

ECONOMICS
of the
GREEN
RENAISSANCE

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The central objective of our economic policies is to create a society in which everyone's needs are met and conditions allow all to lead fulfilling lives without degrading the planet.

Zero growth doesn't sound like a very accurate description of a massive expansion of the renewable energy sector, a major investment boost for public transport and a greatly expanded role for industries (such as steel), building goods to last, recycling and re-using precious resources.

**FROM A LETTER IN "THE SCOTSMAN",
AUGUST 1991, BY DAVID SPAVEN, PRESS
OFFICER OF THE SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY.**

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1 Where To Find The Money ?

WHILE previous eras in our human history have been obsessed with the apparently boundless opportunities for exploration, extraction and development provided by a bounteous Mother Earth, this latter half of the twentieth century has evinced an awareness that not all resources are renewable; that Man, with his increased understanding of the elements, and the power that such knowledge puts in his hands, could actually do irreparable harm to his environment, impairing the quality of life for generations yet unborn.

A new breed of crusader has arisen to challenge the accepted orthodoxies; conceding nothing to be necessary and indispensable if it is seen to upset the natural processes whereby Earth's creatures exist and prosper. There is a new and vibrant concern for the preservation of species, the recycling of waste, control upon the emission of noxious chemicals into our atmosphere and rivers, and into our coastal waters. It has been argued that there is a critical limit below which we dare not diminish the amount of vegetation on our planet's surface if the air we breathe is to stay in balance; battle has been joined with the developers of the concrete jungle and the depredators of the rain forests.

This reawakened interest in 'green' things has spread across the whole spectrum of society in a relatively short time. It has captured the imagination of the young, embarrassed and bulldozed the Establishment, made it politically untenable to oppose conservation and protection of the environment. Scientists have been enlisted to give the accolade of researched credibility to much that had begun as intuitive feeling by the original campaigners. Industrialists found themselves under attack for disposal practices that had formerly evoked neither comment nor criticism. Farmers were made to realise that chemical fertilisers running off their lands could pollute nearby pools and rivers. Even the deep blue sea could no longer be regarded as the ultimate receptacle for the non-recycled garbage of twentieth century consumerism. An epoch which developed the nuclear bomb would come to appreciate that harming the humble ocean plankton could mean gambling with the future of life itself.

So the argument had been won. The case had been established. No one who wanted to maintain a good public profile would dare to say he was for profit at the expense of conservation; for pollution in pursuit of growth; for grab-and-snatch and devil-may-care development whatever the ultimate consequences. Those who had reaped mightily of the earth's resources have been made aware that there is a price to be paid, and the wise ones give lip service to the overriding concern for a cleaner and healthier environment.

In so many instances, however, it is lip service only. Waste disposal itself has become big business, but on a cost effective basis; burying garbage in holes in the ground, or dumping it in the depths of the sea. Against the needs and pressures of the market, salvage can so often be a second-best option, with newly produced raw materials being sold at less than the cost of re-processing. Without a subsidy the salvage operator cannot survive. And who wants subsidies in an age of free marketeering and Adam Smith economics?

Thus the conservationist finds himself standing eyeball to eyeball with the cost accountant; confronting the industrialist who says he cannot put his product in recyclable containers because he would lose the market edge on his rival; the farmer who needs that phosphate dressing to boost his crop yields; the mining engineer who is forced to exploit only the richest seams and seal off stores of energy which, in market parlance, are deemed economically unviable.

It's no better when the problem is posed at government level. Those who reach into orthodox political economy for a formula that would allow us to clean up the environment whilst keeping costs and revenues in line, are bound to be discouraged and disillusioned.

It would seem that in the nineteen-nineties - as in so many decades of the near and more distant past - economic growth and output, consumer demand and

cost inflation, wage drift, chronic unemployment, exchange rate balance and prime interest rate leverage are once again upon a knife-edge. Chancellors, much though they might aspire to be innovators and designers of new, improved fiscal remedies for a better future, seem inevitably to be cast in the role of jugglers; tightening cost pressures whilst maintaining a reasonable level of demand; restricting money aggregates without physical controls on credit; persevering with high interest rates in a battle to curb inflation - even when high interest rates are seen to be a contributory cause of inflation. In the grappling with such an intricate and delicately balanced equation, what hope is there of financing some grandiose scheme for cleaning up the environment?

