

# ENVIRONMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT, 1962-1992

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that humankind's concern for the environment dates back many centuries, the concept of nature as an infinite resource that could be exploited as humankind saw fit, prevailed. The environmental revolution of the 1960s shattered this belief and recurrent environmental disasters in the late sixties brought home the finite capability of the natural environment to absorb unchecked industrial and demographic growth.

The perceived environmental crisis compelled governments and the United Nations (UN) to address the widespread environmental degradation, which was duly done when the UN convened the historic United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) in Stockholm in June 1972. UNCHE was very important, for not only was it the first international environmental conference of its kind, but it also succeeded in placing the environment on national and international political agendas.<sup>2</sup> Twenty years later, in June 1992, the governments of the world met again, this time in Rio de Janeiro, for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) - also known as the Earth Summit - to reconsider the paths taken since UNCHE in the quest for a viable future for humankind. The Rio summit redirected the course of the global environmental movement<sup>3</sup> towards the goal of sustainable development.<sup>4</sup>

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2 MAL Miller, *The Third world in global environmental politics* (Buckingham, 1995), p. 7; RJ Dalton, *The green rainbow: environmental groups in Western Europe* (New Haven, 1994), pp. 37-8.

3 Also referred to as new environmentalism, new wave environmentalism, second wave environmentalism and modern environmentalism.

4 For the purpose of this article sustainable development "is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our common future* (Oxford, 1987), p. 43.

It further established that environmental problems were not confined to national and/or regional boundaries, but were in fact global problems and that all role-players had a duty to conserve the natural environment, not for the sake of the citizens of individual countries, but for humankind as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the fact that the natural environment was in a better state in 1962 than in 1992, the thirty years in between represents an important formative period in which the global environmental movement developed rapidly from the first tentative steps taken to improve the environment in 1962, to acknowledging by 1992 that the world at large needed a new development model (namely sustainable development) if humankind and other life forms were to survive. On a national level, these developments included the institutionalisation of environmental affairs within government structures, the implementation of wide-ranging environmental legislation and policy, and the activities of non-governmental role-players. On an international level, the UN, its specialised agencies and other interested parties worked towards improving the environment through programmes and conventions aimed at getting the governments of the world involved in and committed to strategies to remedy the environmental degradation.

During this formative period three distinct sectors emerged in the global environmental movement, namely the UN and its specialised agencies, national governments and the environmental non-governmental role-players. This article aims at exploring non-governmental activities and contributions to global environmentalism between 1962 and 1992. Attention will be directed to two main aspects: firstly, on the role played by the non-governmental sector in bringing about the environmental revolution in the 1960s; secondly, on the activities of non-governmental role-players in between UNCHE in 1972 and UNCED in 1992.

## **2. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ROLE-PLAYERS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVOLUTION, 1962-1972**

The immediate roots of the modern environmental movement can be traced back to the conservation movement of the nineteenth century that focused mainly on threats to particular areas or species. Included in the conservation agenda was concern with high air pollution levels, a direct result of the

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5 R Sandbrook, "From Stockholm to Rio" in J Quarric (ed.), *Earth Summit 1992* (London, 1992), p. 16.

Industrial Revolution and a preoccupation with the conservation of the natural environment, both particular areas and fauna and flora species. In general, as already mentioned, the natural environment was viewed as an infinite resource that could be utilised as man saw fit.<sup>6</sup>

The conservation agenda or first-generation environmental issues continued to dominate environmental concern in the first half of the twentieth century. By the 1960s, however, the movement proved unable to address the multitude of second-generation environmental problems such as water and air pollution, the proliferation of chemical waste, the possible threats of nuclear weapons and the widespread use of pesticides. These environmental problems differed from the conservation movement's concern for particular areas and species in that it affected the amenities and quality of life of humans around the globe.<sup>7</sup>

The existence of and the problems surrounding these second-generation environmental problems were brought to the open by the academic community in the course of the 1960s. The publication of the book **Silent spring** by career biologist Rachel Carson in 1962 in the United States of America (USA), is hailed by many as the beginning of the environmental revolution (and thus also of modern environmentalism). In **Silent spring**, Carson focused the attention on the environmental problems caused by the use of pesticides. Her central concern was with the way dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT)<sup>8</sup> and other pesticides impeded the reproductive cycle of bird life. On a more general level, **Silent spring** also illustrated how human activity influences the natural environment, and how this influence could turn out to be poisonous for humans as well.<sup>9</sup>

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6 J McCormick, **The global environmental movement: reclaiming paradise** (London, 1989), pp. viii-ix, 12; J Wiley, **Suid-Afrika se rol en betrokkeheid by internasionale omgewingsbewaring** (CR Swart Lecture 19, University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein, 5 September 1986), pp. 3-4; BG Norton, **Towards unity among environmentalists** (Oxford, 1991), p. 62.

7 Norton, p. 62; SP Hays, "Three decades of environmental politics: the historical context" in MJ Lacey (ed.), **Government and environmental politics: essays on historical developments since World War Two** (Washington, 1991), p. 22; RC Mitchell, "From conservation to environmental movement; the development of the modern environmental lobbies" in Lacey (ed.), pp. 84-6.

