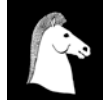




Environment & Society Portal



The White Horse Press

Full citation:

Rose, Chris, "Beyond The Struggle For Proof: Factors Changing The Environmental Movement." *Environmental Values* 2, no. 4, (1993): 285-298.

<http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/5500>

Rights:

All rights reserved. © The White Horse Press 1993. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purpose of criticism or review, no part of this article may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, including photocopying or recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission from the publishers. For further information please see <http://www.whpress.co.uk>.

Beyond The Struggle For Proof: Factors Changing The Environmental Movement

CHRIS ROSE

*Programme Director
Greenpeace UK
Canonbury Villas, London, N1 2PN, UK*

EDITORS' NOTE: This article is a new and politically significant statement by a key figure in one of Britain's best-known environmental organization, Greenpeace UK. Chris Rose is a leading environmental campaigner, who has recently piloted landmark changes in Greenpeace's approach to environmental campaigning, for the 1990s and beyond. His account of these changes appears here in print for the first time.

ABSTRACT: Until the 1990s environmental non-governmental organizations focused on 'issues' to raise public awareness. Recently it appears that though awareness of environmental problems has increased, the high media profile and superficial 'greening' of politics and business have actually exacerbated people's feelings of helplessness and detachment. Greenpeace UK is currently addressing its strategies to counter this change.

KEYWORDS: Environmentalism, Greenpeace, media, non-governmental organizations, risk

It is argued here that a 'sea change' is now going on within 'the environmental movement', and that where it is not, it probably ought to be. The paper tries to describe briefly some of the factors that have influenced recent thinking in one organization, namely Greenpeace UK. It should be noted that it is the influences which are discussed, rather than the inner workings or internal politics of the organization itself. The former are perhaps of more general relevance, as 'rethinking' has been a internal preoccupation of many environmental organizations, in the UK and elsewhere, for the past four years.

CONTEXT

Human concern for the natural environment has crossed an important threshold. 'Environmental' non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have yet to come to terms with this change. Perhaps they will not do so.

For the first time the political ground – political in the very widest sense – has moved beneath the feet of the environmental NGOs. It remains to be seen whether they are capable of radical reform and innovation to meet new needs in new circumstances, or whether they are such creatures of their time that they will remain stuck in the forms of their initial moulding.

It is argued here that to walk on this new, changed ground, the ‘environmental movement’ needs to find not new destinations nor even new paths, but a new means of locomotion. The task now is not to say where we should be going, or why we should begin the journey, nor even to say what route we should take, but to show how the steps can be taken.

Up to now most environmental debate in Britain has focused on ‘the agenda’: the question of what to debate, ‘which issues to work on’. This is no longer the most important task. Yet these phrases are such common parlance that they are assumed to describe the core business, the mission, function, the *modus operandi* and *raison d’être* of environmental NGOs: the terminology has invaded and now constrains the thinking, structure and vocabulary, and thus the very processes by which these organizations conduct themselves.

Today, at least in a country such as the UK, the most important challenge for such NGOs is to find new ways of working rather than new ‘issues’ to ‘address’. Indeed, the very language of ‘issues’ which are somehow vaguely ‘worked on’ or ‘addressed’ is unhelpful and ought, in a perfect world, be dropped. The concept of ‘an issue’ has tended to be treated as a reality, and ‘working on it’ has become a self-justifying end in itself, easily disconnected from timescales or detectable achievement.

This abstract ‘agenda’ of the NGOs has become suspended in recent years in a metaphysical domain of its own, visible when it intersects with print and electronic media or at conferences or through press releases, and sustained through the bureaucratic organization of NGOs and others, but less and less a product of the real-world.

In so far as environmental NGOs have become trapped in this intellectual framework, it threatens now to render them ineffective and irrelevant, cut off from the means to effect or deliver real change and increasingly remote from the motivation of individual supporters which provides, for most, the only truly effective test of their mandate. Without this they are in a political nether world, where they can exist – by some tests – quite happily, working in ways acceptable to government, business, media, supporters and others. Yet here they may threaten nothing and change little.