A little here and there perhaps? We will do what we can, of course. It's not that we don't agree with the principle of the thing. But you know the problem, don't you, without even asking. Where are we going to find the money?

2 The Dismal Science

WELL, where *are* we going to find the money? That's the sticker, isn't it? Do *you* know where to find the money? In an anxious desire for instant conservation, for a ban on anti-environmental practices in both agriculture and industry, for costly innovations to neutralise noxious emissions; in general concern for the dwindling resources of the planet; is it wise to barge in on that delicately balanced economic exercise and indulge in single-issue zealotry without thought to what might happen on the other side of the equation?

If we do, are we likely to get any substantial segment of the decision-making establishment to go along with us? As already noted, we will probably receive agreement on principle, a commitment to tackle some of the worst abuses, with more to follow when economic conditions improve.

The trouble is, from past experience of such syndromes and such promises, we suspect things are not going to improve? Not dramatically enough, that is, to bring about the necessary sea-change in official attitudes!

They'll tell you it's tough being in the present-day economics business. They didn't christen it *the*

dismal science for nothing. We seem to be boxed in most of the time. Always lots and lots of things that need to be done - including all those highly desirable things for improving the atmosphere and the quality of life generally - but money is scarce . . . hard to come by. And when available, it's needed for so many *absolutely essential* purposes, that it's extremely difficult to siphon off a little towards long-term projects of limited fiscal return.

3 Conservation Versus Market Economics

HAVING thoroughly embraced this concept about money being scarce, you go off and brood a little. Then you chance to open a financial paper one day, and discover that a merchant banking consortium has just mounted a bid to buy out a multinational conglomerate for six billion pounds sterling. Six billion, you say! Six thousand millions! We could clean up a few smelters, purify a river or two with that kind of money. So if they can find six billion to buy out an international company - which seemed to be trading perfectly well without them - why can't we have six billion to help clean noxious gases out of the atmosphere?

Ah! they say, that's different. It's just that you don't understand how the financial system works. That six billion in sterling wasn't just lying around doing nothing. In fact it wasn't even in existence until the arbitragers set up the deal and created the *need* for it.

So we've learned something more about money - that apart from the petty-cash that lies around in cashiers' tills, is held in the public's pockets, or hidden under the mattress - the really big zeros, the multi-million pound sums that buy out international

companies, or get Third World countries permanently in hock to their bankers, only materialise when there's a deal big enough to bring them into existence.

Frustrating, isn't it? All that goodwill emanating from every level of society and the Establishment! No controversy about the desirability of cleaner atmospheres, maintenance of the green cover and conservation of non-recyclable resources! Everyone anxious to be quoted in favour of the fight against depredation, despoliation and pollution! But always there's a sticking point over the question of funding and cost.

Commercial corporations won't adopt safer and less wasteful methods of manufacturing and packaging if that proves more expensive, and would disadvantage them against their rivals. Governments accept the need to legislate certain anti-environmental practices out of existence, but have to phase in their new regulations over a period lest it distort the domestic market. Economically we are forever in a bind. Can't do anything too drastic in case it rocks the boat, upsets the exchange rate, sends the 'hot' investment money rushing off to Hong Kong or Taiwan or the Cayman Islands.

But what about the mind-boggling sum of money that's just been dreamed up for the purpose of taking over that multinational conglomerate? Has it drained the kitty? Or might there not be some comparable sum lying around, for such an eminently

worthy cause as saving the planet?

Yes, it's possible, if you think you can find the collateral against which to borrow, and can make it profitable enough to service the debt at the going rate of interest.

“What did you say you wanted it for? Cleaning up the environment? Is that a project with growth prospects? And what might be the return on capital?”

4 Processes That Hasten Our Dying

O.K. PERHAPS we've gone far enough, treating conservation as a project of market economics. We know it is nothing of the kind, cannot possibly be market-orientated, can only be justified in terms of the quality of life and the legacy that we pass on to another generation. We have seen the difficulties of introducing it into a developed industrial society which is already engulfed in problems of 'opportunity-cost': it isn't viable because it doesn't earn paper profits.