8 DDT was first discovered in 1939. It was cheap and easy to make. The initial effectiveness as a pesticide led to its widespread use before its effect on the natural environment was properly tested.

9 McCormick, p. 55; RE Goodin, **Green political theory** (Cambridge, 1992), p. 3.

**Silent spring** was an immediate best seller with the general public and sold more than 100 000 copies in the first three months. While her book was embraced by the general public, the US Department of Agriculture and the chemical industry viewed it as a threat and mounted a \$250 000 campaign against Carson to discredit her.<sup>10</sup> In August 1962 President JF Kennedy requested his scientific advisor to study the pesticide issue. In May 1963 the President's Scientific Advisory Committee (PSAC) released its report in which it took a critical stance against the pesticide industry and the federal government. The PSAC agreed with Carson on the harmful nature of pesticides in general, and DDT in particular, and thereby firmly established that a problem existed. **Silent spring** sparked off a wide public debate over the use of pesticides and directly led to changes in local and national government policy in the USA and several Western European countries.<sup>11</sup>

Beinart and Coates point out that the enthusiastic reception of **Silent spring** should in part be seen against the background of the discussions in the 1950s regarding the harmful effects of nuclear fall-out. By 1962 a biologist, Barry Commoner, had already traced isotopes from nuclear surface tests conducted in the Nevada Desert (USA) in the 1950s, via grass and cow's milk, into the teeth of human babies where they resurfaced as high concentrations of radioactive strontium-90. DDT found in fatty tissues of Antarctic penguins and in other animals such as the cahow bird (found mainly around the Bermuda islands) did their part in convincing the general public that they had to start reconsidering the industries around which they built their national economies and ultimately their lives.<sup>12</sup>

Carson's **Silent spring** stimulated academic discussions on the state and the future of the environment which led to the publication of numerous alarmist environment-orientated books, both in the USA and in Western Europe: Stuart Updall, **The quiet crisis** (1963); Jean Dorst, **Avant que nature meure (Before nature dies, 1965)**; Rolf Edberg, **Spillran av ett moln (On the shred of a cloud, 1996)**; Paul Ehrlich, **The population bomb** (1968); as well as two books by Barry Commoner, **Science and survival** (1966) and the famous **The closing circle**

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10 GT Miller, **Living in the environment: principles, connections and solutions** (9<sup>th</sup> edition, Belmont, 1996), p. 43.

11 McCormick, p. 56; F Graham, **Silent spring** (London, 1970), pp. 268-9.

12 W Beinart and P Coates, **Environment and history: the taming of nature in the USA and South Africa** (London, 1995), pp. 95-6; PA Schaeffer, **Pollution and the death of man: the Christian view of ecology** (Wheaton, 1970), p. 9

(1972), to name only a few.<sup>13</sup> Environmental models were further developed by the Club of Rome and the British magazine, the **Ecologist**, respectively entitled **Limits to growth** (1972) and **Blueprint for survival** (1972), in which the authors predicted the breakdown of society if the pollution, demographic and industrial trends were allowed to persist.<sup>14</sup>

Most of these authors drew public attention to three key issues, namely pollution, population growth<sup>15</sup> and technology. Their books were alarmist in nature and the more pessimistic among them quickly earned titles such as "the prophets of doom".<sup>16</sup> The influence of these "prophets of doom" on the minds of the general public in the 1960s and 1970s should not be downplayed. Phrases like "if we are to survive" brought visions of the end of the world into people's homes. Various religions, notably Christianity, Judaism and Islam had for centuries preached that the world would someday come to an end because of a Higher Being. The public was now confronted with a real possibility of the world coming to an end due to human actions alone. The Cold War tensions and the mere thought of a possible nuclear war that would bring life as we know it on earth to an end within minutes, did not help.

The publication of these alarmist environment-orientated books coincided with a series of environmental disasters in the late 1960s that seemed to prove the "prophets of doom" correct and that heightened public concern over environmental problems even further. One of the first disasters focused the attention on the implications of pollution and involved the collapse of a pit-heap above Aberfan, a village in South Wales in October 1966. This tragedy resulted in the deaths of 144 people, 116 of whom were children attending the local school at the time of the disaster.<sup>17</sup> Oil pollution became a major issue in 1967 when the oiltanker, **Torrey Canyon**, ran aground in the English Channel, polluting hundreds of kilometres of Cornish coastline with about 875 000 barrels of crude oil.<sup>18</sup> To make matters worse, the British government authorised the

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13 Dalton, pp. 35-6.

14 McCormick, pp. 74-9.

15 It was common practice to refer to the population growth in terms of the population explosion. The main reason for this was the relative short period it took the world's population to grow from 2 to 3 billion. The first billion was achieved in about 1850; eighty years later in 1930 the second billion mark was passed and only 30 years later it moved up to 3 billion. PM Hauser, "On population and environment: policy and problems" in **Vital Speeches of the Day** 36(22), 1 September 1970, pp. 696-7.