THE CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES

In the late 1960s, the 1970s and most of the 1980s, there was, in the ‘developed world’, a predominant culture toward ‘the environment’ of denial and of

minority opposition: denial, by the majority, of a big problem, an environmental ‘problematique’; and opposition from a minority, denouncing the industrial, consumerist, growth-oriented, technocratic and scientific system as damaging to the planet and to people, unacceptable and unsustainable.

Over this period, the debate took the form of protest-versus-progress. It was a time of visionary nightmares: Silent Spring and Doomsday. A time in which raising awareness was a pure process: Earth Day, European Conservation Year 1970 and others. A time in which advertising and production seemed to replace ethics, morality or individual values. But seeds of doubt were sown and, fertilized by counter-cultures, took root in the heart of the technocracies: NASA took the place of angels, spacemen looked down on the earth, wondered about the pollution they could see and asked whether it was really a good idea.

The doctrines of present-day environmentalism, so far as they exist, began to coalesce in the televisual universe of the 1960s and 1970s, condensing around iconographic images such as the ‘Spaceship Earth’ and the saving of whales, more an imagery than an ideology.

Researchers found organochlorine pesticides in Antarctic penguins. The descendants of John Muir (who had begun his journal one hundred years before by giving his address as “Earth, Planet, Universe”) founded Friends of the Earth and a host of other groups, not to pursue an interest or a hobby or even as a personal vocation, but in a crusade bent on rescue and conversion of society as a whole. Inspired by the example of the Quakers, Greenpeace set out to bear witness and confront power with truth in the Pacific nuclear testing grounds.

Throughout the 1980s, the environmental movement was essentially engaged in a struggle of proof, progressively raising the stakes of diagnosis to show that critical damage was being done to the environment not just at an individual level or a community level or locally or even regionally, but nationally, internationally and finally, globally.

‘Science’ was called as the expert witness, and through the media, the public was enlisted as the jury. Throughout the decades of the Cold War, governments broadly subscribed to the ideas of modernism – more globalism, and command, control and intervention. So at an international level, countries did not seriously question the idea that the institutions of the United Nations would act as a Court of Appeal, and environmental advocates used that to put unbridled industrialism on trial.

From the moment NASA sent back images of the earth alone in space, environmentalists had secured the imagery and the moral high ground of the global commons. For that part of the world receiving broadcast television – the bit of the world which generally referred to itself as ‘the world’ – ‘the issue’ of the environment was increasingly framed in terms of a media trial of war crimes. In the universe of television news the odds were progressively weighted in favour of the moral claims of environmental critics and against the buying power of industrial organizations.

By the 1980s, the children of the 1960s were running the media and had joined forces. Disciplines such as ecology which had flowered in the 1970s were capable of defining problems of interaction and distant events played out through simple industrial or economic thinking and processes leading, eventually, to environmental disasters. In a world of images, the technologies and assumptions of previous decades – progress, nuclear power, endless economic growth, the car, plastic and conspicuous consumption – were merged into one ill-defined phenomenon, characterized by doing environmental damage, being powerful, making money, and the prognosis that, as environmentalist Max Nicholson said “it would all end in tears”.

Against such a pervasive enemy, groups as diverse as the Council for the Protection of Rural England and Greenpeace were progressively aligned in a common cause, in which the green and pleasant land stood for much the same thing as stopping Antarctic mining or nuclear power.

This was no political or intellectual ‘offer’ at work here. As Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison noted in their analysis of Greenpeace, “as its name implies ... Greenpeace has its own conception of the problem that is to be alleviated by direct action. War and environmental destruction derive from the same unanalysed cause: the important thing is not to understand why destruction occurs but to slow it down, reverse the trends, give people the hope that personal commitment can make a difference.”

They added: “the paradoxical nature of this fragmentation [growth and success of environmental organizations and especially Greenpeace], is how public ‘success’ has been achieved, at least in part, by a rejection of ideological discourse”.

