

# Ted Turner: the Goebbels of the zero-growth movement

by Kathleen Klenetsky

This spring, cable television mogul Ted Turner publicly affirmed Friedrich Nietzsche's infamous dictum that Christianity is a "religion of losers." The ensuing hue and cry was so intense that Turner, who had recently started dating the eternal starlet Jane Fonda, was eventually forced to issue an apology for his remarks.

The incident did have some positive effects. It severely undercut the mythical image which Turner had carefully cultivated of himself as a conservative maverick, doing battle with the Establishment's "Big Three" television networks. And it captured the true Turner, the man who has used his massive media empire to publicize and promote a range of policies truly Nietzschean in character.

Particularly since the early 1980s, Turner has emerged as one of the most influential advocates of the ecological-fascist ethos. He has utilized his media empire—which includes the Atlanta-based Turner Broadcasting Company, Turner Network Television, and Cable News Network—to propagandize on behalf of such measures as draconian population control, radical environmentalism, and the disarmament of the West.

In his latest gambit, Turner has thrown his considerable clout behind the "Big Green" referendum in California, a package of far-reaching environmentalist measures which has been characterized by its opponents as a giant step toward an ecological police state. The proposal was originated by Jane Fonda's ex-husband, New Left agitator Tom Hayden.

## Pagan nature worship

Turner's attack on Christianity this spring didn't represent some sudden change of heart, but was consistent with his past statements and activities. Over the years, the "Mouth of the South" has made it abundantly clear that he not only thinks that Christianity is for "losers," but that it should be killed off, and replaced with some new cult based on pagan nature worship.

Last year, Turner charged that "Christianity's had 2,000 years to solve the world's problems and they're just as big now as they've ever been, and the missionaries have either been killed or eaten, in the Third World, and Christianity is *not* gonna take over the world." So, said Turner, "why don't we start over" with a "new movement" that will bring about "peace, not only man with man, but

man at peace with the environment?" In the same speech, he denounced the Ten Commandments as "obsolete," and proposed to replace them with "Ten Voluntary Initiatives," of his own devising. He later had these initiatives printed up and distributed by the millions. These reveal the heart of the "new movement" Turner intends to bring into being. "I promise to have no more than two children, or no more than my nation suggests," reads the third "initiative." "I pledge to use as little non-renewable resources as possible," reads another. Others include promises to "use as little toxic chemicals, pesticides, and other poisons as possible and to work for their reduction by others," and to "support the United Nations and its efforts to collectively improve the conditions of the planet."

## A 'better world' . . . for whom?

Aside from his media operation—which now reaches 50 million home viewers worldwide—the Better World Society has become one of the key vehicles which Turner employs to spread his anti-human propaganda.

Turner formed this outfit in 1985, donating a half-million dollars in seed money. The group's stated purpose is to make TV documentaries on alleged global overpopulation, ecological degradation, the need for abortion, etc., and to distribute them worldwide.

BWS's board reads like a Who's Who of the green fascist elite. High on its membership list is Jimmy Carter, who presided over the *Global 2000* report, which called for halving the world's population. (Turner, in turn, is a member of the Board of Councilors of the Carter Center at Emory University. He has made large donations to the center, which is home base to Carter's ongoing *Global 2000* project.)

Other BWS board members include:

- Dr. Julia Henderson, former Secretary General of International Planned Parenthood Federation.
- Ambassador Zhou Boping, vice chairman of the P.R.C.'s Family Planning Association, the group that oversees China's notorious birth-control program, which involves forced abortions and sterilizations, and infanticide on a wide scale. This spring, BWS held its board meeting in China, hosted by Zhou Boping. The BWS newsletter reported that its directors would meet with top Chinese officials to discuss "security, family planning, and environment issues."

- Russell Peterson, president emeritus of the National Audubon Society, and one of the leading Establishment environmentalists. A hard-core neo-malthusian, Peterson was a director of the U.S. Association for the Club of Rome, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Population Council—the last is one of the leading apologists for China’s population control program.

- Georgi Arbatov. One of the Soviet Union’s leading profilers of American political life, Arbatov has served as a go-between for Turner’s extensive projects with the Soviets, which range from joint broadcasting ventures through the Goodwill Games.

