



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on January 3, 2023

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Eco '92: Launchpad for Global Government

This article first appeared in the July 13, 1992 issue of The New American.

Environmental militants are moaning that the Earth Summit was sabotaged by President [George H.W.] Bush's election-year politicking and a sellout to U.S. industrial interests. Republican stalwarts, meanwhile, are painting the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) as a victory for the United States and for Mr. Bush, who stood firm for American economic interests against hostile world opinion.

The significance of the summit, hailed as history's largest gathering of world leaders, will not become known for months, perhaps years. No one has yet had a chance to read, let alone digest, all the fine print in the voluminous agreements and documents hammered out during the two fractious weeks of negotiations in Rio de Janeiro. One thing is certain: They will be sources of much future argument, negotiation, lobbying, and legislation. As Maurice Strong, executive secretary of the conference, said, "This is a launching pad, not a quick fix." Without any doubt, more than a few of the summit's "accomplishments" will be around to haunt, harass, and increasingly trouble us in the years ahead, including:

- Agenda 21, the 800-page blueprint for governmental action on everything from forests, deserts, oceans, and rivers to women's rights and health care, which will set in motion a continuously evolving process of environmental policy formation.
- A new Commission on Sustainable Development that will be established at the UN to monitor national compliance with the environmental targets agreed upon at the talks. The Commission will also review the development assistance contributions from the industrial countries to make sure these contributions are sufficient to enable the implementation of the Agenda 21 policies.
- A new International Green Cross for worldwide "emergency" environmental assistance, to be headed by Mikhail Gorbachev, that will be formally established next year.



[AP Images](#)

Creator rejected: Christ the Redeemer towers over Rio de Janeiro, but the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio rejected Him for a hodgepodge of New Age pantheism and pagan aboriginal religions worshipping Gaia and the "Sacred Earth."



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- President Bush's call for an international conference on global warming January 1st, for the nations to report on specific plans to reduce greenhouse gases.
- President Bush's pledge to double U.S. aid to international efforts aimed at "protecting" forests.

Flying Down to Rio

From the moment I stepped aboard the Rio-bound 747 at Miami International Airport, it was obvious I had entered alien territory. Long-haired refugees from the '60s in Birkenstocks and tie-dyed shirts, yuppies in designer digs wearing Greenpeace buttons, and silver-haired socialist grandmothers with handfuls of Zero Population Growth pamphlets mixed with UN staffers in three-piece suits clutching reams of notes on treaty negotiations and members of the press studiously preparing for the upcoming event by poring through the latest briefings from the Worldwatch Institute, Friends of the Earth, or the Business Council for Sustainable Development.

But what else would one would expect en route to the Green Woodstock known as the Global Forum and the planetary conference dubbed the Earth Summit or Eco '92? As fate would have it, as we disembarked from our plane at Galeano Airport and made our way slowly and laboriously through the crowded Brazilian customs lines, I ended up elbow to elbow with a passenger from another flight — Dr. Dixy Lee Ray. As we were probably the only "oddballs" amongst the thousands of greenies and globies streaming into Rio, our meeting was indeed fortuitous.

The Earth Summit, for me, was filled with paradox and irony at every turn. Take, for instance, the spiritual dimension of the conference. From the window of my apartment at the foot of Corcovado Mountain I was able to look directly up at the famed statue of Christ the Redeemer, whose outstretched arms have welcomed travelers to Rio de Janeiro for most of this century. In the early morning hours when I arose, He was standing majestically above the mists. Throughout the day, the towering figure is a visible landmark from virtually every sector of the city. At night, bathed in light, He is a beacon to the world. It is a beautiful, comforting, and awe-inspiring sight.

But for most of the tens of thousands of Earth Summiteers who descended on Rio, Christ the Redeemer held little, if any, attraction. They had rejected Him for the green-theology mishmash of earth worship and New Age mysticism. At both the official UNCED summit at Rio Centro and the Global Forum "people's summit" at Flamengo Park, pagan aboriginal rites and wacky eco-babble melded to form an incoherent spiritual "faith."

Opening Declaration

Earth Summit chief Maurice Strong, in his opening address to the UNCED plenary session, directed the world's attention to the Declaration of the Sacred Earth, which was part of the pre-Summit ceremonies. "The changes in behavior and direction called for here," said Strong, "must be rooted in our deepest spiritual, moral, and ethical values." According to the declaration, "The [ecological] crisis transcends all national, religious, cultural, social, political and economic boundaries." "The responsibility of each human being today is to choose between the force of darkness and the force of light," Strong exhorted. "We must therefore transform our attitudes and values, and adopt a renewed respect for the superior laws of Divine Nature."

