





Issue 131 - June 2008

OUR VIEWPOINT

• The high cost of excessive paper consumption

WASTEFUL PAPER CONSUMPTION: A POLITICAL ISSUE

- Appeal from literature and journalism for socially and environmentally clean paper
- Short video on the impacts of excessive paper consumption
- Paper, paper everywhere...
- "Shrink": A new campaign to stop the madness of paper over-consumption
- <u>The Confederation of European Paper Industries' Looking-Glass World</u>

COMMUNITIES AND FORESTS

- <u>Africa: Food sovereignty threatened by AGRA</u>
- India: A Story of Non-Participatory Conservation in the Buxa Tiger Reserve
- Malaysia: The logging trail leading to tree monocultures in Sarawak
- Peru/Brazil: The right to self-determination of indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation

COMMUNITIES AND TREE MONOCULTURES

- <u>Chile: The "modern slaves" of the "forestry boom"</u>
- <u>Indonesia</u>: Killings by Perhutani in East Java teak plantations a twofold perverted notion of joint forest management
- Ivory Coast: Tanoé Swamps Forest under destruction by Unilever/Palm-Ci's oil palm plantations
- Uganda: Thousands of Indigenous People evicted from FSC-certified Mount Elgon National Park

OUR VIEWPOINT

- The high cost of excessive paper consumption

An analysis of environmental destruction processes usually leads to the identification of a series of causes, which can be classified as either direct or underlying causes. For example, one of the direct causes of the destruction of forests is their conversion to monoculture plantations of soybeans (Brazil, Paraguay), oil palm trees (Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Colombia), pine trees (Chile) or eucalyptus trees (Brazil, Ecuador). Yet behind this easily identifiable cause there are others – the underlying causes – that ultimately determined and enabled this conversion.

There may be a number of underlying causes, which can also be interrelated: the building of highways that gave the companies involved access to the forests; the loans from multilateral financial institutions that made it possible to build these highways; the pressure exerted by the International Monetary Fund to increase exports to pay off external debts; the assistance provided by the FAO and other "cooperation" agencies to promote these monocultures; and the promotion of agrofuels by the European Union, among others.

But almost all environmental destruction processes share a common underlying cause: excessive consumption. There are countless examples of this fact. The social and environmental destruction caused by industries like oil, mining, logging and shrimp farming have been amply documented. While the products of these industries are consumed in many countries, the bulk of consumption is concentrated in a small number of them: the United States, Japan and the member states of the European Union, to name the most obvious ones. This consumption thus constitutes the common underlying cause of the destruction of the lands and livelihoods of a great many communities around the world.

In the case of paper and paperboard, worldwide consumption has already long surpassed the threshold of sustainability. Nevertheless, the industry that benefits from this consumption plans to increase it even further. Contrary to the paper companies' advertising claims, this rise in consumption is not aimed at satisfying people's real paper needs, but rather at increasing the use of paper and paperboard packaging, which accounts for over 50% of total production. Therefore, this increase will not involve printing more books or textbooks, but rather the invention of new "needs" for disposable products (such as paper cups, tablecloths and napkins), which will be used only once before they are added to the mountains of garbage in the wealthy countries.

This level of paper and paperboard consumption requires a steady supply of vast quantities of abundant, homogenous and cheap raw material. This is why the paper industry initially turned to a seemingly inexhaustible source of raw material: the forests of Europe, Japan, the United States and Canada. In time, however, this source of raw material began to run out, due to excessive consumption. The industry then turned to the establishment of huge monoculture plantations of fast-growing trees (eucalyptus, acacia, pine), which resulted in the destruction of forests and grasslands in countries of the South (and even in some regions in the North). These plantations, which continue to expand, are now becoming the main source of raw material for paper production. More recently, the industry has also begun to move pulp production to the South – close to the tree plantations – to supply its paper plants located near the main markets: the high-consumption North.

Moving pulp production to the South is aimed at several objectives. The first is lower costs, thanks to access to cheap land (where the trees also grow ten times faster than in the North), cheap labour, state support, and lax environmental controls. The second objective, linked to the first, is increased production of cheap pulp in order to create new paper consumption "needs". Achieving these two objectives makes it possible to achieve the industry's third and most important objective: increased profits.

Nevertheless, these economically "cheap" costs for the industry are extremely costly in social and environmental terms for those who suffer the consequences. This is why numerous local communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America are fighting back against the spread of monoculture tree plantations and pulp mills, working in coordination with organizations and processes in the North. To contribute to these efforts, we are including a special section on the subject of paper consumption in this edition of the WRM bulletin. We hope it will be useful for everyone – in both the South and the North – who is involved in this struggle.

index

WASTEFUL PAPER CONSUMPTION: A POLITICAL ISSUE

- Appeal from literature and journalism for socially and environmentally clean paper

"Paper is a wonderful material, which for centuries has served for a fertile exchange of ideas among human beings. For us all who use it as an essential vehicle to share what we think, imagine, dream, know or believe we know, paper is a wonderful tool that we want to be able to continue using ... but not at the expense of people and the environment.

As people who live in this reality, we are aware of the serious injustices and inequalities - social and environmental – arising from the world production and consumption of paper.

In addition to the destruction of forests for making paper, now forests and grasslands are being replaced by vast monoculture tree plantations, destroying communities, water, soil and all life. Both the destruction of forests and the installation of monoculture tree plantations – occupying food-producing land – bring about enormous damage to the local population, who see their rights violated, their environment destroyed and their way of life irremediably affected.