One can think of shock treatments that might be administered. A frightening of the population onto something resembling a war-footing, entire resources mobilised, unnecessary production and activities curtailed, and rationing instituted for normal civil consumption!

Electorates have willingly gone along with this in the past, but only when facing an external enemy who threatens their very survival. Would it ever be acceptable in times of peace, even to save the environment?

There is a story about a heavily over-industrialised district of New Jersey which, becoming anxious

about its polluted atmosphere and the health of its children, engaged an environmental scientist to carry out a series of tests for toxicity and airborne diseases. His report, when presented, was very alarming indeed. He had found that there was an unhealthy concentration of smelter and chemical plants within the local area, and unless their combined effluence and emissions could be drastically reduced, or preferably eliminated, there would be a reduced life expectancy throughout the whole community. The council read the report and went into a huddle, weighing up the pros and cons of keeping their chemical industries as against the threat to life itself. In the end, of course, they decided to go for continued chemical output and the concomitant pollution, since it was their means of earning a living.

Must that for ever be the choice, even for a minute proportion of the earth's inhabitants, that they should earn their living by processes that hasten their dying? Has all our modern technology meant so little, that we find less and less time to stand aside and examine its effects with clear and critical eyes? Do we have to be perpetually on a treadmill, snatching at opportunities for profit and advantage, for getting one ahead of the other fellow?

5 The Problem Of Incessant Growth

THESE questions raise serious doubts about the way in which our political and economic affairs are organised, and indeed about the whole philosophy that dominates our socio-economic perceptions. We hear a great deal about competition, which is reckoned to be an essential element of the free market, and indeed *has* to be recognised as a potent force in all human relationships. Without having to compete, the individual cannot assess his skills, his endurance or his inherent capabilities; and in the corporate world competition is regarded as the critical factor for maintaining cost-effectiveness and adequate standards of service to the consumer. Even so, there are levels of competition to which the modern power structure has descended, which can mean blighted lives for the unfortunates caught in its more vicious aspects. Heartless, unscrupulous competition which drives down prices and revenue for the hapless producer, so that he has no time to think of health or safety or quality of life, but is obsessed with the primitive urge to survive!

Nations and communities caught up in this syndrome - and with the advent of the Third World

Debt Crisis there are many such instances today - do not have the option of protecting their environments or husbanding their raw material sources. They are under a brutal sanction to extract more and more, at minimum cost, so that sufficient of their product can find its way on to world markets for the servicing of their external debt.

Thus the true conservationist, concerned though he may be with abuses on his doorstep, has also to look at acute problems being enacted out beyond his own horizon. Preservation of the planet has to mean preservation of the *whole* planet, and it is incumbent upon us to understand why, for instance, extractive industries in many under-developed regions of the world are currently being exploited at source-price levels which do not provide reasonable income for their peoples.

There is another factor which may not have struck the serious 'green' campaigner as having any great significance. That is the free marketer's fascination with *growth*.

Here is what I wrote in 1983 upon that very subject:-

"All who read the financial press and the Opposition speeches of party politicians have a fair idea what is meant by growth in an economic sense. It means businesses, industrial complexes,

communities and Gross National Products just getting bigger and bigger. More houses! More cars! More consumer durables! More money in the pockets of the workers! More turnover and profits in the balance sheets of companies and corporations.

*Those who live close to nature are aware that life itself does not work that way. Young things everywhere have a voracious appetite for growing. But when they are fully developed, they stop growing, and find a pace at which they can settle down . . .”**

Growth! That byword of the company chairman, the stock market analyst and the investment tout! That corruption of one of Nature's own processes which is seldom, if ever, explained away in the context of its economic imperative, yet which poses greater dangers for the longer-term future of Planet Earth than all the CFC gases released into the ozone layer. Growth, and the necessity thereof, has its origins in *debt*.

*(The Money Bomb, p129)

6 Staying Ahead Of The Debt Collector

WE touched briefly upon the vicissitudes of underdeveloped nations, some of whom might be single-crop or single-commodity producers, having to exact tribute from their peoples and wreak havoc with their environments, just to afford the servicing charges upon the huge loans for which they have become beholden to Western banking houses. In some cases, it has been calculated, no less than 30% of total export revenue has gone to pay the interest.

