

itself, as they made clear in the April 19, 1989, *Los Angeles Times*.

Thus, like communism before it, “purity” of lofty goals blinds environmentalism’s numerous well-meaning adherents to its horrendous bottom line. By adopting environmentalism as a personal meaning of life—as illustrated with acid rain—facts that do not support the cause are ignored. And “facts” are conveniently manufactured to support the prerequisite world view.

Many environmentalists readily recognize in others that such a personal philosophy is tantamount to intellectual suicide. However, these very same people commit precisely that, fiercely resisting anything that threatens their manufactured personal meaning of life. They deceive themselves with much talk about man altering the “delicate balance of nature” or about how to quote Vice-President Gore, “We are . . . bulldozing the Gardens of Eden” (*Earth in the Balance*, 1992). And so, I point out to environmentalists and nonenvironmentalists alike, this is no way to save the planet or the human race; it is the surest way to trash it.

Edward C. Krug is director of environmental projects for the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFAT) in Washington, D.C.

The Economics of Robinson Crusoe

by George L. Clark, Sr.

A Lesson in Free Trade

Background: The French economist and writer Frédéric Bastiat used the simplest economic system he could think of, the duo of Robinson Crusoe and Friday, to illustrate the folly of protectionism in “Something Else,” one of a series of essays he called *Sophismes économiques*, published between 1844 and 1850. In the original story, Robinson’s protectionist instincts won out, and the pair lost the benefits of free trade. In this version, they agree to try Friday’s free-trade approach, with unexpected results.

Robinson and Friday had decided to

work together in providing for their needs. In the morning, they hunted for four hours and brought back two baskets of game. In the afternoon, they worked in their garden for four hours and obtained two baskets of vegetables. This amount of effort provided them with ample food but left them little time for making new tools or maintaining their lodge.

One day a longboat landed on the Isle of Despair. A stranger disembarked and was invited for dinner. He tasted and highly praised the products of the garden and said to them, “Generous islanders, I dwell in a land where game is much more plentiful than it is here but where horticulture is unknown. It will be easy for me to bring you two baskets of game every day if you will give me one basket of vegetables.”

At these words, Robinson (R) and Friday (F) withdrew to confer, and the debate they had is too interesting not to report here in full:

F: “Friend, what do you think of it?”

R: “If we accept, we are ruined.”

F: “Are you quite sure of that? Let us reckon what it comes to.”

R: “I have already reckoned it, and there can be no doubt about the outcome. This trade will simply mean the end of our hunting industry.”

F: “What difference does that make if we have the game? Instead of going hunting every morning, we can work two hours in the garden to obtain the basket of vegetables for the stranger and four hours in the afternoon to obtain vegetables for ourselves. He will give us two baskets of game in exchange for the one basket of vegetables.”

R: “We shall be unemployed a large part of the day. If we don’t work, we will surely go hungry.”

F: “Friend, you are making an enormous mistake. We will have the same quantity of food we do now, and we will have more free hours in which to do other things.”

R: “You may be right about that part of it, but don’t you see the political reasons for not doing it?”

F: “Political reasons?”

R: “Yes. First, he is making this offer only because it is advantageous to him.”

F: “So much the better, since it is better for us, too.”

R: “Then, by this traffic, we shall make ourselves dependent upon him.”

F: “And he will make himself dependent upon us. We shall have need of

his game; and he, of our vegetables; and we shall all live in great friendship.”

R: “Suppose the stranger learns to cultivate a garden and that his island is more fertile than ours. Do you see the consequence?”

F: “Yes. Our relations with the stranger will be severed. He will no longer take our vegetables, since he will have them at home with less labor. He will no longer bring us game, since we shall have nothing to give him in exchange, and we shall be in precisely the same situation that you want us to be in today.”

R: “You do not see that after destroying our hunting industry by flooding us with game he will destroy our gardening industry by flooding us with vegetables?”

F: “But as this will happen we shall be in a position to give him something else, that is to say, we shall be able to find something else to produce with a saving in labor for ourselves.”

R: “I am not convinced, but I am willing to give it a try, if only to prove you are wrong. If we are not satisfied with the arrangement, we can terminate it and return to hunting any time we please.”

The stranger was delighted to hear that his offer had been accepted, and months went by during which he delivered two baskets of game every day and took back his basket of vegetables. Robinson and Friday very much enjoyed the game and found many useful and pleasurable things to do in their free time.

Then, one day, the stranger brought the game, as usual, but declined to take the vegetables in exchange. He explained that, copying their methods, he now had a successful garden of his own. His vegetables were growing so profusely that he no longer needed theirs. Did they have anything else to trade? Robinson and Friday were greatly distressed, not wanting to lose the benefits to which they had grown accustomed. They withdrew to discuss the matter.

R: “It is just as I predicted. His island not only has better game, but is more fertile as well. This trade will be the ruin of us.”

F: “Not at all. I was right about the benefits we have enjoyed so far, wasn’t I?”

R: “I must admit that much. But what do we do now?”

F: “We can continue to benefit. The

problem is only one of finding something else to trade."