The moral imperative of demonstrators and direct action to save whales on the high seas was set against rationalizations and sales images of conventional commerce, and the whales won. One by one, ‘western’ countries were over-run by what later became known as the ‘green wave’. In 1977 President Carter commissioned *The Global 2000 Report: Entering The Twenty-First Century*; it was, in effect, a vindication of the Club of Rome’s report *The Limits to Growth* (1972) and of *Blueprint For Survival* (1972). In 1981 the forests were found to be dying in Germany, acid rain became politically real and politics itself was irreversibly changed with the rise of the German Green Party, though even they are remembered less for ideas than for the image of their flower-carrying arrival in the grey German Parliament.

For a decade it was a process of revelation in which, like the peaks of a mountain range appearing from the mist, one new environmental problem after another came into view. In 1985 the ozone hole was announced by science with a NASA image of a hole at the end of the world, and in 1988, so was global warming, this time with computer models reminiscent of *The Limits to Growth*. In between, there were institutional events like the World Conservation Strategy

(1980) and the Bruntland Report of 1985. Chernobyl blew up in 1986. Through TV, the judgement of the world was closing in on its polluters and people felt it was dying.

The 'green wave' hit Britain in the late 1980s. Seals died in the North Sea in 1988, and Mrs Thatcher 'went green' at the Royal Society. The Greens won 15% at the 1989 European Elections and the Government published its White Paper *This Common Inheritance* in 1990. During these years membership of environmental organizations grew exponentially.

Then suddenly it was over. At the 1992 Earth Summit the television images of the struggle did not match the aspirations of the audience. The environmental messages of Rio fell like ashes in a shower of disappointment.

Why ? What had happened ?

GREENPEACE UK

In Greenpeace as in other organizations, questions were being asked prior to the Earth Summit. Indeed throughout the Rio preparations, there was a feeling of unease, a nagging sense that a bigger better version of Stockholm 1972 was not what was needed in 1992.

In 1988, the hey-day of green consumerism and the sudden Government enthusiasm for matters 'green' disoriented the environmental movement. Greenpeace had commissioned analyst Philip Gould (whose other clients have included the Labour Party and the US Democrats) to look, amongst other things, at how the change in public mood had affected its potential public support. Gould identified two risks to the organization at this time: marginalization and co-option.

To counter these, Greenpeace set out to maintain its 'radical' positioning while enhancing its capabilities in specialized skills. These would enable Greenpeace to prosecute its campaigns with new tools, opening new and unexpected avenues of attack. By the end of 1990 it had acquired a science unit, a media unit, a lawyer, a political unit and a specialist actions unit.

The hollowness of the 1990 Environment White Paper *This Common Inheritance* re-established the validity of conventional campaigning, and Greenpeace had launched major prosecutions of the National Rivers Authority and chemical company Albright and Wilson. In line with others, Greenpeace UK had grown rapidly: from 190,000 supporters in 1989 to 390,000 in 1991, and from 65 staff to 90. Yet the feeling remained that new challenges and opportunities existed, over and above attacking the 'old enemies' in new ways, and that no environment group was really dealing with or even properly identifying this potential. Indeed, the difficulty in sorting out what was properly the territory of NGOs, of political parties (e.g. the Green Party), of TV eco-evangelists, of

agencies, of the individual or of shops, prevented the formulation of any coherent critique of the 'environment movement', despite the high public and media interest of the time.

Within most environment groups the years 1989-92 were marked by inward self-examination, training, management changes and restructuring to cope with the results of relatively massive growth, swiftly followed by the onset of recession. For most groups, although not for Greenpeace, this also involved retrenchment. Within Greenpeace, 1991 saw a conscious effort at 'prioritization': i.e. concentrating the use of resources. This led to a system for 'prioritizing' one campaign over another, and in spring 1992, to a reorganization of campaigns into 'teams' rather than units.

However, whereas growth, recession-retrenchment and internal reorganization-prioritization naturally occupied the attention of management in Greenpeace and other NGOs, it was almost inevitable that they did not touch on more basic questions.

Such steps enabled Greenpeace to be more effective at doing what it already did and added to its tactical weaponry, but they were deliberately not a fundamental repositioning or reformulation of the organization.

