing over power to an elected civilian government in 1992.

Following a cabinet re-shuffle by the President on 29th December, 1989, there were peaceful demonstrations by Christians in the Northern parts of the country because the Christians were not represented on an equal basis with the Muslims in the re-shuffle. I and most people got to hear of this first on the Voice of America, news bulletin of 11th January, 1990. According to the Voice of America, the stongest Christian in Babangida's cabinet, General Domkat Bali, gave an indication of his retirement following his re-assignment to the Ministry of Internal Affairs from his former post as Defence Minister and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. According to VOA, the Lieutenant General saw this as a humiliation and accused Babangida of ruling like a dictator. This comprehensive information which we got from VOA and not from any mass-media in the country shows that the press and electronic media are under gag and censure. And usually when the mass media could not perform the students take over the role through riots and militancy.

### **Endemic Corruption in Nigeria**

Corruption has since independence assumed endemic proportions in Nigeria "The phenomenon encompasses all official misconduct and other unorthodox practices, including the giving and receiving of bribes, misappropriation of public funds through embezzlement, or award of contract to relatives or favoured associates"<sup>35</sup>. In Nigeria, the belief is that you have to be corrupt in order to be rich and you have to be rich in order to succeed or get what you want. Nigerians are interested in jobs where there is room for receiving bribes and gratification. It has become a sub culture that one has to bribe someone in order to get something from any office. And a politician believes that money has to be used to canvass for elective office. Professor

Chinua Achebe says this of corruption in Nigeria : "I will only say that most people will agree that corruption has grown enormously in variety.....Public funds are now routinely doled out to political allies and personal friends in the guise of contracts to execute public works of one kind or another, or licence to import restricted commodities. Generally, a political contractor will have no expertise whatsoever nor even the intention to perform. He will simply sell the contract to a third party and pocket the commission running into hundreds of thousands naira or even million for acting as a conduit of executive fiat....."<sup>36</sup>.

Corruption is so endemic in Nigeria that one can hardly isolate corruption from governments and its social organs including the judiciary, the police, customs, immigration, extra-judicial bodies and so on. All these bodies are corrupt. As a result there is always a breakdown of social action against corruption. Corruption persists in Nigeria because members of the police and the judiciary are corrupt. Members of the police force are the most hated members of the society. In Nigeria, it is the policeman who is regarded as the thief. This is because the police are believed to have linkages with virtually all robbery actions in the society. The police are such a degenerate force that a London metaphysician, the late Dr. T. Lobsang Rampa, had this to say : "who has custody of the custodian ? Who police the police ? Absolute power corrupts. But does not the police now have absolute power ? And are they corrupt"<sup>37</sup>. Rampa observes that a police force which regards everyone as a guilty is corrupt. He says that the police "are now hated, isolated, living in a dream of colourful uniforms, horse manure and stamping feet. It is time to re-organise them, show them that they are not God chosen by servants of the public"<sup>38</sup>. He then advised : "Teach the police courtesy, politeness, manners, let them chase (and catch) criminals, and let ordinary decent law abiding citizen alone. Only then will they regain the respect which most certainly is lacking now"<sup>39</sup>. In Nigeria, the single most important source of action against corruption has failed because it is itself corrupt. This is one of the contradictions of Western civilization.

Actions against corruption by governments in Nigeria since 1950 have been many and varied. In 1950s, the first panel of inquiry headed by Justice Strafford Foster Shutton was set up to look into the ACB-Nnamdi Azikiwe affair. On June 20, 1962, the Federal Government of Sir Abubakar appointed the Justice G. B. Coker Commission which accused Chief Awolowo of being privy to the diversion of large sums of money..... into the coffers of the Action Group Party.

On September 16, 1975, General Murtala Mohammed set up a Federal Assets Investigation Panel to probe the assets of former governors, administrators and commissioners under General Gowon's regime. In this case, over ninety per cent of them were found guilty. The 1979 constitution provided for the Code of Conduct Bureau/Tribunals which was later found to be ineffective because the Shagari refused to enforce it. With the fall of Shagari

regime, the politicians were held under the state security (Detention of Persons) Decree 2 of 1984 and tried by the Recovery of Public Property (Special Military Tribunals) established by Decree 3 of the same year. Over 96% of them were found guilty and jailed for several terms of imprisonment. Other measures against corruption included Decrees 7 and 20 of 1984, relating to the Exchange Control (Anti-Sabotage) offence, the Anti-corruption Committee which was headed by Retired Justice Kayode Eso, the Code of Conduct and Asset Declaration and so on.

Buhari's regime (1983—1985) instituted the programme of "War Against Indiscipline" as a grassroots action against corruption, but before the programme could be assessed, the regime was overthrown. The Babangida regime came to power in 1985 and promulgated MAMSER (Mass Mobilization for Social Justice And Economic Self-Reliance), yet, paradoxically, it seems that it can not survive without corruption. It is in this period that people could buy all sort of Mercedes cars against the spirit of Structural Adjustment.

Reformist policies may not be able to exterminate corruption. *Newbreed Magazine* reports, "Majority were also of the view that corruption, being a structural problem, will persist unless and until a structural change occurs in the system for a socialist-oriented one of far-reaching fundamental economic and social transformation along the lines of the present system"<sup>40</sup>. That corruption is structural means that it is systematic and that the phenomenon is erected on the structure of individual beliefs and consciousness. These beliefs and consciousness are liberalism and capitalism.

### **The Need for an Alternative System**

Corruption has endemic, cancerous, and oracular tendencies. It is endemic because it normally catches up with a people or community. It is cancerous because it spreads from one person to the other until it engulfs the whole society. It is equally oracular in nature because once it spreads in a system, people tend to believe in it just as people of ancient times believed in and worshipped oracles. In a corrupt society, people tend to think that no one can be successful without being corrupt.

Secondly, corruption can easily be located among the powerful. It is the mostly privileged and powerful that can easily become corrupt. It is often said that "power"<sup>41</sup> tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. It is a fact nowadays that the powerful desire to get more power, the privileged want to get more privileges, the rich want to get richer.

And thirdly, corruption is most of the time systematic and structural. It has to do with the consciousness, beliefs, institutions and governments of the people.

Naturally, therefore, to attack corruption means to attack these factors collectively and individually. The third province of corruption might be the most fundamental and should be tackled first if according to Karl Marx,

"It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness"<sup>42</sup>. Marx would regard corruption as a symptom of capitalist ideology, which turns people's lives upside down. According to him, "If in all ideology men and their relations appear upside down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process"<sup>43</sup>. It is, therefore, logical that if corruption is structurally or ideologically removed there will be no powerful or privileged few and the phenomenon would have no place in the minds of the people.

We are all witness to the fact that Western liberalism has failed woefully to curb corruption in Africa, Asia and Latin America. There is, therefore, the need for an alternative conception of society. Incidentally, researches have shown that African and third-world cultures are ideologically more to the left than to the right. It is something of this nature : 60% left and 40% right. These cultures constitute a way nearer to holism than individualism. They emphasise the whole over and above the freedom of the individual who can not be trusted. Liberal governments have traditionally failed to appreciate that unguarded freedom to humans is tantamount to making them corrupt.

In ancient African societies, there was a tacit agreement developed over the year by the people to surrender some of their rights to a divine king, who then had a duty to facilitate and protect the rights of the members of the community. Power and authority as literally understood are used interchangeably in the African context. Although people talk of powers of kings and monarchs in African societies where they existed, it is not really 'power' that those kings had but authority. Totalitarianism is not peculiar to ancient African leaders. An African king "ruled with councils of elders, and if he abused his powers they were broken by making him perform some action that cut him off from the ancestral forces"<sup>44</sup>. Professor D. D. Raphael distinguished between power and authority. According to him, when we talk of power in social context "we are usually thinking of a specific kind of ability to make other people do what one wants them to do"<sup>45</sup>. and "to have authority to do something is to have the right to do it"<sup>46</sup> The power which African kings were said to have is therefore a limited one which is an authority protect and serve the interest of the society as a whole. Elements of power come in when it is necessary to exercise it against some individuals or groups for the interests of the whole.

Kings and monarchs, therefore, perform social functions like the enforcement of morality and the protection of lives and properties. Morality is the quantifier or predicate of all conduct. "Man lives in a moral community and his behaviour is prescribed by relationship. Morality is the mores, the manners and customs of society. Good morality is living in appropriate relationship with other people, high and low, old and young .."<sup>47</sup> In ancient Africa, corruption was repugnant to the society. Significantly enough,

there were no police. Instead there were practical and theoretical entities like God, gods, ancestors and spirits, who acted as both custodians and overseers of public morality. "The existential pragmatic culture of the Africans lies in their closeness to nature and living by the dictates of natural laws and gods. The gods are guardian of societal morality, though God is the ultimate. The people try as much as possible not to commit any offence against their gods or society, for that would bring metaphysical evil. The gods are the watch-dogs of the societal morality and law. In African society, the gods are involved as witness to any event, bond or agreement"<sup>48</sup>. A corrupt person who acts in a way inimical to the society suffers a boomerang. This is called Nemesis. The gods normally associated with Nemesis were deities of Thunder and Justice. To the African, "the world is a spiritual arena, in which is seen the interplay of psychic forces"<sup>49</sup>, African society is purposive and self-consistent. "Unnatural deeds do breed unnatural troubles"<sup>50</sup>. In African traditional setting "one cannot display acts of dishonesty and go scot-free. The foundation of co-existence was based on absolute piety. It seems that if people are made to swear by the indigenous gods, the administration of justice will witness some changes"<sup>51</sup>. When one takes all the sides of African culture into consideration, one can be able to imagine and believe that corruption in Nigeria and other places is a refraction of what was original. What accounts for human degeneration in terms of corruption is the shift of African life from nature as a result of imperialism.

While I do not advocate a resuscitation of the dead past, there is nothing bad in appropriating these elements in the ancient culture which make people conscious of their closeness and obligation to nature or God. Nigeria needs a change of system. In the absence of any smooth change for the better, then a revolution will be the answer. The military or the intelligentsia or the students can be the vanguard of the revolution to give it a sense of direction. This revolution should be a revolution for a new-past. This new-past can be based on communalism and holism and not necessarily scientific socialism.

The problem of corruption is a structural and psychological problem and, therefore, it has to be tackled as such. Any theory that intends to tackle the problem and refuses to acknowledge this will be at best reformist and revisionist. C. S. Momoh's doctrine of Moralism is a good example of a theory that is a reformist. C. S. Momoh of the University of Lagos, having beautifully advanced African socio-religious mores as means of tackling the problem of corruption, paradoxically and naively suggested that corruption can be tackled by "frankly acknowledging the phenomenon and legalising it. In legalising it we can then stipulate what percentage and what rate to charge for any services. The merit of the suggestion is that it will be possible to charge a public official to court this time not for corruption but for over-corruption."<sup>52</sup> This is a weird logic indeed, and which can neither be predicated on positivist or natural law theory. Interestingly and surprisingly

enough, it is the same Momoh who, while paraphrasing African deontic modalities, acknowledged the African belief that if people refuse to be good, they can be forced to be good. He says, "A doctrine in African ethics says that man is free to be good, but that man can also be forced to be good. As regards the issue of man being free to be good, experience has shown that man has not lived up to expectation. So the remedy has been to fall back on alternative proposition which is that man can be forced to be good"<sup>51</sup>. The idea of legalising corruption (whatever Momoh means by that) seems to be capable of encouraging it instead of curbing or exterminating it.

Momoh's doctrine of Moralism with respect to corruption is a bourgeois compromise with African culture. Momoh's doctrine of Moralism naively and paradoxically departs from the commonly understood meaning of moralism. And this is precisely because of its position with respect to corruption. Moralism is "the habit or practice of Moralism"<sup>54</sup>. Moralising means "to give moral quality or direction to; make aware of or subject to the influence of moral values"<sup>55</sup>. Moralism and not Momoh's doctrine of Moralism can be used to describe traditional African culture. Momoh's doctrine of Moralism is corrupt, and can corrupt the society. It cannot be taken as a timeless and eternal idea, instead it should be forgotten quickly before it feverishly plagues the society.

