

permanent protection of large natural areas will be feasible only if the deeper socioeconomic forces that imperil them are dispelled. Whatever the proclamations from national capitals, and whatever the economic progress registered in aggregate GNP accounts, as long as large numbers are denied the means to make a decent living the nature reserves will be in jeopardy.

**Beyond hand wringing about** the population explosion, many conservationists, distraught over Third World species losses, have paid little attention to the socioeconomic structures and human plights underlying current nature destruction. Some tend to perceive wildlife prospects largely in terms of the degree to which governments legislate proper conservation laws. While such legal measures are obviously essential, an accurate long-range perspective must also incorporate analysis of the economic policies affecting human prospects.

Accustomed to perceiving species-protection battles in North America and Europe as battles against mindless development, many may find it hard to devote attention and energy to the Third World battle for rapid economic development—albeit development of an ecologically sustainable, socially sensitive sort. However, the ultimate fates of thousands of plant and animal species will turn, not only on what happens in the comparatively tidy worlds of scientific research and presidential decrees, but also on what happens in the confused, conflict-ridden arenas of social and economic change.

Unless national and international economic systems provide many more people with land or jobs, the dispossessed will naturally covet and molest “legally protected” lands, trees, and animals. Similarly, if rapid population growth in tropical countries is not soon slowed, human pressures to exploit virgin territories will overwhelm even the most stalwart conservation efforts. Success in bringing down birth rates, however, is also at least partly dependent on more general social progress. Immediate human survival needs will always take precedence over long-term environmental goals. Clearly, the struggle to save species and unique ecosystems cannot be divorced from the broader struggle to achieve a social order in which the basic needs of all are met.

“In wilderness is the preservation of the world,” sermonized Henry David Thoreau in 1851, encapsulating a philosophy that has suffused Western nature-conservation efforts since then. Reflecting on the psychic anomie of an acquisitive society estranged from its natural roots, he observed that “the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” Today’s Third World, of course, bears little resemblance to booming nineteenth-century America; the quiet desperation suffered by hundreds of millions is of a more basic sort, one not much salved by the contemplation of turtles and ants. Even so devout a nature disciple as Aldo Leopold (himself a patron

saint of modern wildlife conservation) admitted that “wild things had little value until mechanization assured us a good breakfast.” Present circumstances necessitate a complement to Thoreau’s dictum: In broadly shared economic progress is the preservation of the wilderness.

All over the world, developers and conservationists have long been at loggerheads, but this will have to change. Economic progress and stability are threatened by the degradation of the earth’s living resources. Yet keeping the biosphere in good order will not be possible unless people’s basic needs are satisfied and population growth is quickly slowed. Locally and internationally, economic orders must be created that are at once ecologically and socially sustainable. Developers and conservationists need each other if the ultimate goals of either are to be met, for biological impoverishment and human impoverishment are inextricably intertwined.

*Erik Eckholm, who writes for Worldwatch Institute, is author of The Picture of Health and of Losing Ground. This article is adapted from Worldwatch Paper 22, Disappearing Species: The Social Challenge, research for which was supported by the U.N. Environment Program. © Worldwatch Institute, 1978.*

## **EXCURSUS III**

### *Thomas Land on* **The “Guest Workers” of Europe**

An embarrassing resolution by the United Nations Human Rights Commission, seeking “to promote the normalization of family life of migrant workers ... by their re-union,” illustrates the anxiety of Western Europe over foreign poverty in its midst.

The Commission of the European Community (E.C.) in Brussels is promoting—at least at local government level—some modest proposals for a gradual sharing of political rights with the resident foreigners. The commission also wants them to have the automatic right to bring in their families, as the Human Rights Commission proposes. But these proposals are doggedly resisted by the nine member governments, which have been on the retreat in the face of increasingly vocal extreme rightist political movements that thrive on economic insecurity and seek compulsory repatriation of the foreigners.

The E.C. governments privately acknowledge that the foreign “guest” workers and their families—an economically exploited and culturally diverse community of about thirteen million people, lacking political rights—are here to stay. But few of the governments have the political courage to admit, in the present climate of tension caused by mounting unemployment, that the very presence of a large and permanent community deprived of any political

representation undermines the essential premises of democracy.

