

The Public Eye

A PUBLICATION OF POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

June 1993

The Wise Use Movement *Right-Wing Anti-Environmentalism*

In the last days of the 1992 Presidential campaign, George Bush denounced "environmental extremists" who sought to lock up natural resources and destroy the American way of life. At the heart of this imagined green conspiracy was the "Ozone Man," Senator Al Gore Jr., author of *Earth in the Balance*. Bush's attack on environmentalism failed to save his candidacy, but it was a high water mark for the political influence of the "wise use" movement, a network of loosely allied right-wing grassroots and corporate interest groups dedicated to attacking the environmental movement and promoting unfettered resource exploitation.

New organizing opportunities and media exposure of the movement's less savory connections have caused constant splintering within the movement. At present, the best way to recognize wise use groups is by the policies they support. Therefore, "wise use" will be used here to describe all organizations that promote the core wise use agenda: removing present environmental protections and preventing future environmental reforms in order to benefit the economic interests of the organization's members or funders.

Five years ago "wise use" was just the latest fund-raising concept of two political entrepreneurs: Ron Arnold and Alan Gottlieb. Arnold once worked for the Sierra Club in Washington State. He has told reporters that he helped organize teaching expeditions to areas that became the Alpine Lakes Wilderness area. Alan Gottlieb is a professional fundraiser who has generated millions for various right-wing causes.

Wise use groups are often funded by timber, mining and chemical companies. In return they claim, loudly, that the well-documented hole in the ozone layer doesn't exist, that carcinogenic chemicals in the air and water don't harm anyone and that trees won't grow

"We're mad as hell. We're dead serious. We're going to destroy them."

—RON ARNOLD, CO-FOUNDER, WISE USE MOVEMENT

properly unless forests are clear-cut, with government subsidies. Wise use proponents were buffeted by Bush's defeat and by media exposure of the movement's founders' connections to the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church network (tainted by charges of cultism and theocratic neo-fascism), but the movement has quickly rebounded. In every state of the U.S., relentless wise use disinformation campaigns about the purpose and meaning

of environmental laws are building a grassroots constituency. To wise users, environmentalists are pagans, eco-nazis and communists who must be fought with shouts and threats.

Environmentalists often point to public opinion polls that show most Americans are willing to sacrifice some short term economic gains to preserve nature. But the wise use movement is eroding the

environmental consensus that dominated American politics from the Greenhouse Summer of 1988 until shortly after the media overload that greeted Earth Day 1990.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The term "wise use" was appropriated from the moderate conservationist tradition by movement founder Ron Arnold. In 1910 Gifford Pinchot, first head of the U.S. Forest Service, called for national forestry policies based on the wise use of America's trees and minerals. That triggered a simmering feud between Pinchot and Sierra Club founder John Muir. Muir wanted to see wilderness valued for its own sake, as the spiritual center of the world. In theory, the current U.S. system of combining national forests managed for resource extraction with wilderness areas managed for recreation is a compromise solution to this debate.

But Ron Arnold did not pick the term wise use because of an affinity to the moderate conservatism of Pinchot. In 1991 he told *Outside Magazine* that he chose the phrase wise use because it was ambiguous and fit neatly in newspaper headlines. Such duplicitous and opportunistic tactics are a trademark

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Environmental Justice: Grassroots Constitutencies Criticize the Movement**
- **Eyes Right**
 - Environmental Racists
 - The Christian Coalition and the Catholic Church
 - Invisible Empire Ku Klux Klan Loses Its Shirt
 - The Constitution Hasn't a Prayer
 - The Holocaust and the Lessons of History
- **Books Received: An Annotated, Selected List**
- **Resources on Anti-Environmentalism**

of the wise use movement. "Facts don't matter; in politics perception is reality," Arnold told *Outside*.

Until recently, Arnold was a registered agent for the American Freedom Coalition, a political offshoot of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church. The American Freedom Coalition takes credit for funding the first wise use conference in 1988. Aside from telling *Outside* he is willing to ignore facts to achieve his goals, Arnold proclaims at every opportunity that his mission is to destroy the environmental movement. "We're mad as hell. We're dead serious. We're going to destroy them," he told the *Portland Oregonian*. This spring Arnold told a Vermont audience that wise users do not want to negotiate with environmentalists.

Ron Arnold's big career break coincided with the coming of the Reagan Presidency and Arnold's own rapid swing to the right. In 1981 he co-authored *At the Eye of the Storm*, a flattering biography of James Watt that the former Sec-

retary of the Interior helped edit. Watt's attempts to dismantle environmental regulation and open Federal lands to logging and mining produced short term gains for corporate interests, but the long term result of such policies was public revulsion and the explosive growth of the environmental movement during the 1980's.

Arnold's movement-building was enhanced when he joined forces with Alan Gottlieb. Gottlieb's Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise (CDFE) reportedly takes in about \$5 million per year through direct mail and telephone fundraising for a variety of right-wing causes. Gottlieb seems to possess a genius for dancing along the edge of legal business practices. He purchased the building that houses CDFE's headquarters with money from two of his own non-profit foundations, then transferred the building's title to his own name so he could charge his foundations over \$8000 per month in rent. Gottlieb also spent seven months in prison for tax evasion.

In 1988, Gottlieb published Ron Arnold's book, *The Wise Use Agenda*, which outlines their movement's goals and aims. Few environmentalists would find fault with the spirit behind this quote from *The Wise Use Agenda*. "(Wise Use's) founders felt that industrial development can be directed in ways that enhance the Earth, not destroy it." But the Agenda itself is basically a wish list for the resource extraction industries. The wise use movement seeks to open all federal lands to logging, mining and the driving of off-road vehicles. Despite much rhetoric about seeking ecological balance and environmental solutions, almost the only environmental problem *The Wise Use Agenda* addresses rather than dismisses is the threat of global warming from the build-up of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere. The solution proposed is the immediate clear-cutting of the small portion of old growth timber left in the United States so that these forests can be replanted with young trees that will absorb more carbon dioxide.



KIRK ANDERSON

Although the science cited by wise use sources is suspect, and their arguments mostly retreads of corporate press releases, today nearly everyone on the right wants a piece of the wise use movement. Rush Limbaugh, Lyndon LaRouche, the National Farm Bureau Federation and dozens of other organizations and public figures are adopting their own versions of wise use rhetoric.

