

Gudmundsson tours Brazil, and Greenpeace hits the ropes

by Geraldo Lino

The fierce battle taking place in Brazil between the Luddites of radical environmentalism, and those who believe that science and technology should guide the relationship between civilized man and the environment, has resulted in an unexpected casualty: Greenpeace, the environmentalist multinational.

Greenpeace (which has operated in Brazil since 1991) is infamous for its aggressive and often violent actions, including the ramming of whalers and other ships on the high seas. But this time it was Greenpeace that was at the receiving end of a hard punch, which sent it reeling against the ropes. The blow was delivered by Icelandic journalist and filmmaker Magnus Gudmundsson, who visited Brazil May 2-10, at the invitation of the Brazilian Nuclear Energy Association (ABEN), an organization of some 1,000 scientists and technicians working in the nuclear sector. Gudmundsson presented the results of his researches into Greenpeace, which he calls "the McDonald's of the world's ecological movement . . . a multinational seeking political power and money."

Gudmundsson started looking into Greenpeace in 1984, while on a visit to Greenland, where he observed first-hand the devastation suffered by the local economy as a result of Greenpeace's campaign against seal hunting. Since then he has produced two film documentaries about radical environmentalism, focusing on the activities of Greenpeace: "Survival in the High North," in 1989, and "Regaining Paradise?" in 1992. Gudmundsson also assisted Denmark's TV-2 in the production of "The Man in the Rainbow," a film which has had an enormous impact on Greenpeace's activities in Scandinavia.

Greenpeace's number one enemy

Even before he got to Brazil, Gudmundsson set off alarm bells at Greenpeace's local headquarters. *Veja*, Brazil's largest circulation magazine, ran a three-page interview with him in its issue dated May 4. *Veja* described Gudmundsson as "the number-one enemy of Greenpeace." Gudmundsson told *Veja* that he is "determined to prove that that they do not create an ecological consciousness; they manipulate hysteria instead."

So far, he has caused serious setbacks for Greenpeace in the Scandinavian countries. "In Sweden, Greenpeace had

360,000 members. It has lost one-third. In Denmark, the numbers have fallen by half. They are no longer in Norway. They only had a half-dozen bureaucrats in Oslo," Gudmundsson told *Veja*.

Greenpeace's executive director in Brazil, Rubem Almeida, admitted in a May 5 interview with the Rio daily *Gazeta Mercantil*, that some of the organization's 3,000 members came out in support of Greenpeace, but many were angry because of what they had learned from Gudmundsson's revelations. Some of the members have even threatened to resort to the courts to recover their contributions to Greenpeace. "The damage is done," admitted Almeida.

Gudmundsson held several news conferences and was interviewed by journalists in several Brazilian cities. He also testified before Brazil's Congressional Committee on National Defense, and before the Committee on the Environment of Rio de Janeiro's State Legislature. He lectured at the Superior War College and elsewhere. In Manaus, he met with Amazonas state Gov. Gilberto Mestrinho, a fierce opponent of radical environmentalism (see *EIR*, Jan. 22, 1993).

The confrontation between Gudmundsson and Greenpeace had its harsh moments. At a news conference in Rio de Janeiro on May 2, Greenpeace director Almeida interrupted Gudmundsson: "All that is missing now is for you to accuse us of being tied to drug trafficking." The Icelandic filmmaker replied that although he had not leveled the charge, he did indeed have documentation showing that in 1987-88, Greenpeace campaigned against plans of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to eradicate coca plantations in South America, on the pretext that this would destroy the economic base of poor rural communities whose livelihood depend on drug cultivation.

Gudmundsson also charged that Greenpeace and other environmentalist non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have conducted blackmail against industries in Denmark and Sweden. Companies pay off the NGOs to avoid being targeted as polluters by the NGOs themselves, said Gudmundsson, adding that some manufacturers have given in by making financial "contributions" to the NGOs.

So distressed was Greenpeace by Gudmundsson's visit, that it attempted to link him to the alleged emergence of an anti-environmentalist movement in Brazil. According to José Augusto Padua, Greenpeace's general coordinator, the

Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) is leading this "anti-ecology" drive. Last year, he said, the MSIA put out a pamphlet describing Greenpeace as the "shock troops of international eco-fascism." In statements published by the May 9 *O Globo*, Padua cited "The Greenpeace Guide to Anti-Environmental Organizations," to support his contention that these anti-environmentalist organizations "are linked to the extreme right," one of whose leaders, said Padua, is "Lyndon LaRouche, an American who operates in Germany and who has published anti-Semitic statements in his magazine *21st Century Science & Technology*."