Again, the revolutionary claim of Momoh's moralism is problematic, because apart from permitting "people or those acting on their behalf to move to unseat any government who does not consider the interest of the other first"<sup>56</sup>, the Moralism hardly advocates a change of consciousness and institutional structures which are corrupt and make people corrupt. Momoh's Moralism is, therefore, reformist and cosmetic. Its revolutionary claim is a petty one. Revolutionary theory does not play a hide and seek game as the doctrine of moralism is doing. Revolutionary theory is always predicated on total change of institutional structures that breed injustice; it is always partisan: it is always definitely on the side of the poor and the oppressed. But the Moralism is non-partisan, it paradoxically wants to change the system and at the same time maintain it.

A revolutionary government is needed in places like Nigeria. The government itself needs to be strong, invested with authority and modelled along the line of kings and monarch of traditional African societies, in order to be able to carry out some institutional changes. It needs to have a good control of the production and distribution of essential goods. It is important, therefore, to consider what David Norton calls qualitative individuality which means that "Each person is entitled to those distributable goods whose potential values he can maximally manifest in the course of manifesting his own unique worth"<sup>57</sup>. This concept of individuality will be enhanced by the concept of meaningful work in which every person participates in the labour process. The labour process is the domain in which claims of human dignity can arise, gain legitimacy and provide the locus for public action.



Again, because of irrationality inherent in primitive accumulation, I shall add that the property acquisition of every individual be thoroughly checked. A system of laws should be set up to limit every individual, who can afford them, to at most, a specific living house, a specific plot of land and at most two private cars.

Each family shall be accommodated according to its needs. When the possessions of individuals are limited, there will be no need for them to buy numerous cars and to own many houses and plots of land. This property acquisition generates injuries upon the less advantaged. There is no doubt that it is the root of injustice and corruption in our society.

I would also add that any business enterprise that turns over more than say a million naira should be owned and controlled by the government. Individual ownership of such enterprises will stimulate property acquisition and corruption. There is need of the government to take over such enterprises and distribute the profits to the welfare programmes equitably.

These are principles of African culture, holism, and socialism. In any of these systems, corruption is bound to be minimal.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1, Madiebo, Alexander A., *The Nigerian Revolution And The Biafran War* (Nigeria, Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980) p. 3. The revolution in question here is the revolution started with July 15, 1966 coup in Nigeria. It was a revolution started, but which however was not accomplished; the forces of reaction later had the upper hand and plunged the country into a bloody 2-years civil war between Nigeria and the secessionist Biafra.
2. Ademoyega, Adewale, *Why We Struck, The Story of the first Nigeria coup* (Nigeria, Evans Brothers Ltd., 1981), p. 1.
3. Professor Adeyemi, A, quoted by Nick Idoko, '29 years of Unbridled Corruption' in *Newbreed Magazine* July 2, 1989, P. 7.
4. *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*, ed. E. M. Kirkpatrick (Britain, Ward R, Chambers Limited, 1983), P. 282.
5. For some detail on the immediate political events that led to Nigerian Coup and Civil War, see Walter Schwarz, "The troubled people" in *Help Magazine*, 1968, p. 6.
6. Ademoyega, *Op. Cit.*, p. 2.
7. *Ibid.* p. 35.
8. Idoko, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13
9. Onome Osifo-Whiskey, *NewsWatch*, July 10, 1989, P. 16.
10. Idoko, *Op. Cit.*, p. 14.
11. *Ibid.* p. 15.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
14. Idoko, *Op. Cit.*, p. 15.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
16. The 'War Against Indiscipline' which came into operation under Buhari/Idiogbon regime was carried out with such seriousness that some element of sanity descended on the nation's psyche. People were beginning to respect the law and avoid those things that lead to disorder. Corruption was minimal but not completely extinct.

17. Ray Ekpu, "Day of the Olive Branch," *Newswatch Magazine*, June 12, 1989, p. 6,
18. *Ibid.* p. 6
19. *Ibid.*
20. "Orgy of violence", ed, Soji Akinrinade, *Newswatch*, June 12, 1989, p. 12,
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, p, 18,
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.* p. 12.
27. *Ibid.* p. 10.
28. *Ibid.* p. 11.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. Bayo Onanuga, "Uneasy Times, Distrust and Suspicion draw a hedge between the Nigerian Military and the Civil Society", *African Concord*, 17 July, 1989, Vol. 4, No. 12, p. 11.
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## The Anti-SAP Upheaval In Nigeria

MARIE PAULINE EBOH

**When T. Momoh the Federal Minister of Information and Culture, published his "2nd Letter to My Countryman : CORRUPTION in HIGH PLACES", little did he realise that the measure he awarded to the erstwhile politicians would be awarded, in due course, to the upper echelons of his own government ; worse still, while they are yet in office.**

Corruption in high places, as Momoh put it, arises through abuse of position. "That is that a person who has the responsibility to render service at a particular position takes advantage of his position to be corrupt"<sup>1</sup>. The cure for corruption, he said, does not lie in sermons but in actively ensuring that there is no opportunity to abuse positions.

"When men ignore norms .... they easily fall prey to many errors and to their egoistic inclinations. Not without reason are states compelled to lay down common laws, by which at least the worst excrescences of human egotism are checked and doubtful questions decided and solved"<sup>2</sup>.

"To ensure better accountability, certain provisions were entrenched in our 1979 constitutions which ensured that public officers kept to strict guidelines in the performances of their duties. For instance, public officers were barred from maintaining or operating any bank account in any country outside Nigeria. They were also strictly barred from asking for or accepting any property or benefits of any kind for themselves or any other persons on account of anything done or omitted to be done in the discharge of their duties. You may not believe it, but the code of conduct of public officers entrenched in the 1979 constitutions also seriously frowned on the receipt by public officers of any gifts or benefits from commercial firms, business enterprises or persons who had contracts with the government"<sup>3</sup>.

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The Buhari regime promulgated a special decree to cripple those who broke their oath of office by amassing wealth ostentatiously beyond their means. Many former politicians in top positions in government had to serve prison terms ranging from five years to life under the provisions of this decree.

This set the stage for close scrutiny of every government, civilian or military, and for possible mutiny. Moreover, ...areas of possible abuse of forum, are the targets of criticism which students, trade unions and other patriotic groups have been known to wholeheartedly zero in since independence''<sup>4</sup>.

The axe of acrimony and scathing diatribe fell on Babangida regime in May/June 1989 when the protest against SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme) spilled over from university campuses into the streets as angry mobs, incensed by rumours, unleashed violence and destruction on Benin, Lagos, Ibadan and other cities. People are expected to be circumspect in a military regime because of the power of the gun, but Nigerian civilians defied the gun. Students stunned the nation in a spectacular showdown: they went flatly out to excoriate the present state of affairs. Handbills alleging serious malpractices by Mr. President and the Chief of general staff had been circulated among the students and they in turn passed the information on to the general public. The handbills alleged that Mr. President and his wife have lots of money and business concerns abroad, and that his children study in Zurich, Switzerland. As regards the Chief of general staff, he too has money overseas. In addition, he ordered the detention of a business opponent under the provisions of Decree 2, not because he was a security risk, but because of a business deal between the two of them.<sup>5</sup>

The rumour incensed some citizens.<sup>6</sup> There was intense hate and outright condemnation of the abuse of power. Students demonstrated. Soon the protests degenerated into mob action as the unemployed, market women, school pupils, madcap hoodlums, torts, loafers etc., joined the bandwagon of protesters. Anti-corruption arguments were dovetailed into anti-SAP propaganda. The rioters vandalised government property and put to torch some private filling stations that refused to give them fuel for their nefarious acts. In Benin alone, the rioters released about 809 prisoners and set ablaze the prison, the high court and the house of assembly. The rationale could be that those unfortunate prisoners may not have been more unethical than the powers that be. And since the high court is powerless in the face of the latter, it is useless and better scrapped.

The logic behind the student-induced riots was that :

''What the Nigerian youth needs is motivating good example of socio-economic conduct by the elders for him to copy, and not the holier-than-thou outcry against juvenile delinquency in today's Nigeria''<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, by virtue of ''egalitarianism''<sup>8</sup> which is the dream of the present administration, the authorities cannot in conscience impose exertive measures and demand excruciating sacrifices from their subordinates while they live in

affluence. If Babangida's assets are monumental and sprawling as alleged, he ought to personally offset foreign debts and end the SAP. The anger of the demonstrators was that "Nigerians had been suffering the effects of SAP; but their leaders were quite comfortable"<sup>9</sup>. The dire economic situation poses serious problems. Prices of food items have spiralled, transportation costs are high, and education is fast becoming the prerogative of the rich because of the high cost of books, fees, etc. The atmosphere is therefore charged and people are extremely sensitive to certain issues. A hungry person is an angry person. This explains the anti-SAP slogans chanted by the rioters: "SAP is a vampire"; "We are fed up with the military and SAP". The rioters wanted to paralyse business for days, if not weeks, so that the government would leave in.

Who would believe that the Nigerian public opinion opposed an IMF loan and opted for SAP instead? Such is the dysfunctional power of corruption to mar good intentions and shake a people's resolve.

It ought to be noted that the allegation against Mr. President is purported to have been culled from *Ebony*, an American monthly magazine. But until now, the edition in question has not been seen yet much havoc has been wrecked on its account. This puts the allegation in doubt. As for the Chief of general staff, security reports indicated that the business man in detention was a questionable character and had fallen foul of the law several times.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, evidence against these government officials is not conclusive. However, irreparable harm has already been done.

"If the protesters had a grouse against Babangida, they did pretty little to keep public sympathy, as not only government property was damaged in the mad action."<sup>11</sup> In addition, they robbed women and passersby of their jewellery, money and wristwatches, they looted shops and made motorists pay 50.00 (fifty naira) or get their windscreen smashed.

What then is corruption and who is fighting it? Is it not also abuse of position for the rioter to take advantage of the pandemonium inherent in mobocracy to extort money and other things from innocent people?

One may want to know how the government reacted to the embarrassment. Of course, it did not take it lying down. As usual, the police was put on red alert and there were many arrests. "The federal government responded with a sledgehammer and closed down six universities for one session, incurring the wrath of parents, teachers and students"<sup>12</sup> This action is equally a gross abuse of power because the mandate to close or re-open a university belongs to the university senate. The government has no constitutional right to use closure of universities as a punitive measure. Moreover, education is a citizen's right, not reward for docility. The government believes that the riots were more than students' handiwork and that these were but veiled assaults masterminded by detractors to "humiliate and disgrace the military out of office". "We will not succumb to blackmail nor yield to any threat of intimidation"<sup>13</sup>, said Babangida. That his administration survived

the angry violence that engulfed the nation for two weeks is evidence that he must be skilled in crisis management.

The wave of violence that swept across the nation was a clear indication that the generality of the masses of this country are disenchanted with the economic and political developments. Whether stagemanaged by the disgruntled ex-politicians, who are banned from active politics, using the students and the so-called "hooligans" in the society, one thing is glaring: the structural adjustment programme has failed the nation.<sup>14</sup>

No one is surprised at the government's reaction to the anti-SAP protests because it is a common practice in Nigeria and other Third World countries to start witch-hunting imaginary enemies when there is a crisis instead of addressing the issue.<sup>15</sup> However the issue of the SAP was too hot to be ignored. The president therefore had to make a pronouncement on it:

there is no viable alternative (to SAP). Government will continue to do all in its power to cushion the pains of SAP without derailing it... We cannot, and we should not, abandon this programme midway because the pains of trying to re-introduce it at a later stage will be worse than the current pains and we may perish in the process<sup>16</sup>.

According to him, SAP is not evil or a way of destroying the country's economy as opponents of the programme say, but a well-thought-out policy that

"aims at increased domestic production in every sector of the economy in order to create more jobs, more goods and less foreign debts."<sup>17</sup>

It was not so much his arguments as the relief measures designed to ease the pains of SAP which somehow managed to pacify the average Nigerian.