The destructive cycle is continued with pulp production, in which fewer and increasingly larger companies take possession of land where they plant trees, of water that their trees and mills consume and contaminate, of political power acquired through their billion dollar investments, and of the environment that they destroy in the regions where they are installed.

To destruction are added inequities. The enormous volume of paper produced from this pulp feeds a "world market" centred on rich and powerful peoples' consumption. The average figures (that hide enormous inequalities on a national level), show that consumption per capita is more than ten times higher in the countries of the North than in those of the South.

To inequity is added excessive consumption. Only as an example it is enough to see the mountains of paper and cardboard growing night after night in the streets of New York to understand that most of the pulp production does not end up as books, newspapers or journals, but simply as trash. In general terms, at least half the pulp produced goes to the production of paper and cardboard for wrapping and packaging, most of it totally unnecessary.

We do not want to have anything to do with paper produced in this way. We do not want to become accomplices to the social and environmental destruction this implies. We do not trust certifications schemes that have given their seal of "sustainability" to these same monoculture plantations whose impacts we know so well.

This situation has already reached intolerable limits and its solution requires policies discouraging unnecessary consumption, promoting a rational and socially appropriate use of paper, ensuring an equitable use among countries and within countries, facilitating the development of diversified models on a smaller scale for the production of pulp, respecting both people and the environment.

The above is perfectly feasible and no technical limitations of any kind exist to prevent it from becoming a reality. The only and real obstacle is the economic interest of large companies, whose objective is to continue making profits by imposing an increasingly large and unlimited consumption of paper. The time has come to tell them that this is enough.

We are therefore appealing to those, who like us want to be able to continue communicating through this marvellous material called paper, to join in this struggle for a socially and environmentally clean paper."

Victor Bacchetta, Nnimmo Bassey, Jordi Bigues, Elizabeth Bravo, Ricardo Carrere, Antonio Franco, Mempo Giardinelli, François Houtart, John Karumbizda, Kintto Lucas, George Monbiot, Edgar Morin, Guillemo Núñez, Wale Okediran, Ike Okonta, Noel Rajesh, Ana Cristina Rossi, Vandana Shiva

WRM fully supports this initiative and we invite writers, poets and journalists who agree with its content, to strengthen

this appeal by signing on to it. By adding your signature you will be joining in this struggle for a socially and environmentally clean paper and amplifying the voices of those who say that "this is enough." At the same time, we invite everyone who shares these views to spread this initiative to other writers, poets and journalists who might be willing to endorse it.

Those who would like to adhere to the appeal can do it at: http://www.wrm.org.uy/plantations/writers.html

index

- Short video on the impacts of excessive paper consumption

We have produced a 10 minute video (in English) on the impacts of the paper industry. We hope that the video will be a useful tool for campaigning against excessive paper consumption and for linking those campaigns with the struggles of local communities confronting the expansion of pulpwood plantations and pulp mills in the South.

The video can be accessed at: <u>http://www.wrm.org.uy/Videos/Paper_Consumption.html</u>

index

- Paper, paper everywhere...

Paper is a material many people in industrialised countries take entirely for granted. Millions of trees are felled, pulped, made into paper, printed on, then binned without even being read. Why is it that we treat cotton, linen and other fabrics made from plant fibres with great respect – laundering them carefully, even mending them when they tear – yet we toss barely used sheets of paper into the rubbish bin that are pulped from trees, the oldest living organisms on the planet?

Part of the reason is because so much of the paper we encounter is given to us for free, often without us asking for it. We consume paper mostly as a side-effect of buying other commodities that we really want: magazines, newspapers and books are sources of information, packaging keeps the goods we desire clean or unsquashed, and so on. Comparatively little of our paper consumption is the result of buying paper products directly; notebooks and toilet rolls are the exception rather than the rule. Junk mail, catalogues and free newspapers encourage us to perceive paper as a material with little or no value; you wouldn't give out 4 million free newspapers a day in London alone if this stuff was actually worth anything, would you?

Paper's low value is coupled with a sense that it is a natural, safe and fairly benign product. It is not exactly uranium, but the sheer scale of this product makes it a serious environmental and social issue. Paper consumption has quadrupled in the past four decades and its production uses almost half of the planet's industrially logged timber, more water than any other industrial product and as much energy per tonne as steel. Each tonne of paper requires 98 tonnes of other resources to manufacture and it is the single biggest contributor to the waste stream of most consumer countries. To reduce our impacts on the planet, using less paper is a good place to start.

The global pulp and paper industry is fuelled by money from those who buy its products, and most of us are in the high consumption countries of the global North, so our purchasing power is an important lever for bringing about systemic change in the industry. Curtailing demand for its products should reduce some of the money-supply that is fuelling its expansion in the global South. At least bringing about a reduction in demand for paper in Europe would help to offset the growth in demand that is likely in other parts of the world. If the fifth of the world's population that currently use most of the world's paper were to cut their paper use by half, that would create a lot of room for people whose current paper use is very low to increase their consumption without a need for any global expansion of paper

production capacity.

Identifying ways to cut paper use is easy. The new website <u>www.shrinkpaper.org</u> invites individuals to make a pledge to adopt their choice of several suggestions from using a cotton handkerchief to shifting to an electronic filing system. Organisations and businesses can easily save paper too. Many already have already taken some steps in the right direction – after all, they can save money by cutting their paper costs and associated expenses (printing, postage, storage etc). Many companies find they can swiftly reduce paper use by 30% or more by simple changes to office practices.

