

pute the fact that market mechanisms like tradeable pollution permits are efficient ways of solving specific problems. But for most environmentalists, efficiency is not especially highly valued.

It has been accurately observed that many environmentalists are driven by a kind of moral absolutism and religious zeal. Clean air and water, endangered species, biological diversity, wetlands, and wilderness are root values that are not tradeable in the coin of efficiency. But root values held with religious conviction are nothing new to conservatives. Individual liberty, for instance, is something few conservatives would trade for any amount of efficiency. Rather than deriding Greens, conservatives should show them that free markets, private property, strong communities, and voluntary associations are principles that environmentalists and conservatives can use to achieve their desired ends.

Sadly, many conservatives present themselves to environmentalists as ideologues who prefer abstractions to concrete ideas on how free markets and private-property rights can be used to create a practical and desirable natural world. Worse yet, some conservatives seem inclined, if not enthusiastic, to simply deny the existence of environmental problems. Gregg Easterbrook, in *A Moment on the Earth*, is probably right when he writes that environmental cataclysm is behind us. Yet that in no way makes environmental happiness certain.

Greens mistrust the motives of free-marketeers and privatizers. They look at the long-standing tolerance of conservatives for industrial pollution and they wonder whether markets and property rights serve polluters first and the polluted second. Greens are also confused by the contrast between the conservative eagerness to fight regulatory takings and the conservative reluctance to offer positive, private-sector alternatives to environmental problems. Saying no to government is one thing, but saying nothing about what will replace government regulation is disingenuous. That's why Greens assume, incorrectly, that conservatives have no ethical sense for the land—no moral sensibility that rejects abuse of soil, plants, and wild animals as a matter of principle. To win over Greens conservatives must show that the best way to defend nature

is to use markets and property rights as offensive weapons in the war for a better environment.

The "wise use" movement also presents a major stumbling block to environmentalists and conservatives reaching agreement. For nearly a hundred years, federal law has limited private property rights on public lands to cutting trees, grazing grass, and digging in the earth for minerals. For just as long, the markets for these goods have been subsidized by taxpayers.

Today, the land-use monopolies of loggers, ranchers, and miners, and the subsidies that sustain them, are under assault. In 1995, environmentalists joined the National Taxpayers Union and the Citizens Against Government Waste to call for an end to resource-extraction subsidies. Congressional supporters of the subsidies answered by calling the two free-market organizations fronts "for the extreme environmental movement." Whether intended or not, their message to Greens was clear: free markets and private property rights are fine, but government subsidies are even finer. So long as environmentalists believe that all conservatives want are subsidies for miners, cattlemen, and loggers, they will cling to big government.

Conservatives have convincingly made the case that big government doesn't work. Now, it's time for them to talk of the splendors and diversity of the marketplace—to sing the praises of social voluntarism and deep markets, and to make this vision one that thoughtful Greens can respect. Conservatives need to tell Greens that their admiration of the state and socialist organization is wrong in principle and harmful to the environment. And they must show that free markets and private property are conducive to the pursuit of happiness for everyone.

Karl Hess, Jr., is an environmental writer affiliated with the Cato Institute and the Foundation for Research on Economics and the Environment. He is completing his third book, Deep Markets & the Rebirth of Environmentalism.



"FROM RED TO GREEN"

by David Horowitz

Even as its own inhumanity and inefficiency consume revolutionary socialism in the East, a specter can be seen rising from its ashes in the West. The colors are no longer red but green, the accents are those of Malthus rather than Marx, but the missionary project is remarkably intact. The planet is still threatened, the present still condemned, redemption

through radical politics still presses: Better Green Than Dead. In environmentalism radicals have found a new paradigm for the paradigm lost.

Thus, the official program of France's Green Party echoes Rosa Luxemburg's apocalyptic cry: "The future will be green or will not be at all." And the program of Germany's Greens exhibits the distinctive accents of the totalitarian voice: "The politics of radical ecology embraces every dimension of human experience...the old age is giving way to the

new." Or, in the blunter expression of the founder of American "social ecology," Murray Bookchin: "We can't heal the environment without remaking society."

The old radical Adam is back: the apocalyptic ambition, the destructive resentment, the totalitarian project. "From all the knowledge we now have about environmental issues," writes Jonathon Porritt, a spokesman for Britain's Ecology Party and the director of Friends of the Earth, "the inevitable conclusion is that our way

In environmentalism

radicals have found

a new paradigm

for the paradigm lost.

of life cannot be sustained...we cannot go on living as we do now." The revolutionary agenda requires a revolutionary strategy. When Porritt hears politicians saying they care for the environment and therefore want to achieve "sustainable growth," it leaves him "spitting with rage." We cannot continue, he says, with [our] same material living standard and at the same time be warriors on behalf of the planet."

Thus radical ecology leads to the familiar threat. The virtuous state must control and restrict social wealth and redistribute it according to the radical creed. In the radical view, property—the foundation of free societies—is mere theft, whose spoils are to be divided up. As Porritt argues: "We in the West have the standard of living we do only because we are so good at stripping the Earth of its resources and oppressing the rest of the world's people in order to maintain that wealth." To achieve ecological balance means "progressively narrowing the gap to reduce the differences between the Earth's wealthiest and poorest inhabitants" until there are "more or less equal shares for all people." Karl Marx described this prescription aptly 150 years ago.