Much of this popularity can be explained by the current lingering economic recession, which has provided a receptive grassroots audience for the wise use claim that it is easier to force nature to adapt to current corporate policies than to encourage the growth of more environmentally sound ways of doing business. Wise use pamphlets argue that extinction is a natural process; some species weren't meant to survive. The movement's signature public relations tactic is to frame complex environmental and economic issues in simple, scape-goating terms that benefit its corporate backers. In the movement's Pacific Northwest birthplace, wise users harp on a supposed battle for survival between spotted owls and the families of the men and women who make their livings harvesting and milling the old growth timber that is the owl's habitat. In preparation for President Clinton's recent forest summit in Portland, Oregon, wise use public relations experts ran seminars to teach loggers how to speak in sound bites. Messages such as "jobs versus owls" have been adapted to a variety of environmental issues and have helped spark an anti-green backlash that has defeated river protection efforts and threatens to open millions of acres of wilderness to resource extraction.

While attacking environmentalists, wise use statements borrow heavily from environmental rhetoric; this borrowed rhetoric often cloaks a self-serving economic agenda. The Oregon Lands Coalition in effect supports the timber industry by arguing that only people who cut down trees really love the wilderness. At the same time, the wise use movement opposes environmentalist efforts to find new careers for unemployed loggers who could be hired to begin restor-

Letters to the Editors

To The Public Eye:

I am glad to see the Public Eye blinking open again after its long nap! The central focus of your premiere issue on the state of the right was just right; the historical overview you gave us is information we all need to get down Pat (sorry).

Thanks especially for describing John Dewey's central place in right-wing genealogies of secular humanist conspiracy. This bit of history is helpful in thinking about the relationship between anti-humanist and anti-Jewish conspiracy theories.

A couple of critical comments: I counted nearly thirty right-wing ideological categories which I assume you see as existing in complicated and overlapping relationships that you didn't describe.

Are traditional, conventional, and moderate conservatives identical? Are Eastern establishment conservatives now the same as mainstream Republicans? Have Neo-conservatives, in the term's original sense, become an extinct or irrelevant species?

I know you can't cover everything in a single article, but isn't the free enterprise right (supply siders, Jack Kemp) a distinct tendency?

Second, why do you adopt the Christian right's euphemistic oxymoron "Judeo-Christian," which they use to describe their agenda?

In solidarity,
Hayyim Feldman

RESPONSE FROM THE EDITORS:

The use of the term "Judeo-Christian" was a serious lapse on our part. The term has been adopted by the right as an answer to the accusation of implicit anti-Semitism in the adjective "Christian." Judeo-Christian is meant to imply inclusion of Jewish traditions, texts, and values within the bounds of Christian thought and action. In so doing, it casts Judaism as a stage in the evolution of Christianity, one absorbed by and expanded on by the New Testament. The two traditions then become available as a joint tradition, under the hegemony of the later, Christian tradition.

Hayyim Feldman's first criticism, that we do not provide a "map" to the ideological distinctions within the political right, is an understandable request for us to engage in an exercise of limited usefulness. The boundaries and content of the various factions of the right are in constant flux, which leads to confusion of terms. The fluidity stems from 1) changes in usage (e.g., the term Neo-conservative, which previously referred to a distinct group, is now widely used to describe the New Right), and 2) splits and new ideological developments that cause the content of a labeled "category" to change.

We address this constant change by using the adjective or category we find most accurately captures an individual or group at the moment of writing. We do not explain to the reader each choice made in this process, therefore it is not an ideal solution. It does give us, however, the ability to be accurate at a specific time, rather than forcing the writer into a grid of categories that are out of date.

ing the stream beds ravaged by clear-cutting of forests.

Similarly, National Farm Bureau Federation publications repeatedly argue that farmers are the true stewards of the land. But the Farm Bureau lobbies for fewer restrictions on pesticide use and for the clearing of wetlands—not for government support for the alternative farming practices that the National Research Council's 1989 book, *Alternative Agriculture*, showed can reduce farming's impact on the environment while improving farmers' net incomes.

Both the National Farm Bureau Federation and the Oregon Lands Coalition recently have disavowed any association with Alan Gottlieb's Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise and the term wise use. Groups that portray themselves as moderate wise users, like the Farm Bureau and Alliance for America, now describe their approach with substitute terms like "multiple use," while still employing Ron Arnold's tactics and inviting him to speak at wise use conferences. This distancing is apparently due to Arnold's willingness to make extreme statements to the press and the baggage of his association with Rev. Moon's Unification Church.

"It shouldn't be surprising that there are these terminology wars, given that so much of this movement is about manipulating language and manipulating people's understanding of concepts like environmentalism," according to Tarso Ramos, who monitors wise use activity for the Western States Center in Portland, Oregon.

In fact, the wise use movement resorts to a bewildering range of subterfuges to mask its agenda. For instance, the developer-funded Environmental Conservation Organization and its member organization, the National Wetlands Coalition, want to make it easier for their funders to drain wetlands to build malls. To that end, Champion Paper and MCI fund The Evergreen Foundation, which spreads the word that forests need only clear-cutting and healthy doses of pesticides to become places of "beauty, peace and mystery."

In a similar example, The Sea Lion Defense Fund is the Alaska fishing industry's legal arm in its fight against govern-

ment limits on harvests of pollock, one of the endangered sea lion's favorite foods. Oregonians for Food and Shelter and Vermont's Citizens for Property Rights cultivate a folksy grassroots image while promoting the agendas of developers or extractive industries. This was a tactic first advocated by Ron Arnold in a series of articles he wrote for *Timber Management* magazine in the early 1980's.

ALLIANCE FOR AMERICA

Since the first corporate check arrived, the wise use movement has been split by debates over who will control organizing strategy and funds. "(Wise use) is not a disciplined ideological coalition. It is a multifaceted movement. There are factions within it. They fight. The objectives of various players are very different. Coalitions can be tenuous, but they are very effective," says Tarso Ramos. The Oregon Lands Coalition (OLC) is dominated by timber interests but also includes the National Farm Bureau Federation, pro-pesticide groups, and land use planning activists representing developers.