So if it is so easy, why has reducing paper consumption not been at the heart of every forest campaign agenda for years? There is a resistance to campaigning about reducing consumption, which is expressed sometimes in terms of 'not wanting to give the impression that paper is worse than other materials like plastics' or 'not wanting to make people feel guilty about their lifestyles' or 'worrying about seeming anti-growth'. As a result, many paper campaigns appear to imply that using paper made from more sustainably sourced fibres is what really matters, regardless of what quantity is used. In reality, both fibre sources and quantity matter.

A key question to ask is why our paper consumption keeps on increasing. One suggestion is that it is rooted in cultural insecurity: our lack of trust in each other leads society to red tape, bureaucracy and ever expanding paper trails; our fear of contamination drives excessive packaging; our worries about disease cause fetishistic levels of tissue use for hygiene; our weakening cultural identities make us susceptible to brand advertising. Perhaps, therefore, promotion of paper saving could have beneficial cultural effects?

The debate about global climate change means that for the first time in my life, possibly since the start of the industrial revolution, it is possible to talk in polite company about using less of something – energy – without being considered anti-progress. This creates a great opportunity to promote an ethos that is positive about reduction, makes thrift a virtue and treats 'less' as a positive concept. I hope promoting paper saving will contribute in a small way to promoting a cultural change that values efficiency more than growth and gets people into mental habits to perceive using less of things as a good thing to do.

By Mandy Haggith, <u>hag@worldforests.org</u> Her book *Paper Trails: from trees to trash, the true cost of paper,* will be published by Virgin Books on 3 July 2008.

index

- "Shrink": A new campaign to stop the madness of paper over-consumption

Since the early 1960s, world consumption of paper and paperboard has increased by almost seven times. Every year, each person in the UK gets through an average of more than 200 kilogrammes of paper. In the US the figure is almost 300 kilogrammes. Global paper consumption is massively inequitable. In Laos, for example, people use on average less than one kilogramme of paper a year. Yet rural communities in Laos are currently faced with the rapid expansion of eucalyptus plantations to meet the global paper industry's demands for raw material.

Much of the paper consumption in the North is unnecessary. Office workers in the UK print out 120 billion sheets of paper a year, enough to create a pile more than 13,000 kilometres high. Two-thirds of this paper ends in the bin before the end of the day. North Americans get through 130 billion paper cups a year. The cups are thrown away after 15 minutes of use.

This month sees the launch of the "Shrink" campaign, which targets paper waste. "Paper production causes a wide range of harmful environmental impacts," explains Mandy Haggith, the co-ordinater of the Shrink campaign. "By using less of it we can reduce our pressure on forests, cut energy use and climate change emissions, limit water, air and

other pollution and produce less waste. There are also negative social impacts and human rights abuses linked to paper production, particularly in southern countries." The "Shrink" project, which is backed by more than 50 European environmental NGOs, invites people to pledge to cut their paper consumption on its website: <u>www.shrinkpaper.org</u>.

The website suggests several ways that people can reduce their paper consumption. "We can stop using paper unnecessarily, like information we can easily read on screen, or picking up paper napkins we don't need," says Haggith. "We can find ways to use less where paper is necessary, like printing double-sided or re-using envelopes. And we can try to resist paper that is thrust upon us by signing off junk mail, asking to be taken off mailing lists and databases, refusing free news or leaflets and avoiding highly packaged goods."

The Shrink campaign also aims to persuade corporations and institutions to reduce their paper use. "Organisations and companies can try to understand where most paper is wasted, for example in office systems, communication efforts or short-term packaging, and encourage and reward staff to come up with ideas for saving paper: changing the way people work so they make better use of paperfree technology, finding more efficient designs for packing goods, and so on," says Haggith.

In June 2008, the campaign wrote to the CEOs of 20 UK-based companies: five catalogue companies; five supermarkets; five magazine publishers; and five banks and insurance companies. "We chose them because they represent four of the biggest paper-using sectors and are a cross-section of those sectors with a diversity of policies on paper," Haggith explains.

Each of these sectors is, of course, not only responsible for wasting paper. Supermarkets undermine farmers' livelihoods, destroy biodiversity by demanding homogenous products, are responsible for an enormous increase in food miles, build their massive shopping centres outside town centers leading to increased car use and the destruction of the countryside, and they finish off local shops by undercutting prices. Banks finance all sorts of environmentally and socially destructive projects. Magazines are financed through advertising, a major driver of overconsumption. Catalogues exist only to promote ever more consumption. But as Haggith points out, "The forests and people who suffer the negative impacts of the paper industry can't wait for all the other wrongs to be righted before we tackle over-consumption of paper."

The campaign aims to support the struggles of movements in the South against the expansion of the pulp and paper industry there. "When we ask colleagues in the global South what they think our priorities should be in our work with the pulp and paper industry their answer is that we should tackle over-consumption in rich countries and try to reduce demand for the products of the industry," says Haggith.

Last year, Haggith travelled by train and boat from her home in Scotland to Sumatra, Indonesia, to research her book "Paper Trails: From Trees to Trash - The True Cost of Paper". "I was horrified by how destructive our paper footprint is," she says. "I met Indonesian villagers fighting a land-claim with a paper company that is growing acacia on their community land to make copy paper for sale in European and North American markets. I asked them what I could do to help their fight, and they told me to ask people in Europe to use less copy paper. To show real solidarity with people struggling with multinational extractive industries, it is not enough for us to shift our consumption from one brand to some other, hopefully slightly less obnoxious, brand. That only displaces the problem. Consuming differently is not good enough, we need to consume less AND differently."