R: "But what? We don't have anything he wants."

F: "This island is larger than we need. Perhaps we could trade a tiny part of it for game."

R: "What? Trade capital for current consumption? Your ideas will be the ruin of us."

F: "My dear friend, I am astonished at your ignorance of economic principles. Free trade can never be harmful. By definition, voluntary trade benefits both parties; otherwise they would not do it."

Robinson could not counter this master stroke of logic, so he agreed to try the proposed arrangement. After all, he said, if we change our minds we shall be no worse off than when we started. They returned to the stranger with the new proposal. The stranger bowed and smiled, and the deal was made.

Years went by, during which Robinson and Friday enjoyed the delicious game brought by the stranger on his daily visits, as well as their leisurely mornings. Their satisfaction with the arrangement was marred only by their concern about the growing portion of the island that lay behind the stranger's fence. Finally, when the fence started to encroach on their garden area, they decided to have a talk with the stranger(S).

R: "Stranger, we are now being crowded out of our garden, and we must make some other arrangements with you so that we can continue to raise our vegetables and enjoy the wonderful game you bring us. We cannot give up any more land."

S: "Very well, what do you wish to trade?"

R: "We have nothing else except the vegetables we grow."

S: "That is a problem, since I no longer need your vegetables. However, perhaps we can continue to do business. Suppose the two of you hunt for game, in the part of the island I now own, for six hours in the morning. That will net three baskets of game. You may keep two of the baskets and give me only one. That way, your needs will be satisfied and I shall have a small profit."

At this shocking proposal, Robinson and Friday withdrew to discuss the matter between themselves. They didn't like the new arrangement, since it would require them to hunt for two hours longer than before they first met the stranger but have no more game for

their efforts. They decided to make one last effort to negotiate a more favorable arrangement.

R: "Stranger, we have enjoyed our friendship and our mutually beneficial trade. We would like to continue both the friendship and the trade, but we must have an arrangement other than the one you have suggested."

S: "I am afraid there has been a misunderstanding. We have been trading partners, not friends. The trade has been beneficial to me, and I trust that you have also benefited. However, the new arrangement I have proposed is the only one in which I can see continued benefit for me."

Robinson and Friday withdrew again and argued at length about free trade and how a series of mutually beneficial transactions could have brought them to their present predicament. Finally, they decided that, since they no longer owned enough of the island to gather game for themselves, they had no choice but to accept the stranger's terms.

The deal made, the stranger again bowed and smiled as he reembarked in the longboat and left the Isle of Despair.

George L. Clark, Sr., is a retired research scientist living in California.

A Park to Die For

by Gerard J. De Groot

Sixties Redivivus

On August 25, 1992, a 19-year-old woman named Rosebud Abigail Denovo broke into the campus home of Chang-Lin Tien, chancellor of the University of California. Denovo, a member of the People's Will Direct Action Committee, was the self-appointed judge, jury, and executioner in the trial of Tien—enemy of the people. An Oakland police officer, called to the scene, intervened before she could carry out her mission. She lunged at him with a machete, whereupon he shot her dead.

Found on Denovo was a note with the message: "We are willing to die for this land. Are you?" By "land" she meant specifically People's Park in Berkeley. Denovo's revolutionary career had begun a year earlier in response to

the university's decision to build volleyball courts in the park. At the time of her death she was awaiting trial on a charge involving possession of explosives—with the explosives had been a hit-list of campus officials. On news of her death 150 supporters rioted in the park. It is fair to say that Denovo, born in 1973, died in the 1960's.

The question of volleyball courts in People's Park seems terribly trivial for a serious revolutionary, even one as obviously psychotic as Denovo. But an examination of the history of that park reveals why its future has become a subject of such bitter and violent argument. To the cynic, it seems peculiarly fitting that the hallowed ground of 60's protest should be transformed into a playground for 90's narcissists. But that is a simplistic assessment.

Local legend has it that the park grew out of the campus Vietnam protest. In fact, the antiwar movement at Berkeley was neither as popular nor as heroic as sentimental 60's rebels would like to believe. Students in the 1960's, most of them protected by draft deferments, cared less about the Vietnam War than they did about promoting 60's nihilism—sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll.

That nihilism was the progenitor of People's Park. In early 1967 the hippie haven of Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco began to crumble under the weight of curious tourists, unscrupulous drug dealers, and hard-core heroin addicts. The hippies fled to the cheap housing and tolerance of Berkeley across the bay. The Haight's sordidness soon followed them; Berkeley's crime rate soared.

Berkeley's tolerance had limits. Conservative Republicans, always a force in the city, demanded that the university, which owned the slum housing where many of the hippies lived, take action. In late 1967 a decision was made to demolish an entire block north of Telegraph Avenue, thus forcing the undesirables out under the guise of urban renewal and university expansion—good liberal causes.

The university had funds to demolish, but none to build. A year later, the site was nothing more than a muddy parking lot. Michael Delacour, boutique owner and urban rebel, decided to seize the lot for "the people." The Berkeley left, always game for an opportunity to confront authority, rallied behind him. Leading the populist chal-