

comeback after having been key to the nation's development. But hemp has been stamped out for commercial fiber and other use by corporations which own forests and petrochemical technology. Prior to the expansion of world trade that followed World War II, renewable crops had been developed to provide many manufacturing requirements including in the transportation sector.

Energy and Agriculture

For a petroleum-driven global economic scheme to be launched when petroleum will be all used up relatively soon, an explanation for this can be suggested: artificially low U.S. gasoline prices at the retail pump. People are fooled by corporate advertising campaigns that successfully fight ballot measures to allow an additional four percent tax on gasoline in California, for example. This would have paid for badly needed, less polluting and more energy-efficient rail projects. Alternatives to motor vehicles are needed because of lack of national energy security. Yet oil crises happen. In addition to government subsidies and U.S. armed force to keep oil cheap and plentiful while it lasts, there is the OPEC policy of undercutting the cost of renewable energy sources in order to maintain market share, creating the apparent glut. Transportation in the U.S. is vulnerable, as it relies almost totally on oil, but people can walk, bike, ride horses, or sail—people cannot find alternatives to food. Agriculture is a petroleum (oil and natural gas) affair in the developed world, and GATT would spread this folly everywhere possible.

Oil and natural gas are the main raw materials for commercial fertilizers and other agricultural chemicals and farm fuels, and according to the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in Minneapolis, "The agricultural proposals in GATT are really designed to help the large multinational corporations, the seed companies, the fertilizer and chemical companies, tighten their control over the food system." Tightening control may be accurate, but perhaps the short-term profit motive and corporate efficiency are more to blame.

Petroleum technology has brought to the marketplace myriad "non-food foods" and additives. And the processing and packaging of food are high-energy aspects of eating, which more and more people are dependent on (or brainwashed by television) to buy. If you want to see packaging reduced in order to save trees and ease pressure on your local landfill, forget it: industrial growth = corporate products' travelling further, securely and cleverly packaged. If packaging isn't from trees it is usually petroleum.

Food will travel on average further under GATT than ever before. Food already travels an average of 1,200 miles in the U.S.—mostly by oil-burning trucks on our ever-expanding highway network—before being consumed. In Europe the distance for food travel is twice that of the U.S.! This contributes to driving people off the land to megalopolises, which globally under GATT could amount to almost two billion people. (There are three billion people still living on the land in the world.) Who benefits? Mainly, the middle men of multinational corporations, truck manufacturers and trucking firms, as well as owners of the last of world petroleum supplies.

The trend in world trade is that Southern nations are turned into petroleum-dependent export farmers, to the detriment of crop diversity. Forced to export food to pay debts, "developing" nations' peoples suffer nutritionally and will increasingly starve while food is exported and non-organic methods reduce the amount of and the health of topsoil. During the Irish potato famine and recently in famine-plagued Ethiopia, food was all the while exported from those countries. Meanwhile, "we tell our farmers in the North to stop growing food at all and just turn their land into golf courses," says Helena Norberg Hodge, author and director of the Ladakh Project.

GATT and NAFTA would multiply World Bank-style mega-projects, in order to exploit non-renewable resources and thus reap profits for multinationals and cater to consumers hooked on corporate products. Fossil fuels and nuclear energy will prevail because of their economies of scale and the difficulty of owning or metering the sun or the wind. Renewable energy sources will still be largely ignored, under world trade schemes. Energy conservation could stall, as "cheap" energy spurs growth which is the purpose of GATT and the multinationals. Cheap energy which receives subsidies and does not reflect external environmental costs makes the payback period on saving energy appear too long; this increases the rate at which nonrenewable energy is used up.

All this is at a great cost to our environment, which most thinking people hoped was going to get consideration and actual care in the 1990s. This decade has been defined by ecologists as the

last chance to save nature as we know it and avert disaster for us all. Of course, carbon dioxide emissions will remain high under GATT, even though the world scientific community has made it clear that a 60-80% cut in emissions was necessary from the 1980s on, in order to stave off global warming. All in all, it appears hopeless that GATT or NAFTA could turn into energy conserving agreements. They are energy consumption programs.

New Responses to Ravages of Global Capitalism and the WTO

As a result of the ominous threat of GATT and NAFTA to peoples' survival, and the environmental-protection loss which resulted from the previous GATT (e.g., "dolphin-safe" tuna), more people are questioning trade and infrastructure. Few people know that 80% of world trade is controlled by transnational corporations, and people who tell us these things (i.e., author Noam Chomsky) are afforded almost no newspaper or television coverage. If people do wake up to world trade as a result of GATT's excesses, GATT could backfire by breeding resistance in many forms.

In Chiapas, primarily Indian-blooded peasants had all they could take from the central government and exploitation from big property owners. An estimated 3 million farmers in Mexico will be driven off the land, as small farming is undercut by free trade and agribusiness farming in the U.S. Profits that result from this inhumane dislocation certainly are a major influence in policy making by our government officials who support NAFTA and GATT.