Call for regulation of the NGOs

Also on May 9, *Jornal do Brazil*, the country's most influential daily, published an editorial, "Well-Founded Suspicions," calling for regulating the NGOs:

"The charges made by Icelandic journalist Magnus Gudmundsson during a visit to Brazil, throw another shovelful of dirt on the public image of the so-called non-governmental organizations. Gudmundsson has made the very grave accusation that the environmental organization Greenpeace is not what it seems. It presents itself as an NGO dedicated to protecting the environment, when in truth that's just a cover for diverting millions, for laundering money, and for suborning politicians.

"The international fundraising carried out by Greenpeace, using the cause of ecology as a pretext, feeds the organization's secret accounts in amounts that reach up to U.S. \$200 million per year. There is no public accounting for a penny of that money. All that money seems to have only one certain destination: the publicity campaign to defend the image of the organization.

"The NGOs have become a true black hole through which humanitarian contributions are drained. They receive tax privileges, pay no taxes, and manipulate the good faith of millions of people. Brazil's street children serve as a pretext for dozens of NGOs to ask for funds in Europe and the United States. But, we know that each day the number of children circulating in the big cities of Brazil increases, without these organizations showing up to get them off the streets and help them.

"The suspicions around the NGOs are demoralizing a form of social initiative which could be key for the welfare of the citizenry. The NGOs owe it to their contributors to render accounts. Their books should be fully opened to the public, on penalty of the loss of all credibility for organizations of that sort. It's time to pass specific legislation to severely restrict NGOs, establishing rigid controls. The NGOs cannot continue acting in disregard for the law."

'As much damage as a nuclear accident'

The extensive coverage Gudmundsson got from the media, particularly the interview with *Veja*, drove the Greenpeaceers into hysteria. "Greenpeace's main asset is its credibility," complained Paulo Adario, development director

for the organization, in an interview published on May 6 by *O Globo*. "If a printed medium publishes the words of a slanderer without hearing the other side, those words may be taken as true. That's a real threat to the organization," he said. But, he neglected to add that one of the main tactics of radical ecologists is precisely the use of one-sided information.

In an attempt to counter Gudmundsson, the Brazilian leadership of Greenpeace transformed itself into a virtual "roving directorate," travelling to each of the cities on his itinerary, where they staged confrontations at his public events, calling him "crazy." Finally, frustrated with the poor results of their peregrinations, the leaders of Greenpeace announced that they would instead seek legal action against Gudmundsson.

Assessing the effect of Gudmundsson's visit, *Gazeta Mercantil* commented, "For Greenpeace, it was devastating, equivalent to a nuclear accident."

Indeed, ABEN's invitation to Gudmundsson coincided with the escalation of a campaign against Brazil's nuclear sector, which Greenpeace has been coordinating through the Anti-Nuclear Network (RBA), a coalition of NGOs that seeks not only to shut down the nuclear sector, but every other advanced technology program in Brazil and the rest of Ibero-America.

The very day that Gudmundsson arrived, Greenpeace started its "Anti-Nuclear Caravan." A bus-load of militants took off from Angra dos Reis, site of two nuclear power plants (Angra-1 and Angra-2), and headed toward Brasilia, stopping along the way to gather signatures on an anti-nuclear petition addressed to President Itamar Franco.

Gudmundsson's visit couldn't have happened at a more inconvenient time for Greenpeace. "It is very strange that he comes to Brazil at the very moment that we are engaged in a big campaign against Angra-2," said Greenpeace's Adario, according to the May 4 *Jornal de Brasilia*. The group wants to stop all construction on the plant, which is 75% completed.

Its propaganda campaign includes a video showing a common household pressure cooker exploding, while a voice-over warns that Brazil could suffer a disaster like Chernobyl. In an interview published in the April 1994 issue of the magazine *Ecologia e Desenvolvimento*, Greenpeace director Almeida was very explicit: "Our aim is to make Brazil definitely abandon nuclear energy."

One document put out by the RBA calls for "joint actions in the Latin American sphere." It says that "the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which foresees the denuclearization of Latin America, needs to be expanded," and it targets "Latin American space programs and their possible military links."

Along with the NGOs, the Brazilian anti-nuclear umbrella organization also includes the São Paulo chapter of the Workers Party (PT), which indicates the sort of policies that can be expected if the party's presidential candidate, Luís Inácio ("Lula") da Silva, wins the next elections.