Jonathon Porritt is a leader of the "moderate" wing of the radical environmental movement. David Brower, the founder of Porritt's organization, departed some years ago to create the more radical Earth Island Institute in Berkeley. In 1989, Brower took his place alongside Comandante Daniel Ortega as co-sponsor of the Fourth Biennial meeting of the International Congress on the Hope and Fate of the Earth in Managua. One thousand delegates from more than 70 nations

met at the Olaf Plame Center to denounce the United States and the other "imperialist" predators of the free world, and to launch a new movement of "solidarity environmentalism" by establishing alliances with radicals in Third World countries. According to a report in Brower's magazine:

The consensus at the Congress was that 'solidarity environmentalism' is the only kind that makes sense.... Would George Bush and Margaret Thatcher be able to call themselves environmentalists if the effort to protect the ozone layer and stop global warming was linked to the Third World movement's demands for a new, more equitable international economic system, an end to the Third World debt, and curbs on the free action of multinational corporations?

In Managua the political symbolism of the Green united front was all in place: Swedish social democracy, British Eco-socialism, Third World Marxism-Leninism, and American auto-nihilism. This development reflects the fact that the Green Movement has grown to its present dimensions out of the crisis of the Left—in particular the necessity of establishing a face-saving distance from the catastrophe of Marxist liberation in the socialist bloc. To avoid the taint of the socialist past, the Green parties of Europe and even primitive communists like Porritt constantly emphasize that their movement is "neither Left nor Right," and distinguish the "politics of ecology" from the "politics of industrialism" (i.e. of economic growth) that characterize both capitalist and socialist societies. But from a historical perspective, it would be more accurate to say that the Green movement is a phenomenon of both the political Left and the political Right, uniting in itself the two traditions of radical totalitarian revolt against liberal order in the twentieth century—Communism and fascism—and aspiring to be the third wave of the gnostic assault against freedom in our lifetime.

The fascist roots of the Green movement are well known. National Socialists were naturists long before the post-

Khrushchev Left discovered ecology, and the Nazis have been justly described as "the first radical environmentalists in charge of a state." Indeed the enthronement of biological imperatives, of the virtues of blood and soil and the primitive communities of the *Volk*, the pagan rejection of the Judeo-Christian God and the radical anti-humanism featured in the philosophy of the Greens are even more obviously derivative of fascist than Marxist political traditions. But despite tensions that exist between the deep ecologists of the environmental Right and the eco-socialists of the Left, they are indissolubly joined in the common embrace of a single illusion: the gnostic idea that humanity has been alienated from its natural self and that its redemption can be achieved by political means; the idea that implies a declaration of war by a chosen few against the historical existence of all.

Thomas Lovejoy has expressed the radical anti-humanism of the Greens in a statement reminiscent of Susan Sontag's infamous indictment of the white race as the "cancer of history" during the Sixties: "The planet is about to break out into a fever and we are the disease." Appearing as a new ideological wrinkle at first, this turns out to be the same old anti-humanism of the radical tradition, the very malevolence that has brought it to its present grief. In the environment, the Left has found a victim to champion that cannot reject it, a victim that will provide endless justification for its destructive agendas. This is the truly new element in the Green revolution: a constituency—nature—that cannot speak for itself. The conflict between vanguard and victim that has plagued generations of the Left has been thus eliminated. What remains is the hubris of the self-chosen saviors, for whom the human condition is not a reality we must come to terms with, but rather material to be subdued and transformed.

.....
Adapted from Deconstructing the Left by Collier and Horowitz, Second Thoughts Books, Lanham, Maryland, 1991.

✻

Earth-shaking change is coming to the tax code. Here's a roadmap for what promises to be an excellent adventure.

TAX REFORM YOUR GUIDE

The Big Three Tax Reform Proposals

by Jeffrey Taylor

Scarcely a year passes without Washington tweaking the tax code. In 1993, President Bill Clinton squeezed out a large tax increase. This year Republicans in Congress are working to undo the tax cuts in their Contract with America. But both these moves are minuscule compared to the looming prospect of mass change that has Capitol Hill buzzing. If the tax bills of the future are thought of as a new coat of paint for the dining room, the reform plans now pending are varying degrees of demolition and rebuilding.

Three different approaches to reshaping the tax code will be on the next few months. The competing plans are a naked one proposed by Senator Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) and, in a more modest Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Clinton's plan, the flat income tax of House Majority Leader

Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.); and the consumption tax of Senate Budget Committee Chairman Paul Domenici (R-N.M.) and House Budget Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.). None of these plans will be enacted until after the 2006 election. The passage of any one of them would be a landmark legislative event, or perhaps



One common thread running through all three attempts to tax consumption more heavily is the consensus of reformers today is that the current tax code, which discourages thrift and investment, is slowing national economic growth.

The other common denominator is the dizzying complexity of our current tax code. An amount of time spent complying with the code is as 8 billion man hours per year that is a large dead weight on the economy.

A broad-based consumption tax would offer consumption explicitly, while a sales tax would, in addition, a sales tax aims to do away with the individual income tax returns, leaving individuals to report the tax. The national sales tax would replace the income tax, the