16 McCormick, p. 69.

17 McCormick, p. 57.

18 One barrel equals 159 litres of crude oil. Dalton, p. 36; MAL Miller, p. 6.

use of untested detergents to break down the oil. Not only were these detergents ineffective, but they also caused further biological damage, and in the end the Royal Air Force had to be called in to set the spilled oil alight with bombs.<sup>19</sup>

Two years later, toxins leaking into the Rhine River, the main source of drinking water for millions of Europeans, killed tons of fish, leaving rotting, poisoned fish along the banks of the river. In the same year a massive blow-out of an oil platform off Santa Barbara polluted kilometres of Californian coastline.<sup>20</sup> IN 1969 the oil-polluted Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, Ohio, caught fire and burned for eight days. By the late 1960s, Lake Erie, a huge inland sea in the northern parts of the USA, had become so polluted with the industrial discharges from places such as Buffalo, Detroit and Toledo that millions of fish died and most of its beaches had to be closed.<sup>21</sup>

Together with the emergence of new environmental problems, the 1960s also saw the development of grassroots protest movements in the USA and Western Europe which led to a new social consciousness in which the tendency was to criticise and question the status quo. Modern environmentalism developed alongside the "anti"-movements of the sixties (for example the anti-Vietnam, anti-nuclear and other movements), fuelled in particular by the youthful counterculture of the hippies and their anti-nuclear, anti-war and pro-peace campaigns. While the natural disasters and the academic debate heightened the general public's environmental awareness, the student movement of the late 1960s created a new generation of young political activists, who, according to Dalton, provided a leadership cadre and an activist core for many of the newly formed environmental groups.<sup>22</sup>

The roots of the modern French environmental movement are mostly traced back to the May Revolts of 1968. The revolts gave French environmentalism an ideological base by linking environmental degradation to the unbridled economic growth in France and to the overcentralised French state. In the Netherlands the environmental movement originated from the Prove (1965-1967) and the Kabouter (1968-1970) movements. Similarly, the student movements and protests of the late 1960s are credited for the beginning of the environmental movements in both West Germany and Denmark. Youth

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19 McCormick, p. 57.

20 Dalton, p. 36.

21 B Comoner, *The closing circle: confronting the environmental crisis* (London, 1972), pp. 94-5; GT Miller, p. 41.

22 Norton, p. 62; Beinart and Coates, p. 94; Dalton, pp. 36-7.

protesters in Belgium, aiming mainly at regional decentralisation and democratisation, also gradually started to incorporate environmental issues in their demands. In the Flemish part of Belgium, environmentalism developed out of a charismatic Catholic movement, *Anders Gaan Leven*. This movement rejected the industrial society in favour of a simple lifestyle.<sup>23</sup>

The environmental revolution was the result of interplay between various factors in the 1960s. The academic community was the first to sound the alarm over the dismal state of the natural environment and the direct implications it had for human life on earth. The natural environment's "reply" to these doomsday predictions was a series of natural disasters, occurring one after the other and which were directly linked to the mismanagement of the environment by humankind. The combination of the academic community's warnings and nature's capitulation in certain parts, created a new awareness of the inherent dangers involved in modern industrialised societies with the general public and prompted newly established youth counterculture movements to take up the environmental issue.

The demands of the general public for a cleaner environment in turn prompted governments, on a national level, and the UN, on an international level, to start paying constructive attention to the state of the environment. On a national level it led, *inter alia*, to a re-evaluation of the kind of legislative protection governments afforded the natural environment (for example the promulgation of the National Environmental Policy Act in the USA in 1970), and to the institutionalisation of environmental affairs within governmental structures (for example Britain created the first Department of Environment in the world in November 1970).<sup>24</sup> On an international level, the UN addressed the concerns of the environmental revolution when it convened the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) in Stockholm in June 1972.<sup>25</sup> Through UNCHE the UN established the environment as an international political issue to be discussed by the leading politicians of the world, and not just by the natural scientists as had been the case prior to UNCHE.<sup>26</sup>

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23 Dalton, pp. 36-7.

24 McCormick, pp. 127, 134.

25 See United Nations, "Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972", <[gopher://unepq.unep.org/00/un/unep/govcoun/decision/1972stoc/gc1972.txt](http://gopher://unepq.unep.org/00/un/unep/govcoun/decision/1972stoc/gc1972.txt)>, 1973 for the full UN report on UNCHE.

26 United Nations, *Human settlements: the environmental challenge* (London, 1974), p. xi; Dalton, pp. 37-8.

### 3. THE ACTIVITIES OF ENVIRONMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ROLE-PLAYERS, 1972-1992

Through the actions of environmental non-governmental role-players the environment became a political issue for the UN and the governments of the world, and these two sectors came to dominate the official protection of the environment in the important twenty years in between UNCHE in 1972 and UNCED in 1992. However, the UN and its specialised agencies could only be as strong as member states allowed it to be, while governments walked a tightrope between protecting the environment and realising the economic aspirations of the business community. This state of affairs resulted in the non-governmental sector of the environmental movement taking on the role of educators, informers, activists and instigators of change away from environmental deterioration towards sustainable societies between 1972 and 1992. Though numerous non-governmental role-players emerged in the period under discussion, due to spatial limitation attention will only be paid to the contributions of the academic community, green political parties and environmental non-governmental organisations.

