

Catholic historian: Are ecologists the new pagans?

Pope John Paul II, though well known for being sensitive to environmental issues, recently put the ecologists on guard. The environment is "certainly a serious problem," he said, but "human life is the first right," and no proposal will be effective if we do not make "respect for life and the dignity of man" the "fundamental criterion" of every intervention. The environmentalists reacted in the leading "Green" journal in Italy, *Nuova Ecologia*. "In a world made narrow and shabby by the misdeeds of our species," say *Nuova Ecologia's* editors, "the basic principle of respect for life cannot fail to be associated with that of *responsible self-limitation*."

"This," they stressed, "remains the major reason for a clash between religious positions and environmentalist concerns."

But the roots of these differences are profound. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the Prefect of the Congregation for

the Doctrine of the Faith, observed that the ecologist movement shows great hostility toward man, by blaming him for destroying nature. The "Green" idea lays the basis for "resurgent animalism," Ratzinger was quoted in *L'Avvenire*, March 15, 1989, and the insistence on the earth goddess "confirms the trends toward paganizing religions."

In Rome, we asked Father Robert A. Graham, S.J., the American historian and author of numerous essays on World War II, about his view of the Green movement.

"It is a new secular humanism, according to which man and his environment are the beginning and end of everything," Father Graham replied. "It is clear to everyone that we must not pollute, that we must save our seas, the fish, and clean up the highways. That's all natural and is dictated to us by good sense. It is not necessary to create an ideology on these things. The reality is that the ecologists do not want to think about transcendent life. Perhaps they are not capable of it." Then he added: "We are dealing with a type of pagan religion that adores the world in its materiality of today, and does not see the beyond. They have no faith. Believers have an eschatology whose foundation is Christian hope, while for the Greens, their eschatology is the end of the world."

—*Maria Cristina Fiocchi*

Russian military superiority, in the context of demobilization of the West, leaves the Russians no apparent solution to their insoluble, internal economic and related social and political crises, but to use their military margin of superiority, to extract loot from other parts of the world. That is the condition for war.

Therefore, you have to choose between ecologism and war. And I can assure you that a general thermonuclear war is not good for the ecology of this planet.

Ecologism creating worldwide famine

Now let's turn to something else. We have, on this planet, a global famine. A famine which has contributed in large part to the death of a half-billion people during the period of application of so-called International Monetary Fund conditionalities. At least, that's the calculations cited by Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak recently. And I concur with that as a rule-of-thumb measure.

We have the creation of food shortages in the United States. We don't see it as an absolute blankness on store shelves, we see it as a constriction of supply in the pipeline, and in the form of sudden and spectacular increases in food prices coming down the way. Rather than seeing some people not getting any food simply by fiat, we see simply the price mechanism, or the market mechanism, so-called, determine

who does and does not get food, and thus the food shortage adapts itself, say, to the U.S. economy. We have conditions of genocidal starvation, however, in Africa, and we're approaching that condition throughout much of Asia.

Therefore, the production of adequate food supplies—with the aid of water management programs, improvements in general transportation, the generation and distribution of power, and basic urban social and physical infrastructure, which is essential to servicing the agricultural world sector for food production—without these measures, we are doomed to worsening famine.

So, we must have the economic conditions in terms of policy, which foster an increase in the production of food, and in policies which ensure that the farmer growing food is able to retain as his price, the cost, plus a little bit better, of the production of the food he or she supplies.

Without that, all talk of ending famine is hopeless. Without such measures, without the reversal of ecological and present agricultural department policies in the United States, there is no solution to a worsening famine, and to a worsening scale of death, especially among the poor of the world, inside and outside the United States. And with the impending general financial collapse of 1990, the number of poor in the United States susceptible to victimization by famine, is about to increase most dramatically.