Pledge to reduce your paper use here: <u>http://www.shrinkpaper.org/take-the-pledge.htm</u>

By Chris Lang, http://chrislang.org

<u>index</u>

- The Confederation of European Paper Industries' Looking-Glass World

"When I use a word," said Humpty Dumpty to Alice, "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less." Welcome to the Looking-Glass World. Not that of Lewis Carroll's "Through the Looking-Glass", but that of the Confederation of European Paper Industries. CEPI represents 800 pulp and paper companies in 18 European countries, producing more than one-quarter of world paper production. CEPI is, in its own words, "the voice and public face of the pulp and paper industry in Europe, representing its interests towards the European Institutions." Based in Brussels, CEPI lobbies at EU level aiming to create industry friendly legislation.

In CEPI's Looking-Glass World, plantations are forests, monocultures improve biodiversity and logging is good for the forests.

In May 2008, CEPI held a side event during the Convention on Biodiversity meeting in Bonn. Titled "Biodiversity protection, not just words on paper but real best practices by the paper industry!" it promised to show "how through best practices the European Pulp and Paper industry supports forest biodiversity protection."

The presentations, of course, had little to do with biodiversity protection. The first presentation came from Hans Verkerk, of the European Forest Institute (EFI). Verkerk looked at how much wood might be removed from Europe's 29.2 million hectares of protected forests if there were no restrictions on logging. His presentation was based on an EFI study that he had co-authored. The study found that forest protection in Europe resulted in a total of 68 million cubic metres of wood being "unavailable" to the industry. "Forest protection has a clear impact on the availability of wood," Verkerk noted. Conversely, if the forest is less well protected, the industry would have a lot more wood available. Wisely, given that his study was funded by CEPI, Verkerk did not tell us what the impact of this might be on the biodiversity of the forests.

Paula Guimaraes of Grupo Portucel Soporcel followed with a presentation about "Intensive Forestry". She explained that her company creates a mosaic at the landscape level. She illustrated this with a slide of a scruffy landscape of clearcuts and monocultures. She told us that eucalyptus do no harm to soils and they do not damage water supplies. This may be true in the Looking-Glass World, but has little to do with the reality faced by farmers living near to the pulp industry's eucalyptus plantations.

Papierholz Austria's Wolfgang Schopfhauser told us about logging mountain forests in Austria to produce bioenergy, mainly for the pulp and paper industry. "Biomass is widely available in the form of standing wood," Schopfhauser said, presumably referring to the trees that grow on Austria's mountains.

One way of reducing the pulp industry's impact on the world's forests is to reduce the consumption (and therefore the production) of paper. This is the aim of the Shrink campaign (see the other articles in this issue of the WRM Bulletin). CEPI responded to the launch of the Shrink campaign by claiming that the pulp and paper industry is "a unique example of how an industry can avoid producing waste and one that recycles at all stages." Obviously, all that unnecessary packaging and junk mail, all those telephone books that no one uses any more, the mountains of office paper and advertising don't exist in CEPI's Looking-Glass World.

"By targeting the paper industry these NGOs are promoting other materials that do not have the same environmental credentials," says Teresa Presas, CEPI's Managing Director, in CEPI's response. But the Shrink campaign is not promoting any other materials. It is advocating using less paper in the North, not replacing paper with something else.

Presas says that NGOs are "contributing to the relocation of paper production to other areas of the world where environmental standards are less of a concern." She seems to have forgotten that the pulp and paper industry has been expanding in the global South for many years. Stora Enso is a member of CEPI. "Were it not for labour unions at home, we would be moving all of production capacity to countries like Brazil," a Stora Enso official told the Financial Times in 2005. Last year Stora Enso sold its North American operations to a private equity company called NewPage, which is now closing down mills as fast as it can. Stora Enso is closing two mills in Finland. Meanwhile, the company is expanding its operations in Brazil, Uruguay, China and Laos. In March 2008, 900 women from Via Campesina occupied an area of Stora Enso's eucalyptus plantations in Brazil, in protest against the expansion of the green desert. The Shrink campaign aims to support this and many other struggles against industrial tree plantations in the South.

Presas says that the Shrink campaign would become "responsible for the loss of thousands of jobs in Europe in particular in rural areas." As CEPI's own data shows, the pulp and paper industry is responsible for the loss of thousands of jobs in Europe. In 1991, CEPI member countries employed 389,300 people in the pulp and paper sector. By 2006, this figure had shrunk by about a third, to 259,100 people. During the same period, pulp and paper production in Europe has increased.

After talking to Humpty Dumpty for a while, Alice quietly walked away. When Humpty Dumpty fell off the wall, as he inevitably had to, "a heavy crash shook the forest from end to end."

By Chris Lang, <u>http://chrislang.org</u>

<u>index</u>

COMMUNITIES AND FORESTS

- Africa: Food sovereignty threatened by AGRA

The Gates and Rockefeller Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) initiative has landed on Africa announcing that it will help small-scale farmers go commercial. What does this mean?

Behind the millionaire funding projects lies the promotion of biotechnology in agriculture. African agriculture will be more dependent on chemicals, monocultures of hybrid seeds, and genetically modified crops.

According to Mariam Mayet, from the African Center for Biosafety, AGRA is "a very violent package because it puts powerful toxic chemicals into Africa. It displaces and destroys local knowledge and seeds. It favors those farmers who will be able to access the system, the more powerful farmers. This will divide the African peasantry. AGRA also creates a lot of dependency and debt." (1)

In the growing trend toward privatisation of foreign aid and the merging of the business sector with governments, AGRA becomes a useful tool for private business interests and Western governments eager to privatize Africa's land and water for export crops, agrofuels and carbon sinks.