#### 3.1 Research by the academic community

While the academic community performed the role of "prophets of doom" during the environmental revolution, their contribution to the environmental movement between 1972 and 1992 was more subdued. Through their research the academics focused attention on many environmental hazards and crisis situations such as the impact of nuclear fall-out hazardous wastes on both the human and natural environment, and the plight of endangered fauna and flora species. These investigations in turn led to a greater understanding of the processes of nature and the way humankind's activities influence it. One such field of research investigated the impact of asbestos on human beings and by the late 1970s medical research concluded that mortality from lung-diseases like asbestosis and mesothelioma could be directly linked to asbestos exposure. These research findings sparked off an international campaign against asbestos and resulted during the late 1970s and early 1980s in an overnight drop in world demand for the product and in some cases in the total banning of its use.<sup>27</sup>

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27 PHR Snyman, "Safety and health in the Northern Cape blue asbestos belt" in *Historia* 33(1), May 1988, pp. 31-3.

More important was the 1985 discovery by researchers that 50 % of the ozone in the upper stratosphere over Antarctica was being destroyed annually from September to December. Researchers identified chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) as the primary cause of this depletion, and a world-wide campaign to ban the use and production of CFCs was initiated by various role-players in response to these findings. The research into the depletion of the ozone layer also directly resulted in the signing of two international conventions, namely the Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (Vienna, 1985) and the Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone layer (Montreal, 1987).<sup>28</sup>

### 3.2 Green political parties

Public concern for the environment also found expression in party politics in many countries and led to the founding of green political parties. According to Müller-Rommel there are three categories of green political parties: already existing, small socialist parties that adopted an environment agenda and changed into green parties; liberal and agrarian parties that had traditionally concerned themselves with environmental issues, and newly formed green parties set up to provide a voice for the environment in the traditional political system of countries.<sup>29</sup>

Contrary to the general held belief, the world's first green party was not the Values Party of New Zealand. The founding of the United Tasmania Group (UTG) in Australia preceded that of the Values Party by one month when it came into existence in April 1972. The UTG was formed to resist plans to flood lake Pedder in Tasmania as part of a hydroelectric development plan.<sup>30</sup> A month later the Values Party was formed in Wellington, New Zealand. It contested nearly half of the seats in the general election of 1972, winning 2,8 % of the votes by placing emphasis on issues such as energy, the environment and the equality of women. In 1975 the Values Party won 5,2 % of the vote, but their support fell to 2,5 % in the 1978 election, and diminished even further to 0,2 % in the 1981 and the 1984 elections. Though it achieved 5,2 % of the vote at its height, the Values Party was never able to gain parliamentary representation

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28 GT Miller, pp. 318-23; I McDonald et al., "The Ozone Awareness Campaign" in *African Wildlife* 45(2), 1991, pp. 82-4.

29 F Müller-Rommel, "Ecology parties in Western Europe" in *West European Politics* 5(1), January 1982, pp. 68-74.

30 PR Hay and MG Haward, "Comparative green politics: beyond the European context?" in *Political Studies* 35(3), September 1988, pp. 433-53.

due to the electoral system in New Zealand.<sup>31</sup>

Even though the first green parties were formed in Australia and New Zealand, Western Europe came to dominate the green political scene from the late 1970s onwards.<sup>32</sup> The first West-European green party, the People Party (renamed the Ecology Party in 1975 and renamed again in 1985 as the Green Party), was founded in Britain in February 1973. Even though it has contested local, general and European elections since 1974, the Green Party has never been able to gain representation in the British Parliament.<sup>33</sup> The Partido Popular Monarquico in Portugal followed in May 1974 and the already existing Movimento Democrático Português (founded in 1969) started to adopt a green agenda in the course of the 1970s.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the existence of a few green parties, they only gained international attention in 1983 when the German party, Die Grünen, became the first green party to gain representation in a national parliament. In the German national election of May 1983, Die Grünen won 5,6 % of the vote (thereby passing the 5 % minimum required by law for representation in a provincial assembly or in the Bundestag) and gained 27 seats in the Bundestag.<sup>35</sup> The origin of green politics in the Federal Republic of Germany may be traced back to the anti-repression movement (early 1970s),<sup>36</sup> the anti-nuclear movement (mainly renouncing the use of nuclear energy, 1960s-1980s) and the peace movement (anti-NATO oriented, that campaigned against the siting of middle-range

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31 S Rainbow, *Green politics* (Auckland, 1993), pp. ix-x; McCormick, p. 140.