Even at that, many citizens remain sceptical. Let's watch and see as usual, they said, 'since it has become a fact of history and experience that it is one thing to make bogus promises and another to pursue a policy to a logical conclusion.' However, there is good reason to believe the seriousness of the AFRC (Armed Forces Ruling Council) to implement the letter the SAP relief package. They will only be playing with fire if they fail to do so. The lesson of the riots is too big to be forgotten.

Apart from the social critic who referred to the SAP relief package as<sup>18</sup> 'fire-fighting measures', most Nigerians see the measures as a sudden and positive response to the anti-SAP crisis. The package contains short term welfare measures to create jobs, feed the hungry and ameliorate the transportation situation in the country. With regards to employment, all vacancies in primary and secondary schools were to be filled with dispatch. 62,000 job-seekers were to be employed between June 8, 1989 and the end of the year. The NDE (National Directorate of Employment) was mandated to create such vacancies. In addition, the federal ministry of works and housing was to

provide additional jobs for 10,120 non-graduate engineers and surveyors within six months. All unemployed professionals : doctors, lawyers, accountants etc. were directed to report at the relevant ministries for immediate employment.

The anti-SAP riots were therefore successful. They have constrained the government to give SAP a human face. But why did it take violence, profane language and wanton destruction of property to bring this about ? If these thousands of employment opportunities had been potentially there, why have our graduates been left to roam round the streets ? It appears this nation has greater cause to weep than to rejoice. The whole riotous incident is an illustration of the Igbo proverb which states that unless a bachelor behaves like a mad man, he will not find a wife. Some months ago, the brain drain dominated national discussions and debates. The government wanted to check the mass exodus or if possible bring back all the doctors and nurses who emigrated to Saudi Arabia in search of job. Yet it did nothing to improve conditions of service or create new jobs. This is probably because the language of the brain drain is pacific.

On June 19, 1989, at a meeting with Vice Chancellors, rectors and provosts of federal tertiary institutions, it took the Education Minister, Jibril Aminu, a 14-page statement to reveal the government's SAP relief measures as they affect his ministry, especially institutions of higher learning. One is left to wonder whether or not it pays to be aggressive especially since aggression most often leads to appeasement. Again two categories of students are involved in the alleged corruption cum SAP issues : the ebullient students who egged on the riots and bore the brunt of tear gas and detention, and the 'good' ones who, though disapproving the state of affairs, kept away from demonstrations and mob action. the question is; which of the two deserves a pat on the back ? The society has been applauding the former (those who make things happen) while condemning the effrontery of the latter. The reason is that the effrontery of the former has yielded enormous positive results: employment for thousands of people, additional halls of residence for students, salary increments for workers, importation of vehicles, buses, trucks, tractors and their spare parts without import duties, importations of drugs, acceleration of food production, etc.

But is it right to fight to social malaise with ethical disarray ? Do two wrongs make a right ? The nation, it appears, has crash-landed into utilitarianism or Bentham's ethics enlightened self-interest, wherein whatever works is right a kind of amorality which portends danger. Utilitarianism elevates the profit of the individual to the supreme norm of morality. This ethics of success will only plunge Nigeria into more moral perversion. Our moral situation is already compounded. The police extort money from persons and yet they arrest people for bribery and corruption; unionist leaders embezzle union money yet they brazenly engage the so-called corrupt government officials in combat; for reasons of state, the government in turn imprisons expoliticians on charges of abuse of position. One thing is clear. When some-

one has vested interest in a certain post, s/he views and vilifies the occupant of that post as lacking in integrity. But once s/he gets into the post, those very acts which s/he used to see as dishonest practices cease to be unethical. Is corruption therefore subjective?

The effect of SAP is hydra headed because SAP has not only sapped Nigerians economically but also morally. To palliate the pains of SAP more meaningfully, some moral reinforcement is very necessary, otherwise history will repeat itself. The anti-SAP rioters have used morally depraved actions to fight corruption—a vicious circle, of which only moral rectitude can show the way out. It stands to reason that the present administration has much more work to do than it envisaged, if it were to implement curative measures for lasting effectiveness. "Unless the moral foundations of Nigeria are put aright, we cannot do anything right in this country."<sup>19</sup> As President Shagari put it, "A nation without a reliable and tested moral foundation is like a proverbial house built on shifting sand."<sup>20</sup> □

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MAKE YOURSELF AN HONEST MAN, AND THEN YOU MAY  
BE SURE THREE IS ONE RASCAL LESS IN THE WORLD.

—Carlyle

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## GREENPEACE—getting a piece of the green action

HAZEL NOTION

**As scientists continue to confirm the rapid deterioration of the global ecology through the increasing pressures of acid rain, the greenhouse effect, depletion of the ozone layer, deforestation, soil erosion, loss of species, contamination of the food chain with toxic chemicals and the pollution of the world's oceans and waterways, all rational people have come to agree : the greenies (environmentalists) are right. Naturally enough, everyone now wants to be a greenie. All sorts of people are rushing in to don the verdant colours. There are evergreens and seasonal greens, red/greens (those migrating from the left) and blue/greens (from the right), verdigris (green rust on copper) and jade but the fundamental division is between light and dark greens. Dark greens want to change the world; light greens want to clean up the one we've got.**

Since most of the major manifestations of the environmental catastrophe occur as expressions of industrial/consumer culture (or emulations of it) the dark green school says there is no way of saving the planet short of a total cultural reformation. Such a cultural deviation would have to be at least as dramatic and far reaching as the one that gave us the industrial revolution in the first place. This school of thought is largely an out-growth of the hippy/utopian vegetable growing movement so popular twenty years ago. These days, however, they are sometimes more sophisticated in their thinking and often style themselves as "deep ecologists".

The light end of the green spectrum, meanwhile, says it's just business as usual. The solution to pollution problems is to have cleaner industries, environmentally safer products and sustainably yielding forests. Furthermore, just around the corner there's a new technology or chemical that will fix whatever it is you're worried about. But whatever you do, don't panic.

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HAZEL NOTION is Pseudonym for an experienced environmental activist.

In between these two doubtful shades there doesn't seem to be anything but varying degrees of inarticulate camouflage, confusion and angst. The situation seems to be giving rise to a slowly growing panic among those too young to be able to say with any degree of confidence, "at least it won't happen in my life-time".

Increasingly it seems people, desperate to be reassured that somebody is truly doing something to save the planet, are placing their faith in international environmental organisations like Greenpeace. This is unfortunate because many of them will be unaware just how far Greenpeace has gone in aligning itself with the "business as usual" light green school. A sell-out? Well, yes, but for a good price.

One has to understand that the business as usualists (BAU) are just the leading edge of the free market economy adapting to and exploiting a new market. To them an environmental catastrophe is just a new frontier to conquer and an opportunity to market new products and services. To the BAU environmental engineers, scientists and businessmen the mainstream environmental movement is the greatest promoter and asset their new environmental industry could ever hope to possess. Without really realising what was happening organisations like Greenpeace have become fully integrated into this new environment industry. How did this happen? Well they were just successful and got big. And they started caring more about their corporate fortunes than about changing the world.

In 1989 Greenpeace had a turnover of nearly \$100 million. \$35 million of this was dedicated to fighting environmental campaigns around the world. To the BAU people this was a whole lot of free publicity for their environmentally sound products and pollution control equipment.

The new executive director of Greenpeace Australia put the corporate image in perspective recently. He said he'd been sent out from the United States as a troubleshooter to clean out the hippy image of the local outfit and bring it into line with the rest of the Greenpeace world. He immediately fired a quarter of the existing campaigning staff and replaced them with people better suited to the new conservative and bureaucratic requirements. The survivors of the shake-out tended to be those skilled at internal campaigning. That is, instead of spending their time campaigning on environmental issues, they saved their best efforts for promoting themselves on the internal Greenpeace network. Career orientation and corporate loyalty are apparently the qualities Greenpeace is now seeking in employees.

The new boss was recently quoted offering gratuitous flattery of the Australian Prime Minister, normally more noted for his support for uranium mining, Australia's nuclear alliance and the pocketbooks of large corporations. "Never before have I seen a leader who is so green. Hawke is doing for the environment movement what Gorbachev did for east-west relations. He is ahead of us all."

These are the words of a man who is perhaps capable of making small

sacrifices of reality in the interests of pragmatism. Being the Prime Minister's friend, it seems, would be to his advantage. And those pragmatic interests he states repeatedly. He wants to quadruple the local "subscribership" to 1% of the population, namely to 170,000 people, and increase the Greenpeace income proportionally. (You can't become a member of Greenpeace, only a subscriber.)

Greenpeace Australia have no doubt chosen a competent person to clean up hippies and raise money. He is a veteran of the Vietnam war and during a recent three year sojourn away from Greenpeace he managed to turn himself into a multi-million dollar property developer. (He recently told startled Australian staff members how he was planning to turn an organic fruit farm, that he had bought in the US as a speculation, into a high-density residential development. He also confided that if he was successful in re-ordering the Australian branch he had been promised the top job in the US, possibly to be followed eventually by the top job in Greenpeace International.) His salary package for the Australian job includes a rent-free mansion with views of Sydney Harbour (\$37,000 per year), a car and a \$45,000 per year salary.

With such conventional minds in charge of Greenpeace it makes one wonder just how they ever acquired their radical image and just what function they are actually serving in the world.

In discussions with Australian staff about campaigning tactics the new boss dismissed suggestions that tactics should be adapted to local political and cultural conditions. He said Greenpeace was like McDonald's and it had its own well proven recipe that had worked successfully all over the world. What he was apparently referring to was the Greenpeace propensity for direct action against known polluters to publicise the pollution they cause. This often takes the form of harassing dump ships in zodiacs (small sea craft) and placing temporary blockages in disposal pipelines. All done, when possible, with full television coverage.

The dramatic pictures that these actions produce for TV news are often flashed around the world and constitute the recipe of Greenpeace at work that has proved to be so successful. The appeal to the public of this kind of dare-devil opposition to polluters and whalers is undeniable. However it is obvious that the choice of issues and the timing of actions is more dictated by Greenpeace's need for self-promotion than by an inspired commitment to the environment. One complaint that is regularly leveled at Greenpeace is that they don't have the commitment to follow through issues to a conclusion. They just publicize an issue (and themselves) and move on.

Another complaint, linked to the need for publicity, is the way they raise money. It has been described as pyramid selling environmentalism. Every evening dozens of "canvassers" are despatched in teams to the suburbs of all Australia's major cities to knock on doors, ask for donations and sell subscriptions. The canvassers keep 40% of the money they collect. Their

task is made much easier and more lucrative by good news coverage of Greenpeace actions. If they find householders are repeatedly asking them why isn't Greenpeace doing something about a particular issue, this may lead to Greenpeace adopting the relevant cause.

The most cited criticism of Greenpeace is the centralisation of power, the old boy promotion network and the rigid bureaucratic authority structure. The commando style actions coupled with a military command structure have led many a dark greenie to lift an eye-brow over the years and speculate as to just who the remote and unaccountable leadership might be using for role-models. One question these eye-brow raisers sometimes ask is just how does Greenpeace manage to always locate their target whaling and fishing boats in the midst of vast oceans? Is it possible they might sometimes be satellite assisted and, if so, how do they return the favour? Perhaps by offering employment as a cover? Certainly there are some people working for Greenpeace with backgrounds more suitable for information gathering in areas other than environmental affairs.

To put the activities of Greenpeace into perspective one has to see them as becoming increasingly a lighter shade of green but with dark green roots. The shift has occurred with the maturing of the small upper echelon of original leaders who still hold power. As a light green organisation integrated into the new environment industry one can see them as packagers and marketers of a new product; environmental theatre. This product is sold by subscription to suburban householders who use it as a palliative for environmental anxiety. Regular doses appear to allow suburbanites to continue normal producer/consumer lifestyles. It is also basically advertising and promotion of pollution control equipment and new environmentally-sound products by creating a demand for them.

Whether one sees them as doing more good than harm or vice versa probably depends on what shade of green the reader is. Certainly the vast majority of people in western democracies now are varying degrees of light green and most of them are bound to give some degree of approval to harmless consciousness-raising activities such as Greenpeace carries out.