The deprivation and suffering which this brings upon the working population is evil enough in itself. But often the problem is compounded when the World Bank or the IMF send in their accountants as advisers. These officials, concerned only with a balancing of the books, often persuade incumbent governments to switch out of essential food production in favour of cash crops that will earn hard currency on world markets. Sometimes famine ensues, relief agencies are alerted, and food aid becomes the *cause célèbre* of charity hostesses in the worldwide enclaves of the chic.

It is still going on. All the rock concerts that were ever convened cannot eradicate the problem.

Primitive peoples whose age-old culture had at least taught them how to feed themselves, are being dragged into the harsh world of finance capitalism, then told that they can either starve or rousp their resources and their environments. They are cultivating drugs on former rice lands in the Golden Triangle, and hacking down the rain forests of the Matto Grosso, just to stay ahead of the debt collector.

7 Green Politics Not Enough

HOW then about the relationship between debt and growth and environmental decline in the developed industrial economies of the Northern Hemisphere? Most of the European and Atlantic nations run substantial National or Federal Debts, which tend to grow on an annual basis because tax revenues are never sufficient to pay the interest, so the shortfall has to be made good by further borrowing. (In the U.K. this is referred to as the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement.)

In the 1980's, during the middle years of the Thatcher Revolution, Britain's Chancellor cutely side-stepped this perennial problem by selling off large slices of the national assets and putting the proceeds into debt redemption. It was a shallow and unsatisfactory solution, for the assets could only be sold once, and when it was over, the borrowing started again. In the fiscal year 1991-92 it was assessed at £8 billion sterling.

Within that same decade the United States Government became the world's most spectacular borrower when it ran up a total Federal Debt of three trillion dollars, which would involve annual servicing charges in excess of \$250 billion. The point about

having to fund those massive amounts of money from the public purse is that progressively they tend to consume a higher and higher proportion of the Gross National Product (GNP) unless it can be made to *grow* commensurately with the debt figures.

Growth! It may not be real growth in physical terms. Debt-ridden economies seldom have a capacity to expand the wealth and wellbeing of their citizens. It's all a matter of expanding the numbers. But it develops into a desperate financial game of juggling the sums so as to square the bankers. And it's a game in which the principal players have little patience with 'green' campaigners who want to husband our resources and clean up the environment.

At this stage it can seem as though the cause is lost - that though we may skirt round the edges of the problem, win a few concessions here and there, we're never going to get to the heart of the matter with all that debt around. And if a Green Party government is ever elected, with massive commitments to ecology and the environment, where is it going to raise all the money? By borrowing it from the bankers?

In that case would it not mean that the bankers could eventually call the tune, tell us how much we would be allowed to borrow, and what we would have to do with it to be sure of paying their interest? Like hosting a resident committee of the International Monetary Fund? And what Green Government

would ever be able to fulfill a significant part of its manifesto with a bunch of financiers sitting in judgement and deciding its priorities?

So we arrive at a situation where Green politics are not enough, whatever the scope and intensity of their commitment. We have to challenge our mentors and obstructionists on their own ground - in the field of economics. We have, in fact, to evolve a system of Green Economics.

8 Real Wealth And Resources

GREEN ECONOMICS! Is it such a novel idea? Has anyone used the phrase before? And if they have, have they also spelled out its meaning?

Let us decide, right at the beginning, that it is a concept which would concern itself largely with resources. The husbanding of resources! The replacement of resources! The recycling of recoverable resources! The ordering of our affairs so that citizen, industrialist and service trader alike will have a positive incentive to conserve, adapt and utilise again and again, rather than throw away and make anew!

Another point: it's *total* resources we're talking about, not just the raw materials that go into factories, power stations and processing plants, or into the bits and pieces that are sold over shop counters. The most precious resource of all is in our people, in their acquired skills, their traditions, their culture and their energies. Given the opportunity to make meaningful contribution to a more enlightened economy, they have much to offer. Orthodox economists argue that it is necessary to maintain a pool of idle labour that can be either expanded or temporarily absorbed by the ups and downs of

economic activity. The demoralisation that this causes, the feeling of rejection, of having been discarded from the mainstream of society, is officially placated by the elaborate system of doles, grants, hand-outs and other 'welfarist' devices intended to keep that stand-by labour force quiescent and at a subsistence level of comfort.