Foreign strategies like AGRA are grabbing forest lands that are also a space of food sovereignty for forest and forest dependent communities.

Monoculture crops for agrofuels – either jatropha in Ghana and Zambia, sugar cane in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, oil palm in Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast – are encroaching on forests, threatening or already depriving local communities of their livelihoods and triggering off displacement and misery.

If the source of Africa's wealth is privatized, African countries may loose their chance to determine their own future.

Delegates of peasants' organizations from different African countries that share the vision of the international peasant

movement, La Via Campesina, gathered in a regional meeting in Madagascar, in May 2008. They voiced their opposition to the introduction of destructive policies that are undermining domestic food production by forcing farmers to produce cash crops for transnational corporations (TNCs) and to buy their own food on the world market. "Peasant and small farmers reap no benefits from higher prices. We grow food but the benefits of the harvest often get taken out of our hands: all too often it has already [been] promised to the money lender, to the agricultural inputs' companies, or directly to the trader or the processing unit."(2)

The peasants' final declaration on "Global Food Crisis" denounces that "the ongoing land-grabbing by TNCs and other speculators will expel millions more peasants from rural areas. They will end up in the mega cities where they will join the growing ranks of the hungry and the poor in the slums." It claims that "the time for Food Sovereignty has come!" and demands the implementation of "fundamental change in the approach to food production and agricultural markets", "long-term political commitments in order to rebuild national food economies", absolute priority to "domestic food production in order to decrease dependency on the international market", an intervention mechanism "to stabilize prices at a reasonable level on the international markets", as well as "the right to implement import controls" in order to stop dumping and the respect and support at international level of "programs to support the poorest consumers, implement agrarian reform and invest in domestic, farmer- and peasant-based food production".

Not only food systems and forests are at stake; also social systems and the whole African culture.

Article based on: (1) "AGRA - green revolution or philanthro-capitalism?", Pambazuka News 361, <u>http://www.pambazuka.org/en/issue/361;</u> (2) "Global Food Crisis", Regional Meeting of La Via Campesina Africa, Madagascar, 14th To 17th May 2008, <u>http://www.wrm.org.uy/countries/Africa/GlobalFoodCrisis.pdf</u>

index

- India: A Story of Non-Participatory Conservation in the Buxa Tiger Reserve

Buxa was one of those forests which the British foresters boasted of. Originally grassland and Sal forests in stony highlands, the area was irreversibly altered when the colonial foresters moved in around 1865 and banished the indigenous swidden agriculturists like the Rava, the Mech, the Dukpa and the Garo. Evergreen trees colonised the empty spaces rapidly as the forest fires got "controlled", and the foresters came to realize that they could not have new Sal plantations unless the fire motif was re-introduced.

Thus came the famous Taungya system of plantation, and the banished "fire-setters" were brought back to the forests as forest villagers. It was they who toiled, cut and burnt forests, and planted and protected new trees for nearly 150 years, and many many days without any wage, up to the point the "independent" foresters of India decided that they need to save the Tigers of Buxa. Buxa forests were declared as a Tiger Reserve in 1983. The forests already had 33 recorded forest villages and 4 Fixed Demand Holdings (leasehold lands under control of the Forest Department).

From 1990 onwards, forestry activities dwindled and came to almost a halt in many parts of the Reserve. The old dolomite mines inside the Reserve were closed down. In many areas, Non Timber Forest Produce collection was banned, and cattle-grazing was declared an offence. Living inside the forests became a nightmare as foresters started to plan relocation strategies that implied that thousands and thousands of people suddenly found themselves bereft of livelihood. One after another, the old Sal trees (known as the Pride of Buxa) started to disappear, as jobless and hungry people were forced to take to forests.

The tiger conservation mechanism in Buxa swung into motion, and money from various sources like the World Bank --Buxa was one of the seven Global Environment Facility funded India Eco Development Projects in India-- came and went. But both wild life and their habitat continue to disappear. Tigers became a rarity, so much so that no one knows exactly how many tigers are there in Buxa now...4-5 will be an optimist estimate. The "conservation"-oriented new regime foresters of Buxa continued to persecute the forest villagers of the area, especially the indigenous Rava community. A 2005 Public hearing organised by National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW) and others recorded innumerable cases of torture, harassment and murders of the forest-dwellers by the Forest Personnel. People, many of them children and youth, were killed in cold blood inside and outside the forest. The most recent incident was the killing of Samuel Rava of Poro village in 2008 February, after the Forest Rights Act with its package of rights had formally been notified. None of the killers has ever been brought to justice.

In Jayanti, very few people of this once-thriving and now a ghost settlement situated inside the so-called core area of Buxa Tiger Reserve know about the Forest Rights Act –that, among other things, recognize rights of tribal and traditional forest dwellers in areas declared as protected areas (see WRM Bulletin N° 115). This settlement has apparently been identified as to-be-relocated village, and the State Forest Department has started the relocation proceedings. In Jayanti, the Range Officer can still forbid people to undertake renovation work in their own homes without permission from the Department on the grounds that it violates the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972. No one seems to know that under the Wild Life Protection Act, 2006 and the Forest Rights Act, 2006, the concept of core/buffer has changed so much that any demarcation of such areas need mandatory endorsement by the community.