This growing obsession, however, with what amounts to a civilisation's dirty habits is fast beginning to distract us from those areas of human endeavour, like social justice and spiritual quest, which always seemed so promising for the cultural evolution to a fairer and more enlightened society. That such a society would have the wisdom to avoid ecological self-destruction through the collective expression of greed used to be always taken for granted. □

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A STRAIGHT LINE IS SHORTEST IN MORALS AS WELL AS IN GEOMETRY.

—Rahel

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## Environmental Movement Power Brokers

TIMOTHY DOYLE

**This paper elucidates the power/elite structure of the Australian Environment Movement as it existed up until the 1987 Australian Federal Election. Since the elite structure of the movement varies from campaign to campaign, it is important to introduce a case study in order to provide this analysis with historical and actual structure. The case study under review is the Wet tropical Forests of North Queensland. This case is most important in connection to the movement's 1987 electoral efforts, as it dominated the mainstream conservation agenda. This investigation will reveal that the movement's electoral affiliation with the Australian Labour Party the political party then in Government was unrepresentative of the movement as a whole, but rather reflected the will of an elite network of powerful, professional activists who have seized power from what used to be known as the voluntary environment movement.**

The Wet Tropical Forests of North Queensland dominated the 1980's as the fore-most conservation issue in Australian politics. This particular environment was deemed unique and, as a consequence, the environment movement campaigned for its conservation. Its chief protagonists were, at different times, the Queensland Government a State Government forming part of the Federation—which preferred the area to be 'developed' for the sake of 'progress; and the Federal Government which did not want to become involved in a State versus Federal Government rights debate.

The campaign was waged by many different networks of environmentalists, in many different ways, over the decade. Each of these networks enjoyed the primacy of the political limelight at different stages. In 1983 and 1984, the Cape Tribulation blockaders dominated proceedings. These blockades formed to halt the development of a road through one part of the Wet Tropical Forests: Daintree. These blockades were characterised by spontaneous, non-violent direct actions. The main arguments for conservation of

the area revolved around aesthetics, wilderness, and survival. The key network mainly included local inhabitants of the area, although many other environmentalists travelled from afar to attend the blockades, particularly in the second blockade of early 1984.

In 1985 and the first part of 1986, Brisbane—the capital of the State of Queensland—was the epicentre of a more formal Wet Tropics environmental campaign. The Rainforest Conservation Society of Queensland, the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland and the Queensland Conservation Council were key organisations during this period. The Australian Conservation Foundation and The Wilderness Society—two national environmental organisations—recognised that Brisbane was the campaign hub and promptly set up branch offices there. Because the nexus of the campaign was now based in a northern state capital, the focus of politics levelled itself at the state level also. The movement argued interminably with the Queensland Government to list the Wet Tropics as a 'World Heritage Area'. The conservation arguments were now based on science and economics.

During the final eighteen months of the campaign the focus moved out of Queensland into the south-eastern cities. An informal elite network of up to a dozen professional environmental activists now dominated all Wet Tropics environmental initiatives. As a direct consequence of this dramatic shift in the movement's power base, the environment movement became totally immersed in the 1987 federal election. This was quite remarkable, due to the fact that, in the past, party endorsements by environmental groups had seldom occurred. Gone were the arguments about aesthetics and spirituality; gone were those of science and economics; the era of political expediency had arrived.

This paper will concentrate its analysis on these final eighteen months of the campaign.

The Australian environmental movement's involvement in the 1987 Australian federal election was a 'success' in the terms of the political game as defined by the dominant, mainstream agenda. The movement, or more correctly, parts of it, managed to prove their political clout in the electoral game. The swing in the voting in the eleven seats which were targeted by the movement was 0.89% to the Australian Labour Party (ALP) compared with a 1.31% swing away from the ALP on an Australia-wide basis. The movement claims, therefore, that their campaign contributed on average 2.20% of the ALP vote in this election. Even if this figure is somewhat exaggerated, even the most hard-headed political analyst does not deny the movement's electoral might.

Despite the widespread perception of the movement's 'success', little attention has been given to the internal politics of the movement itself. The Wet Tropics campaign has been fought throughout a decade. Why, in the twilight years of the 1980's did the movement finally achieve this 'success'.

Part of the answer lies with the ALP's willingness to accommodate the

movement's wishes, in a trade-off for electoral support. More importantly, various changes to the movement's structure, goal-seeking and power distribution have all contributed to recent events.

Before the main body of the text is introduced, I think it is important here to accurately define what it is which makes up the environmental movement.

### **The Australian Environmental Movement**

A vast array of networks, organisations, groups and individuals are involved in what is loosely termed 'the environment movement' in Australia. The movement's physical fragmentation is a reflection of a broad range of differing political ideals and means for achieving objectives.

It is not possible to ascertain the exact number of conservation groups operating at any one time. The movement is constantly changing. As issues appear on the political agenda, groups often form. As the issue in question disappears from public view, often the group may also become obsolete.

The movement's membership is a fluid one. It comprises many individuals who are not necessarily 'card-carrying' members of specific conservation organisations. The overall membership, when defined by different individuals or groups, varies accordingly. The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)—one of Australia's largest umbrella environmental organisations—lists over 800 environmental groups in Australia and admits that there were a 'further 300-400 bodies for which we could not obtain sufficient information for entries to be made'.

Due to the movement's fragmented, ad hoc and informal nature, study of its structure is extremely complicated. There is no structure which strictly formalises relationship between groups as in the case of business corporations.

Much depends on history: the development of friendships, alliances and common enemies. Geography, also, plays an important role contributing to the present structure of the movement, in a country which is as vast and, on occasions, as politically isolated as Australia. Finally, the environmental movement is part of Australia's political culture. Attempts to establish hierarchical structures within the movement mirror, to an extent, this country's established political structures. Conversely, within the movement there are also strong pressures away from hierarchical structures and towards decentralised and participatory forms.

### **Elitism: A Definition**

The word 'elitism' and its derivations are popularly perceived as undesirable. In political science terminology, however, 'elitism' has quite a clear and precise definition pertaining to the characteristics of an elite society. It is in this academic sense that the term is used here. Dye and Ziegler in *The Irony of Democracy*, list four key attributes of elite theories of society [2]:

1. Power is held by the few; the majority of people have no input into the policymaking process.
2. The elites are not representative of the population, therefore, their policies are not designed to fulfil broad societal goals.
3. Non-elites can slowly move into elite circles (thereby maintaining stability i.e., a vision of upward mobility); but before being admitted they must accept the values, guidelines and practices of the elite regime.
4. Elites influence masses before masses influence elites.

The environmental movement involved with the Wet Tropical Forests of North Queensland has become 'elitist' in its operation since about 1986. Power is in the hands of the few; pressures 'exist' within the movement to 'toe the elite line'; and finally, the movement agenda is totally dictated to by these powerful professionals. This scenario fulfils all of the four criteria as laid down by Dye and Ziegler.

This situation may not appear remarkable if we were talking about a business corporation or a government body. The environmental movement involved with the Wet Tropics, however, has traditionally operated in a way which values consensus and demands that the processes of democratic representation be fulfilled before any initiative can be implemented.

#### Who are these elites ?

Members of this elite network dominating environmental initiatives have three essential characteristics. First of all, they are professional activists. They are not volunteers; nor are the majority honorary elected officials. They are employed to do a job. Secondly, members of this exclusive network work for either the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) or The Wilderness Society (TWS). Some of these elites have ties with both formal organisations. Finally, the elite network has a geographic dimension. All members are strategically located in the four major capital cities: Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart. The first three of these cities reflect the 'triangle of power' which is the nexus of mainstream politics in this country. The elite environmentalists, therefore, mirror the establishment's distribution of power. The addition of Hobart reflects the history of The Wilderness Society which originally was the Tasmanian Wilderness Society.

The de facto membership of this network was determined by asking several key individuals to nominate the network participants who dominated environmental proceedings in the election campaign. By cross-referencing these names, I was able to arrive at the following list of the most powerful individuals. (Of course, each person I talked to nominated a slightly different list, reflecting their different individual locations, biases and relationships.)



**Figure A****The Network of Professional Elites**

Name	Organisation	Position	City
Jonathon West	TWS	Director, TWS	Hobart
Karen Alexander	ACF, TWS	Councillor ACF Election Officer TWS	Melbourne
Michael Rae	TWS	Co-ordinator TWS	Melbourne
Phillip Toyne	ACF	Director	Melbourne
Bill Hare	ACF	Campaign Director	Melbourne
Jane Elix	ACF	New South Wales Campaign Director	Sydney
Margaret Robertson	TWS	Co-ordinator TWS	Sydney
Jane Lambert	TWS	Liaison Officer	Canberra
Joan Staples	ACF	Liaison Officer	Canberra

Despite the intense involvement of the Queensland groups over the past years, not one Queensland was included in this network. This is of particular importance when one considers that the Wet Tropical Forests are in Queensland.

These professionals totally devote their lives to the environment in this country. They accept wages which are far below a level commensurate with their level of expertise. They are, on the whole, not in the political game for the purposes of attaining individual power. Instead, they perform in a way which they believe benefits the movement as a whole. Their dominance of the movement is not necessarily the result of a conscious bid for power but a consequence of their attempts to play the political game as defined for them by the party political and government agendas.

It was this network of individuals who bargained with the Labor Government before and during the 1987 election campaign. The decision was theirs. It was not representative, in any way, of the environmental movement as a whole. But, due to the key positions of power held by this national elite, it was possible for this network to portray to the politicians, the media and to the general public its actions as representative.

It will now be shown how the decision to play electoral politics - and back the ALP - was in no way representative of the broader movement in either a direct or indirect sense. In short, consensus is no longer practised by the dominant groups involved in the campaign to save the Wet Tropics.

**Unrepresentatives**

The decision to play the electoral game and to back the Labor Party was first made by TWS and later endorsed by the ACF. In the past, the ACF has been the front runner in electoral involvement, In the 1987 election, TWS had the upper hand all the way.

TWS's decision to back Labor in the House of Representatives and the

Australian Democrats in the Senate was announced publicly on June 6. That decision had already been made by the TWS elite band sometime before the National Meeting of The Wilderness Society held in Brisbane on 28 to 29 March 1987.

The National Meeting of The Wilderness Society constituted an attempt by the organisational elite to gain ratification from the TWS membership for its electoral strategies. The voluntary membership was quite shocked at the extent of preparation which had been undertaken by the organisational professionals. Two extensive documents had been prepared by elite network members Michael Rae (TWS Melbourne) and Geoff Lambert (TWS Sydney) for discussion papers prior to the national meeting. In short, the elite had set the agenda. One TWS volunteer wrote of the decision at the National Meeting to play party politics as follows :

All those supporters of TWS, like myself, who believe that TWS should take no party political stance at all could very rightly feel angry, misrepresented and wonder just whose decision it was that they were abiding by and, by default, condoning .... that really wasn't consensus decision-making at all. I see TWS as losing what has always been its most attractive quality, that of grass roots involvement and decision-making. Power it seems is vested in those who are paid by TWS rather than the members.

Indeed, there were few volunteers admitted to the network; but this is not the full extent of the division between elites and non-elites. The organisational professionals operating in Brisbane, Cairns, Adelaide and Perth were equally surprised. Harry Abrahams, Co-ordinator of the Brisbane Branch of TWS writes of this situation :

I have enclosed two articles, one by M. Rae and one by G. Lambert. They are documents prepared as discussion papers for the National Meeting. They should give you some idea as to how people were thinking before the meeting. The Brisbane Branch was not thinking strongly about elections before the meeting, hence some members may have felt there was a bit of 'steamrolling' going on.

This strategy of not consulting organisational workers 'outside' the network continued right throughout the campaign. The Brisbane employees of both the ACF and TWS presented a brief report for the campaign post-mortem held in Melbourne the week after the election. They voiced their disappointment about being left out of the central nexus of power-broking and decision-making. They wrote :

We were not told who was working where and what numbers were to be used to contact whom when the branch offices were established. We found out by hook or by crook rather than being told. Somehow we felt that we were not aware of where and when decisions were being made in Melbourne. Did regular meetings exist between the ACF and TWS? We felt more that we were finding out the decisions

after the meeting rather than that a meeting was going to be discussing XXX (sic) this, what do you think ?