But there is no blueprint in the orthodox economic handbook for permanently raising the degree of human involvement in resource activity. *Growth*, yes! where it consists of pushing around the financial numbers, so that the money machine, as presently constituted, stays in balance! *growth* that can be shown as expansion in balance sheets, trading statistics and GNP figures, even where the true trends are towards decline. What your hidebound, stuck-in-the-groove exponent of the *dismal science* cannot offer is any uplifting departure from the treadmill on to which he and his colleagues in national treasuries have shackled us throughout the latter half of the century.

And why? Because of a convention! just because of a convention! a convention which insists that all new money coming into the economy must emanate as a loan from the banking system.

There is no legal, statistical, political or scientific reason why this should be so. In Britain, steeped as we are in hoary old tradition, the convention was established in the 1690's, with the founding of the Bank of England, and barring an occasional

deviation, the practice has persisted ever since.

It is this practice, rigidly followed by all the developed nations of the Western World, which has saddled them with staggering levels of National Debt. The act of creating a loan, while showing an asset in the books of the lending institution, imposes a liability upon the borrower. And when the borrower is our own country, that liability imposes a curb upon our national freedom of action.

Despite those privatisation sales in the mid-eighties, we in the United Kingdom are currently financing a National Debt of about £150 billion sterling, and when dramatic schemes of capital expenditure are envisaged, even for such a pressing need as cleaning up the environment, it is the scale of Treasury borrowing, and its effect upon the Debt servicing in future years, which defines the parameters within which a Chancellor can juggle his figures and establish his priorities.

That oft-imagined visitor from the planet Mars, given some time to learn our language and customs, and acquire an understanding of our economic procedures, might express his astonishment that any nation should practise a form of strangulation by compressing its own throat. His logic would surely be that any such restraint upon a people's needs and aspirations was completely artificial, and should never be allowed to stand in the way of great developments - as for instance the prodigious efforts by that newly elected Green Government to clean up

the whole environment.

The man from Mars would be right, of course. For it *is* artificial to impose a protocol under which credit cannot be created except as an interest-bearing loan from the banking system. New money takes its value, not from the bank governors, but from the strength, energies and raw material resources of the community into which it is issued. You can site the most prestigious bank in all the world in the centre of a barren desert, and invite it to monetize the desert's assets in the form of currency, promissory notes and negotiable securities. All of these, whatever their numbers or denominations, would be worthless bits of paper, since they would have no purchasing power in a land without people or resources.

But dig wells, find water, create an environment in which vegetation can exist, and living things can grow and multiply. Then your currency will have started to acquire a value. That value will have been determined, not by the awesome dignity of the bank itself, the acclaimed financial expertise of its governors or the imposing calligraphy on its note issue - only by the intrinsic wealth of the community that had gathered round its doors.

“If an empire were made of sand, it would be pounded to dust by the economists”

Napoleon Bonaparte

9 The COMER Proposals

MORE and more people have begun to realise that the basic fallacy of modern economics, which condemns it for ever as the dismal science - unable to find a way out of the impasse in which it has embroiled itself - is its obsessive insistence on a banking monopoly for the creation of credit. It is seen by various well-documented historical examples that sovereign states can of their own volition, and with due regard to needs and availability of resources within their control, issue all the currency and credit-bearing securities that are required to maintain satisfactory levels of economic activity within their territories, and that this should be effected without imposing further debt, either upon their own treasuries or upon the communities they serve.

Here is the critical point for Green Economics. If any departure is to be made from that dreary treadmill upon which the orthodoxists have transfixed us, it must be done by taking charge of the nation's credit, and adapting it towards a sane utilisation of national resources. Lest that be deemed a revolutionary concept which would shake the very foundations of society, let us try to define just what changes such a reform would entail.

There are currently a group of Canadian economists petitioning their government to adopt the sort of financial procedures which could be used to bring about the green renaissance. They associate under the name of COMER (Committee on Monetary and Economic Reform), and they have been arguing for some time now that capital spending by the State on infrastructural and other long term projects should be treated as a national asset, rather than written off to revenue account, with only a pile of borrowed money and the concomitant servicing charges to show for it. They also insist that the Government of Canada has the option of borrowing from the Bank of Canada at cost rates only, which amount to about one half of one per cent. The Government's own expenditures, they say, and transfers for capital undertakings, could then come from that source, virtually without adding to the interest burden.

