

VII. THE SPIRITS OF BALI *

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IUCN, says the paper Categories, Objectives and Criteria for Protected Areas, "is dedicated to the wise use of the Earth's natural resources and to the maintenance of the Planet's natural diversity." What to think of the sequence? Use first, maintain second? And this comes from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources?

"The World National Parks Congress, taking place in Bali, Indonesia, October 11-22, 1982, will provide case studies from around the world to illustrate how the various categories of protected areas are meeting the needs of countries of all economic, social, cultural, and political backgrounds," writes J.A. McNeely, the secretary of the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, in a special issue of the Swedish journal *Ambio* (11: 237. 1982). "No longer just playgrounds for vacationers and means for conserving natural heritage, protected areas have become an inseparable part of the modern human ecosystem."

Having been fortunate enough to receive all the papers — when densely packed, they make a pile of 18 cm — I found plenty of fascinating things to read. One might almost speak of parcology as a discipline of its own. The 1982 United Nations List of National Parks and Protected Areas (146 pages; IUCN, Gland, Switzerland), recognizes 9 main categories and lists 51 terms for variations on the theme 'parks and protected areas'. Even monuments like the Cathedral of Chartres seem to qualify (p. 62 of the List). Altogether, 2611 Protected Areas have now been established in 124 countries, covering nearly 4 million sq.km, "but management must still be improved considerably before the full benefits of such areas can be delivered to society" (p. 238 of the *Ambio* issue).

"As discussed by the 450 protected area managers, researchers, academics, advocates, and government officials from some 70 countries," reports the IUCN Bulletin of December 1982, "this certainly did not mean any relaxing of the level of protection for the world's remaining natural areas. Quite the opposite. The role of protected areas in the process of social and economic development can only be effective when these areas are fully and effectively managed." This last term, curiously enough, has now been stretched to become virtually synonymous with planning: "By management here is meant the setting of goals and objectives, the design and

* A draft of this paper was sent by the author to several conservationists. It is not impossible that, if he had not so suddenly died, Dr. Jacobs would have made minor changes. I am quite certain, however, that he would not have changed its 'philosophy'. The paper summarizes quite well indeed Jacobs' ideas on nature conservation and on the stand it has to take in the fight with technology, economics, development, etc. I therefore decided to publish it in this Bulletin, also as a homage to its author who contributed so many original and significant papers on the subject of nature conservation in the tropics.

A slightly abridged version was by agreement published in the IUCN Bulletin. — C. Kalkman.

choice of means, the evaluation of results and the process of learning from past experience", writes Kenton Miller, the CNPPA Chairman (*Ambio* 11: 315).

Something, too, has happened to the term conservation. In the folder of the 'Conservation for Development Centre', one of the IUCN offices at Gland, the word is defined as "managing our use of the environment to ensure maximum benefits for man — present and future." This sounds rather like an intention to conserve man than to conserve nature. So we are less surprised to read about plans (*IUCN Bulletin*, p. 81) to change the name of IUCN into something like World Conservation Organization. Nature is to be eliminated from the name.

Of course, the dilemma could not be kept at bay forever. Let me formulate the choice as: Part for Nature or All for Man. See what H.E. Ali Moertopo, the Indonesian Minister of Information, had to say about it, in a keynote address that is remarkable for its candour. "The damage done to nature has reached such an alarming proportion to the extent where we can say, in all seriousness, that the survival of mankind is at stake I think, we are in a position to develop a new perception of threat. Not only do we think of threat, as we did in the past, in terms of a military might from outside which is capable of jeopardising the existence of any sovereign state or groups of states; we should also conceive threat in terms of our inability to maintain a new balance between the carrying capacities of the earth's land area and the fast rate of population growth. If the balance is not redressed — and I honestly don't know how — sooner or later, the world will perish."

Yet the question remains if the congress — as an organized body speaking with one voice — has not irresponsibly helped feed a waning development illusion. Perhaps Moertopo felt it: "I conceive this Congress and many international conferences of this kind as representing the serious efforts we have been undertaking to delay, as long as possible, the ultimate collapse of our earth. This, I am afraid, is the only choice we have. We can only delay, we cannot prevent the dawn of the day of the ultimate reckoning" (p. 5). If this be a true and legitimate concern — actually, the earth has already collapsed in many deforested, contaminated, desertified, 'developed' places — what can be done to save at least the plant and animal species that still do exist? — not for our sake, but for their own?