32 The USA, in contrast, has very limited examples of green political parties, the best known being the Citizens Party. Founded in 1979 when a number of small protest groups amalgamated, the Citizens Party's impact on a federal political level has remained negligible. R Gottlieb, *Forcing the spring: the transformation of the American environmental movement* (Washington, 1993), pp. 174, 199-201.

33 J Porritt (ed.), *Friends of the earth handbook* (London, 1990), pp. 13-4; J Sallnow and S Arlett, "Green today gone tomorrow?" in *Geographical Magazine* 61(11), November 1989, p. 11; W Rüdiger and PD Lowe, "The withered 'greening' of British politics: a study of the Ecology Party" in *Political Studies* 34(2), June 1986, pp. 262-84.

34 H Vollgraaff, "Ekologisme: 'n alternatiewe lewenswyse" in *Annals of the South African Cultural History Museum* 7(1), November 1995, pp. 43-4.

35 Sallnow and Arlett, p. 11.

36 The anti-repression movement was sparked off by the *Radikalenerlass* issued by the Federal Government in 1972. The *Radikalenerlass* produced an employment ban on "radical" job seekers in the civil service. These "radical" job seekers were mostly those students who participated in the student movement of the late sixties and who had neo-Marxist or socialist leanings. GO Kvistad, "Between state and society: green political ideology in the mid-1980s" in *West European Politics* 10(2), April 1987, p. 218.

nuclear missiles in Germany).<sup>37</sup>

Die Grünen was founded on 13 January 1980 when four green orientated groupings amalgamated to form a single political party. Die Grünen consisted of people who felt concerned about the way the industrial civilisation was moving in the Federal Republic. It attracted conservationists (concerned with environmental protection), Christians (concerned with the destruction of creation), educated liberals (concerned with global ecology), technicians (with insight into risk-technology), socialists (concerned with the consequences of capitalism) and neo-Marxist-Leninists (seeing Die Grünen as the first opportunity for a truly left-wing party).<sup>38</sup>

Due to its diverse support base, the founding principle was dialogue, not only within the party itself, but also between Die Grünen and the citizens. It stood for four ideals, namely ecology, social responsibility, grassroots citizenship and non-violence. The members saw the position of the party as being "neither left nor right, we are in front of them all".<sup>39</sup>

Die Grünen was not an immediate success with the electorate. In the general election of 1980 they managed to gain only 1,5 % of the vote. As has already been pointed out, their big breakthrough came in the 1983 election when their 5,6 % of the vote gave them 27 seats in the Bundestag. This percentage was increased in the 1987 general election to 8,2 %, which meant 42 seats in the parliament.<sup>40</sup> However, their position on German unification had them thrown out of the Bundestag in 1989. German unification was the single most important issue in the 1989 general election and even though Die Grünen spoke out in favour of a democratic, independent East Germany, the party opted not to make an issue out of unification. They went into the general election with the slogan "they all are speaking about the nation, we are speaking about the weather", lost more than half of their electoral support, and with only

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37 H Lippelt, "The German case: Die Grünen. Short history - basic ideas", <<http://www/hrz/uni-oldenburg.de/~oliver/bg/history.html>>, November 1991. See also H Wiesenthal (edited by J Ferris), **Realism in green politics: social movements and ecological reform in Germany** (Manchester, 1993), pp. 190-223.

38 Lippelt. The Federal Republic of Germany never had a strong left-wing political sector due to the promotion of a strong anti-communistic milieu by consecutive governments after 1945. Vollgraaff, p. 10.

39 B Devall, **Simple in means, rich in ends: practising deep ecology** (London, 1988), p. 135; K Brynard, "Groenes tem hul ou bleid" in *Insig*, December 1989, p. 19.

40 Sallnow and Arlett, pp. 10-1.

3,3 % of the votes were denied further parliamentary representation.<sup>41</sup>

Die Grünen's success in the 1987 general election should be seen against the background of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the USSR. A safety test gone wrong resulted in the meltdown of reactor no. 4 at the Chernobyl nuclear power-station on 25 and 26 April 1986. A south-easterly wind carried the radioactive nuclear fall-out (isotopes of plutonium and uranium) first to Scandinavia and then to Western Europe where abnormally high levels of radioactivity were measured. Apart from focusing attention on the dangers involved in the generation of nuclear energy, Chernobyl further heightened the level of environmental awareness to an unprecedented level across the globe.<sup>42</sup>

Renewed environmental awareness among the electorate in turn meant higher voting percentages for green parties across Western Europe. Besides Die Grünen, Verdi, in Italy, took 2,5 % of the votes in the June 1987 general election, thereby gaining thirteen representatives in the Chamber of Deputies. In Sweden, the Miljöpartiet de Gröna increased its percentage of the votes in the general election from 1,5 % in 1985 to 5,5 % in 1988 which gave them twenty seats in the Riksdag (parliament). The Miljöpartiet de Gröna subsequently became the first new party to enter the Swedish parliament in 70 years. In Austria, three green groups, namely the alternative Liste Österreich, Vereinte Grüne Österreich and the Citizen's Initiative Parliament gained a collective 4,82 % of the vote in the general election of November 1986. The three groups amalgamated to form the Grüne Alternativen and became the first new group to enter the Nationalrat (parliament) since 1959.<sup>43</sup>