Capital spending treated on a separate basis from revenue spending - put into a Capital and Depreciation account, as is done with companies and corporations in the private sector - and the whole lot financed at a nominal interest rate of one half of one per cent!

Those COMER economists - cautious professionals that they are - normally do their homework before making their proposals. They have it on record that the wartime Canadian Government financed the first two years of hostilities by just such a method,

and being aware that this was effected without inflationary pressures because there was a pool of idle labour to draw upon, would probably want to introduce their own cautions and caveats before suggesting it for a modern-day industrial economy.

They would want to be certain, first of all, that the expenditure was necessary, and would create something of real benefit to the nation. They would secondly check that the skills and human and material resources were readily available, and could be put to work without crowding out wealth-producing activities elsewhere. Their capital projects would be slotted in to 'take up the slack' in the economy, and would aim at minimal interference in the processes by which a nation earns its living.

10 The Mental Blockage

LET US view this now from the standpoint of a 'green' economist entrusted with the task of cleaning up the environment. If he took over from a monetarist administration, he might well start with that pool of neglected talent, which will provide the human input for his initial projects. At the top level, and for the more sophisticated operations, he will require specialist skills and management, and it will be a balanced judgement to decide when these can be drawn from elsewhere. He is committed to a new philosophy with regard to both industrial and consumer waste, and he knows that this can most readily be implemented by a system of cash incentives, making it more cost-effective to recycle than to throw away. He may have fretful relations with neighbouring countries who are not so ecologically-minded, but there will on the other hand be constant requests from overseas for advice and expertise, that others may follow the green example. Whatever his problems and frustrations, they will be mainly organisational and physical, and can conceivably be sorted out in time. Overriding financial considerations, which would have plagued and thwarted him under the old orthodoxies, are now working in his favour, since he has found a way

of tapping the national credit, and can continue to mobilise the required resources of both materials and manpower without substantially adding to the Exchequer's burden of debt.

"Really!" you might say at this stage. "If that's all there is to Green Economics, why hasn't someone thought of it already?"

The answer is that many people have thought of it, including, of course, the lucid professionals of that Canadian COMER group, who are constantly discussing and analysing. The United States has numerous organisations campaigning towards the same end, as have also Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, to mention only the main English-speaking countries; which indicates in passing that we do not have a monopoly on economic realism.

So where's the blockage? Why the deep-freeze on a concept which could unleash the profit-dictated economies of the Western World, free the underdeveloped world from debt-induced bondage, and mobilise resources both North and South for rescue of the global environment?

11 A Banking Takeover

AGAIN it is mainly to do with money, money as a means of persuasion, of gaining influence over people's actions and allegiances, eventually over their minds and their most deeply-entrenched opinions. The power-brokers who preside over the banking system have been less than honest in these matters. They seem determined to preserve their Monopoly of Credit at all costs, and throughout the last half-century have contrived to block all public discussion of its implications, both for economics and for the future of mankind.

What have they done in face of this worldwide ecological movement to clean up the surface of Planet Earth, this growing realisation that many of the globe's resources are not renewable, and that even at the height of our technological attainments we could so foul the atmosphere we breathe, the land upon which we stand and the seas around us that they ultimately become an untenable environment for those generations yet unborn?

For sure they have decided not to oppose it. They have sensed that it is too broadly based, too readily responsive to the fears and forebodings of troubled humanity for them to demolish it by high-level

disdain and denigration, as has been done with so many other relevant issues in the past. At the same time they would be quick to recognise, as you and I have now recognised, that their usurious system of credit control, whereby new money can only be brought into circulation by payment of a heavy tribute in debt-interest, acts as a blocking mechanism against any large-scale and imaginative strategies of environmental renewal.

So how should we expect them to handle this one, bearing in mind that they are past-masters at creating the Problem, before coming up with the Solution? Overtly they must praise the Green Movement, give it both moral and financial support, set up a few prestige foundations and glossy magazines dedicated to ecological issues; tie in some of the big names in the wild-life and nature-protection business, get them used to the idea that those caring, sharing bankers are their biggest friends and most reliable patrons.