In 1991, the OLC became a national organization by creating the Alliance for America. The Alliance's stated purpose is to "put people back in the environmental equation." The means to this end is to enlist grassroots groups in each state to fight environmentalists on a wide variety of issues. In 1991 and 1992, the Alliance staged "Fly-ins for Freedom" which brought supporters to Washington D.C. to lobby on behalf of logging, mining and ranching interests.

From its founding, the Alliance for America's purpose was to unify grassroots anti-environmentalist organizations in all fifty states. In the western states, where the movement was born, the wise users tend to be freedom-loving, right-wing libertarians, yet they spend much of their time and energy working to protect government subsidies for ranchers, miners and loggers.

A well-worn joke describes the typical westerner's attitude toward the Federal government as "go away and give me more money." Groups like the Oregon Lands Coalition and People for the

West strive to preserve government privileges, such as below-cost sales of timber from Federal lands and the 1872 mining law that lets mining companies lease government mineral rights for as little as \$2.50 an acre.

A more subtle approach was required to build support for wise use groups in eastern states, where the wise use movement's natural audience, primarily rural landowners, were not so accustomed to government largesse. The Alliance for America quickly found a slogan for its efforts to organize east of the Mississippi: private property rights.

THE THEME OF PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

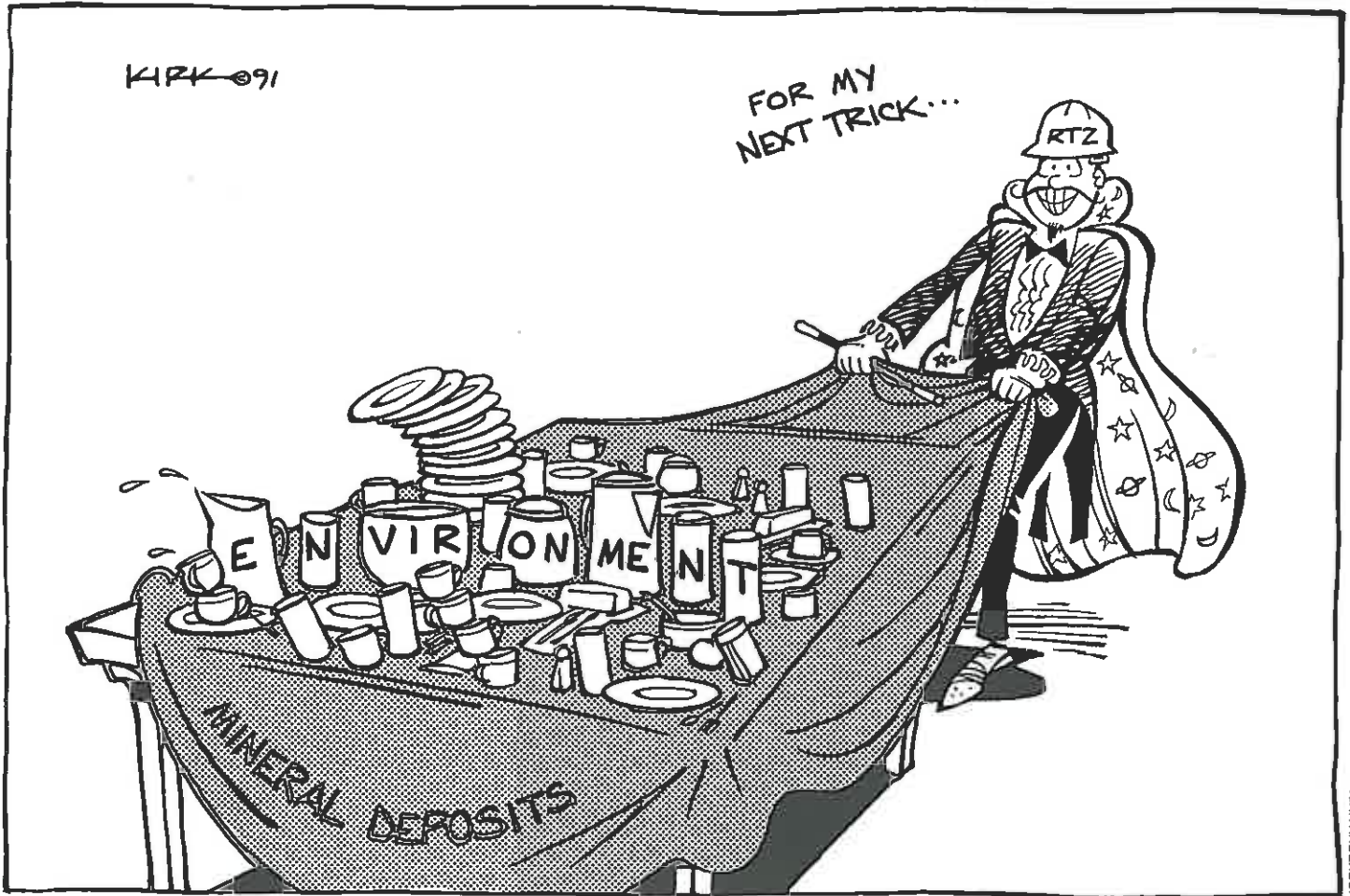
The wise use movement argues that regulation protecting environmentally sensitive areas on private property are unconstitutional "takings." They cite the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which states in part: "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." That clause is the basis for the concept of eminent domain, which allows government entities to take land for public projects by paying property owners the land's fair market value.

Across the nation, the wise use movement is backing state legislation seeking to expand the legal concept of what constitutes a "government taking" to include all situations where possible profits from developing, mining, or logging private lands are limited by environmental regulations. The movement argues that if a regulatory agency wants to protect a wetland, for example, the agency must pay the wetlands owner what he or she *might* have made if the wetlands were drained in order to become a buildable site.

The private property rights strategy may prove wise use's best weapon. Despite their ability to draw attention and corporate money, western wise use organizations will remain vulnerable to negative press coverage because they are so often arguing for more government handouts for their corporate backers. But the call to protect private property rights from "government land grabs" or

KIRK 091

FOR MY
NEXT TRICK...



“unconstitutional takings” appeals strongly to rural landowners and small businesspeople, sectors of society that fear economic change and heavy handed environmental reforms.

“As an organizing strategy, takings is a kind of deviant genius,” says Tarso Ramos. “It automatically puts environmentalists in the position of defending the federal government and appeals to anyone who has ever had any kind of negative experience with the federal government, which is a hell of a lot of people.”