So, at some stage before the National Meeting of TWS, the professional elites had made two decisions: 1. To pay the electoral game, and 2. To back the Labor Party. Proof of the second point is easily found in Lambert's report to the National Meeting. He writes:

This morning's (23 March 1987) report that Howard (leader of the Liberal Party) would abolish everything including motherhood, if elected to office, opens up greater scope for differentiating between Liberal and Labor in the eyes of the conservation-minded voter. Perhaps Labor is a viable choice. Howard has turned rather dry on conservation, as evidenced by his promise to abolish support for the ACF (and us too?)

But the decision to back Labor goes even further back. One does not have to be a genius or a conspiratorialist to work out that a deal had been struck by Barry Cohen—Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Environment—and Jonathon West. Before November 1986, West worked for Cohen as his private secretary, (3) West's timely departure from under Cohen's wing to the directorate of an organisation which would take the lead in the environmental movement's election campaign is far from a coincidence. According to one Tasmanian TWS source, the decision to make West Director of TWS had been made some eighteen months before by the TWS elite. It was just a matter of timing.

West was the leader of the movement during the election campaign. Trade-offs and deals were achieved through his negotiation with both parties. It is irrelevant to ask which entity is more important to Jonathon West: the movement or the ALP. What remains crucial to this analysis is to recognise the key role he played in the movement's election campaign and the consequent endorsement of the Labor Party.

Although the environmental movement cannot be delineated on party political grounds, this elite group—particularly the TWS members—is intensely Labor Party oriented. The connection between these two entities will be later discussed.

Thus, The Wilderness Society's move to focus on the 1987 federal election, and the consequent support it gave to the Labor Party was in no way representative of its membership and, more importantly, of the movement as a whole: yet it portrayed itself so. TWS is not an organisation which operates around a tightly constructed constitution. If one does refer to its constitution, it soon becomes obvious that the document was not designed to restrict powers. Section 7, paragraph VIII of the constitution reads as follows:

Any four members of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the committee.

Four people can exercise all such powers and functions that are requi-

red by the Association'. The inbuilt flexibility of The Wilderness Society's constitution has been used in the past to act quickly in certain crisis situations. Unfortunately, without these constitutional controls its organisation has been seized by a small band of elites who do not seek to be representative; instead, they feel that they 'know what's best' for the rest of the Society.

The ACF played second fiddle to The Wilderness Society in the 1987 election campaign. This is unusual for, in the past, it has dictated the national environmental agenda. This time, the initiatives were all fundamentally dominated by the TWS elite.

The ACF voiced its support of the Labor Party officially on 15 June. The Adelaide *Advertiser* newspaper printed the following statement the next day.

The 20,000 strong Australian Conservation Foundation will endorse the Hawke Government and the Australian Democrats in the election campaign...The decision, based on a two-thirds majority vote in the ACF secret ballot of its members, is a big plus for Labor, which has made several pledges to woo the conservation vote...

The general public, on reading this story, would have been convinced, wrongly, that two-thirds of ACF's 20,000 members had voted to support Labor in the election. In both previous elections, the ACF membership was polled to ascertain whether or not the ACF should back a political party. In the case of the 1987 election, however, the ACF did adopt this policy. Instead, the broad decision to back the Labor Party was left up to the ACF Council, whilst the nuts and bolts of the campaign were formulated by the seven-member Executive.

The ACF argued that this latter process saved time and money. It also substantially disempowered its membership. The ACF Council decision was not representative of its membership. The response of the Western Australian Chapter of the ACF illustrates both the lack of representativeness demonstrated by the council's vote and reaffirms the point that the elite power nexus exists in the four south-eastern capital cities. Colin Hall, President of the Chapter, communicated the following statement to me:

We were notified of Council's decision three weeks before the election. We weren't consulted. We are sick and tired of not being consulted. We never see the ACF Councillors at any of the meetings. Some individuals within the chapter challenged the Council's decision. But they were heaved out of this stance by Labor Party sympathisers. The long term effects of the electoral campaign are now being felt; the whole affair has split the branch into disrepair. I believe it will fold.

The long-term effects of the elites' election strategy will be discussed at the conclusion of this paper. At this point, it is more important to note that the ACF Council's stance merely ratified the elite network's election strategy. One ACF Councillor made the following statement about his role in the

**Labor Party endorsement :**

We had been lobbied heavily before we cast our vote. It was a secret ballot; but in reality it was a foregone conclusion.

The ACF members of the elite network, unlike their TWS counterparts, did go through the formality of seeking some sort of ratification from its membership. But this was merely a formality. The decision to combine the electoral efforts of both organisations was made at a national meeting of elites on 22 May 1987. Eight members of this network decided 'that the organisations should co-operate as far as possible in formulating a common platform for the election in relation to the question of support or otherwise for any political party'.

The ex-Director of the ACF, Dr. J. G. Mosley, sees the changes in the ACF's election procedures as just one example among many of the increased elitism in the organisation and 'the continuing, progressive reduction of the powers of its general membership'. This unrepresentativeness is rarely a deliberate ploy of the professional elite. Some of the elites are equally concerned with this increasingly unrepresentative decision-making process. For example, Michael Rae, Co-ordinator of the Melbourne Branch of TWS—and elite network member—writes of his uneasiness:

.. that of the "executive decision making process", I do not deny that such a thing exists. I have my own concerns about this but I will have to take this issue up in a future letter. My apologies but I am not able to write about this at the moment due to the pressures of time and the fact that elections are screaming around my head.

The above quotation is a perfect example that this network is dictated to by the short-term time frame and the political agenda and the political parties. By playing the electoral game, the structure of decision-making and the scope of the movement's goals were dramatically affected. The long-term effects were that the term of reference fell out of the membership's hands.

**The ALP Connection**

At this point, it is essential to state that the Labor Party did have substantially better environmental policy than either the opposition Liberal and National Parties. The 'necessary and sufficient conditions' for movement support of the ALP Government were spelt out at the Sydney meeting of elites in late May :

1. Unilateral nomination of the Wet Tropical Forests and the commitment to use Commonwealth powers to stop the degradation of this area (logging, roads, real estate, etc.)
2. Injunction to stop illegal logging and forestry operations in Tasmania.

The Labor Government did promise to meet these two criteria, thus satisfying the movement elite that a substantial bargain had been struck. What helped the elites further in their endorsement of the ALP was the disa-

strous performance by the opposition parties in terms of the environment in the lead-up to the election.

Given stark differences between the political parties' environmental stance, it could be rationalised that the movement picked the lesser of two evils and, in the words of Jane Elix—ACF New South Wales Campaign Officer—'their (ACF, TWS) joint decision to advocate voting for the ALP in the House of Representatives and the Democrats in the Senate was made on the basis of past environmental record and existing policy statements on the environment'.

This statement by Elix simplifies and, in doing so, clouds the reasons lying behind the movement elites' endorsement of the ALP. Yes, the movement backed the ALP partly due to a comparison of policies. But if the policies and past performances were the only criteria, then the Australian Democrats should have received support in both houses. The issue of ALP endorsement by the movement elite is far more deeply entrenched.

There is no evidence which suggests that the ALP has deliberately infiltrated the movement. There is no evidence of conspiracy. Despite this fact, from 1985 to 1987 it attained increased access to movement politics. This phenomenon is explained by a number of factors.

First, it is necessary to re-emphasise the importance of the role one person: Jonathon West who has played 'the middle man'. West was influencing the movement's path directly, even whilst in Barry Cohen's employ. Working for Cohen, West has used ACF and TWS letterhead when expressing his views to the organisational elite. One such paper, entitled 'The Wet Tropics: What can we expect from the Labor Government in its second term', is an excellent example of the dual role and political world of West. This paper—written at the outset of 1985—begins with a brief paragraph which reads:

This paper aims to set out briefly some thoughts on how the re-elected Labor Government might react to the tropical rainforest issue in 1985 and how conservationists can orient in the new circumstances.

Apart from supplying advice to movement participants, West directly involved himself in the organisational elite power-plays of the environmental movement in this country. The following scenario is evidence of his input whilst working for the Labor Party.

The dismissal of Dr J. G. Mosley from the position of ACF Director in April 1986 has been popularly portrayed as a power-play within the movement between 'radicals' and 'conservatives', Mosley belonging to the latter. This line of thought proceeds along the following lines: Mosley, after twenty years of service to the Foundation, was overthrown in a bloodless coup, very reminiscent of the situation which saw the wholesale changes in the Foundation and his rise to power-back in 1973. Again, the reality is quite different.

Mosley was a sometimes abrasive and often idealistic character who

wouldn't kowtow to politicians and bureaucrats. The President of the ACF, Hal Wooten, expressed to ACF Council his foremost concern that Mosley was not creating sound relationships with government officials :

— the growing alienation of those with whom ACF must maintain relations — ministers, public servants, and the leaders of other conservation organisations.

The professional elite had put Mosley's dismissal on the agenda and, again, Council merely ratified its decision. In the words of John Sinclair—long time ACF Councillor—Council has become little more than a 'rubber stamp', 'that means that the major decisions are predetermined outside the Council'.

Mosley did not get on with the Minister, Barry Cohen. This situation was seen by the elite as being totally unsatisfactory. Cohen's secretary, Jonathon West, was at the informal centre of the move. One ACF employee summed up the dismissal of Mosley quite simply : West was on the phone for a week before the Council decision'.

West was, and remains, instrumental in the link between the ALP and the environmental movement. He has operated in the Federal party political forum, and his perceptual boundaries of environmental issues remain confined to this mainstream 'appeal to elites' agenda. [4] He has brought the ALP much closer to the movement. In the words of Michael Rae (TWS Convenor, Melbourne), West 'has provided us with far more access to the Labor Party political machine and the higher echelons of the bureaucracy'.

The relationship between the professional elites and the ALP during the election was far more closely linked than just a mutual back-scratching exercise. Some members of the elite network have ALP tickets. But this is not the crucial factor adding to the explanation of the extent of the ALP-movement link. Instead, more importantly, top Labor Party organisation officials became part of the movement elites' network during the election campaign. Bob McMullin (the Federal Secretary of the ALP), Peter Batchelor (Secretary of the New South Wales ALP) and Peter Beattie (Secretary of the Queensland ALP) were the key Labor members of this network, and were involved in discussions relating to movement strategies.

As evidence of this direct involvement of the ALP in the movement's affairs, one has to look no further than the selection of seven key seats—this number later swelled out to the eleven—for campaigning by the movement during the election. This election was not a movement decision. The Wilderness Society Election Evaluation report spells this out quite clearly : 'First decisions (about seat selection) were made at ACF/TWS "Sydney Meeting" on June 6 on advice from ALP Secretariat'.

Some professional members of the movement 'on the outside' were not at all amused by this procedure. Abrahams writes:

Our move into Fisher [an electorate] was done very quickly and we were upset that the decision was made without consultation with those of us closest to the scene, not good. We were happy with the

decision at the time but not the process. This is further evidence of unrepresentativeness and the reduction of the powers of the broader membership of the movement.

Not only did the movement endorse the ALP during the election, but their own campaign foci were initially defined for them by the ALP and, in certain electorates, the movement's campaign became almost inseparable from that of the ALP.

The case of the Denison electorate in Tasmania is a classic example. Nowhere else in Australia is the ALP-movement link stronger than in Tasmania. The swing of 4.69% away from the sitting member Michael Hodgman was more than enough to put his ALP opponent, Duncan Kerr, into the House of Representatives. In this electorate, TWS actually did a substantial amount of the ALP letter-boxing.

