

Imagine. Jack Munro, Colleen McCrory, and George Watts together on stage, "under the auspices of the New Democrats". Here are some strange bedfellows if there ever were any. They unveiled Harcourt's already unveiled "Environment and Jobs Accord", and Frank Cox (Pacific Tribune, July 9, 1990) writes that this is a step in the right direction.

Maybe this politics would have seemed credible twenty years ago. The onset of global warming and the deterioration of the planetary ozone shield clearly indicate that the human impact on the biosphere is far too great already. Rapid population growth in poorer countries and their determination to raise their living standards to those prevalent in the overdeveloped First World means a doubling and redoubling of the total human impact over the next few decades.

Further growth in overdeveloped regions like Canada is clearly insane, the act of a politics so out of touch with reality that it must shoot itself in the head rather than wake up.

The NDP under Harcourt are solidly committed to economic growth. Harcourt has assured the business community that it will be "business as usual" when the NDP gets elected. (Vancouver Province, April 8, 1990, an extensive interview circulated by the NDP caucus provincewide). Any changes that are compatible with economic growth that will improve the position of labour or the environment: "can't be done overnight. It's as simple as that.... I've made this clear to my party. They've endorsed it. I've told the trade union movement this, and they understand it." (Mike Harcourt, Report from the Legislature, July 9, 1990).

Environmentalists are in because cynical deals like this give them a chance to "save a few more parks before the planet blows out". This may not make sense, but try asking environmentalists if they can see a future. Their concern to "make a difference" has them unwittingly holding up a fig leaf in front of a spent political force. The commitment of labour to this farce appears to be a rearguard action designed to delay the rise of an independent revolutionary Green political alternative. Everyone gets to wear a shiny new "environmental" flower in their lapel and claim that they are "building a coalition", today's buzzword for meaningful political activity.

Maybe Cox is right. A "step in the right direction", straight off the nearest cliff, might be best for this coalition.

A credible politics for today must aim at finding a new way. Somewhere in the First World a large group has to start living on drastically fewer resources - no more than the amount if all humanity was to use per capita the planetary systems would stabilize. This could be done only by changing social, economic, and political relations in a way that must be described as revolutionary. It is ironic that the political forces who would describe themselves as the most progressive stand so resolutely in the way.

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