But the key underlying issue was relevance. Were NGOs as 'relevant' as they were? Were functions and ways of working, capacities, properties, character, assumptions and strategies as effective as they had been, or would have been, without any such changes? As the crucial changes were arising in the 'outside' world, Greenpeace UK embarked on its first comprehensive attempt to assess the need to change itself by looking at the outside world and working back in, rather than looking simply at its own internal efficiency.

Greenpeace set out to ask first, whether the world – the 'market' of opportunities, problems, other players and influences – had really and essentially altered; second, to take a view on what 'needed to be done' (which in the case of Greenpeace meant 'what the environment needs'); and third, to take a view as to what role Greenpeace should play.

This was equivalent to a study in 'corporate planning' or 'repositioning' but on a 'market-led' basis. The process, only now at the implementation stage within Greenpeace, took two years. Although centrally led, it involved the participation of the entire staff.

CORE VALUES

From the beginning of its study, Greenpeace took it as read that its core values would remain unaltered. This was, for everyone in the organization, an essential constraint on any 'market-led' reforms. Greenpeace has extensive qualitative research which shows that its 'core values' centre around its 'actions', and that the views and beliefs of its staff are more or less indistinguishable in this respect

from its supporters. This is one factor, a form of organizational honesty, which gives Greenpeace considerable power and resilience, and creates a high degree of trust.

The core values, which interestingly for a NGO are intrinsic, instrumental and transformative, are held to include:

- commitment to protecting the natural world
- bearing witness
- non violent direct action
- financial and political independence
- internationalism

These lead Greenpeace to favour, as an internal dictum puts it “the optimism of the action over the pessimism of the thought”, and it is because these are treated as imperatives, that they lead the organization to do things regarded as audacious, courageous and so on. The importance placed on action also drives it away from compromise, and its ‘positions’ are essentially moral ones, intervening on the moral boundary of an ‘issue’.

Naturally this creates propositions which are ‘black and white’. Greenpeace thereby tends to become involved in the elimination of problems, not their management. The internal culture of Greenpeace is, compared with many other NGOs, rather strong. In part this is because it treads the boundaries of legitimacy: carrying out acts which are legitimized by the moral deficit they address, rather than the means which are used. This has created a powerful internal self-reliance and a very strong relationship with supporters. The question in 1990 was whether this potent combination could be used effectively to attack the problems of the future as well as those of the past.

THE PROBLEMS

1. *The Historical Design of NGOs*

In effect NGOs came into existence to define issues. This led, during the 1970s and 1980s, to a proliferation of distinct ‘issues’ (framed for example in terms of physical cause and effect, polluter, victim and political responsibilities) and an issue-based departmental/faculty structure within individual NGOs which then canalized perception, response and planning. It also caused the accretion of issues in the form of campaign departments, making innovation very difficult. From 1978 to 1992 Greenpeace initiated 19 ‘campaigns’ (the definitions become rather blurred) and halted only five.

In this sense NGO structures now appear out of date, no longer supplying what is needed. As one staff member commented, once society had shifted to accepting the broad environmental critique “they said ‘OK – we believe you: so what do we do?’ And we said ‘give us a bit more money and we’ll think about it for a few years’.”

Greenpeace had, and some other NGOs still have, ‘baggage’ both in terms of a commitment to a range of issues, and the devices constructed to ‘work on’ those issues. This has tended to encourage a continuum of output, with each of many campaigns being lined up to take its turn at biting the cherry of national media coverage. Such a continuum keeps each ‘issue’ alive but frequently fails to raise it to the level at which political and other processes force the institutional or other developments required to deliver real change.

2. Reliance on Reportage for Communication: Campaigning on a Media-reality

Through decades in which NGOs sought to use the media to raise awareness and could define progress by the acceptance that issues were indeed problems, the media itself became the assumed delivery mechanism for campaigns.

More precisely, it tended to be assumed that local, national or international action would follow from ‘proof’ of a case in the media. But by the 1990s it was clear that this was no longer the case: there was a surplus of proof and a deficit of delivered change.