There remains another important reason explaining increased interplay between the ALP and the movement: the ALP is in government. Over twelve months directly prior to the 1987 election the professional elite concentrated its efforts more on direct lobbying techniques aimed at influencing the politics of powerful people in the mainstream political sphere. The days of mass mobilisation campaigns, for which TWS is renowned, are over. The power of the movement seems now to be in the hands of a small group of professional elites who, in turn, are far more interested in dealing with their counterparts in government than generating grassroots action. Thus, the movement has moved closer to government in recent times: the ALP just happens to be in government.

The professional elite speaks the language, utilises the same arguments, and is beginning to think in the same way as the governors of our society. No more arguments about wilderness; no more talk of scientific diversity; instead the game is mainstream politics: deals, bargaining, pragmatism and money.

The movement is now playing the political game as defined for them by the dominant powerbrokers. To play the game properly they need money: large quantities of it. The actual source of movement funding during the election campaign rates a mention here as it, more than anything else, illustrates the ultimate authority of the professional elites, who, on their rise to power, have brought with them an ideological package reflecting mainstream values. Means are not especially important to the elites. Ends-short-term ones are top priority.

The non-violent action, wilderness ideals and the grassroots processes belonging to the agenda-setting actions of earlier years have been well and truly superseded by this dominant group.

### **Corporate Sponsorship**

For the first time in the history of the Australian environmental move-



ment funds are coming from corporate sponsors. In the past, the movement has relied on individual donations, membership fees, government grants and its own pockets. In the case of the 1987 federal election vast sums of money came from corporate sponsors in a bid to influence the outcome of the election in favour of Labor.

This occurred for two major reasons. First of all, the largest and most powerful corporate bodies in Australia were backing a Labor Government; this must be one of the few times the ALP has enjoyed such support. Secondly, the movement- or those networks which dominate it- has witnessed a fundamental change in the structure of its power distribution. This transfiguration has been matched by dramatic ideological changes.

The largest donation came from Bond Corporation. This donation also spells out the fact that the movement has gained increased access and support from the media. In mid-June 1987, Bond Corporation made an approach to the Australian Conservation Foundation and offered quarter of a million dollars of free advertising on its eastern seaboard television network, Channel Nine.

Bond Corporation specified what type of advertisement it had in mind. Its advertising consultants drew the picture of two trees; one being knocked down—the result of the election of a coalition government—whilst another tree thrived under the beneficial regime of the Labor Party.

In the months leading up to the election, the seven member ACF executive council met several times. At one such meeting, after much debate, a decision not to accept the Bond offer was made. According to one member of the Executive, the decision was made on two grounds. First to accept funding from Bond Corporation would be ideologically unsound. On past occasions the Foundation had come into direct conflict with Bond Corporation. These actions ranged from a boycott on Bond bottled products in South Australia due to the Corporation's poor recycling record to a more direct conflict between the Western Chapter of the ACF and the Corporation over the high rise 'Observation City' development at Scarborough Beach in Perth. Secondly, in practical terms, the eventual disclosure of the source of funding would be politically damaging.

The Wilderness Society did not have such qualms. After Bond Corporation failed to get the ACF to act as its front person, it turned next to TWS. TWS accepted the offer. The television advertisement was screened in prime-time on Channel 9 and 10 in Sydney and Melbourne; Channel 9 and 10 in Brisbane; and Channel 6 in Hobart. The 'Conrleton Walsh Report' also screened the ad.

Again, only the informal executive of TWS knew of this deal. To this day most of of the membership of the Society remains ignorant to the existence of this trade-off. In the draft election evaluation document which TWS prepared for its members, there its no reference of this donation. In fact, under the heading of 'Donations', only \$11,000 is recorded, coming

from the generous pockets of the general public.

At the 1984 TWS National Meeting, Pam Waud—a prominent environmentalist—presented a discussion paper which demanded that certain ideological questions be resolved within the Society. At that stage in TWS's history, the organisation was caught in an ideological paradox personified by the conflict between its grass roots members and its professional bureaucrats. Three of these questions read as follows:

1. Do we regard TWS as an end in itself (as an organisation) or, is it a structure created by a changing group of dedicated individuals AS A CAMPAIGN TOOL.
2. What is the individual's place vis-a-vis the organisation, and the efficiency of the organisation ?
3. Should we seek and/or accept funding from environmentally unsound organisations/individuals ?

Waud's questions were not resolved at the 1984 meeting. They were, though, in the 1987 election campaign. The decision to accept corporate sponsorship epitomised this transition. TWS—the organisation most dominated by the professional elite—has finally resolved the ideological paradox which it has existed in since the fulfilment of its Franklin goals: the organisation has won.

Secrecy now exists between this elite network and the rest of the environmental movement. Files are off limits. All is done on the phone. The professional elites now have control of information flow. This suggests the increased distance between the elite and the membership.

### Conclusions

It is essential to address the effects of the recent dominance of professional elites on the whole environmental movement.

During the 1987 election campaign, a network of professional elites unilaterally acted as representatives of the environmental movement. This act, resulting from the dominance of this network, will change the membership—along with the ideology—of the environmental movement in Australia.

The organised environmental movement will become more narrow in its base and less ideologically diverse. The President of the ACF, Hal Wooten, supports this contention when he writes :

But actual party endorsement is divisive and may narrow our base.

It brings all the problems of single issue politics. Do we need it ?

Also, the organised movement is far more homogenised in its belief structures, as the dominant elites continue to demand more uniformity in environmental ideals.

Already, the demands of such homogeneity are being felt.

In a letter withdrawing her services from The Wilderness Society, Eleri Morgan-Thomas speaks of the lack of ideological tolerance within the organisation:

Brisbane Branch has been having some very real problems lately, not the least of them being communication. Many of us at the National Meeting felt that it was difficult to make a comment that disagreed with what was perceived to be the 'power base' ..

The demand to conform to the professional elites' ideology will alienate large sections of both the organisational membership and the movement participants who choose to operate outside the structures of formal, constitutionalised organisations. In turn, this alienation will lead to polarisation and conflict.

Most alienated will be the voluntary workers in the more formal groupings; those people who involve themselves in the 'grassroots', everyday, 'nuts and bolts' of any environmental campaign. Morgan-Thomas, for example, kept the books for the Brisbane Branch of TWS.

Apart from being tied to particular political parties, they have lost all of their power: a feeling of uselessness prevails. Craig Jones, another volunteer who resigned, wrote to the Director of the Society explaining his disappointment:

I regret to inform you that I can no longer remain a member of The Wilderness Society. I've delayed in writing this letter for several reasons, not the least of which is the remorse that I felt at having to withdraw my support for The Wilderness Society.

I believe that the "raison d'etre" of The Wilderness Society was that it provided a basis for a "grassroots" conservation movement...

With increasing executive power, which seems to be the direction in which the Society is heading, comes a limiting of the ORDINARY MEMBER'S ability to participate in any way but a superficial manner. Not all of us are involved in The Wilderness Society simply to ease our consciences. We need to be active, and we need to be able to participate in the decision making processes of the society.

Without this kind of participation, the Society will wither and die.

The letters of Morgan-Thomas and Jones are not unique. Since the election of West to the top TWS job, TWS has continually alienated its volunteer members located at its various branches. TWS is becoming increasingly centralised around its organisational base. According to Geoff Holloway, a long-time commentator on The Wilderness Society, TWS no longer operates from a 'grassroots' basis. Holloway says that from 1986 to 1987, TWS branches which are active diminished in number from approximately forty to twenty. This decreasing number is, arguably, a direct result of the branches no longer being involved in the decision-making process.

A similar event is occurring in the ACF. In a previous section Colin Hall (President of Western Chapter of ACF) told how his particular chapter has been torn as under. Similar events are occurring in all major capital cities: the organisational membership is changing. And who is replacing the volunteers who are leaving? Karen Alexander, a professional who has membership in

both the ACF and TWS, reports that the ACF attracted about 300 new members during the election campaign. She asks :

Are we just attracting ALP voters and Left-wing fanatical green anarchist guerillas?...We could have...

Her reference to anarchist guerillas is based on a misconception. Anarchists would not be at all thrilled about party alignment. But her reference to an increasing influx of Labor Party supporters is a most interesting point. Could it be that the movement, through continually aligning itself with the Labor Party, will be increasingly attractive to Labor Party members? If so, the movement's environmental agenda will also be increasingly dominated by party politics.

If these trends of elite dominance continue, with emphasis on electoral politics, then the politicians, the government bureaucracy and the developers will have complete control over the movement's political agenda and its terms of reference. The time dimension; the rules of the game; the extent of the trade-offs; the sources of money; the mutual personnel: all these factors will be defined by the dominant regime. □

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## The decline and fall of Friends of the Earth in the United States

LORNA SALZMAN

**The environmental group Friends of the Earth (FOE) was founded in 1969 by David Brower in the United States. Since then offshoots have been established in numerous countries around the world as part of Friends of the Earth International, and some of them continue to carry out excellent environmental campaigning work. But in the US itself, the original FOE was destroyed, for all intents and purposes, in April 1986, as a result of a manipulated and 'corrupt Board of Directors' election process.**

The history leading up to this acrimonious election was preceded by baseless nuisance lawsuits and scurrilous slanders against Brower by former friends and Board members, led by attorney Edwin Matthews Jr. and artist Alan Gussow, and has not been fully told. It is a cautionary tale for both the environmental and green movements. For some it sounds like the usual corporate in-fighting with rivalries and power plays; what makes it shocking is the feeling that environmental groups are somehow immune to such behavior.

The lesson is important for several reasons. First, it is a lesson of the need for built-in, pervasive accountability at all organizational levels, in all movements, and in particular accountability to members and potential constituents. Second, the environmental movement indulges in little self-criticism and even less of associates. Especially in Washington, it closes ranks against even friendly criticism and presents a united front in self-defense. Because of this, organization members rarely if ever learn how the organization is being managed or their money spent, what the group's strategies and policies are (except when they get urgent calls to write their representatives in support of positions developed by the Washington lobbyists), and have no opportunity to share in shaping the group's direction. This large void in accountability eventually results in a loss of members' and public trust.

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Collectively speaking, the major US environmental organizations, about a dozen of them, are supported by and/or represent as many as 50 million Americans. The dues paid by all the members (not counting special fund appeals, year-end contributions and foundation grants), result in a lot of money being paid out to these groups. But there is no reciprocal right granted to members to participate in or be privy to all organizational decisions. Moreover, money is solicited on behalf of the "public interest"—by the "good guys" fighting the "bad guys", who say; trust us, give us your money and we will protect your interests and the environment. But mostly what members get is a monthly publication telling them what has already been done, or whom to call or write, or asking for more money.

Nearly all these groups are tax-exempt and have tax-deductible affiliates for non-lobbying work like education and litigation. Their Boards consist of leading scientists, academics, attorneys (a preponderance, it seems), and corporate executives for whom such membership is a matter of pride (and a counterweight to their reputation and image as polluters). The Sierra Club, for example, is remarkably resistant to internal change. It was headed for most of the 1970s by a nuclear physicist, Lawrence Moss, and long refused to oppose nuclear power, and has yet to take any position against nuclear weapons development. A former president, Doug Wheeler, was a reputed supporter of Reagan. (Wheeler, executive director Michael McCloskey and Board member Michelle Perrault reportedly refused to meet with Nicaragua's former national parks director Jose Cardenal, who toured the United States under the auspices of Earth Island Institute's Environmental Project on Central America.)

Because of their public interest thrust, and the fiscal privileges conferred by the Internal Revenue Service, and not least because of the large sums of money contributed by the public to such groups, it becomes incumbent on them to insure that breaches of ethics and law as well as internal mismanagement be made known to members (and corrected) so they can decide whether they wish to support that group or put their money elsewhere. Environmental organizations cannot point out anti-environmental, anti-social actions of private corporations and simultaneously violate the special public trust put in them by dues-paying members and the public at large to whom they routinely appeal for money and support.

Before beginning my story of FOE, it is worthwhile listing a few acronyms.

FOE : Friends of the Earth, an environmental organization.

FEF : Friends of the Earth Foundation, an organization able to accept tax-deductible donations and provide grants to FOE.

PAC : Political Action Committee, an organization formally registered for election campaigning.