Delegates and members of the news media referred to the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 as "sacred"



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texts. Senator Al Gore (D-TN), who led the U.S. Senate delegation to Rio, called for a new spiritual relationship between man and earth. A centerpiece of the Global Forum opening ceremony was the Viking ship *Gaia*, named for the Greek goddess of earth. At the culmination of that program, a group calling itself the “Sacred Drums of the Earth” struck up a solemn cadence. The ceremony program said that the drummers would “maintain a continuous heartbeat near the official site of the Earth Summit, as part of a ritual for the healing of our Earth to be felt by those who are deciding Earth’s fate.”

At the first plenary session, Uri Marinov, Israel’s Minister of the Environment, issued a New Ten Commandments on Environment and Development. No one bothered to ask him what was wrong with the original Ten Commandments. Was the Creator of this planet somehow negligent, or so ignorant of environmental science that His original Decalogue is ecologically deficient? As we recall, the first of His commandments states: “I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have false gods before Me.” That, understandably, makes the greenies uncomfortable. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods. Those also can be troublesome when your plans call for expropriating the property of others.

True, there were also “Christian” participants in the summit celebrations. Ministers from the World Council of Churches and Catholic clerics like Dom Helder Camarra — known as the “Red Archbishop” because of his blatantly pro-communist sympathies — could be found amidst the cymbal-clanging Hare Krishnas, diapered swamis, saffron-robed gurus, and witch doctors in loincloths. But they were there precisely because their ecumenical “spirit” promotes an anti-Christian, syncretistic blend of Christianity and paganism.

Many of the greens make no bones about their animus toward Christianity. Jose Lutzenberger, former Brazilian Minister of the Environment, decried the foundation of modern education, which he argued was “based on the Judeo-Christian philosophy of an evil world which needs to be subdued by man.” Lutzenberger exhorted, “We have to teach our children to dialogue with their world. We need a moral revolution, and should learn from indigenous people who have successfully integrated their species into the entire symphony of nature.”

This blaming of the biblical world outlook for the world’s environmental problems, and the romanticizing of aboriginal religions and “lifestyles,” was rife among the eco-crazies. It was also the source of much chagrin when the Indians didn’t play the roles expected of them. As for instance, when Mario Jurunu, an Xavante Indian chief from the interior of Brazil, appeared amongst the greenies at the Global Forum trying to sell a large spotted jaguar skin for six hundred dollars. He had killed the beast near his home in the western state of Mato Grosso, and challenged, “I will sell it, yes, and nobody will forbid me. If Indians were free, they would sell snake, alligator, wild cats, jaguar, and other animal skins. What should Indians do? Let themselves be eaten by the leopard to keep the foreigners happy?”

Flunking the Green Test

One could not go far in Rio without running into blatant examples of green hypocrisy. Consider, for instance, UNCED transportation. Most of the thousands of delegates, UNCED employees, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and members of the press attending Eco ’92 rode the UN chartered buses from their beach hotels to the Rio Centro convention site some 30 miles away. Many of these shiny new air-conditioned buses with the Earth Summit logo on their sides ran around virtually empty all week. On my first trip to Rio Centro, my bus with 48 seats carried a total of four passengers.



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We passed another Rio Centro-bound bus with one passenger and several others with similar loads. Those were not isolated incidents; they were repeated many times each day. Talk about environmentally unfriendly! These are the same people who insist that you carpool, or, better yet, give up your car for a bicycle and mass transit.

Deforestation was, of course, a major concern of the Earth Summiteers in Rio. But you certainly wouldn't have guessed it from the forest of trees felled to produce the blizzard of paper issued at the summit each day. Tons of official committee reports, press releases, speeches, and bulletins combined with mountains of tabloids and papers put out by all of the "save the forests, hug a tree" eco-activists at the Global Forum to create a truly overwhelming paper avalanche. There was a steady convoy of young men pushing gurneys groaning under the weight of massive stacks of paper from the UN's Rio Centro photocopy/printing facility to the press and information centers.