When NAFTA was passed, the EZLN (or Zapatista Army) launched its armed struggle the day NAFTA took effect, January 1, 1994. In the words of a human rights worker in Chiapas broadcast on the BBC, "the people felt that NAFTA would leave them further behind." The corrupt dictatorship in Mexico City then promised more roads, among other things, but the Zapatistas didn't bite. Instead, their demand is for a provisional government to replace the PRI (ruling party). The shafting that Chiapas has had over the centuries might be lessened by social programs and laws to protect workers and the environment, but the EZLN knows that GATT calls these measures "barriers to the free flow of trade and capital," and GATT requires their elimination anyway. NAFTA and GATT are one reason that the EZLN wishes to make common cause with other groups in other parts of Mexico and in other countries, pursuing peaceful means if possible. The democratic movement in Mexico is stronger now—because of the Zapatistas—than it has been for several decades. Since ancient Mayans attained and imparted the height of galactic knowledge, certainly Mayan descendants can see clearly what their role today must be to obtain freedom and justice, and share with the world their message.

But the U.S. military could create another Vietnam war for the sake of protecting world trade; it would be nothing new. The war against GATT is on in Chiapas today and in the hearts and minds of well-informed grassroots environmental activists everywhere.

According to Noam Chomsky, "more Chiapas" are bound to occur because of GATT. Chomsky also says that despite the advent of the welfare state, the global-economy and profits-first are trends that harken back to the pre-labor rights era. Work prisons are coming back in a big way. Seventy-five per cent of people in the U.S. are losers in NAFTA and GATT, as they are in groups that the *New York Times* revealed as losers under NAFTA: women, blacks, Hispanics, and semiskilled labor. The *Times* editorialized in the same story that this is acceptable because a boost for the economy flows down from the benefit under NAFTA given to banks, lawyers, publishers, chemical companies, and so on. Chomsky also says that 90% of financial activity is now speculation, and only 10% production; this results in low wages and high profits.

Environmentalism Leadership and the Fight Against Multinationalism

It should be kept in mind that just the attempt of the world's economic elite to brazenly put over GATT as a backroom deal should be a wake-up call. There is no substitute for nonviolent civil disobedience, which is why citizens of India stage mass protests

against the rip-off of genetic diversity by foreign biotech and agribusiness multinational firms. In Britain, protests have stopped road building and slowed down by half the pace of motorway construction. Road fighting is a relatively recent phenomenon in the U.K., and it will spread globally until environmental destruction from roads and the waste of public funds end.

In the U.S., effective resistance to GATT and NAFTA will not be accomplished much by the usual lobbying of members of Congress, who so often are corporate-influenced or corporate-puppets. Lobbying and writing letters to editors is limited activism, although those activities are still valid. Until there is campaign financing reform and we have the right to hold referenda to vote on such large issues as GATT, we will suffer more end runs around our few political avenues of change. And if cars are afforded whole sections of newspapers, is there really free speech on transportation and environmental issues? Even if the U.S. survives as a coast-to-coast nation well into the 21st century and the nation were to become more democratic, this is not any guarantee of reaching "sustainability," local-community accountability, or bioregional-level control over our economics and politics. So it would be appropriate if the big environmental organizations worked for fundamental change in economics, energy, land use and transportation.

But, the techno-fix for continuing present U.S. energy habits is a cherished and money-making principle that passes for "green." This is not to say that cars ought not to be electric instead of gasoline, but to pursue this reform at the expense of supporting car-free living is too little and too late for planet Earth. During the Gulf War, narrow-interest techno-fixers in the environmental movement did not extend much environmental support to the anti-war movement, although they probably meant well. Similarly, some big environmental groups supported NAFTA, and these groups will always work within the system, even though the corporate-government system worsens. Or even though the system might require complete undermining and replacement by a better system or systems. On the other hand, many Washington, D.C. environmental leaders know that the world economic/political machine is naked in the face of GATT's antithetical values and the loss of state and national sovereignty. As GATT press coverage shows us, we are often shown a distorted picture by our government, industry and the corporate news media, or, we are witnessing simply the ongoing lust for impossible endless growth.

There is a sea change, nevertheless, in the scale of global exploitation by the new world order of GATT. There is a simultaneous transformation among millions of people to deal with the plight of the planet. Prior to GATT's raising its head so clearly, a new consciousness on the environmental threat was fast developing. For example, opposing more roads adds a new dimension to environmentalism, for many conservatives see that saving the land goes with keeping down taxes that must pay for "growth." With GATT and the bumbling of spendthrifts running the U.S. government under the last three presidents, people on the right and left are agreeing on several issues. Maybe a consensus will even be reached that it is good that "a road moratorium questions the underpinnings of the expanding megasystem," as stated by Paul Leclerc of the Alliance for a Paving Moratorium.