D.C. : District of Columbia, the small geographic and political area housing the city of Washington, the national capital. FOE-D.C. is the FOE

office based Washington, D.C. now merged with the Environmental Policy Institute.

Sierra Club, or Sierra for short : a long established US conservation group with national standing.

PIRG : Public Interest Research Group, one of many student organizations set up to do Research and campaigning for the public interest. PIRGs were originally the initiative of Ralph Nader.

FOE was founded in 1969 by Brower after he was forced from his position as Sierra Club Executive Director on the basis of ideological and style differences, though fiscal arguments were used to strengthen the case against him. Brower had made the Sierra Club a household word, multiplying its membership tenfold, carrying out a superb Exhibit Format book publishing program and taking the whole environmental movement into a new era that built upon and enriched its origins as a purely conservation movement. Whatever his failings as an administrator (and, in retrospect, as a judge of character), his vision was always clear and correct, his integrity unimpeachable. His was a voice for uncompromising aggressive defense of Nature.

Founding FOE, he brought with him loyal supporters from Sierra and put together a brilliant core staff in California that put FOE at the cutting edge of the movement despite its relatively small size. FOE immediately took the national lead in opposing nuclear power and later in promoting Amory Lovins' "soft energy" path, published the finest environmental publication in the country, *Not man Apart*, edited by Tom Turner for most of its seventeen years, and joined the front ranks of national membership groups. FOE was respected for its refusal to compromise, its broad vision, and its reliance on a loose, decentralized network of branches, field representatives, volunteers and a small well-informed staff.

There was never any doubt that Brower was in charge; Yet FOE gave great freedom and autonomy to branches and field representatives. Ideological and strategy disputes were few and far between until 1979, the year Brower resigned the presidency to Edwin Matthews, who was voted out the next year in favor of legislative director Rafe Pomerance. The decentralized nature of FOE that was its initial strength proved eventually to be its downfall, as people less scrupulous and less imaginative than Brower began to plot to wrest control away from him and his supporters in San Francisco, FOE's headquarters.

In 1975 Brower hired me as Mid-Atlantic Representative of FOE, and I headed the New York office, working closely with the New York branch of FOE, until Pomerance fired me in May 1984. Around the time that Pomerance became president in 1981, legislative director Jeff Knight moved from Washington D.C. to San Francisco, becoming administrative director of FOE and later of Friends of the Earth Foundation, assisted by Ron Rudolph. A FOE PAC (Political Action Committee) was set up in 1982 with

an outsider named Bob Chlopak, formerly of the national Public Interest Research Group, hired as its director. When Brower stepped down in 1980 as president, FOE finances were near the break-even point, and its membership was close to 30,000. Four years later, after triumvirate rule by Pomerance, Knight and Chlopak, assisted by Matthews and Gussow (who was FEF president), FOE was nearly \$700,000 dollars in debt and membership was down to about 16,000. (The organization merged with the Environmental Policy Center and the Oceanic Society in 1989.)

In spite of the fact that Brower had had little influence on management or on Board decisions since 1980, and despite the fact that management (Pomerance, Knight and Rudolph) and later the short-tenured executive director Karl Wendelowski and the Board ran the organization and signed the checks, and thus were responsible for FOE's financial state and administrative problems, the Board majority initiated a campaign to smear Brower and blame him for everything that had gone wrong between 1980 and 1985.

This campaign accelerated even as the Board itself countenanced increasing debt each year; the frustration of the San Francisco staff led to its unionizing to counteract the favoritism bestowed by Pomerance and Knight on selected staff, primarily those in Washington D.C. (The San Francisco staff were fearful of complaining to the Board because they claimed Knight would get revenge by holding up money owed them or by refusing to process their foundation grant proposals.)

During this period the Washington D.C. office, more and more the center of power, was continually at loggerheads with branches and field representatives because of the dominant role of D. C. in policymaking and their refusal to consult with branches and field representatives in developing legislative strategies. Chlopak made himself, with Board and management concurrence, the sole determinant of who would get FOE congressional endorsements, persuading the Board to endorse Walter Mondale for the Democratic presidential candidacy before the Democratic primary and over the objection of nearly the entire FOE staff. The Board rubber-stamped every request and proposal presented them by Pomerance, Knight and Chlopak, and the consolidation of the D.C. office's power, under Geoff Webb's control, was complete.

The truth was that FOE management (Pomerance, Knight and Rudolph, plus Chlopak and Webb who were technically only staff) not Brower, developed, implemented and oversaw all organizational decisions and finances since 1980, presiding over its fiscal and ethical decline. But at no time during this period did the Board hold management accountable for the dire state of the group or its finances. Instead, when the time came, they lashed out at Brower and his staff supporters.

This decline, which began during Pomerance's presidency in 1980 and continued until the sordid April 1986 Board election, was paralleled by ethically and legally questionable deals, mostly made, it was later discovered, in



private by management and handful of Board members, and by serious political compromises on important environmental legislation. As regional representative, working chiefly on nuclear power, I witnessed some of these compromises, and during Pomerance's tenure I conveyed to board members in numerous written memoranda and phone conversations my growing concern for internal mismanagement, authoritarianism, FOE's readiness to compromise the domination by the D. C. office, and "Potomac fever" whereby FOE's lobbyists in the capital cared more for the opinions of, and access to, Congressional aides than for the interests and concerns of FOE members or the environmental community at large.

In 1982, I received a bulk mailing, signed by the Mayor of Hertford North Carolina, William D. Cox, from a group of prestigious Democrats seeking to oust the conservative Senator Jesse Helms and replace him with then-Governor James Hunt. One of the signers was a North Carolinian, and then president of the Sierra Club, Denny Shaffer. It just so happened that I had been in contact with certain North Carolina activists who had criticized Hunt for foisting a toxic waste dump on their community, which was a rural, poor, largely black area in Warren County. I had obtained copies of letters from 1979 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regional office in Atlanta, Georgia, which, in deference to personal requests from Hunt, had readily waived three of their criteria for toxic waste dump siting, so as to allow the Warren County dump to go ahead. One of the criteria waived was the requirement that dumps be at least 100 feet above groundwater, whereas the Warren County site had water fifty feet beneath the ground.

Seeing Shaffer's name on this promotional mailing for Hunt upset me, but since it was possible that he was unaware of Hunt's role in the dump siting, I took the liberty of writing him, on FOE stationery, as an environmentalist and Sierra Club member, recounting the dump issue and Hunt's efforts, pleading with him not to support Hunt, and explaining why I believe it important that environmentalists reject the "lesser of two evils" syndrome in endorsing candidates.

I got no reply but another complainant who wrote him on this issue got a letter saying ".....I find the outrage about Gov. [Governor] Hunt's decision to be almost totally in NY and NJ [New York and New Jersey]: Those outraged have little or no firsthand knowledge of the matter or the Governor (who) is clearly more sensitive to human rights and environmental protection than any governor in N.C. [North Carolina] in the past thirty years." (The Sierra Club's PAC has often endorsed candidates who have voted wrong on environmental issues, such as New York Senator Daniel Moynihan, who actively supported the proposed "Westway" interstate highway project in Manhattan and worked to repeal federal laws to facilitate its approval, and Representative William Green, a supporter of nuclear power who favored aid to the contras in Nicaragua. FOE itself, over

the strenuous objection of the New York branch, endorsed Representative Joseph Abbaddo, a major player in the machinations to approve Westway. Westway had been New York FOE's top environmental issue and the FOE PAC endorsement was deeply resented by New Yorkers.)

I was reprimanded by Pomerance, ostensibly for writing on FOE stationery, but primarily, as I learned later, because Chlopak planned a FOE PAC campaign in North Carolina around the issue of toxics to promote Hunt.

In 1983, the issue of who would be the Democratic presidential candidate to oppose Reagan arose in FOE. Chlopak, Pomerance and Knight, along with Knight's assistant Ron Rudolph, were running FOE as a private fiefdom and went to the Board to get the endorsement for Mondale before the primary. Chlopak flaunted a staff poll he had done that, he claimed, supported the endorsement, although the poll had been limited to the loyal Washington staff and to selected Chlopak supporters elsewhere. An alternate poll conducted in San Francisco showed overwhelming opposition to endorsing *anyone* before the primary, and substantial opposition to Mondale in particular. This was ignored by the Board, which went for Mondale.

But what was arguably the most serious political and ethical compromise (at least until the events of 1984-1985) took place in 1981-1982, when Congressman Morris Udall, having wrapped most of the Washington environmental community around his little finger, pushed through ill-advised high-level radioactive waste legislation with the support of the Sierra Club Environmental Policy Center and Environmental Action (with FOE cheering them on from the sidelines, it turned out). Sierra later reversed itself and opposed the bill—too late to turn tide—but its lobbyist, Brooks Yeager, reportedly continued to support and lobby for it.

Udall had drawn up a bill that gave the nuclear industry everything it craved. It waived parts of the national Environmental Protection Act, made citizen redress in court difficult, and reduced states' rights in siting procedures. It also provided for retrievable surface storage, a concept rejected ten years earlier, which would make commercial spent fuel available for eventual reprocessing for weapons or for fast breeder reactors. All these provisions and others earned Udall a public commendation from the nuclear industry after the bill was passed for resisting the efforts of the anti-nuclear community to amend the bill.

FOE's D.C. lobbyist Renee Parsons told me FOE opposed the bill, but neither she nor anyone else in Washington was willing to lift a finger to rouse up public opposition, much less publicly *state* their opposition, except for Ralph Nader's Public Citizen group and the Nuclear Information and Resource Service. This was a double blow, because Udall had circulated a memo to Congress claiming the support of the *entire* environmental community for his bill ("all" in this case meant three groups, later to when Sierra dropped out, but since no groups were actively opposing it, the

supporters took prominence).

In New York City I went to work, organizing a coalition of local and regional groups to oppose the bill. I sent out an analysis and history of the Udall bill, giving reasons why it was bad for the public and good for the nuclear industry, and why the groups (I named them) supporting it were wrong. I organized a letter and telegram campaign, send press releases to media and Congress, and got about 25 local groups and alliances to oppose it. I also asked the FOE D.C. office for help in organizing a press conference in Washington to counteract publicly Udall's claim of unanimous support, and asked Brower and Knight to intervene personally with other groups who had not gotten involved, so as to create a counter-coalition of groups against the bill and thus send a message to Congress that Udall was misrepresenting his support.

I got no help from Parsons or FOE-D.C except an offer of a press list from Parsons's assistant, Caroline Petti (Parsons was working on other issues or out of town during most of the battle). But the letter I had written to Udall, contesting his claim of broad support and criticizing the bill's contents, enraged FOE-D.C. The head of the office was Liz Raisbeck, who was so uninformed on nuclear matters that she had never heard of the Clamshell Alliance in New England. (She is now a senior vice-president of the National Audubon Society.) When I went to Washington DC for Ralph Nader's Critical Mass conference, I was herded into Pomerance's office, the doors closed behind me, and sternly lectured by Pomerance, Raisbeck and Parsons for "washing dirty linen in public" (i.e. writing to Udall and informing anti-nuclear groups why the Washington groups were wrong). "We have to work with these people", pleaded Parsons.

But their discomfort and anger had to have deeper roots. I had clearly embarrassed them in more serious ways than just criticizing D.C. groups. Why was Parsons so upset at my efforts to rouse up opposition in New York? Why had FOE-D.C. refused to lobby or take any public stance on the bill to clarify FOE's purported opposition to Congress? Why had FOE, ostensibly opposed to the bill, not tried to persuade non-committed groups to oppose it, as I had suggested?

I took the frontal approach and called Ruth Caplan of Environmental Action and Dave Berick of the Environmental Policy Center, which was leading the support. In the course of these discussions bits of the truth emerged and then converged, proving beyond a doubt that despite Parsons, and FOE's remonstrations about their opposition to the bill, they had in effect given Berick the green light to act on their behalf. Berick was angry with Parsons for good reason; he came to realize, while talking to me, that Parsons had told me one thing (FOE was against the bill) but signaled to him that they weren't going to raise any significant opposition to it and that whatever he decided was all right with FOE.