Green parties elsewhere in Western Europe, notably in the Netherlands, France, Belgium and Finland recorded similar successes.<sup>44</sup> Elections for the European Parliament (EP) held in 1989 also saw a sharp increase in support for green parties contesting the election. Britain's Green Party improved on its

41 Lippelt. After the general elections of 1994, Die Grünen re-entered the Bundestag as the country's third most powerful party and in 1998 it became the first green party to govern when the newly elected majority party, the SPD, entered into a two-party governing pact with Die Grünen. M Dowie, *Losing ground: American environmentalism at the close of the twentieth century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), p. 241; J Bonfante, "Chance for change" in *Time* 152(15), 12 October 1998, pp. 27-9.

42 Greenpeace, *Greenpeace zwartboek over het nucleaire tijdperk* (Weert, 1989), pp. 257-68; JO Jackson, "Nuclear time bombs" in *Time* 140(23), 7 December 1992, pp. 36, 41.

43 Sallnow and Arlett, pp. 10-1.

44 See McCormic, pp. 140-2 for a short discussion on the individual green parties in Western Europe and their electoral success rates.

0,7 % (1979) and 0,5 % (1984) voters' support to an all-time high of 14,5 % in the 1989 EP election. However, due to the electoral system in Britain, the Green Party did not obtain any representation in the EP.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.3 Environmental non-governmental organisations

One of the salient features of the modern environmental movement is the phenomenal growth in the number and prominence of environmental non-governmental organisations (ENGOS) since the 1960s. No definite directory exists that lists all the ENGOS that operate on local, national and international levels around the globe. The **Who is who in service of the earth** listed about 2 500 ENGOS in 1991, while the **International directory of non-governmental organisations** lists about 1 650 environmental and developmental NGOs. The growth of ENGOS is especially evident in countries such as Brazil where the ENGO-sector grew from 400 organisations in 1985 to 1 300 by 1991. On the African continent 21 ENGOS founded the African NGOs Environment Network in 1982. By 1990 membership to this organisation had grown to 530 ENGOS from 45 countries.<sup>46</sup> Though thousands of ENGOS exist throughout the world, for the purpose of this article, the focus will only be directed at Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace (being examples of internationally-minded ENGOS with broad environmental agendas), Earth First! (representing ENGOS with radical environmental agendas) and the Environmental Justice Movement (which opened the environmental movement up to working classes and people of colour).

Friends of the Earth (FoE) was established in 1969 by David Brower who had been the Executive Director of the Sierra Club<sup>47</sup> in the USA (a position he held from 1952 till May 1969). Even though Brower built the Sierra Club up to be the most influential conservation group in the country, his unorthodox methods and interest in non-conservation issues created tension between him and the board, which ultimately led to his dismissal in May 1969.<sup>48</sup> Brower went on to found FoE with the conviction that solutions to environmental problems

45 See "Table 1" in Sallnow and Arlett, p. 11; Porritt, p. 14.

46 T Princen and M Finger, **Environmental NGOs in world politics: linking the local and the global** (London, 1994), pp. 1-3.

47 John Muir founded the Sierra Club in 1892 with the aim of preserving the forests and other features of the Sierra Nevada mountains. McCormick, p. 12.

48 See RA Jones, "Fracticide in the Sierra Club" in W Anderson (ed.), **Politics and environment; a reader in ecological crisis** (Pacific Palisades, 1970), pp. 284-90 for a discussion of the conflict between Brower and the board of the Sierra Club.

required fundamental changes to the social structures of society. Through well-publicised campaign methods, FoE not only brought environmental evils to the public's attention, but also built up a support base which mainly consisted of the educated white middle-class.<sup>49</sup>

FoE grew rapidly after its 1969 origin in San Francisco, and offices were opened in Paris (July 1970) and London (October 1970). Representatives from national FoE offices from the UK, France, Sweden and the USA got together in the Rambouillet forest in France in 1971, which led to the establishment of FoE International (FoE1 - first headquartered in San Francisco, later moved to Amsterdam).<sup>50</sup> It remained a predominately northern hemisphere organisation until the 1980s when groups from Asia, Latin America and Africa joined FoE. In 1988 the Polish Polski Klub Ekologiczny joined FoE and branches were soon opened in other former Eastern bloc countries, notably Estonia, the Czech Republic and the Ukraine.<sup>51</sup>

Between 1972 and 1992 FoE addressed a multitude of environmental issues such as pollution, energy, transport, rain forests, wildlife and legislative changes. It also achieved a great number of successes (and failures) like the 1982 moratorium on commercial whaling issued by the International Whaling Commission.<sup>52</sup>

In 1971 nuclear tests by the USA around the island Amchitka, off Alaska, led to the creation of the world's most visible ENGO, Greenpeace. In 1970, Jim Bohlen, Paul Cote and Irving Stone formed the Don't Make a Wave Committee to campaign against the US nuclear tests. (The name Greenpeace was adopted in the course of 1971.) A 24-meter halibut seiner, the **Phyllis Cormack**, was chartered by the committee to sail into the nuclear testing area, and left Vancouver for Amchitka on 21 September 1971. Their mission was unsuccessful and the USA detonated a nuclear bomb off Amchitka on 6 November. However, due to public pressure that resulted from the Greenpeace campaign, the US government announced four months later that all nuclear tests around

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49 McCormick, p. 144.