Europe's biggest employer of foreign labor is West Germany, which has been trying to reduce its migrant population since early 1973, well before the oil crisis. But Germany's "guest" worker population *cum* dependents has hit a record four million—despite the country's prolonged recruiting ban and its various investment and incentive schemes designed to encourage the departure of foreigners. Expected from abroad are yet another 1.4 million dependents of workers already in the country, who are entitled to residence rights. According to conservative estimates in Bonn, the foreigners may well produce a million offspring within a decade.

Apart from workers from the British Commonwealth and Irish immigrants, "guest" workers lack political power. As recent statistics published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the E.C. indicate, the foreign workers' children, officially natives of the countries of their birth, are likely to inherit the inferior social and employment status of their parents. About a fifth of their children of school age are believed to be receiving no education.

Hence the embarrassment at E.C. headquarters in Brussels following passage of an uncontroversial resolution by the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva expressing particular concern about "the situation of the children of migrant workers and the effects upon their cultural, medical and psychosocial well being and the difficulties of adaption and separation to which they are exposed." The resolution requested all U.N. organizations to give special consideration to the issue in the context of the International Year of the Child and to ensure wide dissemination of information on measures to improve the lot of migrant workers and their families.

Earlier, a comprehensive report on the housing of migrant workers, published by the European Commission, proposed the establishment of a fund to finance urgent measures to end discrimination. The study had been compiled by thirty specialists throughout the E.C., including anthropologists, social geographers, economists, psychologists, and sociologists, all of them independent of both the European Commission and the national governments. It is significant that they treated the issue as a long-term problem with considerable effect on the entire Community.

Paradoxically, immigration restrictions imposed on foreign labor are likely to increase, rather than decrease, unemployment among European natives, according to an OECD study. Another study published in Geneva, this one by the U.N.'s Economic Commission for Europe, argues that economic recovery in Western Europe may well depend on a fresh influx of foreign labor.

Even were it possible—and, indeed, desirable—to expel the foreign workers, their places would soon be taken by others. Portugal, Spain, and Greece are likely to join the E.C. within the foresee-

able future, opening the door to vast numbers of South Europeans from rural areas who lack industrial skills. The cherished E.C. principle of free circulation of labor within the Community thus may well perpetuate Western Europe's embarrassment over its imported poverty.

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## EXCURSUS IV

### *Elliott Wright on Eastern Orthodoxy's Great Council*

Eastern Orthodoxy never acts rashly. Patience over the past thousand years has helped ancient patriarchates and medieval national churches to survive Huns, Catholic crusaders, Muslim Arabs and Turks, Protestant missionaries, Communists, and the British. But, as a virtue, even patience is supposed to bear fruit, and that means a change in the seasons. Today the third largest, the most immutable branch of Christianity is budding with a possibility that is destined, if it matures, to produce the rare phenomenon of perceptible change in Orthodoxy.

"Something Is Stirring in World Orthodoxy," says the title of a new booklet by Stanley S. Harakas, dean of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological Seminary, Brookline, Massachusetts. The "something" is preparation for a "Great and Holy Council," Orthodoxy's first since the eighth century, to grapple with modernity's effects on church life and order. While date, place, and composition of the gathering are yet to be decided, the planning, begun in 1961 through the initiative of the late Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I, has progressed to the point of collecting reactions to a proposed agenda. The first public discussion of ten tentative topics, proposed in 1976 by a preconciliar conference, took place in late summer at the third international conference of the Orthodox Theological Society of America.

The importance of a contemporary Eastern council for the Orthodox themselves and for ecumenism can hardly be overstated. Interestingly, Orthodoxy does not need a rebirth of conciliarism to establish doctrinal unity. Its unity is based in a common liturgy expressing a common Eucharistic theology. What is needed for internal peace is collective attention to administrative controversies and structural irregularities that threaten the practice of unity and weaken witness to unity.

Long before the East-West schism of 1054, Eastern Christianity developed a pattern of jurisdictional decentralization. It has never desired a single magisterium as powerful as the papacy. The four oldest patriarchates (Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople) and the several national churches in Eastern Europe are administratively quite as