Instead, the Range Officer and his staff threatened the people to leave their land. Notices of relocation got many people angry: "Why should we who raised and protected these forests all these years be asked to leave?" said an old man. Another old woman waived her frail fists: "I won't, won't go...before we go we'll kill you all. If we cannot stay, we will not let you stay either".

Forest officers have also offered the people wads of money if they leave voluntarily knowing that the lure is too strong.

Almost the same happens in Buxa Road (a remote forest village, constantly threatened both by wild elephants and soil erosion) and the uphill village of Santarabari, another two villages targeted to relocation by the State Forest Department ignoring the new 2006 legislation.

The way the Forest Department tries to conserve wild life in the Buxa Tiger Reserve seems far from being participatory.

By Soumitra Ghosh, from notes of the visit of a 4-member team on behalf of National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW), North Bengal Regional Committee, to the area. The full document is available at: http://www.wrm.org.uy/countries/India/BuxaTiger.pdf

index

- Malaysia: The logging trail leading to tree monocultures in Sarawak

In 1989, WRM and Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends of the Earth) produced the publication "The Battle for Sarawak's Forests", which documented not only the destruction of forests and forest peoples' livelihoods in Sarawak, but also the local resistance process, which included major road blockades established as from 1987 by local communities for stopping the entry of logging trucks into their territories.

The aim of that publication was to serve as a tool for the worldwide campaign that had been launched two years before by a large number of Northern and Southern organizations against the social and environmental destruction resulting from industrial logging in the Malaysian state of Sarawak.

The campaign made the issue well known at the international level and put the Malaysian logging industry and government in a difficult position. For instance, in July 1988, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on member states to suspend imports of timber from Sarawak and in October-November a number of delegations visited Malaysian embassies in different countries to urge that logging activities not disturb the Sarawak natives' livelihood.

Internally, local police repression and judicial persecution followed, coupled with a smear campaign that termed as traitors all Malaysians that participated in the protection of Sarawak's peoples and forests.

In Sarawak, the main losers from forest destruction are the Penan, a nomadic people entirely dependent –physically, socially and culturally- on the disappeared tropical forests. However hard their current situation may be, it must at least serve to learn lessons for the future and in this respect the Sarawak struggle illustrates several important points:

- First and foremost, it shows that local peoples and their supporters were right in opposing industrial logging. From a Human Rights' perspective, logging violated the basic rights of local peoples –territorial, physical, social, cultural- and even their right to life. Environmentally, logging resulted in the destruction of a forest ecosystem that hosted an enormously rich biodiversity in terms of animals and plants. Economically, logging enriched a few while pushing the majority into poverty.

- Secondly, and equally important, it is today clear that the logging industry, the Sarawak state government and the Malaysian federal government lied to the people of Sarawak. Industry and government promised development and jobs. None of this happened. The forest all but disappeared while people became poorer. The only visible "development" were the roads built for the purpose of extracting wood. In response to the international campaign, industry and government promised to carry out "sustainable logging", which in fact resulted in the same type of destructive logging as before, now under a different name.

A recent video produced by Hilary Chiew and Chi too ("Penusah Tapa: the forgotten struggle"), documents "the untold Penan story" through the testimonies of local people, many of whom participated in the long struggle to protect the forest.

Those testimonies not only provide evidence on the disastrous social and environmental consequences of industrial logging, but also on the current process of substitution of logged over forests with monocultures of oil palms (aimed at producing palm oil) and acacias (for the production of pulp for paper). This means the final death of the forest. As one man interviewed in the video says: "We think that the loggers are bad. But if they only take the logs, the forests will still regenerate. But when oil palm and tree plantations come, that will cause the trees to be gone forever ..."

The video is available at http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4ggci_penusah-tana_politics

<u>index</u>

- Peru/Brazil: The right to self-determination of indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation

In late May, aerial photos taken during a fly-over piloted by the coordinator of the Ethno-Environmental Front of FUNAI (the National Indigenous Foundation of Brazil) confirmed the existence of indigenous people living in voluntary isolation on the border between the Brazilian state of Acre and Peru. They are members of one of four indigenous ethnic groups living in isolation in this area.

Newspapers around the world published images of the indigenous warriors painted red with the natural pigment annatto, produced from the fruit of the achiote tree, aiming their bows and arrows at the plane. Other members of the group are standing back, unarmed, their bodies painted black with genipap fruit juice, while women and children can be glimpsed hiding in the forest. The pictures give the impression that they have had bad experiences in the past

associated with airplanes, and their reaction leaves no room for doubt: they want the intruders to go away.

The photographs also captured two large thatched huts built on wide areas cleared in the rainforest to grow bananas, cassava, corn and other crops.

Anthropologist Beatriz Huertas of the International Committee for the Protection of Peoples in Isolation makes a distinction between groups living in "isolation" and those living in a situation considered of "initial contact". The former are reluctant to establish sustained interaction with members of the enveloping society while the latter have mainly been forced to abandon isolation by external factors or agents, and are more vulnerable to contagion of external diseases against for which they have developed no immunological defences.

Both groups share one problem in common, however: the invasion of their territories by oil companies, logging companies, and more recently, soybean farming operations on the Brazilian side of the border.

It is known that in many cases some predecessors of these groups had "extremely traumatic" experiences when coming into contact with outsiders, and as a result they have chosen to remain in isolation.