By the end of 1992, private property rights advocates had introduced legislation expanding the definition of takings in twenty-seven states. If passed, these bills would rule that government regulatory actions such as wetlands protection or even zoning restrictions are “takings,” and require that landowners be paid for the potential value of the land they lost due to government actions. A single lost takings case could bankrupt most state regulatory agencies.

The takings movement would, if successful, effectively end environmental protection in the United States. The only federal legal test of takings was *Lucas v. South Carolina*. Lucas, a developer, sued the state for the lost value of homes he had planned to build on land that South Carolina subsequently declared sensitive coastal habitat. The 1992 U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the case is often trumpeted as a takings triumph by wise users, but was actually a split decision requiring that South Carolina prove the homes would have constituted a public nuisance before enforcing the regulation protecting the seacoast.

In Vermont, a failed takings law was nicknamed the “pout and pay” bill. Opponents argued that the bill would have encouraged owners of low-value properties to imagine fantastic development schemes that conflicted with zoning restrictions or wetlands protection, then present the federal government with the bill.

After a bitter legislative battle, Ari-

zona Governor Fife Symington signed a takings bill into law in June, 1992. Delaware also passed a takings bill in 1992. In 1993, Utah passed a takings bill. In Idaho and Wyoming, takings bills passed the state legislatures, but were vetoed by the governors of each state on the grounds that the laws would create unnecessary bureaucracy. Similar bills are pending in a number of states across the country.

It is at the grassroots, city and county level in rural areas that the wise use movement has been most effective. State level takings laws fare better than efforts to convince the federal government it has no right to regulate land use. American industry has never dared advocate total war on the environment, even if the argument can be made that at times standard industry practices have fit that description. But grassroots wise users are proving effective shock troops, using tactics inspired by Ron Arnold to reverse decades of environmental compromise and negotiation in a few months.

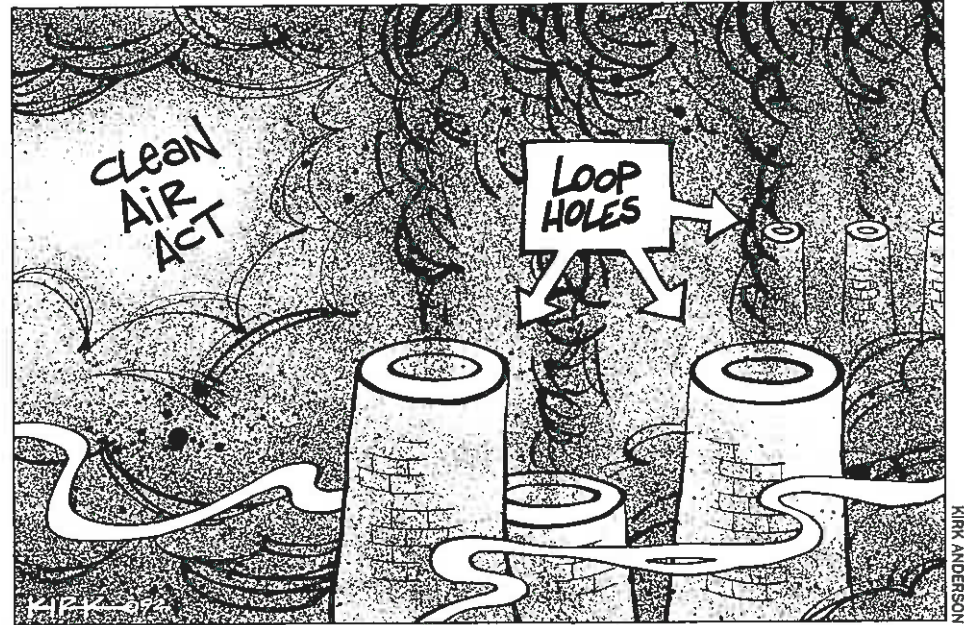
The private property rights call was first sounded in the Northeast by the John Birch Society. In 1990-91, John Birch Society members helped turn out hundreds of people to protest the Northern Forest Lands study, a joint effort by the federal government and the governments of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine to plan for the future of the vast woodland known as the Big North.

Now, New England's private property rights movement has outgrown its John Birch Society origins. Wise use groups in every New England state have affiliated with the Alliance for America. In Vermont, Citizen's for Property Rights has assembled a coalition of developers and far right politicians to crusade for the repeal of the state's progressive land use laws. The Maine Conservation Rights Institute, based in the state's far northeast (a stronghold of Christian fundamentalism), promotes a typical wise use agenda, opposing wetlands and forest protection under the guise of conservation.

A western Massachusetts wise use group called Friends of the Rivers (FOR) blocked a U.S. Park service plan to designate the upper reaches of the Farmington River a federally protected wild and scenic river. With assistance from Alliance for America, FOR spread disinformation on the effects of wild and scenic designation. Their literature predicted businesses being forced to close, property values plummeting and riverbank homes being taken by the government.

Friends of the Rivers' most vocal ally was Don Rupp, who is affiliated with Alliance for America. Rupp previously had led an unsuccessful struggle against wild and scenic designation of the Upper Delaware river in New York. Along the Delaware, Rupp warned of dire effects from wild and scenic designation that were virtually identical to the claims that appeared in Friends of the Rivers' literature. But no homes have been taken or landowners forced to move from Rupp's home territory. And after the Park Service stepped in to provide protection to the river property, land values along the Upper Delaware rose.

Friends of the Rivers' leaders in-



cluded the Campetti family, owners of an oil distributor and off-road vehicle dealership, and Francis Deming, who operates his one-hundred acre property as a pay-as-you-go dumpsite. But despite this evident self-serving interest, FOR's claims frightened enough Massachusetts residents to cause three towns to vote against the wild and scenic designation of the Upper Farmington. FOR displayed posters claiming local wild and scenic supporter Bob Tarasuk was a paid government agent. Tarasuk had once spent a summer working for the Bureau of Land Management; he reports that harassing phone calls from opponents of wild and scenic designation eventually forced him to get an unlisted telephone number.

"There is no better tactic than to threaten someone's land. Get someone who lives on their land and that's all they have and then tell them that the government is coming to take it. Fear works. The Alliance for America knows this and I believe they coach (local groups)," Tarasuk said. "Your land has been stolen," read an FOR flier distributed along the Farmington.