Political organizing is not the only way to work for basic change. There are personal strategies for emancipating oneself from petroleum-based global economics, to help undermine multina-

tional corporate trade. These strategies save money, encourage health and awareness, and promote truly sustainable development. Moving away from car dependency and television addiction, and instead walking, biking, taking buses and trains, and living nearer to work places, all improve communication and further cut pollution of the environment. Refrigeration is actually an unnecessary luxury when it is on a universal scale; alternatives are available.

Thousands of Americans already try to boycott non-local corporate products. Many of us prefer to raise organic food, barter and do things cooperatively to avoid having to enslave ourselves to a rigid job. Lots of money is not what we need; rather we require what money is supposed to provide. Recognizing the need for fundamental change leads some to look again at indigenous traditional societies. Did the American Indians need unlimited possessions or technological toys? Even if available or affordable, such pursuits were against most of their philosophies and survival strategies. Some of these values live on, to some extent in the fields and jungles of Chiapas, where justice—not multinational corporate jobs or products—is demanded. Indians of the Americas maintained sustainable (for the most part) societies for millennia that did not devour or overpopulate Earth and toxify the environment. Part of the common struggle for all North Americans today should be to refrain from patronizing the K-Marts, Wal-Marts and supermarket chains that bring us questionable products. These corporations and many others, as well as franchises, depend on more and more roads, wider roads, and, above all, parking lots. The destruction of historic Indian sites is still going on from such "development," and causes poison runoff into our waters from the motor vehicles on the pavement.

The best way for a potential victim of GATT to judge it is to first acknowledge or discover how deteriorated the state of the Earth has become. The only hope may be that as global capitalism and the rape of the planet pass their last gasp through GATT, perhaps, we may expect collapse of the economic system relatively soon. Thus, a restructuring around local and bioregional realities can arise from the ashes of today's industrial system. Graduating from fossil-fuels dependence to such positive changes as depaving, road closure and restoration will happen eventually, when the financial resources for "growth" are really gone, or when a social movement for a paving moratorium prevails. The longer today's system paves and sucks up the planet's life in unprecedented entropy, the harder the adjustment and transition to a sustainable society will be.



The Mayan galactic core: Hunab Ku, the one giver of movement and measure, the principle of life beyond the Sun.

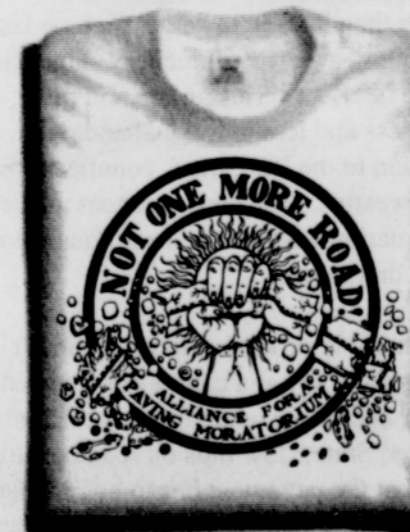
Published Nov. 28, 1994. Written by Jan Lundberg. Thanks to Randy Crutcher, Paul Leclerc, and David Keniston for editing assistance. Jan is a former petroleum and alternative fuels analyst for the oil industry, utilities, and government. He is now President of the Fossil Fuels Policy Action Institute, and Editor of Paving Moratorium Update/Auto-Free Times, and lives in Arcata, California. He can be reached at telephone (707) 826-7775 or at P.O. Box 4347, Arcata, CA, 95521, USA

For the reference list, please contact us.

Join the Paving Moratorium Movement & Subscribe!

Free T-Shirt with sponsorship!

- Yes, I'm joining the Alliance to help stop road building. Consider me a supporter of the campaign. We must develop the many alternatives to more highways, logging roads, shopping malls, cars and trucks.
- I'm enclosing a tax-deductible contribution of \$_____.
- I'll do more and sign up as a paying member of the Alliance. In addition to a subscription to The Paving Moratorium Update/Auto-Free Times, I will receive information releases and networking opportunities.
- \$30 regular member \$45 sponsor (free T-shirt: large, organic unbleached 100% cotton)
- \$100 lifetime member (free T-Shirt)
- \$15 student/senior (or \$30 for T-shirt for student/senior)
- We would like assistance fighting a local road project. (Please send a one-page description of your project.)



Concept and art by Peter Bralver

Name: _____

Group, if any: _____
 List our group as an Alliance member.

Address: _____
 Street or P.O. Box, Suite or Apt. no., City, State, Zip or postal code, Country

Phone: _____ Call or write me about a gift subscription.

Make checks payable to Alliance for a Paving Moratorium P.O. Box 4347, Arcata, CA, 95521 USA
 Alliance for a Paving Moratorium is a project of Fossil Fuels Policy Action Institute, a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) California corporation.
 Your contributions are tax-deductible.