In the case of the Peruvian Amazon rainforest region, Huertas says there are 14 ethnic groups or segments of ethnic groups living in isolation, with the majority concentrated along the border with Brazil. She also pointed out that with few exceptions, virtually all the Land Reserves created and proposed to favour those peoples living in isolation are encroached by hundreds of loggers, many of whom have harassed or murdered isolated indigenous people who have come across them. Certain firms that have been granted logging concessions in neighbouring areas to those that are home to indigenous communities are also logging in reserves and launder the timber through their concessions and licenses.

In an interview with Terra Magazine (1), Huertas stressed that there have been countless denunciations of problems provoked by illegal logging on the Brazilian-Peruvian border since 1998. "Since then both countries have set up commissions to deal with the problem but they never reached any clear agreements, nor did they undertake any firm actions to remedy the situation," she noted.

Despite the abundance of evidence and complaints regarding this situation, some of the companies involved are even able to market their wood with the added advantage of certification. This is supposed to ensure consumers that the products they purchase are made from wood produced through "sustainable" logging practices, which would imply respect for the rights of the aboriginal peoples living in the area.

The International Indigenous Committee for the Protection of Peoples in Isolation and Initial Contact of the Amazon, the Chaco Basin and the Eastern Region of Paraguay (CIPIACI) declared in a press statement: "The movement of isolated tribes into Brazil seems to be the result of the constant aggression and threats they have been facing on their land in Peru. Effectively, this kind of displacement has been going on for the last few years because of the invasion of their territories, mainly by loggers or missionaries who follow them and want to contact and evangelize them." (2)

The photographic evidence of the "invisible" indigenous peoples created a certain level of awareness that has made it possible for the International Indigenous Committee for the Protection of Peoples in Isolation to highlight the situation. This month, after visiting the region on the Brazilian-Peruvian border, accompanied by a FENAMAD (Federación Nativa del Río Madre de Dios y Afluentes) leader and Ashaninka indigenous people from the village of Apiwtxa, Huertas announced: "We are going to prepare a report on this issue and present it to the governments of Brazil and Peru and to international human rights organizations. To the greatest extent possible, we are going to do everything within our reach to ensure that this problem is addressed."

The dissemination of the photographs of the indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation on the Brazilian-Peruvian

border had positive repercussions, but as Huertas pointed out, "Nevertheless, we have to be cautious about certain journalists who expressed a great deal of interest in travelling to the region to establish contact in order to capture images of the uncontacted Indians. This could be catastrophic and could result in the death of the entire group, because of contagious diseases or even a confrontation that could possibly erupt."

"We have always advocated the right to self-determination, and this means the right of these peoples to decide freely and voluntarily about the ways of life they want to have, without the forced imposition of contact or actions that threaten this right, and this desire. They are living in isolation and it is necessary to respect this isolation. At the same time, if they seek contact, we will have to respect the decision they have made, but we cannot in any way force contact upon them," she concluded.

Sources:

 "Comisión hará informe sobre indios aislados entre Brasil y Perú", 12 June 2008 <u>http://www.co.terra.com/terramagazine/interna/0,,OI2944081-EI8865,00.html</u>
"South American Indians demand 'respect' for uncontacted tribes", 4 June 2008 <u>http://www.survival-international.org/news/3368</u>; and personal comments of Beatriz Huertas.

index

COMMUNITIES AND TREE MONOCULTURES

- Chile: The "modern slaves" of the "forestry boom"

The rural-urban migratory process in Chile is the result of internal conflicts in the agrarian structure and, in the case of the VIII Region – the Bio-Bio Region – it is linked to a productive restructuring which is in fact forestry restructuring.

The forestry sector is advertised in Chile as a key economic sector, representing the second largest export after copper mining. However, comparatively the territories where plantations and forest industries are installed show adverse effects rather than the benefits that could have been obtained if the land had been turned over to alternative economic activities.

In spite of the gravitation forestry activities have in the macro-economy, this has not been reflected in job generation, characterized by its cyclical nature, considerable lack of stability and precarious salary levels. While over the past 20 years employment has grown 66%, forested areas have grown by 277%. Furthermore, in some cases, the expansion of forestry activities has taken place on land previously exploited by small landowners who have been absorbed by the so-called "green mantle" (referring to the millions of trees in the monoculture tree plantations). According to estimates made by the Forestry Workers Confederation (CTF - Corporación de Trabajadores Forestales) considering all the various forestry occupations, between 1997 and 2000 the work-force decreased by 12 per cent.

Forestry activities "offer" seasonal work in association with certain stages linked to the process of growth and care of the species planted (plantation, thinning, logging, etc.) An enormous majority- probably some 75–80 per cent – of the workers employed in the Chilean forestry sector work under temporary contracts. The loggers and chain-saw operators work for brief periods and they are paid in accordance with productivity standards established by the companies themselves, involving exhausting working days. According to available information, at least 26 per cent of the workers in the forestry sector declare that they normally work for over 10 hours a day.

The drastic reduction in workers' rights and in their negotiating capacity – which makes it possible to increase each worker's productivity – is linked to another characteristic factor of the workforce employed in forestry: the worker's relationship with the forestry companies is influenced by the action of contracting companies selling their services to forestry companies which hire workers for seasonal work. These companies respond to the forestry companies'

productive demands, leading to high worker turnover and seriously hindering their possibility of getting organized and defending their interests. The results are poor quality jobs and a remuneration that does not really enable the workers and their families' to enjoy the possibility of welfare.

This is the segment where the greatest exploitation of the workforce takes place, both because the tasks themselves are carried out far from urbanized centres (demanding lengthy travel to the workplace) and because these workers have no possibility of organizing themselves into trade unions to face the frequent violation of their rights and to improve their working relationship.