The reliance on media opportunities also tended to determine the organization of campaign work while other communication methods were relatively little developed. Greenpeace had developed a polished machine for using the media to broadcast the environmental message, and the media looked to Greenpeace to provide ‘a service’. As one insider remarked, “we have become a feeding trough for the media, they pick and chose what they want”.

In addition, as Jackie Burgess at University College London has identified, the coding and packaging of messages to fit media opportunities and prejudices and paradigms of what is environmental news, led to the creation of formulaic ‘sameness’ in messages, with result that many people felt that “yes it’s serious, but haven’t we heard it all before?”

Furthermore, by formulating and influencing an agenda created and sustained through and in the media, Greenpeace began to cut itself (and to some extent the public) off from ‘ground truth’, the grass roots of reality. Thus environmental problems tended to gain a media-only reality, adding to the impression that “it’s all on TV – it’s serious but not much to do with me”. Greenpeace and environmental problems were ‘out-there’, wherever that luminous world was, somewhere down the cathode ray tube.

3. *A Disappearing Enemy; the Greening of Business and Government*

Once the key groups of government and business accepted the strength and essential rightness of the environmental case, the overwhelming and defining imperative for NGOs to prove there was a problem was removed.

Once industry and politicians were speaking in 'environmental language' they naturally gave the impression that awareness was leading to action.

Furthermore, as powerful new players they took ownership of a large part of the 'issues' and the environmental problematique in general.

They then proceeded to disown it, so that it was 'nobody's problem' except the individual consumer or abstract market or moral forces. This has partly happened because environment has moved to be a central public concern, so deradicalizing many NGOs while potentially increasing their authority, (so long as they remain the perceived arbiters of what is really the 'right' environmental solution) and because business and Government have largely failed to deliver convincing improvements.

Of course some companies are changing, particularly those with long investment timescales. And generally they change more than governments do. But by and large they are not delivering what the public sees as solutions. These processes lead to a general feeling that change is not only not being delivered but, thanks to a conspiracy of circumstances and vested interests, it is impossible.

4. *Globalization, Time-space Compression and the 'Deconstruction' of Society*

There is now a widely-observed loss of faith and confidence in western countries in institutions and processes (political parties, trades unions, local authorities) which formerly enabled people to feel they had social agency (influence). Combined with the three factors above, this has led to pervasive public feelings of anxiety and helplessness. In the environmental sphere, business and governments have effectively passed on their responsibilities to a public they have disempowered. Simply providing more evidence of environmental problems can actually set up a cycle of despair which drives people out of NGOs because they feel they are 'not doing enough'.

For Greenpeace in particular, there is also a danger that its very ability to compete in the global electronic village, in the world of satellite news where there is one soft drink, one war at a time, one president, one monarch and one environmental group, will detach it from the people who support it, and even (like the Rio Summit), from the problems it is trying to solve. Environmental issues relayed as gladiatorial sound bites and dramatic action 'moments' from a far off environmental summit are as much beyond the grasp of normal people as are the machinations of multinationals.

5. *The emergence of 'unpolitics' and the importance of risk*

In the UK real political dialogue is increasingly via NGOs with businesses, or via NGOs and Government, or between customers and companies, or between NGOs, rather than via political parties: it is a sort of unpolitics.

While simple wealth-production politics still dominates conventional political thinking – routine politics framed almost solely in terms of economics and elections run like direct mail campaigns for personal finance schemes – it is increasingly irrelevant to real problems. Part of the phenomenon of 'the environment slipping down the agenda' and of 'people' downgrading it as a political priority in polls, is probably the public acting on its perception that as politicians are clearly uninterested in the environment, there's not much point in naming it as a priority for them. Other measures such as membership of Greenpeace or actual lifestyle actions, together with more detailed surveys, do not show a downgrading of personal feeling for the environment.

Many environmental problems can be better described in terms of risk than economics, or in terms of the rights and wrongs of individual consumption. This is risk in the sense used by Ulrich Beck in his work *The Risk Society*, in which he argues that risk-generation has become a predominant characteristic of western society. For example, issues such as who bears risk, who has the right to create it, who escapes from it, who controls the distribution of risk, and what mechanisms are there for deciding it are now of increasingly central public concern.