Arch-globalist/communist front man: Canadian energy magnate Maurice Strong, who served as UN chief at the Earth Summit, was a longtime board member of the World Economic Forum and a close pal of Mikhail Gorbachev and CCP leaders Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping. (AP Images)

Agenda 21, the massive global plan for regulating the entire planet, runs some 800 pages. Thousands of copies of this document alone, in its various stages of negotiation, were issued to the summit attendees. One of the most passionately fought sections of this agreement deals with sustainable forestry practices and forest product consumption. But the irony appeared to be lost on the summit greenies, who also went through enough plastic cups to close a fair-sized municipal landfill. Apparently, they forgot to bring their ceramic Greenpeace mugs, a practice they urge on others.

Air conditioning is one of the super eco-villains of modern industrial society that has been repeatedly reviled by UNCED chief Maurice Strong and other greens. But they made sure the air conditioning was up and running at Rio Centro to keep the offices and the main conference hall where the plenary sessions were held cool and comfortable. Much of the time the huge glass doors to the plenary session hall were wide open, forcing the air conditioning units to work overtime processing the unseasonably warm and humid Rio air. Likewise, many offices and conference rooms were left empty and unattended, with lights still on and air conditioning running full tilt. More Fs on the greens' report card.



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Orgy of Consumption

In one plenary speech after another, in interview after interview, and in conversations overheard in the corridors, meeting rooms, and cafes, one of the most popular recurring themes had to do with the planet-threatening “unsustainable” consumption patterns of the industrialized countries. In his opening speech, Maurice Strong condemned the “wasteful and destructive lifestyles of the rich” and warned of the “disproportionate pressures on the environment, resources, and life-support systems of our planet” caused by the developed countries. Every child born in the developed world, he reminded us, “consumes 20 to 30 times the resources of the planet than any third world child.” Presumably such rhetoric is intended to induce sufficient guilt that we of the “wasteful and destructive lifestyles” will accept government policies that drastically reduce our consumption, bringing it more in line with that of the “third world.” Certainly, the planet planners don’t want to see third world lifestyles elevated to standards common in the developed countries. That, they have made clear, would be ecologically disastrous — “unsustainable.”

“One part of the world,” Strong continued, “cannot live an orgy of unrestrained consumption while the rest destroys its environment just to survive.” Anwar Saifullah Khan, Minister of the Environment for Pakistan, joined in the condemnation of “the desire to perpetuate overconsumptive lifestyles that are substantially responsible for degradation of the environment and depletion of natural resources.”

Surely, then, these passionate Jeremiahs are themselves paragons of ascetic virtue and exemplars of the “sustainable” lifestyle they so ardently preach to others. Hah! That’s one of the most galling things about the entire, phony eco-charade in Rio. After imploring the middle classes of the developed world to curb their “excessive” lifestyles and shoulder a larger tax burden for foreign aid to the “developing world,” Strong and associates spilled out of the air-conditioned plenary session into the balmy evening air of the Rio Centro veranda, where white-tuxedoed waiters served them cocktails and hors d’oeuvres to the soft strains of Carioca music.

From there these models of abstemious living were off to one of the dozens of famous eateries and chic watering holes along the white sand beaches of Ipanema, Copacabana, Leblon, and São Conrado, where the tab for dinner and sundries can top the annual wages of many of the Third World laborers they claim to champion. Then onward to Rio’s nightclubs and discotheques for more cocktails and dancing, to Oba Oba for a burlesque skin show, or to Guanabara Bay for an evening cruise, before returning to their luxury hotels for a few hours rest to prepare them for another day of world saving.

It’s a tough job, but somebody’s got to do it. And who could be more qualified than the UN civil servants and government officials who have been training for the past several years by globe hopping to Paris, Geneva, Kuala Lumpur, Brussels, Kyoto, Nairobi, New York, London, and Tokyo for conferences on global warming, ozone depletion, biodiversity, rain forests, etc.? Of course, the U.S. congressional delegation was also up to the task. They joined the official U.S. summit delegation at the ultra-posh Sheraton Hotel, a five-star accommodation where the rooms start at \$300 per night.

U.S.-bashing

On June 2nd, the day before the opening of UNCED, the *New York Times*’ James Brooke reported that the “mood in Brazil is that the United States will be the biggest villain of the conference” for refusing to sign the biodiversity convention and weakening the climate change accord. Under the headline, “U.S.