In Connecticut, along the lower reaches of the Farmington River, a local river protection group called the Farmington River Watershed Association defeated Friends of the Rivers' efforts to prevent wild and scenic designation. Drawing on their strong local base,

the Watershed Association (founded in 1953) rallied local citizens to support wild and scenic designation. Don Rupp's efforts to spread fearful tales about the Park Service were blunted by the fact that the city of Hartford has flooded several branches of the lower Farmington to create reservoirs. Connecticut residents saw wild and scenic designation as Federal protection from future dam projects.

The battle over New England's rivers reached a climax in March, 1993 when the New Hampshire Landholders Alliance, an affiliate of the Alliance for America, convinced six of seven New Hampshire towns along the Pemigewasset River to vote against the river's proposed wild and scenic designation. Patricia Schlesinger of the Pemi River Council said that only 15% of the registered voters in the seven towns took part in the town meetings that decided the river's fate. "People felt intimidated and abused by fear-mongering and deceit. It was canned stuff, claims that 'the feds are going to take your land.' It was typical wise use tactics."

The founders of the New Hampshire Landholders Alliance, Cheryl and Don Johnson, have a profit motive to fight wild and scenic designation along the Pemi. Don Johnson works for Ed Clark, a local businessman who has unsuccessfully sought to build a small hydroelectric dam at a scenic area called

Livermore Falls—a project that would be prohibited if wild and scenic status were secured. As a result of the defeat of the wild and scenic plan, the state of New Hampshire will lose \$450,000 in federal aid to develop a park at Livermore Falls.

FREE MARKET ENVIRONMENTALISM

Environmentalists are conditioned by decades of using legislative processes to battle industry over the scale of development and resource exploitation in natural areas. But wise users don't contest the scope of environmental protection; they wage war on the notion that there are any ecological problems that cannot be solved by reliance on the free market. David Gurnsey, Maine Conservation Rights Institute's representative to the Northern Forest Lands Advisory Committee, did not criticize the conclusions of the Committee's recent biodiversity study—he claimed the whole concept of preserving biodiversity was a veiled effort to take land from private owners.

Wise users often call environmentalists "watermelons:" green on the outside, but red to the core. This association of environmentalists with the specter of communism is not mere grassroots name-calling. Corporate-funded, rightist libertarian think tanks like the Cato Institute and the Reason Foundation publish analysis and research supporting the wise use claim that green politics are the last vestige of communism's collectivist, One World Government plot to subjugate the planet. In its most extreme forms, this logic surfaces in the claim of Lyndon LaRouche's followers that Greenpeace's activists are eco-terrorists and pawns of the KGB. The Greenpeace-KGB connection, first trumpeted in LaRouche publications, has recently resurfaced in the writings of Kathleen Marquardt, founder of Putting People First and winner of the Best Newcomer Award at the June, 1992 Wise Use Leadership Conference in Reno, Nevada.

In some respects, however, free market environmentalism as advocated by Cato's director of Natural Resource Studies, Jerry Taylor, or *Reason Magazine*

editor, Sylvia Postel, has more merit than many environmentalists want to admit. For example, the biggest source of water pollution in America today is municipal wastewater facilities built with federal assistance. It was only after the end of federal subsidies for wastewater treatment that alternative clean-up methods like engineered wetlands were able to win out over traditional wastewater plants in many areas. But the wise use movement is not seeking to open opportunities for small businesses to profit while healing the planet. They want to dismantle government environmental protection while removing restrictions on industrial exploitation.

At the grassroots level, the wise users are taking on many of the typical characteristics of demagogic, paranoid right wing movements, portraying environmentalists as in league with the federal government to destroy families. In Vermont, Citizens for Property Rights decorated a rally with effigies of their opponents dangling from nooses. Massachusetts' Friends of the Rivers claimed environmental groups had paid off legislators to support wild and scenic designation of the Farmington River. In New Hampshire, opponents of grassroots wise users along the Pemigewasset River received threatening phone calls.

WISE USE AND THE RIGHT WING

Recently, it appears that the wise use movement is forming its first links with anti-gay activists and the religious right. In his report, *God, Land and Politics*, Dave Mazza of the Western States Center traced the growing association of two grassroots movements in Oregon. "Oregon's electoral process has seen the Wise Use Movement and the religious right movement coming together in a number of ways, intentionally or unintentionally pushing forward a much broader conservative social or economic agenda," Mazza concluded.

The Oregon Citizen's Alliance, which achieved a small measure of national fame by its advocacy of a state referendum effectively legalizing discrimination against gays and lesbians (Measure 9), is trying to climb on the

state's crowded wise use bandwagon by sponsoring an initiative undermining Oregon's land use planning laws.

As the wise use movement continues to spread, it is becoming both more vociferous and more sophisticated. The leaders of the wise use movement have demonstrated that they would rather intimidate environmentalists than negotiate compromises between economic and environmental interests. In practice, wise use is proving to be a slick new name for some of democracy's oldest enemies.

—William Kevin Burke

(Write or call for information on footnotes for this article.)

Eye Lashes

THE RIGHT LOOKS AT THE WORLD:

"It is sackcloth-and-ashes time for American Catholics: we need urgently to remind ourselves that Hell is a *place*—you know, just like Peoria—we can actually *get* there if we try hard enough."

—Catholic Eye, March 29, 1993 p.1.

[Editors' Note: emphasis in the original . . . and apologies to Peoria.]

PRA LOOKS AT THE RIGHT:

Beware of the movement
"Wise Use"

Eco-activists it heaps with abuse.
They'll tell all the folks
environmentalisms's a hoax,
till we're up to our necks
in refuse.

Environmental Justice

Grassroots Constituencies Criticize the Movement

Highlights of The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit

Video of a conference sponsored by The Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ held Oct. 24–27, 1991.

Video available from United Church Resources, UCC, 800 N. Third St., #202, St. Louis, Missouri 63102. Phone order:(314) 621-1330.

Robert D. Bullard, ed.

Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots

South End Press, Boston, 1993. 209 pp., plus bibliography and index.

Richard Hofrichter, ed.

Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice

New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, 1993. 228 pp., plus bibliography and index.

Joni Seager

Earth Follies: Coming to Feminist Terms with the Global Environmental Crisis

Routledge, New York, 1993. 283 pp., plus footnotes, bibliography, and index.

