

Will the Third World challenge Eco-92's secret agenda

by Lydia Cherry and David Cherry

A variety of sources indicates that the Third World's emphasis on development over and above environmental issues may derail the Eco-92 summit—formally called the U.N. Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED)—planned for June in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. On Jan. 7-8 a meeting in Bonn of the Inter-Action Council of Former World Leaders heard a confidential briefing according to which Eco-92 is running into “very serious problems.” The meeting was told that the planned international conventions concerning rain forests, greenhouse gas emissions, and so-called “biodiversity” will likely not be formalized. Developing sector countries are balking at signing these protocols without the establishment of a substantial fund to compensate for damage to their economies by these drastic cutbacks being demanded under cover of environmental restrictions. According to this briefing, no such fund is in the offing.

Within a week of the Bonn meeting, London and Washington were addressing Third World resistance by expressing a new level of ardor about the summit. British Prime Minister John Major announced, in a Jan. 12 opinion column in the London *Observer*, “I will lead the United Kingdom team.” It is most rare for an article signed by an acting prime minister to appear in the British press. In Washington, Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.) introduced a sense-of-the-Congress resolution urging the administration to “place the highest priority” on the success of Eco-92 “by participating actively, particularly through the personal participation of President Bush.”

Eco-92 organizers say that if the summit flops, they will just carry on. In light of their successes over the past 20 years, that is threat enough, especially given the weakness of Third World responses so far to the framework put forward by the Eco-92 organizers.

The demand for a compensatory fund is only a form of temporary resistance that in no way challenges the false premises of Eco-92. And there is, after all, *no* amount of money that can compensate for non-development.

The report of the Switzerland-based South Center on Eco-92, analyzed below, exemplifies this weakness. The report accepts without examination the purported science of the environmental hoaxes. Moreover, it accepts without examination the premise that the interests of the industrialized countries are what the Brundtland Commission and its vari-

ous offspring say they are.

Is it hard to grasp that the peoples of the industrialized countries are not represented by governments grounded in national interest? We are, instead, in a time of dominance by a single, international oligarchy, with “democratic” governments using the club of environmentalism to drive industrialized nations further into economic depression and to strangle the economic potential of the developing sector. Beyond mere imperialism, the oligarchy seeks the destruction of productive potential in the industrialized countries as the best guarantee of a new *global* dark age in which oligarchic control is assured.

Without this realization, all parties are locked into the North-versus-South rules of the game laid down by the Eco-92 organizers. A provocative gleam of light, however, lies in the work of outspoken Indian advocate of Third World development Anil Agarwal. Agarwal emphasizes that “Third World nations must undertake their own research,” into such crucial areas as global warming and “must propose an agenda of their own,” as he explains in a report on “Global Warming in an Unequal World.” While not suggesting that the global warming projections are a hoax, his analysis does indicate that the demands of the Eco-92 organizers *make no sense on their own terms*. By comparing population sizes and per capita consumption levels, he shows that the Third World contribution to presumed excess greenhouse gases is almost nil. Where, then, is the justice, one asks, in proposing any constraint on Third World emissions? Here's the clue that the real agenda is a hidden one, and nothing to do with “saving the environment.”

Agarwal, however, falls into the North versus South trap and sounds like UNCED Secretary General Maurice Strong himself, when he speaks of “a world which cannot withstand the current levels of consumption and exploitation. . . . We had hoped that western environmentalists would seize this opportunity to force their countries to de-develop.” An international group called Independent Scientists, however, is circulating a statement saying that “despite continued claims of near-universal consensus on such issues as global warming, ozone depletion, human population size, biodiversity . . . we contend that there is much disagreement. . . . We cannot condone recommending that nations undertake vast and costly programs to correct problems that may not even

exist." The organizers are seeking signatures widely in the world scientific community.

As the campaigns of Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and the World Wide Fund for Nature help to make clear, the countries that represent the biggest threat to Eco-92 are Asian countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, and of course the giants India and China. Malaysia is coordinating plans for an alternate summit of more than 40 countries. The Group of 77 developing sector countries are also planning a coordination effort, as is the six-nation grouping ASEAN to which Indonesia and Malaysia belong.

'Common Strategy' for UNCED

South Center report means slow suicide

by Dana S. Scanlon

The Geneva-based South Center, headed by the former President of Tanzania, Dr. Julius Nyerere, has issued a special report on the upcoming United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) which is intended to provide the framework for a common strategy among developing sector nations for that conference, commonly known as Eco-92, which is set to take place in June in Rio de Janeiro. But while the intentions of many of those participating in the South Center's working group on UNCED are beyond reproach, its end product unfortunately is not.

The report, which resulted from the South Center's September 1991 working group, is entitled "Environment and Development: Towards a Common Strategy for the South in the UNCED Negotiations and Beyond." From the very first few paragraphs, it is clear that the South Center accepts the parameters, most of the agenda and the language of the original Brundtland Commission, whose book-length report *Our Common Future* has laid the foundation for UNCED. At the UNCED conference, a host of unscientific and unfounded disaster theories are to be used to force nations—from the North as well as the South—to give up their national sovereignty, to agree to put limitations on their economic development, to accede to the notion that population growth is an evil to be combatted in the name of preserving the environment, and to agree to the creation of some (presumably green-helmeted) police force deployed by the United Nations to ensure respect for those agreements. *There is absolutely nothing to be gained, for any nation, but particularly those of the developing sector, in participating in or giving any*

credibility to these plans.

To follow the path laid out in the "Common Strategy" document would be to choose slow death, versus the quick death proposed by some environmental extremists and financial institutions. And since it would be self-imposed, it would be to choose suicide.

Attack on sovereignty, the nation-state

Before examining the South Center's report in some detail, it is useful to say a few words about the Brundtland Commission, the predecessor group that led to UNCED. Headed by former Norwegian Prime Minister Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, the World Commission on Environment and Development *also* proposed a link between environment and development. What the Brundtland Commission had in mind is perhaps best ascertained by looking at what organizations with the avowed purpose of implementing the commission's recommendations had to say about their goals.

One such organization is the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (usually known as IUCN), based in Gland, Switzerland. According to the IUCN: "The present global interdependence between states requires recognizing international law as a system within which states and other actors conduct their affairs, rather than as a mediating technique between sovereign entities, each one an island in itself. This 'system approach' regards states as participators in a system, one of whose objectives is the sustainable management of the Earth's resources. This new perspective has immense consequences, not least in the areas of sovereignty."

The same themes have been developed by Sir Shridath "Sonny" Ramphal, former secretary general of the British Commonwealth, also a member of the Brundtland Commission. In a Cambridge, U.K. speech on Jan. 24, 1989, Ramphal called for the abolition of the modern nation-state, and the creation of a one-world "green" police agency.¹

According to Ramphal: "Underlying the Brundtland Commission's message of a 'common future' was the premise that we must think of our planet not only as a world of many states, but also as the state of our one world. That we must be ready to nurture tomorrow's concepts of global governance, not have them stifled at birth by yesterday's notions of national sovereignty; that human survival may not be secured save by the reach of enforceable law across environmentally invisible frontiers."

Keeping those words in mind, let us turn to the South Center's recommendations.

Bad politics and bad science

The South Center's report proposes that UNCED "could yield results that the developing countries have been seeking for some time. . . . The North is seeking environmental concessions from the South, and . . . the South can make such concessions in return for firm commitments by the North to