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Has a Starring Role at Rio as Villain,” Brooke quoted Fabio Feldman, a leading Social Democrat of Brazil, denouncing the United States in harsh terms. “U.S. intransigence is recreating the polarized atmosphere of the 1960s,” said Feldman, “— all civil society and the press against the U.S.”

Suddenly, the U.S. was “isolated” from the rest of the world. Rio’s daily newspapers, *O Globo* and *Jornal do Brasil*, the Brazilian television news, and all of the international press corps fell in line on the “isolation” theme for the first several days of the conference and kept that as a top concern in stories throughout the summit.

Veja, a Brazilian news weekly, called President Bush “Uncle Grubby” and “Mr. Smoke,” and said, “Bush comes to Rio as Earth Summit Enemy.” The headline of the lead story in *Jornal do Brasil* for June 5th read, “U.S. singled out as Eco bad guy.” The U.S. press was just as bad. The U.S.-bashing was getting so bad that Earth Summit chief Maurice Strong, himself a leading U.S. antagonist, felt compelled to come to the United States’ defense so that the summit would not degenerate completely into chaotic name calling.

The late Warren Brookes popularized the term “Watermelon Marxist” to describe the militant environmentalist: green on the outside, red on the inside. It was a fitting description of many of those attending the Earth Summit and Global Forum. This was revealed most clearly with the arrival in Rio of communist dictator Fidel Castro. We’ll let the *New York Times* describe the event: “Inside and outside the main conference hall, the biggest applause went for Fidel Castro, who proved his durability as a tribune for anti-American sentiments among many people in impoverished countries.”

As Castro arrived at his luxury hotel, he was greeted by onlookers with shouts of “Viva Fidel Castro!” and “Viva Cuba!” The *Times* reported: “Mr. Castro drew cheers when [he] strode to the platform to denounce the industrialized countries as guilty of most of the world’s environmental problems.” It was the most invigorating anti-American celebration many of these eco-revolutionaries had experienced since the Vietnam War.

“A Species Out of Control”

Underlying all the issues dear to the hearts of environmentalists is the matter of population — or, rather, population control. In spite of disagreements on many other issues, the one thing that finds the greens in greatest unanimity is the belief that there are too many people in this world, and that something drastic must be done to change this. Thus, one of the most common criticisms leveled against the summit by the participants was the lack of any forceful proposals to “deal” with population. The May-June issue of *Popline*, a bi-monthly tabloid published by the Population Institute, charges that “the written agenda for UNCED slights the population issue. It contains not a single mention of birth control, contraception, or family planning.”

In response to these critics, many UNCED speakers worked population themes into their speeches. Maurice Strong deplored the world’s “explosive increase in population” and warned, “We have been the most successful species ever; we are now a species out of control.” “Population,” he declared, “must be stabilized, and rapidly.”



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Greens and Reds hail Fidel: The Rio Earth Summit delegates showed their watermelon Marxist (green outside, red inside) bona fides with their tumultuous “Viva Fidel!” welcome for communist dictator Fidel Castro. (AP Images)

Jacques Cousteau, one of the most venerated attractions at the summit, issued a dire warning that “the fuse connected to a demographic explosion is already burning.” At most, he said, humanity has 10 years to put it out. The famed oceanographer urged “drastic, unconventional decisions” if the world is to avoid reaching the “absurd figure of 16 billion human beings” by the year 2070.

This theme was echoed by Gro Harlem Brundtland, prime minister of Norway and chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development, by Mostafa Tolba, executive director of the United Nations Environmental Program, and by many others. Agenda 21 asserts that \$4.5 billion per year is needed for “demographic policies” in developing countries, and says that some \$7 billion per year is needed until the year 2000 to implement “intensive programmes” necessary for population stabilization. What that means, in plain English, is that the UN wants a lot more money to expand its population control programs of sterilization, abortion, and universal access to contraceptives and sex education. As we approach the United Nations Conference on Population and Development scheduled for 1994, we can expect to see the UN campaign for population control programs intensify.

The Green World Order

In his presentation to the summit on June 4th, World Bank President Lewis Preston called for a “global partnership” in safeguarding the planet and warned that “substantially increased aid flows are crucial if the low-income countries are to meet their national environmental needs.” Naturally, since he is in the best position to know and service those needs, he wants a hefty increase in funding for the World Bank. Preston also called for an “earth increment” increase for the International Development Association (IDA), the arm of the World Bank that lends to the poorest countries. The grand total: “only” \$23 billion. On the final day of the conference, delegates agreed to give “special consideration” to the Preston proposals, but no firm commitments were made.