- Gro Harlem Brundtland, the former Norwegian prime minister and head of the Brundtland Commission, whose 1987 *Our Common Future* report laid out the parameters of a global ecological dictatorship.

- Maurice Strong, a pivotal figure in the environmentalist movement, and currently president of the World Federation of United Nations Associations.

- Lester Brown, head of the Worldwatch Institute. Brown has recently initiated a campaign for a global environmental tax, to “stabilize” population.

BWS’s advisory board has a similar coloration. The members range from former CIA head William Colby, through David Mathews, president of the Kettering Foundation and a leading figure in the Dartmouth Conference, a back-channel for East-West negotiations.

Last January, several BWS board members, including president Dr. Glenn Olds, attended the Global Forum on Environment and Development in Moscow, which plotted an East-West coordinated assault on science, technology, and population growth. According to an official report of the proceedings, a central concept shared by many participants was the belief in the Earth Mother goddess “Gaia hypothesis,” and the idea that Gaia will “eliminate us with no pity” if we don’t stop “exploiting the Earth in the name of technological efficiency and progress.”

### ‘Big Lie’ manipulations

Turner’s relationship to the zero-growth lobby bears a marked resemblance to that of Josef Goebbels to the Nazis: He uses the same “Big Lie” techniques, to push equally anti-human goals, such as massive cuts in human population on the grounds that mankind’s very existence is a threat to the natural world.

Just look at some of BWS’s video offerings: In 1987, the group produced “Dark Circle,” which it billed as a “powerful examination of plutonium processing,” but which actually was akin to “The China Syndrome” in its fabricated account of the problems at the Rocky Flats Processing Plant—a plant vital to the U.S. military. BWS literature boasts that the documentary contributed to the shutting down of the plant.

“Increase and Multiply?” was a 1987 diatribe against population growth, with the underlying theme that the bibli-

cal injunction to “increase and multiply, and subdue the Earth” has created a demographic and ecological catastrophe. The program attacked the Reagan administration’s decision to cease U.S. contributions to the U.N. Fund for Population Activities, because of its involvement in financing abortions. (The year before, BWS gave its annual award to the UNFPA.)

In 1988, BWS issued a video of that year’s Awards Dinner, at which recipients included the China Family Planning Association and the United Nations Environment Program. The next year, BWS’s awards went to Mikhail Gorbachov and Faye Wattleton, head of Planned Parenthood.

One of BWS’s most important projects in 1989 was “Abortion: For Survival.” A BWS handout describes the video as making “a forceful case for a woman’s right to a medically safe, legal abortion. Emphasis is placed on the effect U.S. abortion policies have on family planning programs in developing nations.”

BWS has produced numerous programs devoted to the issue of “world peace,” which it effectively defines as the state reached when the West gets rid of its last weapon, and accepts the Soviet Union as the great anti-war humanists of all time. Over the past several years, the group has put out “A Step Away From War,” narrated by Paul Newman, and billed as offering “a compelling case for an immediate, verifiable ban on all nuclear weapons”; “Beyond the Threat,” an “in-depth look as the perceptions—attitudes, fears, curiosities, and ignorances—Soviets and Americans have of one another”; and “Disarmament and Beyond.”

The Better World Society is by no means the only forum through which Turner peddles his genocidal, pro-Soviet propaganda. According to a recent letter from Turner Broadcasting Company’s public relations office, TBS has been in the forefront of the environmentalist onslaught. “This August,” says the letter, “TBS will further demonstrate its commitment to the environment when it begins airing a weekly, half-hour, environmental magazine series entitled ‘Network Earth.’ In addition, Mr. Turner originated the concept of ‘Captain Planet and the Planetears,’ TBS’s animated series which uses television to make young people aware of environmental issues.” TBS will also present “A Place of Skulls” in September, a “documentary which discusses one of today’s most pressing environmental tragedies—elephant poaching.” (If you weren’t aware that elephant poaching, and not the millions of people living in abject misery, is the pressing issue of our time, you clearly haven’t been watching enough Turner television!)

“Voice of the Planet, a series of 10-hour programs “that examines the state of the planet from the viewpoint of the Earth itself, will air on TBS in October.”

With this worldview, it is hardly surprising that, in 1985, Turner’s CNN abruptly canceled a series of paid advertisements for *EIR*’s “Global Showdown” Special Report, a detailed analysis of the Soviet military threat.