50 E Matthews, "FoE1: no small miracle" in *Link* 73, July/August 1996 (25<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue), p. 5.

51 Friends of the Earth International, *25 years for planet, for people* (pamphlet, Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 2-3, 25.

52 See Friends of the Earth International, pp. 5-19 and *Link* 73, July/August 1996 (25<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue), pp. 1-33 for examples of FoE successes between 1972 and 1992. See also R Lamb (in collaboration with Friends of the Earth), *Promising the earth* (London, 1996), for a history of FoE England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Amchitka would come to an end, and the island was declared a nature reserve.<sup>53</sup> Sailing directly into nuclear testing areas at sea became a trademark of Greenpeace with particular attention being paid to French nuclear testing in the Pacific Ocean.<sup>54</sup>

Greenpeace grew rapidly from its origin in Vancouver to more than 30 branches across the world and a Greenpeace-base in Antarctica. Along the way Greenpeace broadened its scope from focusing only on anti-nuclear actions, to include campaigns against toxic waste and pollution transfers, the destruction of the ozone layer, climatic changes, forests, oceans and disarmament. The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic treaty, signed in October 1991, led to the creation of a world park in Antarctica in which the ecosystem is guaranteed protection by the signatories until 2041<sup>55</sup> - one of the many notable successes after many years of campaigning.

Environmental activism between 1972 and 1992 was not confined to mainstream and internationally minded ENGOs like FoE and Greenpeace. Grass-roots environmental activist groups also played a prominent role and in many instances were more successful than their mainstream counterparts. The emergence of the Environmental Justice Movement in the USA from the late 1970s onwards had a profound effect on the environmental movement as a whole, mainly because it opened the predominantly white middle-class based environmental movement up to working classes and people of colour. The Environmental Justice Movement, based upon the "not-in-my-back-yard" principle, has two major tributaries: the first consists mainly of women organised in thousands of anti-toxic groups to confront perceived risks to the health of their families.

53 M Brown and J May, *The Greenpeace story: the inside story of the world's most dynamic environmental pressure group* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London, 1991), pp. 6-15; Greenpeace Nederland, *Greenpeace informatie brochure: geschiedenis, campagnes, successen* (brochure, Amsterdam, 1997), p. 3; T Bode, "De Greenpeace-doom" in *Greenpeace* 3, 1996 (Jubilee edition), p. 3.

54 The most publicised confrontation between Greenpeace and the French government occurred in 1985 when the French government gave the order to sink the Greenpeace ship, *Rainbow Warrior*. At the time it was docked at the Marsden Wharf in Auckland, New Zealand. Two bombs were detonated which killed one crew member, Fernando Pereira, and sank the *Rainbow Warrior*. Brown and May, pp. 112-27. See also R Morgan and B Whitaker, *Rainbow Warrior* (London, 1986), for a detailed discussion.

55 P Waner, "In defence of banner hangers: the dark green politics of Greenpeace" in BR Taylor (ed.), *Ecological resistance movements: the global emergence of radical and popular environmentalism* (Albany, 1995), pp. 306-7; K Eitner and M Smeitink, "Hoogte- en dieptepunten" in *Greenpeace* 3, 1996 (Jubilee edition), p. 18; Greenpeace Nederland, *Antarctica gered!* (pamphlet, Amsterdam, 1995). See also Brown and May, and *Greenpeace* 3, 1996 (Jubilee edition), pp. 1-39 for a discussion of the history of Greenpeace.

The instigator that sparked off nation-wide anti-toxic campaigns in the USA, was housewife Lois Marie Gibbs and the Love Canal issue. The US authorities had allowed the development of a working class neighbourhood, Love Canal, on a toxic waste dump. After three years of campaigning by Gibbs, the authorities in 1981 permanently relocated over 500 households which had previously resided in Love Canal. Since then hundreds of struggles by local anti-toxic groups have emerged to demand environmental justice from the US government.<sup>56</sup>

The second major tributary of the Environmental Justice Movement centres around the environmental perceptions of the African American community in the USA. Focusing mainly on civil rights and social justice, African Americans stayed away from the environmental movement until the early 1980s. The first significant environmental protest by African Americans took place in Warren County, North Carolina, in 1982 and was aimed against a proposed landfill, in Warren County, for polluted soil. Prominent African American political, church and civil rights leaders got involved in the struggle, which in turn led to studies on the relation between race and toxic waste dumps, conducted by the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice. These studies found a direct correlation between the siting of hazardous waste sites and the racial composition of the community close-by, and the fight against "environmental racism"<sup>57</sup> was thus born. The high point of this movement so far has been the First National People of Colour Environmental Leadership Summit held in Washington D.C., 24-27 October 1991. This Summit underlined the reality that the environmental movement was no longer a "white issue".<sup>58</sup>