One of the major players (both out front and behind the scenes) at Rio and in the preparations leading up to the summit was the Washington-based Worldwatch Institute. An interview with Lester Brown, founder and president of Worldwatch, appeared in the June 3rd issue of *Terraviva*, a special daily



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newspaper of the Earth Summit. Brown expressed hope that “ecological sustainability will become the new organizing principle, the foundation of the ‘new world order,’ if you will.”

Brown, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, admitted that this meant giving up national sovereignty. “One hears from time to time from conservative columnists and others that we, as the United States, don’t want to sign these treaties that would sacrifice our national sovereignty,” said Brown. “But what they seem to overlook is that we’ve already lost a great deal of our sovereignty. We can no longer protect the stratospheric ozone layer over the United States. We can’t stabilize the U.S. climate without the cooperation of the countries throughout the world. If even one major developing country continues to use CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), it will eventually deplete the ozone layer. We can’t protect the biological diversity of the planet by ourselves. We’ve lost sovereignty; we’ve lost control.”

What it really gets down to, said Brown, is that “we can no longer separate the future habitability of the planet from the distribution of wealth.” No surprise there. With social engineers like Brown, redistribution of the wealth is what it ultimately gets down to.

Lester Brown was not the only one talking sacrifice of sovereignty. Willy Brandt, president of the Socialist International, in an interview with *Terraviva* on June 4th, declared: “A more broadly defined concept of security corresponds to a more narrowly defined concept of national sovereignty. Ceding powers to regional organizations is something which has been accepted as a matter of fact in the European Community — and should be envisaged vis-a-vis the United Nations, too.” These sentiments were echoed in many of the summit speeches.

After the Summit

The influential Worldwatch study, *After the Earth Summit: The Future of Environmental Governance*, by Hilary F. French, has this to say on the subject:

National sovereignty — the power of a country to control events within its territory — has lost much of its meaning in today’s world, where borders are routinely breached by pollution, international trade, financial flows and refugees.... Because all of these forces can affect environmental trends, international treaties and institutions are proving ever more critical to addressing ecological threats. *Nations are in effect ceding portions of their sovereignty to the international community, and beginning to create a new system of international environmental governance as a means of solving otherwise-unmanageable problems.*

[Emphasis added.]

What French says next has very strong bearing on the results of the just-concluded summit:

The past twenty years’ experience has yielded some instructive lessons in environmental negotiations — which the world community can now apply to the larger challenges looming on the horizon. Paradoxically, one way to make environmental agreements more effective is in some cases to make them less enforceable — and therefore more palatable to the negotiators who may initially feel threatened by any loss of sovereignty. *So-called “soft law”*



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— declarations, resolutions, and action plans that nations do not need to formally ratify and are not legally binding — can help to create an international consensus, mobilize aid, and lay the groundwork for the negotiation of binding treaties later. [Emphasis added.]

“Agenda 21,” says French, “an action plan on nearly all aspects of sustainable development expected to emerge from UNCED, would fall into this category.”

Inside operators like French are not moaning because they did not get everything they wanted in the Earth Summit treaties. They got their feet in the door, and that’s what matters most.

Bland Bludgeon

New York Times writer William K. Stevens recognizes this important lesson as well. In the *Times* of June 14th, he notes that “blandness can sometimes prove a surprisingly effective bludgeon.” “The parcel of treaties signed here have been portrayed by disappointed advocates as pitiful gutless creatures with no bite,” said Stevens. “But they have hidden teeth that will develop in the right circumstances.”

That is why Richard E. Benedick, the former State Department official who helped negotiate the ozone layer treaty, has observed that the Earth Summit “should not be judged by the immediate results, but by the process it sets in motion.”

And that process has set a lot of things in motion. In his aforementioned work *After the Earth Summit*, Hilary F. French notes: “Events in Rio also may lay the groundwork for a more ambitious reform of the United Nations proposed for 1995. An independent group of current and past world leaders including Willy Brandt, Jimmy Carter, Vaclav Havel, Julius Nyere, and Eduard Shevardnadze has recommended that a World Summit on Global Governance be held that year — the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.”

And you thought the Earth Summit was about protecting “biodiversity,” stopping global warming, and saving the rain forests.



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