

EARTH IMBALANCE

Al Gore's Corporate Environmentalism

A BOOK REVIEW

By Aumear

What is the meaning behind Al Gore's book, *Earth In the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*, published by the Penguin Books, Inc. January, 1993? Are environmentalists premature in applauding the victory of the Clinton/Gore ticket? Can nature lovers justifiably hope that the new administration will begin to halt or even reverse the planetary ecological destruction which the developed nations have wrought?

The new vice president's voting record in the Senate seems to demonstrate a sincere intent to lessen the damage being done to the planet. His book, which has become a national bestseller, covers the spectrum of environmental concerns, from air and water quality to waste management and climatic changes. Gore calls us to "dedicate ourselves to take bold action to cherish and protect the environment." Unfortunately, his proposals are anything but bold. If implemented, they will only perpetuate and mask structural flaws in the political and economic system that have brought our species to the brink of self-destruction.

The vice president says that "future eco-



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omic progress is inextricably linked to sound policies promoting the protection of the environment," and that "Americans...are convinced that [environmentalism] is in our economic interest." In Gore's view, the success of the environmental movement depends on willing participation by industrialists, on making polluting costly for corporations and stewardship profitable.

Late in the book Gore acknowledges that "features of our economic philosophy...are flawed in light of the ecological destruction they legitimize, even encour-

age." Yet in the same breath he lauds a "stunning victory of free market economics over communism." Gore cannot see that environmental degradation is an inevitable result of our highly centralized, consumerist society. Rather he perceives the damage to be the consequence of isolated elements of the system which he assesses can be altered without requiring substantial reform of the system itself. Such a notion is itself flawed.

The author uses the word "crisis" on virtually every page. Yet the crisis for Gore and the establishment

is in fact political and economic. Corporations and government created the environmental damage and now ask us to trust them to manage their crisis. Americans must recognize the great danger of allowing corporate interests to so heavily influence our government, and recognize the impossibility of such a government effectively regulating those corporations.

Climate change may help to "cause...political unrest," Gore acknowledges. Yet unrest based on ecological destruction is already here. Witness the increasing popularity of the Green Party, and the gathering

momentum of activist groups such as Earth First! Gore's book is part of an attempt to co-opt the environmental movement and defuse it.

The author says the purpose of his book is to "solidify public support for the increasingly comprehensive changes that will be necessary." Most Americans are well aware of the extreme violence to the biosphere and the urgency of stopping the damage and beginning repair. So what changes need more solid public support? Gore proposes a "Strategic Environment Initiative" modeled on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI, or "Star Wars") as the vehicle for such change.

SEI has nine points, which have nearly nothing to do with ecology and everything to do with big business. The first four points are: "tax incentives," "funding," "government purchasing," and the "promise of large profits." Gore's last three proposals would broaden laws to impose greater export controls, benefit developers of technology, and improve joint ventures and a variety of similar legal concepts.

Gore's SEI promises the military-industrial complex untold billions to wage a perpetual war. Is it possible that the environmental crisis, like the "red menace," the "energy crisis" and "economic crisis," has been at least in part instigated by the establishment to increase its power and profit? Using war to drive the economy is an old subterfuge. A group of 15 elite experts convened in 1963 to consider the "problems"

which could result from world peace. The *Report from Iron Mountain on the Possibility and Desirability of Peace* recommends environmentalism as a substitute for militarism. The goals would be the same: fueling the economic engine, providing "an external necessity for a society to accept political rule," and maintaining the economic power structure. The report was suppressed by the government committee that received it, but published anonymously in 1968.

In the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), one of the most influential theoreticians of the foreign policy establishment, George Kennan, reiterated this strategy in 1970. The CFR promotes the interests of insiders under the chairmanship of David Rockefeller. Members include Bill Clinton and former Oregon Governor Neil Goldschmidt.

The Trilateral Commission (TLC), the CFR's sister organization, describes itself

as a "private North American-European-Japanese initiative" concerned with "international economic management." In 1991, the TLC published *Beyond Interdependence: The Meshing of the World's Economy and the Earth's Ecology*. The author, Jim MacNeill, called for the implementation of this "environmentalist" agenda at the Earth Summit in Rio.

Gore obviously shares this globalist economic perspective. He claims that "national boundaries are often invisible and irrelevant." He refers to the Rio summit as "only the first in a continuing series of worldwide meetings to discuss and implement a new generation of global treaties aimed (primarily) at promoting sustainable economic progress." Ecological stewardship apparently takes second place.

The vice president disingenuously asserts that Americans' "fear that our rights might be jeopardized by the delegation of even partial sovereignty to some global authority ensures that it's simply not going to happen." He proceeds to suggest that the United Nations establish a Stewardship Council modeled after the UN Security Council, the same body which Bush used

activity." He admits the lending policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund are misguided. Then with the skill of an amateur sleight-of-hand artist, he shifts the blame to the method of calculating the Gross National Product (GNP). He asserts that redefining GNP will help save the rainforests, then admits that the definition of GNP can only be changed "under the aegis of the United Nations every 20 years." Furthermore he admits that these changes have been urged and UN officials have already refused.

At one point, Gore misplaces the blame for ecological destruction on "the land hunger of tens of millions of poor and dispossessed people." On the contrary, as Guatemalan freedom fighter Maria del Rosario has said, as long as indigenous and sovereign people have no claim to their homelands due to the greed of multinational corporations in collusion with governments, then true peace, justice and environmentalism will only be a glimmer of hope.

Does Gore himself actually believe that establishment parasites will go on a crash diet to save their suffering host? The reader

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must conclude that Gore has either deceived himself or is aware of the deception. Those of us justifiably concerned about corporate government's embezzlement of the earth's natural resources will find little comfort in a close reading of Gore's rehash of the establishment agenda cloaked in spirituality and greenery.

to legitimize his war on Iraq rather than being constrained by the Constitution, which demands only Congress may declare war.

Gore calls for the "elimination of those public expenditures—both national and international—that encourage and subsidize environmentally destructive economic ac-

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Choosing a War Substitute

—From *Report from Iron Mountain*—

ECONOMICALLY, the substitute must "be 'wasteful,' in the common sense of the word, and must operate outside the normal supply-demand system. An obvious corollary is that the magnitude of the waste must be sufficient to meet the needs of a particular society." In America's case, "not less than ten percent of the gross national product" must be squandered to "stabilize" the economy.

POLITICALLY, "the war system makes the stable government of societies possible—essentially by providing an external necessity for a society to accept political rule."