Matters assume a better perspective if we consider the whole exercise as an effort to make laymen more aware of the benefits of conservation to society. These are very real in terms of maintenance of species diversity, prevention of erosion, and wise use of land in general. Conservation is nowadays, of course, much more than creating parks for science and outdoor life, and this 'much more' has no doubt been put across very well at Bali. Indonesia herself cut an impressive figure by declaring 11 national parks.

Wise utilization is certainly possible to a much greater extent than now practiced in ecosystems that are not inherently stable and with an abundant supply of minerals (like some savannas and coastal waters). It must be said that in tropical rain forests the margins are so narrow as

to be non-existent for practical purposes. There are too many woody = long-living species, large animals are needed for seed dispersal, the soils are generally too poor. Any illusion that tropical rain forests can be exploited on a permanent basis (otherwise than through seed collection) is misleading. And tropical rain forests contain roughly half the species on earth. Feeding illusions about exploitability of these systems amounts to showing a path to disaster.

Fortunately, some clear voices could be heard. "Planning and management cannot provide a solution to the basic conflict between pressures for the development of resources, and the conservation of wilderness, which is the essence of the present situation in Tasmania", concludes Bosworth in *Ambio* (11: 273). "They cannot because there is no solution. These two uses are incompatible. Tasmania needs to decide if it wants to maintain such remaining wilderness areas or develop them. If it decides to maintain them, then resource development cannot proceed in these areas".

The impression persists that during this Congress efforts were made to make nature the subject of new expectations: "to approach the new balance with a view to harmonizing the apparent discrepancy between the increasing rate of population growth and the harsh reality of the earth's limits" (Moertopo, p. 8). As understood by him, the new idea clearly recognizes the principle "that the welfare of the people in the national territory should come first" (p. 9).

I think Moertopo's address well reflects the modern dilemma: how to allocate land for which man and nature are competing? The ambiguity is clear in Moertopo's text. A population growth which nobody knows how to check, yet the welfare of the people must prevail.

As far as the IUCN officials who were in charge of the Congress chose not to side with the species of plants and animals, I am afraid they showed a lack of strength and vision. It is facile enough to raise expectations among development-hungry people, particularly at the expense of plants and animals. And as Dr. H.D. Rijksen clearly reported (in Conservation: Not by skill alone) this change of attitude (what originally must be protected, may be sacrificed to man after all) has brought confusion among many students of conservation.

What makes IUCN a unique organization is its worldwide network of experts in conservation (in the old sense of nature protection). Its six commissions (on Ecology, Education, Environmental Law, Environmental Planning, Parks, and Survival Service) enlist considerable scientific manpower. This enables IUCN to act as the world's environmental conscience. No organization is better equipped to speak the truth on environmental matters according to scientific standards derived from those same matters. The truth may sometimes indeed be unwelcome to economists; if ignored, it will make itself felt later, harder. So if IUCN starts to generate ideas about 'sustainable development' without solid scientific backing, it is risking its reputation, and endangers the very 'nature' it previously aimed to protect.

We can be reasonably sure that any opening in the defense of nature will be widened by exploiters, any promise of 'utilization' will result

in claims under the most far-fetched pretexts. Now that management includes planning, nothing can be wrong with management; if 'conservation' is stretched enough it includes 'development', and requires 'the benefit of man' as a new justification. However, the benefit of man knows no limits; in the new circumscription, conservation may be redefined for the benefit of the only animal whose needs are infinite, whom all others must serve. Didn't the Indonesian hosts serve a turtle barbecue on the beach?

It seems therefore necessary to find out carrying capacities before employing 'national parks for development', and also to be a bit critical before hailing a concept in the name of which such monumental ecological blunders have been made. This provision, to be sure, has been made in the 6-point 'Bali-Declaration': "... and, where compatible with the protected area's objectives, access to resources."

The Bali Declaration is a constructively worded paper — except that the genuine rights to exist are not extended to plant and animal species. Thus doubt remains. Where will IUCN stand in case of conflict? and conflicts between man and nature are sure to worsen. And what will IUCN do in case of doubt?