FOE-D.C. had intentionally deceived me and Berick now knew it. He

referred to private meetings with Udall to get amendments that would partially satisfy critics; at least one of these was a meeting only with the Environmental Policy Center and perhaps Yeager of the Sierra Club, who reportedly offered to *relinquish* some of the amendments already conceded by Udall. Even Environmental Action had been excluded from this meeting; later, after denying it took place, Caplan discovered that in fact it had. (She later apologized to me tearfully.)

Why was FOE supporting Udall at all, after acknowledging how bad the bill was? FOE had never before felt the need to conform to ill-advised and inconsistent positions and had cut an independent path on legislation without compromise, one of its strongest attributes. Why had it changed now and who was responsible?

I found out later, inadvertently from Raisbeck herself at a FOE staff meeting in San Francisco, who recollected that the former head of the Environmental Policy Center, Louise Dunlap, had visited Pomerance to discuss the bill. Dunlap had a long history of cozy cooperation with industry: her husband Joe Browder once tried to take over FOE, and failing this, set up the Environmental Policy Center where he worked on natural resource issues while continuing to maintain close ties to the American Coal Association. Dunlap apparently insisted that FOE support the bill and Pomerance had acceded, in turn probably instructing Parsons accordingly.

Parsons soon left FOE; the bill passed the House easily; although some Congressmen were apprehensive about it, the absence of environmental opposition assuaged their doubts. Raisbeck later circulated a memo to FOE staff, asking whether Parsons' job as nuclear issues lobbyist should be filled; based on her belief that "not much" was happening with nuclear issues in D.C., the position was never filled. The Atomic Industrial Forum could not have done a better job of de-clawing FOE's anti-nuclear work than FOE itself did under Pomerance and Raisbeck.

As FOE's debt over the next few years mounted to nearly \$700,000, Board and management realized that desperate measures were needed to rescue FOE. At the same time they knew that this opportunity would enable them to consolidate their grip on FOE, impose their own agenda on the direction of the group, and purge the pro-Brower staff on fiscal grounds, which meant the entire San Francisco office, the administrative and publishing headquarters. They began to lay plans for dismantling FOE and for moving it to Washington, quietly spreading anti-Brower propaganda among neutral board members and trying to deflect the blame for the financial crisis away from themselves and onto Brower. The opening shots in the virtually total purge of FOE staff took place in 1984; I was fird in May of that year, and Brower in mid-summer.

Earlier that year, Chlopak had drawn up a list of proposed Congressional endorsements for the FOE PAC and dutifully circulated it to staff for comment, which he later ignored. On the list was a freshman Congressman

from New York State who had not been in Congress long enough to develop a clear pro-environment voting record. Because of this, and because I believed that local branches and field representatives should have the deciding voice in endorsements (or in withholding them), I wrote to Chlopak and demanded veto power over endorsements within New York State for myself and the New York branch of FOE. Three days later I got a telegram from Pomerance dismissing me for purportedly "usurping" the Board's powers of endorsement, although all I had done was to *ask* for veto power, and all he had to do was deny it. I had finally given Pomerance the excuse he needed to fire me.

But the worst was still to come. Two months later, in a conference call of the FOE Board (later deemed illegal by the courts), they fired Dave Brower as chairman. His crime: opposing the Board/management plan to fire over half the staff to stave off financial collapse. Brower had placed an ad at his own expense in *Not Man Apart* appealing to members for money to prevent the staff cuts. Although the Board had specifically authorized Brower to seek such funds, they were enraged because Brower had the audacity to inform members via the FOE newspaper what the Board was doing. They confiscated and shredded all but about 300 copies of the paper and then demanded that Brower swear a "loyalty oath" not criticize or contradict management policies or decisions, a declaration that would have put Brower in clear violation of his duties as Board member. He refused and they fired him, illegally as it turned out; he was reinstated later that summer after threatening to call a special members' meeting to tell members the full story.

Upon his reinstatement, Brower was advised by his lawyers to demand the resignation of those Board members who had concurred in his firing, on grounds that they could not be trusted and could come back in a month and fire him legally. Brower, always reluctant to confront his opponents, did not follow this advice, and his failure to oust the treacherous Board members was to be the undoing of the whole organization. They used the next year and a half fruitfully, carefully plotting to eliminate Brower supporters, twisting the arms of uncommitted Board members, bad-mouthing Brower, and passing resolution after resolution to consolidate their power and undermine the position of the pro-Brower staff.

A recapitulation of the major Board and management actions over the year and a half preceding the 1986 election is extremely instructive and revealing. Most of the anti-Brower directors of FOE and FEF consider themselves (and were probably considered by the public) liberal or progressive. Many were prominent in peace, community activism, environmental education, progressive science, alternative agriculture and other social change issues. Wes Jackson heads The Land Institute in Salina, Kansas; Paul Berks is a clergyman who has participated in non-violent sit-ins at the Rocky Flats Arsenal in Colorado; Mark Terry is a noted environmental and energy educator; Anne Ehrlich is a leading scientist and active, like her husband

Paul, in population and endangered species issues; Ann Roosevelt is the wife of James Roosevelt, a liberal Democrat active in Massachusetts politics; Alan Gussow is a well-known artist; David Sive is considered to be a founder of environmental law; Edwin Matthews Jr., although an attorney at Coudert Brothers, a large international law firm with corporate clients, was founder of FOE in France and a long-time personal friend of Brower; Rafe Pomerance is from the wealthy Wertheim family that includes nature writer Anne Simon and Barbara and the late Jessica Tuchman, and his mother Jo was a dedicated peace activist for many years. It is hard to imagine these individuals as conspiratorial evils-doers. Whatever their motivations, here is a partial list of their actions at FOE between 1980 and 1986, actions taken over the objections of Brower and his supporters on the Board.

- terminated FOE's anti-nuclear lobbying in D.C.
- ended the internationally prominent International Project for soft energy Paths
  - terminated the entire branch program
  - closed the San Francisco office and moved it to Washington D.C.. a move that may have cost FOE a quarter of a million dollars
  - made executive director Wendlowski publisher of *Not Man Apart* to enable him to control all material being printed
  - refused to act on a legally authorized resolution by the Board minority members calling for a special members' meeting
  - issued a "gag order" prohibiting directors from using membership lists, to prevent members from finding out Board actions and from requesting a special membership meeting as is their right
  - demoted international and wildlife program directors in San Francisco and put them under control of the D.C. office
  - vehemently resisted the unionizing of the San Francisco office (the decision to move to D. C. may have been motivated largely by this anti-union feeling)
  - terminated all FEF payroll grants to FOE, including the chairman's fund
  - hired a law firm charging \$150 per hour, at FOE expense, to file groundless lawsuits against Brower: refused to set limits to this litigation
  - continued to appeal to members for funds for four FOE programs, three of which had already been discontinued because of staff cuts
  - campaigned during the election process against Brower and for the Board majority and prospective directors, in violation of FOE by-laws
  - refused to send members' ballots by first-class mail; many were received late or not at all, thus disenfranchising at least 18% of the members
  - made vicious *ad hominem* attacks against Brower at Board meetings.
- In another instance, FOE took foundation grant money, solicited and earmarked for its marine mammals program headed by Dave Phillips in San Francisco; and spent it on its mid-west office and on moving the headquarters to Washington D. C. The foundation learned of this misuse of its grant

money and sued FOE in 1988 for the money and for damages. Reportedly the then directors of FOE settled out of court.

But there was more. Rafe Pomerance resigned in July 1984, probably to get off the hot seat, and over the next months Chlopak and Knight left too, under mysterious circumstances (a memo of Chlopak to the Board indicated he was not leaving voluntarily). In January 1985, while FOE was seeking a new executive director, Brower decided to look into FOE's financial state and asked a lawyer to go through all the papers and accounts. The lawyer discovered a series of memos to and from Knight, Pomerance, Chlopak and interim president Dan Luten, regarding two large severance payments to Chlopak and Knight (who signed his own check), nearly \$30,000 paid without the knowledge or consent of the Board, in violation of New York State non-profit corporate law and of FOE by-laws. The payments, authorized secretly by Gussow, Luten and treasurer Bob Galen, constituted half of FOE's entire cash balance for 1984, when the debt hovered near \$700,000.

And there was still more. Chlopak had demanded and received, before leaving, indemnification from FOE against all future lawsuits that might arise as a result of his employment with FOE, as well as the right to censor any and all public statements that FOE might make in the future regarding his tenure there. It also turned out that FOE president Alan Gussow, also a FOE director, had committed FOE to paying half of the severance payments, although the FEF Board had never discussed or approved it. After the FOE Board refused to hire counsel to investigate the legality of the payments, FOE voted to do so over Gussow's objections; but there is no indication that the investigation took place or that any results were reported to FOE or FEF.

After the memos were made public, the FOE directors met quickly to cover their tracks. Vetoing resolutions calling for an impartial investigation and demanding return of the money, they voted to authorize the payments after the fact, to head off possible member lawsuits for violation of fiduciary trust, FOE by-laws and New York State law. The whole affair was swept under the rug. Immediately after this emerged, I wrote a memo to the Board, rhetorically inquiring whether all these things were true and demanding justice and redress on behalf of FOE's members and reputation. Soon after I received a phone call from prominent environmental attorney David Sive, member of the FEF Board, implying that I could be sued for slander if I didn't keep quiet. ("Do you want to be a martyr?" he asked; I replied "No, I want justice".) In retrospect I realized that he ment to intimidate me, out of fear that I or others might in fact sue the Board.

In 1985; Brower, who had been sued by the Board, under Edwin Mathews' insistence, as pure harassment, filed countersuits and demanded that the Board act on the minority directors' vote requesting a special membership meeting. Brower had put together a replacement slate (in which I was included) for those directors whose terms were expiring, plus a resolution calling for the removal of the rest of the Board majority. To head

off a court-supervised election, the Board agreed to have a special mail vote, but then did all they could to drag their feet and stack the deck against Brower.

They promoted their own candidates in violation of FOE by-laws; They sent ballots third-class mail (many never arrived); they campaigned in special mailings at FOE expense, violating FOE by-laws, sending out letters full of vicious and unsubstantiated claims against Brower and misrepresentations of Board policies and actions regarding the fiscal crisis, the move to D.C. and other issues. Brower and his slate lost by 180 votes out of 6000 cast. Brower resigned from the Board in the fall of 1986.

The lessons learned from FOE have pertinence to other environmental groups, and to other movements as well, especially in the area of accountability. Environmentalists themselves, in the halls of Congress and the state legislatures, are familiar with bureaucratic insolence, arrogance and unresponsiveness, in contrast to the deferential response shown to powerful special interests with money and clout. The same kind of accountability to constituents that would help keep elected officials honest is that which the green movement, in its founding principles, has demanded of itself, and which it is therefore entitled to demand of others. Nowhere has this organized contempt for voters and the public-like that of the FOE Board/management for its members-been more clearly shown than in the regulatory agencies that environmentalists routinely monitor and petition: the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, state public utility commissions, Federal bureaus like the Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation. These bureaus make their own laws, act as their own enforcers, and function both as judge and jury. The experience of environmentalists in trying to overcome the autonomy of such agencies should have taught them lessons about the need for equivalent accountability within their organizations.

The environmental movement was shaped in an earlier era, when hierarchy and centralized leadership were the rule, when the expertise and judgment of those higher up went unchallenged, when the warm glow of idealism and enthusiasm seemed eternal. But such hierarchy does not build movements or bring social change. It builds rigid managerial attitudes and structures, a self-sufficient "old boy" network that puts forth a benevolent face but refuses to share power in the same way that the government agencies and private corporations they oppose reject their social responsibilities. Furthermore, the environmental professionals in D.C. continue to look to the local communities to support *them* not *vice versa*: to send money for the projects they deem important; to write letters on issues of their choosing, not those that address local concerns; to support the strategies they have developed privately in Washington, with Congressional aides and others, without input from members of communities.

This must be turned around. The Washington environmental organizations should be serving the needs and interests of members and of local groups, not running a private professional enclave. □