What next? Well being bankers, and having all the money in the world at their disposal, doesn't it seem obvious that their next move should be to take the whole thing over? Yes, take over the Greens! Move heavily into conservation! Show a tender concern as world citizens for the preservation of plant and animal life all the way from the Amazon to the Ganges Delta, and from Ungava to the penguins on Antarctica's frozen shores!

Does that seem far-fetched? A quantum leap into fantasy and supposition? Not really! For we can quote chapter and verse to verify that just such a strategy has been adopted by the international banking elite in their game plan for the twenty-first century.

The news broke at a most unusual conference held at Denver, Colorado, in September 1987. Present were some of the most prestigious personalities in the banking business, such as David Rockefeller and Baron Edmund de Rothschild, as well as James Baker III, American Secretary to the Treasury. The audience of about 1500 people, many of whom had been brought there on an *expenses paid* basis from no less than 60 countries, heard the speakers expound upon one of the most grandiose plans that had ever been conceived, for rescue of the global environment.

The big idea was to petition the United Nations for a lien upon all the world's untapped wilderness areas, comprising some 20 million square miles throughout the six continents, ranging from 7% of Europe to about 99% of Antarctica. Individual states would be persuaded to give up sovereignty over these virgin lands, which would then be put at the disposal of a special wilderness trust, administered by the self-appointed guardians of Planet Earth.

And who might those guardians be? Why, the bankers of course! Having capitalised their new charge at trillions of dollars in assets, they would

then propose to set up a World Conservation Bank for financing all environmental issues, from mending of the ozone layer to replanting the rainforest. Nothing would be too big or too complex for this WCB to handle. It would create its own currency, organise its own lending, engage in barter, swap and discounting on a massive international scale. It would truly be the biggest bank the world had ever known.

12 Making It Work

SUCH were the dramatic revelations made at that Fourth World Wilderness Congress, held in Currigan Hall, Denver, over the weekend of 11-13 September 1987, and subsequently continued at a retreat called Estes Park in the mountains of Colorado. The hundreds of conservationists who attended the opening sessions must have been impressed by the big names, the lush hospitality, the aura of influence and affluence that radiated from the speakers' platform. But could they really believe the answer to their environmental problems was this colossal wilderness trust, locking up some 20 million square miles of the Earth's surface, and impugning the sovereignty of so many Third World nations, who might have a population-generated need for development in those very areas which had been so arbitrarily taken from them?

Sounds convoluted, doesn't it? It *is* convoluted. Because those master bankers were anxious above all to avoid any criticism of their monopoly on the creation of credit, they had thrust themselves into the forefront of the conservation business, becoming greener than the Greens, more caring than the most passionate wild-life enthusiast, protagonists of the empty heath and the endangered species.

then propose to set up a World Conservation Bank for financing all environmental issues, from mending of the ozone layer to replanting the rainforest. Nothing would be too big or too complex for this WCB to handle. It would create its own currency, organise its own lending, engage in barter, swap and discounting on a massive international scale. It would truly be the biggest bank the world had ever known.

And it was all a phoney, of course. What really motivated them was the increasingly desperate state of their non-performing loan accounts, and the prospect that, if they could persuade the environmentalist lobby at the United Nations to embrace their fantastic scheme for a World Conservation Bank, its asset-base would be so large, they could easily offload their own bad investments, which had kept them hovering on the verge of bankruptcy since the Third World Debt Crisis blew up in 1983.

Do we really need more expensive finance, more lending, more irredeemable debt? Does it make sense to lean upon the poorer agrarian states all round the globe, just to conjure up a convoluted solution to an ecological problem that would respond more readily, and with greater certainty, to the direct approach? Like, for instance, that proposal by the Canadian COMER economists, to change the basis of government accounting, so that spending on capital account is separated from spending on revenue account, and the money created for infrastructural projects, as for instance those badly needed environmental renewals, is borrowed from the Central Bank at the purely nominal rate of one half of one per cent!

It's all that's needed to mobilise the available resources, and make better use of human talents. Such a simple matter! Technical! Procedural! Even

so, it couldn't be left to the orthodox economists, who are enmeshed in the bankers' protocol. But if it did happen, if the people made it happen, it would be the mightiest step towards real economic freedom in the whole of this troubled century.

Out would go *the dismal science*. In would come Green Economics, as the creed and methodology of the Green Renaissance.