For many years, the large, mainstream environmental organizations such as The Audubon Society, the Wilderness Society, and the Sierra Club exercised hegemony over the environmental debate in legislation, the media, and publishing. In the 1980's and 1990's, a number of challenges to those increasingly establishment-style organizations have been mounted by those who feel the Big 10 do not speak for them. Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism are two prominent examples of such challenges.

These three books and one videotape represent another challenge—one from the grassroots, from the people most victimized by environmental plun-

der. It is a growing movement which began under the name "environmental racism" and now goes by the more inclusive "environmental justice." As it has grown, it has begun to incorporate a womanist/feminist critique of environmental abuses. The result is a movement of the less-powerful to demand an end to the life-threatening habits of industrial and military polluters that they have disproportionately endured where they work, live and play.

Neighborhoods that have been degraded and poisoned by industry and the military—neighborhoods that are disproportionately the homes and worksites of people of color—are organizing to fight back against the agents of their peril.

The environmental justice movement began with anger, an anger informed by increasing awareness that communities of color bear the brunt of environmental pollution. Three-fourths of hazardous-waste landfills are sited in communities that are poor, African-American, Native American, and Latino. Penalties for violation of hazardous-waste regulations are 500 percent higher at sites having the greatest white population than at sites with the greatest minority population.

Anger over these issues was given expression at the historic First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Conference, held in Washington, D.C. in October, 1991. This was not only a conference to address the Big 10's neglect of environmental racism, but also to draw together grassroots environmental activists from African-American, Asian, Native American, and Latino communities.

During the four days of the conference, activists from across the country told stories of the environmental degradation of their communities, and the action they have taken to defend those communities. The videotape of the highlights of that conference is an excellent place to start to get a sense of this "new"

movement—one that actually has been building for decades.

Part of the appeal of video medium is that it captures the eloquent words and emotional urgency of individual statements. The conference was chaired by Benjamin Chavis, Jr., of the United Church of Christ Racial Justice Commission (now Executive Director of the NAACP). Chavis's opening statement that "We are not organizing an anti-white movement. We are organizing an anti-injustice movement," sets the stage for hard-hitting critiques and moving personal testimonials.

The Highlights video includes Richard Moore of the SouthWest Organizing Project (Albuquerque, NM) saying that the conference is a movement-building event, and movements must be built from the bottom up. Mililani Trask of Kiaaina Ka Lahui Hawaii (Hilo, Hawaii) telling the story of being denied the right to sue the Federal and state governments because Native Hawaiians are "wards of the state and Federal government and thus cannot sue for redress of grievances because they do not have standing." Hazel Johnson of People for Community Recovery (Chicago, IL) talking about years of attending environmental conferences and being the only African American person in the room. Young Hi Shin of Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (Oakland, CA) calling for "jobs which do not slowly and permanently disable or kill us." Or Dana Alston, then of the Panos Institute (Washington, DC), speaking to the Big 10 representatives on the dais (and bringing the audience to its feet with applause): "We refuse a paternalistic relationship. If you are to form a partnership with us, it will be as equals and nothing else but equals."

Robert Bullard, University of California sociologist and the author of the pathbreaking 1990 book *Dumping in Dixie*, has collected an anthology of thirteen articles that reflect the building blocks of the envi-

ronmental racism movement. *Confronting Environmental Racism* gives us in one book theoretical statements, results of academic studies, and activists' first-hand accounts—capturing the perspectives raised at the 1991 conference. The contributors are academics and grassroots activists, predominantly people of color. Six of the thirteen essays were written by women.

In addition to fleshing out the concept of environmental racism, new concepts of "environmental blackmail" (the promise of jobs in exchange for pollution) and "environmental equity" (an end to the injustice of Not In My Backyard movements in wealthy, white neighborhoods resulting in dumping in poor communities) are explored. The collection eloquently demonstrates that the mainstream environmental movement's claim that people of color were not interested in the environment had more to do with the way environmentalism was defined than with any real indifference.

The agenda proposed by *Confronting Environmental Racism* is a broad challenge to the eco-establishment to take up the issues of environmental racism, and to include people of color among its leadership.

As the environmental racism movement became the environmental justice movement, it grew in stature, breadth, and depth. This growth is reflected in the publication of yet another anthology, titled *Toxic Struggles*, edited by Richard Hofrichter. *Toxic Struggles* is also explicitly linked to the 1991 conference. At its core, it defines itself as a book inspired by the conference. Here again Robert Bullard's

essay early in the volume introduces environmental racism; later in the book, Vernice Miller gives an account of the conference and its importance in the growth of the environmental justice movement. But this volume is more ambitious. In addition to looking at environmental racism, it considers the causal role of capitalism in the environmental crisis, inequities perpetuated by the legal system, the global nature of environmental justice issues, the importance of hazards at the workplace, and the role of cultural activism. It is, in short, an attempt to move beyond the core issues raised at the 1991 conference to bring into one book all of the alternative approaches to environmentalism that fall within the scope of academic study.

The book is quite successful as a broad compendium of environmental justice issues, though its breadth makes it less satisfying, in some ways, than the more focussed *Confronting Environmental Racism*. The intervention of academia has its usual positive and negative effects: more analysis and more information, but less immediacy.

Joni Seager, a geographer and feminist who teaches at the University of Vermont, has brought a feminist perspective to the environmental justice debate with her comprehensive account of the gender politics of the environmental crisis. *Earth Follies* is a wonderfully readable indictment of the structural causes of environmental degradation, the male identity of the causal agents, the disproportionate effect borne by women, and race and sex discrimination throughout the mainstream environmental movement. Seager highlights

the crucial leadership role played by women at the grassroots, whose work is the heart of the environmental justice movement. The book is a groundbreaking one in that it occupies a place of affinity with Ecofeminism, while avoiding the essentialist equation of women and nature so often made by Ecofeminism.

A puzzling omission is Seager's apparent unawareness of the recent events and organizing of the environmental justice movement. This is particularly strange because her politics are so clearly in tune with that movement (an essay summarizing her perspective appears in *Toxic Struggles*), and her book is an important complement to the environmental racism perspective. A deeper appreciation of the role of gender in environmental injustice has been needed, Seager provides it, yet the synthesis of the two perspectives has not yet been completed.