A key factor in 'risk' politics is science, because many risks are only detected or represented by science. Greenpeace has so far largely used science in a conservative way. This has been both defensive ('getting facts right') and offensive ('our scientists can prove this').

But science has also been captured, and is being abused, by vested government and commercial interests. In particular it is used to disguise or altogether displace moral and ethical judgements concerning risk.

CONCLUSIONS ON EFFECTIVENESS

So it was that in early 1993 these findings led Greenpeace to conclude that its effectiveness was being limited in several ways:

- opportunities were not being taken up – for example, seeing that known solutions are put into practice, and exposing the reality of the failure of business and government to match words with actions
- some old methods were not as effective as they used to be: e.g. reliance on communication and pressure via the media

- new needs were arising but Greenpeace has been so structured and organized that they could not be properly met. Moreover, Greenpeace has become potentially more powerful and can actually force problems to stop, instead of simply drawing attention to them. But to do so it must focus its efforts.

The upshot is that Greenpeace now plans to work in a number of new ways:

1. Investigations

There will be greater concentration on conducting investigations and exposés, leading ultimately to intervention by ‘actions’ if required, to attack industrial and Government disownment of environmental problems.

The public, rightly, believes that despite the volume of news and information regarding the environment in general, it is kept in the dark about significant information regarding the responsibility for environmental ‘crimes’ and sins of omission. Greenpeace will aim to reveal these truths and force action by confronting those responsible.

2. Enforcing Solutions

A second new focus will be on ‘enforcing solutions’ through ‘interventions’. This work will aim to show that change is possible and to help overcome the complex problems of helplessness and anxiety, deconstruction, loss of agency, globalization, and time space compression, using projects or streams of work which innovate and confront those preventing solutions being put into practice, either sectorally or locally.

An example is the work Greenpeace has already carried out regarding ozone depletion and refrigeration (see box, p.296) where it has intervened to change the refrigeration market. This change has been far more substantial than that achieved by conventional ‘pressure group’ tactics.

The next refrigeration target is the supermarket sector; while in Germany Greenpeace has exposed the fact that the car manufacturer Renault has – as do most car companies – a very low fuel consumption model which it simply does not put on the market.

These may appear relatively prosaic and piecemeal ‘results’. But they are, unlike mere ‘awareness’, actual results. These are not of course ‘complete solutions’, but the defining of a complete solution is probably not possible and certainly not worth worrying about. (What, for example, is the ‘complete solution’ to ‘refrigeration’?) Their value is in accelerating progress towards solving environmental problems, and in this respect they are a new form of action or intervention.

The case of the fridge – enforcing a solution.

The conventional role of NGOs has been to spur Governments into action, leaving ‘the system’ to deliver results once mobilized. Since 1987 Governments have gathered to agree controls on ozone depleting chemicals like CFCs under the Montreal Protocol. Throughout this period Greenpeace (together with others, notably Friends of the Earth) has lobbied these meetings, provided scientific research results, drafted amendments, published reports, pressed Governments to take action in national capitals, protested, blocked chemical plants, hung banners from buildings and used all the rest of the available tactics. But with limited success.

In 1992, to overcome political impediments and industrial lobbying hostile to the development of non-ozone-depleting refrigerants for domestic refrigerators, greenpeace’s German office worked with technicians from Dortmund Institute of Hygiene to develop a ‘green fridge’, free of CFCs, HCFCs or HFCs.

By publicizing and promoting the product which was developed – called ‘Greenfreeze’ – including advertising it to GP supporters and collecting 70,000 ‘advance orders’ as ‘proof’ that a market existed, Greenpeace helped launch the world’s first mass produced climate-friendly and ozone safe fridge.

In February this year Greenpeace attended the Cologne white goods fair – Domotechnica – and publicized the Greenfreeze, which had a 300,000 initial production run. Major manufacturers Bosch and Liebherr unveiled their own hydrocarbon-cooled fridges at this event. Bosch and Liebherr are both now marketing the same technology with hydrocarbon coolant and insulation. Remarkably, once DKK’s fridge was in production, major companies managed to do in a matter of months what they said would take years. ICI had said in 1991 that it would take a decade.