Hermien Hadiati Koeswadji of Airlangga University put this last problem into compelling words: "If a mistake is made (in management), it must be in favour of natural ecosystems and functions, rather than in favour of man's alterations of such systems ... The necessity to err in favour of nature and natural processes is a pill that many economists find too bitter to swallow. They argue that failure to utilize resources now retards the rate of economic growth. The ecologists argue, however, that it is precisely this conservative attitude that preserves options for future generations. If one errs against nature, one closes out one's options all too rapidly" (p. 7).

It is to be regretted that a current in IUCN lent itself to the common trend in western civilization to discriminate against everything that is not man as a matter of course. Nature must be employed in the service of man — as if not all species of animals and plants have a right to exist no less than humans! Here we come to the lack of vision: throughout, man is presented as the one who is entitled to the benefits of nature. In the (here prevailing) IUCN view, it seems to be man's role to take from the earth, and to take. The idea that man has obligations towards nature, that man has the duty of respect and restraint in his dealings with nature, is sadly missing. No vision has been forthcoming from IUCN — as far as I am aware — which could inspire man towards a higher principle than reaping benefits. In my view of humble biologist, man and nature have a common destiny, which reaches across thousands of years. If we have indeed borrowed the earth from our children, isn't it man's finest task in life to serve and beautify the earth, a really superhuman goal? I think IUCN cannot afford to ignore these matters. A poor vision attracts poor minds. People will turn away from IUCN because they find the ceiling too low.

Any vision on conservation which does not acknowledge, first and foremost, the rights of animal and plant species to exist ad infinitum, will lead to a dead end, along a path of misguided reasoning. One example is

the well-known tiger dilemma: are we justified in protecting a few tigers while thousands of humans go hungry?

The question is a little warped. It ignores a whole history of false expectation, namely that increase, of human numbers, of "the needs of countries", of "maximum benefits for man", could go on forever. It presumes that conversion of wilderness would bring the definite solution of hunger. The question thus harbours a double standard of time. Population pressure is viewed as a sudden phenomenon without much relation to past and future, on the one hand, and problemless times are tacitly predicted for those people on whose behalf the tigers are to be eliminated, on the other.

This double standard is concealed in the slogan 'Conservation for Development' as well. Conservation deals in ages. A millennium is a trifle. Do we realize that it took 35,000 millennia for the dipterocarp forests in Malesia to evolve? That agriculture exists for less than half the time it takes a herb species to evolve from another species? The process to which all creatures owe everything, evolution, is the one to protect in the very first place. The World Conservation Strategy speaks of maintaining genetic diversity and the essential ecological processes, but scarcely about the underlying, more comprehensive process of evolution. Here is a weak spot. And we have no way to influence evolution except negatively; we just have to wait, millions of years, and see what comes out of it. Now in Development, everything is hurried. Five years is the common span, the more ambitious projects take ten, some daring projections reach across twenty — and not much further. Conservation for Development then means the intention to subordinate the permanent to the temporary. Nature, which exists and maintains itself in extremely slow processes, hitherto allowed to go on in protected areas, is to be subjugated to Development: rampant processes which a few humans can set in motion but fewer humans are able to stop?

The time scales of nature and of man are indeed hopelessly incompatible. The ecological ruins, so aptly described in the book by Farvar & Milton, The Careless Technology (1972), testify to just this incompatibility. Effort can and should be made to make technology more careful. Some incompatibility can be avoided by judicious management. But in case of a choice, where will IUCN stand? The truth in conservation has always been: protect nature. From what? Of course, from Homo sapiens. It is as simple as that. Homo sapiens and Felis tigris are both, as species, entitled to citizenship of this earth. If the tiger is endangered because of man's progress, it is time for man to recede. And while there is much to be regulated in the margin, it will always be ... well, in the margin.

But will this be politically acceptable? Again, the double standard is ready to fool us. Doesn't IUCN have in the first place the task to guide people, to shape their thoughts, that is, to be ahead of them? Or is it to be guided by political considerations which, naturally, are always ages behind current ideas, since ages must elapse before a majority has been reached?

In practice, IUCN tries both. But we are talking here about emphasis

in the conduct of daily affairs, and of clear choices only in the hour of truth.

In conclusion, there are five (almost?) subversive points to make:

- 1) All species have a right to continue their existence.
- 2) The biological process to protect in the first place is natural evolution.
- 3) Non-renewable resources are to be protected from consumptive demands.
- 4) Only he is realistic who heeds the ecological realities.
- 5) The long-term view should always prevail.