So, it is up to the reader to create that synthesis. One place to start is with the books reviewed here. To do so is an exciting and rewarding process, which will leave you alarmed, indignant, inspired, and challenged

—Jean Hardisty

CORRECTION

The address of The Colorado Legal Initiatives Project (CLIP) was incorrectly listed in the last issue of *The Public Eye*. The correct address is: CLIP, P.O. Box 44447, Denver, CO 80201.

The Public Eye

The Public Eye is published quarterly by Political Research Associates. Subscriptions are \$29.00 for individuals and non-profit organizations, \$39.00 for other organizations, \$19.00 for students and low-income individuals. Outside U.S., Canada, and Mexico, add \$9.00 for surface delivery or \$14.00 for air mail.

Please make checks payable to Political Research Associates, 678 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 702, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-3355.

PRA is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

© Political Research Associates, 1993. All rights reserved.

POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES STAFF

Jean V. Hardisty, Ph.D.,
Director

Chip Berlet,
Analyst

Margaret Quigley,
Researcher

Judith Glaubman,
Archivist

THE PUBLIC EYE STAFF

Jean Hardisty and Margaret Quigley, *Editors*

Guest Co-Editor for this issue: Judith Glaubman

Design by DG Communications 

Printing by Red Sun Press 

Mailing by Walnut Street Center

Many thanks to Kirk Anderson for his fine work.

ISSN 0275-9322

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISTS

In a diabolical example of outreach, the far right's anti-immigrant campaign has adopted environmentalism as a justification for excluding immigrants. A familiar xenophobia underlies this analysis: America's culture and standard of living must be protected from dilution by "others," primarily Third World intruders. It is immigrants who are to blame for pollution, over-crowding, smog, and traffic congestion.

Will this theme will be vigorously resisted by the "Big 10" environmental organizations? Perhaps recent criticism of their historical neglect of the environmental issues facing poor people and people of color will vaccinate them against racist attacks on immigrants and refugees. Time will tell.

THE CHRISTIAN COALITION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

New York City recently was rocked by highly contested school committee races. These local, usually uneventful elections were targeted by Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, which supported candidates whose views corresponded to its moral litmus test. "Moral" issues were of interest to the Christian Coalition, such as support for classroom prayer and parental consent before students can receive condoms or be taught about homosexuality. The Christian Coalition then developed a voters' guide to promote its candidates. This is a now-familiar religious right election tactic.

The twist of note in New York City was the formation of an open coalition between the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York and the Christian Coalition. Under the general leadership of John Cardinal O'Connor but reflecting the specific organizing of Msgr. John G. Woolsey, director of the archdiocese Family Life-Respect Life office, the archdiocese agreed to distribute the voter guides in each of its 213 parishes. In New York, this ex-

panded the reach of the largely Protestant Christian Coalition to the entire Roman Catholic community, which it is openly courting.



INVISIBLE EMPIRE KU KLUX KLAN LOSES ITS SHIRT

After a five-year legal battle waged by civil rights activists in Georgia, the Invisible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan has been ordered to surrender its mailing and subscription lists plus all its assets including a printing press, computer and cash. In addition, it must cease using the name Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and publishing "The Klansman." But, while the Imperial Wizard, James W. Farrands, intends to comply with the ruling, he has made it clear through his attorney that he and his cohorts will make sure the KKK continues.

THE CONSTITUTION HASN'T A PRAYER

Televangelist Pat Robertson has resurrected school prayer in time to exercise us all at graduation ceremonies. He is mobilizing graduating high school seniors to challenge the Supreme Court's decision forbidding the saying of prayers in school.

In February, the legal wing of Robertson's organization, American Center for Law and Justice, launched its campaign using a lone ruling by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans that students can lead their peers in prayer.

The Supreme Court recently refused to hear a challenge to the Fifth Circuit decision allowing school prayer, letting the lower court decision stand. Contrary to widespread assertion, however, that does not mean the Supreme Court affirmed the Fifth Circuit decision, nor does it mean the Fifth Circuit decision has the rule of law in the remaining circuits.

The Center mailed the Fifth Circuit's decision to over 300,000 addresses including all the nation's 15,000 school districts. This was followed by an April 5th statement in which the Center said it would send legal "SWAT" teams to make clear to school officials that student-led prayer was constitutional. "They said they will support us in court if we decide to file a lawsuit. We're seeing the eroding away of our national heritage," said Chad Vance a Farmer City, Illinois senior. Similar challenges are being encouraged and backed by legal support in Virginia and scores of other communities around the nation. On Robertson's 700 Club TV program, students and parents are being urged to call for a free school prayer kit.

To counter this aggressive campaign, ACLU's legislative counsel, Robert S. Peck, said the Union is seeking injunctions against school systems in Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Virginia.

THE HOLOCAUST AND THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

One fifth of the U.S. population apparently doubts the facts of the Holocaust, the ruthless program implemented by Nazi Germany to eradicate millions of Jews and the Roma (Gypsies), and for the automated wholesale murder of other enemies of the fascist state. According to the poll, commissioned by the American Jewish Congress and conducted by the Roper Organization, 22% of adults and 20% of high school students surveyed agreed that it was possible the Holocaust never happened. Among the adults surveyed, an additional 12% said they did not know if it was possible or impossible for the Holocaust to have happened.

BOOKS RECEIVED

A Selected, Annotated List

Walls, David

The Activists Handbook: The Concerned Citizen's Guide to the Leading Advocacy Organizations in America

New York: Fireside/Simon & Schuster 1993. 431 pages, bibliographical notes, and index.

An eclectic collection of diverse groups spanning the political spectrum. Coverage is divided into sections: Environmental, Peace and Foreign Policy, Human Rights, and Multi-issue. Human Rights is subdivided into Rights and Liberties; Race and Ethnicity; Gender and Sexuality; Age and Ability; Food, Shelter, and Sustainable Development; and Animal Welfare/Animal Rights. A very useful, informative, accessible, (and even witty) resource.

Atwood, Thomas C., ed.

Guide to Public Policy Experts: 1993-1994

Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation: 1993. 412 pages with index.

A cornucopia of conservatives whose views fall within the margins of the correct political lines as adjudicated by the Heritage Foundation. A Who's Who of who was influential during the Reagan/Bush administrations, and a guide to the opposition under Clinton. Experts are clustered by name, issue area, and geographical location. A surprisingly useful, often-overlooked resource.