Greenpeace has publicized the Greenfreeze and met with manufacturers and civil servants in the US, Canada, Australia, Japan, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK.

Sadly there was little real interest or action from the UK companies LEC and Hotpoint, or from the Department of Trade and Industry, who did not believe the technology would work. In contrast, within a week of the Greenfreeze appearing in Japan, Japanese technologists were touring factories in Germany.

Greenpeace is now working at the technical and regulatory level to remove obstacles in the UNEP technical panels which advise governments.

Greenpeace now plans more work with retailers, its 450,000 UK supporters and 250 local groups to promote the purchase of hydrocarbon technology fridges in the UK.

3. Direct Communication

The above mechanisms – of exposé and enforcing solutions – should become two of Greenpeace’s principal means of conducting the environmental offensive. They will both make heavy use of direct communication. Rather than being ‘tools’, they will become the operational organizing units for Greenpeace’s work.

A greater capacity for direct communication will establish a media-independent reality to Greenpeace's campaign work. This will not replace the use of the media: instead it will probably re-create a reality for the media to report.

Direct communication can take many forms – from advertising and narrowcasting through to presentations to companies, leafletting, billboards, street meetings and mass meetings – its characteristic is that it is direct rather than through a third party. By its nature, it brings organizations into more direct contact with the people it is trying to reach.

4. *Challenging Science*

Greenpeace will also challenge science, seeking confrontation with the mis-use of science, for example, where arbitrarily selected 'safe' levels are presented as stemming from an independent logic.

Who sets and controls, for example, the limits of safety used in toxicological tests licensing a new product or the level of a discharge into the environment, and on what basis? Who says whether a genetically modified organism may be released, and which ones and why? How much is this a process of 'pure' science and how much one in which scientists, scientific jargon and selective findings are used to camouflage political judgements? What happens when science acknowledges ignorance as opposed to uncertainty?

Greenpeace will try to prise open the ways in which society's institutions use and abuse science in order to determine what happens to people and the environment. In addition it will aim increasingly to demonstrate the political significance of risk, and to encourage politicians to add risk to their calculations.

CONCLUSIONS

These 'internal' changes are not by any means a final answer to the problems faced by Greenpeace or any other NGO. Nor will these methods displace the existing techniques used to do what can be seen as the other side of Greenpeace's work: that of driving the problem, in the sense of driving public and political awareness of the need for action. In this, Greenpeace will continue to document, assimilate and analyse evidence, to bear witness and to intervene to protect nature.

Rather, the reforms I have discussed are a reflexive expansion of Greenpeace's role, in order to do – within the core values of the organization – whatever it takes to deliver real *change*. In many ways the environmental problem has remained the same: it is the action required to deliver results which has altered.

This being so, this analysis may have wider application (i.e. to other NGOs in similar circumstances). For Greenpeace, which has always tended to test things by doing them, innovation is perhaps easier than for many others. It does not require a decision to try and inculcate or create a 'new ethic' or political prescription: there is no ideology to overcome – only an imperative to act.

NOTE

The author would like to thank the many staff and others who gave their ideas and their time to be interviewed in the course of the research which has helped reformulate Greenpeace's work. In particular: Jacqueline Burgess and Carolyn Harrison, Dorothy Mackenzie, Sarah Wise, Nick Gallie, Philip Gould, Adam Markham, Charlotte Grimshaw, Tony Hare, John Wyatt, John Grey, Simon Bryceson, Richard Sandbrook, Charles Secrett, Janet Barber, Julie Hill, Robin Grove-White, Steve Warshall, Cornelia Durant.

REFERENCES

- Beck, Ulrich 1992. *Risk Society; Towards a New Modernity* (trans. Mark Ritter). London, Sage Publications [reviewed on pp. 367-8 of this issue].
- Jamison, Andrew and Eyerman, Ron 1989. "Environmental knowledge as an organizational weapon: the case of Greenpeace", *Social Science Information* **28**: 99-119.