Grassroots environmental activism was not confined to the Environmental Justice Movement. The founding of the radical ENGO, Earth First! (EF!) in 1980 added a new dimension to the environmental movement. Founded on the principle that direct action is the only way to fight back in civilisation's war

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56 B Edwards, "With liberty and environmental justice for all: the emergence and challenge of grassroots environmentalism in the United States" in Taylor (ed.), pp. 35-9; M Mowrey and T Redmond, **Not in our backyard; the people and events that shaped America's modern environmental movement** (New York, 1993), pp. 188-90.

57 The US South African Exchange Programme on Environmental Justice defines environmental racism as "when decisions on hazardous waste siting, highway building, sewage treatment plant planning, gentrification, poor working conditions, clean-up of waste sites, burying of nuclear waste, and delivery of services directly or indirectly impact on communities of color". South African Exchange Programme on Environmental Justice, "What interests us", <<http://www.igc.apc.org/saepej/Interests.html>>, s.a.

58 Edwards, pp. 39-41.

against nature, EF! demands monkeywrenching,<sup>59</sup> ecotage<sup>60</sup> and non-violent action. Criticising mainstream existing ENGOs like Greenpeace and FoE for their corporate structures, EF! and its support groups have gone out of their way to build up a world-wide network with no hierarchy or structure.<sup>61</sup>

EF! announced itself in 1980 by unfurling a plastic "crack" down the face of the Glen Canyon Dam, thereby symbolically "liberating" the Colorado River from the dam. EF! has since been involved in struggles against the destruction of the rain forests and the building of highways, to name but two. Its self-proclaimed navy, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, is best known for sinking whaling ships and claims credit for sinking or scuttling five such ships.<sup>62</sup>

The founding of EF! and its activities since 1980 has added a much-needed component to the ENGO sector of the environmental movement. It was founded at a time when the more mainstream groups were moving away from their protesting phase towards a more rational form of environmentalism, co-operating especially in the writing and implementing of policy within governments and sometimes in UN structures. With the ENGO sector being a variety of all sorts, the ENGO movement also needed groups like EF! to run highly publicised and at times dangerous campaigns in order to bring the seriousness of the environmental crisis home to humankind.<sup>63</sup>

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The global environmental movement has come a long way in the thirty years from the publication of Carson's *Silent spring* in 1962 to the Earth Summit in 1992. As such, the focus of the movement also gradually shifted from concern over the influence of human activity on the environment voiced by the environmental revolution and UNCHE in 1972 to focusing at the Earth Summit

59 Monkeywrenching is the "purposeful dismantling or disabling of artefacts used in environmentally destructive practices at a specific site". Deval, p. 140.

60 Ecotage (i.e. ecological counter-sabotage) is "disabling a technological or bureaucratic operation in defense of one's place. It is self-defense." Deval, p. 140.

61 Deval, pp. 138-41; A Dobson (ed.), *The green reader* (London, 1991), p. 225; South Downs EF!, "An introduction to Earth First! in the UK", <<http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/ef/efhtmls/introduction.html>>, s.a.

62 BR Taylor, "Earth First! and global narratives of popular ecological resistance" in Taylor (ed.), pp. 14-5, 28 (notes nos 9 and 10); Deval, pp. 138-9. See also MM Cooper, "Environmental rhetoric in the age of hegemonic politics: Earth First! and the Nature conservancy" in CG Herndl and SC Brown (eds), *Green culture: environmental rhetoric in contemporary America* (Madison, 1996), pp. 236-60.

63 Interview: Kevin Dunion, Edinburgh, 18 December 1997.

in 1992 on the world's economy and how the environment affected it. The Earth Summit further redirected global environmentalism towards the goal of sustainable development as the new economic, developmental and environmental model for the future.

These changes can be ascribed to the developments in the global environmental movement between 1962 and 1992, to which the non-governmental sector contributed a great deal. Through their research the academic community contributed to an increase in the human understanding of the processes of the natural environment, which in turn enabled politicians to formulate environmental policies and legislation that were able to address environmental problems more effectively. Green political parties, on the other hand, through their presence in national and regional parliaments played an important role in pressuring governments to reform outdated environmental legislation and improve upon the official administration of the environment.

Of particular importance was the contributions made by the ENGOs, whose activism ensured that governmental and UN attention remained on the environment, despite the tensions of the Cold War. The successes of the ENGOs are many and include the 1982 moratorium on commercial whaling, campaigns to save the ozone layer, and those directed against the transboundary movement and disposal of hazardous wastes, and the preservation of the Antarctic and wetlands. By 1992, however, the Cold War was over and the Earth Summit ushered in a period of unprecedented national and international concern with the environment in the pursuit of the goal of sustainable development.