Heins, Marjorie

Sex, Sin, and Blasphemy: A Guide to America's Censorship Wars

New York: The New Press, 1993. 210 pages, footnotes, suggestions for further reading, and index.

In this thoughtful, concise overview of the Culture Wars, Heins successfully reframes the debate. By portraying the censors not as conservative guardians of traditional values, but as perpetrators of scapegoating, she demonstrates how this historical pattern, triggered by social and economic stress, is used as a demagogic mechanism to avoid addressing large and complex real-world social ills.

Gebhardt, Jurgen, trans. Ruth Hein

Americanism: Revolutionary Order and Societal Self-Interpretation in the American Republic

Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. Press, 1993. 359 pages, bibliography, footnotes, and index.

An interesting exploration of U.S. public philosophy, with an emphasis on the role of John Adams and the other Founders in constructing a civil theology that simultaneously embraced equality and slavery. Gebhardt argues that modern consumerism and individualism have endangered Americanism, but explores only minimally the tensions produced by this concept's internal contradictions.

Kull, Andrew

The Color-Blind Constitution

Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1992. 301 pages, footnotes, index of cases, and general index.

Kull argues in his preface that his purpose is to "discover the history of the argument that the U.S. Constitution prohibits (or should prohibit) racial classifications by the agencies of government." He disavows any intent to attack affirmative action, although he notes his disavowals have been met with "visible skepticism."

King, Dennis

Get The Facts on Anyone: How you can use public sources to check the background of any person or organization.

New York: Prentice Hall, 1992. 216 pages, appendices, resource list, bibliography.

This is the book PRA recommends to persons asking how to investigate the political right, but King's reference work is useful for any type of serious (and legal) background investigation. The most valuable aspect of the work is its precise division of subjects based on the category, nature, and target of the research. Advice is presented in a nuts-and-bolts manner.

RESOURCES *cont. from page 12*

Culture Watch is a new "monthly annotated bibliography on culture, art, and political affairs" published by the Data Center and edited by Bill Berkowitz. Its premiere issues explains that for "the past fifteen years the Right has been actively and successfully setting the terms of the debate over social, economic, and political issues." *Culture Watch* seeks to create multi-issue awareness and understanding of the radical right and its campaign to control what you read, what you watch, what you listen to, and how you think. Visual artists should think of *Culture Watch* as a representational ty-

pographic equivalent of an aspirin the size of a Rothko...take two, and keep on fighting for freedom of expression. For more information or to place an order, write: The DataCenter, 464 19th Street, Oakland, CA 94612-2297. Tel.: (510) 835-4692.

A thoughtful and literate article on "The Environmental Backlash and the Retreat of the State," by Anthony E. Ladd appeared in the January 1993 issue of *Blueprint for Social Justice*, (Vol. XLVI, No. 5). For more information, write to: Blueprint, Loyola University, Box 12, 6363 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118-6195.

ANN MARI BUITRAGO 1929-1993

Political Research Associates joins the many friends and colleagues of Ann Mari who celebrate her life of progressive work. Her warmth and fierce determination are only two of the many qualities we will miss.

THE PUBLIC EYE Resources

God, Land, and Politics: The Wise Use and Christian Right Connection in 1992 Oregon Politics, is an outstanding new study published by the Western States Center and the Montana AFL-CIO. The 65-page spiral-bound report includes a useful bibliography, copious footnotes, and many charts and lists. It is available for \$8.00. In addition, the two groups have formed a Wise Use Public Exposure Project with a Grassroots Information Network that publishes a newsletter, *Western Horizons: Organizing a Better Environment for Working People*. The Western States Center also publishes the aptly named *Western States Center News*, which frequently carries articles about environmentalism and anti-environmentalism in the Pacific northwest. For more information or to place an order, write to the Western States Center, 522 S.W. Fifth Avenue, #1390, Portland, OR 97204. Tel.: (503) 228-8866.

The Greenpeace Guide to Anti-Environmental Organizations is a short but handy pocket guide in paperback format published by Odonian Press. The 110-page book includes a brief introduction to the six types of anti-environmental groups and a short discussion of their tactics, followed by thumbnail sketches of over 50 public relations

firms, corporate fronts, think tanks, legal foundations, endowments and charities, and wise use groups. It is available for \$5 at local bookstores or send \$7 to Odonian Press, Box 7776, Berkeley, CA 94707. Credit card orders or bulk purchases can be placed by calling 1-800-REAL-STORY (1-800-732-5786) or (510) 524-4000.

The *Mendocino Environmental Center Newsletter* devoted most of its 40-page issue #12 (Summer/Fall 1992) to an overview of the wise use movement. This compact yet breezy discussion of the individuals, groups and issues involved in wise use is the best quick introduction available. For a reprint, send \$2 to the Mendocino Environmental Center, 106 W. Standley Street, Ukiah, CA 95482.

The Scent of Opportunity: A Survey of the Wise Use/Property Rights Movement in New England is a 20-page PRA Topical Report by William K. Burke released in December 1992. An extensive bibliography by Jym St. Pierre of the Maine Woods Project of the Wilderness Society is included. Send \$6.50 to PRA.

A limited number of copies of *The Wise Use Movement: Strategic Analysis*

& *Fifty State Review* are available from the Clearinghouse for Environmental Advocacy and Research. Send \$11 to the Clearinghouse, c/o the Center for Resource Economics, 1718 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20009. Tel.: (202) 667-6982.

You won't know whether to laugh or cry when you read *Trashing the Economy: How Runaway Environmentalism is Wrecking America*, by wise use gurus Ron Arnold and Alan Gottlieb. Over 650 pages packed with right-wing paranoia can be obtained for \$19.95. Self-published by the authors' Free Enterprise Press, it is distributed through the mail for \$22.95 by Merril Press, P.O. Box 1682, Bellevue, WA 98009.

Antidotes to wise use are found regularly in the pages of the *New Voices* newsletter, edited by Kathy Kilmer at the Wilderness Society, 7475 Dakin Street, Denver, CO 80221. The newsletter is aimed at cultivating a new perspective on the environment among the "people of the New West." Write for information.

RESOURCES continued on page 11

The Public Eye

NEWSLETTER

Political Research Associates
678 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 702
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-3355