

Infrastructure hit by greens in Russia

by Konstantin Chermnykh

On June 16, when horror-struck Russians were waiting for new information on the fate of civilians taken hostage by a Chechen force in the southern town of Budyonnovsk, the State Duma (national Parliament) was busy adopting a new law, forbidding . . . torturing animals.

Ecological issues, thanks to the United Nations and the British monarchy's royal consort Prince Philip personally, have become a sort of sacred cow that is regarded with almost religious respect. Each political party puts wildlife projects in the center of its political program.

Recently the weekly *Za Rossiyu (For Russia)*, published by the People's Labor Union, a 60-year-old post-White Guard anti-Communist organization, which used to be utilized by the CIA and British intelligence for espionage against the U.S.S.R. and which backed Gen. Andrei Vlasov's Russian Liberation Army, which was allied with the Hitlerites during World War II, published a new program containing an emotional ecological chapter. It features "sustainable development." The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), for which the People's Labor Union is an absolute antipode, dedicated even more words to the same "sustainable development" in its new party program.

Infiltrated into Russia

The notion of "sustainable development," promoted in United Nations circles as a cover-name for what is more accurately called "technological apartheid" (i.e., the denial of more advanced technologies) against less developed countries, has been infiltrated into Russian parlance in a tricky way. At some point, a Russian translation for the phrase was selected: *ustoychivoye razvitiye*, which means not "sustainable," but rather the even more innocuous-sounding "stable development."

The "green religion" is spreading with the speed of an epidemic. Its march through Russia is increased by impoverished scientists, who have no other way of earning money except research work in the ecological field. Other fields of science are not a priority for investments from western institutions.

The growing interest of investors in ecological research is marked by areas of special curiosity, prompting suspicions that it is just a pretext for gaining cheaper access to Russian

technologies. NEFCO, a Scandinavian ecological company, is now conducting research in the industry of Arkhangelsk and Murmansk regions and Karelia, apparently eager to get to the center of atomic shipbuilding at Severodvinsk.

Five years ago, a Greenpeace vessel was stopped not far from the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, site of Soviet nuclear tests. The Greenpeaceniks were furious. The newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, one of the locomotives of Mikhail Gorbachov's *perestroika* policy in the 1980s and now home for various Gorbachovists, expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the military would not let the Greenpeace "eco-revolutionaries" into the nuclear test zone.

Losses incalculable

Since 1991, Greenpeace has had an official organization in Moscow, which is busy keeping tabs on the military and launching protest campaigns against infrastructure projects. In 1993, the Greens sponsored by Greenpeace managed to get the project of the Ust Luga port in Leningrad Province (around St. Petersburg) frozen for an undetermined time.

According to the weekly *Ekonomika i zhizn (Economy and Life)*, the Ust Luga port project attracted interest from the Naval Ministry of Germany as well as the administrations of Rostock, Lübeck, Kiel, and Hamburg. Germany was going to use the port for trading with Japan, South Korea, and China. For Russia, the project is of crucial interest after the separation of the Baltic states, where the ports of Klaipeda, Riga, Ventspils, Tallinn, and Paldisky are located.

The losses brought by the Greenpeace activity are incalculable.

High-speed railway targeted

The eco-radicals have also tried to undermine the project for a Moscow to St. Petersburg high-speed railway. The same *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (it is interesting, how many of the Russian Greenpeaceniks are former Komsomol, Communist Youth League, leaders) started a campaign of protection for the Valday National Park and its fauna, which would be disturbed by the noise of the road. But the greatest "tragedy" was seen in the protective wall along the roadbed, which would prevent small animals from crossing the railway.

In mid-June, the ecological expert analysis of the high-speed railroad project was finally completed. Scientists and high officials did their best, curtsying before the eco-dictatorship. Billions of rubles will be spent for making a curve around the Valday National Park, as well as for construction of special tunnels for *frogs* (this was reported officially, and with a serious air, on the radio in St. Petersburg).

No doubt this money could rather be invested into the productive economy, or used for relief for the refugees from Chechnya, Abkhazia, and so forth. Too bad for them, those women and children were not born frogs.