In 1988, 80 per cent of the workers in the sector did not belong to any kind of union and were open to management arbitrariness, obliged to work up to 16 hours a day for minimum wages, to live in subhuman conditions and to work with tools under minimum safety conditions: "modern slaves," the other face of the so-called "Forestry Boom."

It is worth looking at work-related accidents in the forestry sector, which shows the highest accident rates (the accident rate corresponds to the number of accidents occurring in one year per one hundred workers). This may well be due to the great effort demanded from the workers causing their exhaustion and with it, such high accident rates. The workers try to cut as much timber as they possibly can during long working hours to the detriment of their own safety. According to information supplied by leaders, work-related accidents cause the death of 15 workers per year.

From the above it may be deduced that the forestry sector is an excluding sector, that it does not generate development and that it is framed in the rationale of a neo-liberal model, only seeking to consolidate and perpetuate itself, and that it responds to the conscience and interests of the class that governs it.

Extracted and adapted from: "Los cambios socio-espaciales producidos por la explotación forestal en la región del Bio-Bio, particularmente en la comuna de Mulchen" (Socio-spatial changes caused by forestry exploitation in the Bio-Bio region, particularly in the Mulchen commune), by Juan Luis Muñoz L. Thesis to apply for a Graduate degree in Education, History and Geography honours. University of Concepcion. The complete report is available at: http://www.wrm.org.uy/paises/Chile/Tesis_Munoz.pdf

index

- Indonesia: Killings by Perhutani in East Java teak plantations – a twofold perverted notion of joint forest management

The state-owned company Perhutani boasts of having "one of the highest percentages of forest plantation in the world" (<u>http://perhutaniproducts.com/</u>) with a land area of 2,426,206 Ha in Java and Madura Island of Indonesia.

It has also the gloomy record of having severely damaged or destroyed well over half the 'state forest' of Wonosobo in Central Java (see WRM Bulletin N° 96).

On top of that, it has recently added notoriousness for killing villagers from the forest fringe of teak plantations in Perhutani's Madiun and Bojonegoro sectors.

Lidah Tani, a local NGO based in Blora, East Java, Indonesia, which supports forest farmers, issued a letter of protest denouncing that:

"Yaimin was shot dead by forest security forces in teak plantations in Perhutani's Madiun sector on Tuesday 6th May 2008. He received 4 bullet wounds in the chest. He was suspected, with others, of being involved in illegal logging." His friends deny the accusation, but, beyond that, Lidah Tani rightfully rebukes: "Four bullets for one man!"

The letter recalls that: "Less than two weeks previously, on 23rd April 2008, three people who were looking for wood in Perhutani teak plantations in the Bojonegoro sector were also shot. Two died and one is still in a critical condition."

These dead people belonged to communities who were the original owners of the forest land that was seized over a hundred years ago by the Dutch and never returned to them. Later on Perhutani took control of the forest and established teak plantations depriving forest farmers of their livelihood.

Recently Perhutani has vigorously promoted its Joint Forest Management programme as a means of involving communities in forest management and protection. However, the Indonesian local NGO wonders: "Is joint management the right term when the forestry company has seized control of community forests?"

People who have lived communally in the forests for generations, relying on subsistence agriculture, livestock, fruit and non timber forest products gathering such as honey, resin and fiber became the workforce to prepare the land and plant and tend the trees so Perutani harvests the timber of its teak plantations.

The meaning of joint forest management has been twofold perverted, because monoculture plantations of teak are by no means a biodiverse forest, and because joint management is far from implying the killing of forest community members.

"What is the meaning of 'joint management' when Perhutani shoots people to protect forests and members of the community are its victims?", asks Lidah Tani in the letter of protest. The organisation denounces that allegedly to protect state assets, Perhutani and its forest guards "shoot and kill people from villages on the forest margins those who are poor and oppressed". The criminal record of the company since 1998 is 31 dead and 69 people who were beaten up or shot by forest guards.

Lidah Tani' demands: "that justice is done. The perpetrators of murder and human rights violations must be sought out, tried and given appropriate sentences. We call on all parties to stop all forms of violence and for a forest protection system without guns. We urge all farmers' groups and community organisations to stop all forms of cooperation with Perhutani. Starting from today! Don't wait for the next victim!"

Article based on the "Letter of Protest About Killings of Villagers From the Forest Fringe by Perhutani", available at http://www.wrm.org.uy/countries/Indonesia/Killing_Villagers.html

index

- Ivory Coast: Tanoé Swamps Forest under destruction by Unilever/Palm-Ci's oil palm plantations

The Tanoé Swamps Forest, in the department of Adiaké, is the very last remaining forest block in the south-eastern corner of Côte d'Ivoire and extends in an area that has been classified by conservation experts as being, among other things, of high importance for the conservation of mammals and birds, and of very high importance for the conservation of fresh water ecosystems. It is considered a High Value Forest and a major refuge for primates like the threatened Miss Waldron red colobus (Piliocolobus badius waldronae), the diana roloway (Cercopithecus diana roloway) and the white-napped mangabey (Cercocebus atys lunulatus).

The swamps of the Tanoé Forest have acted up to now as a powerful "shield" that has protected the forest from major aggressions. The forest extends along the sub-prefectures of Noah, Nouamou and Tiapoum, and the bordering villages of Kongodjan Tanoé, Kadjakro, Yao-Akakro, Kotouagnouan, Dohouan, Atchimanou, Saykro and Nouamou. Villagers regard it as their reserve of fishing, medicinal and food resources. (1)

Since February 2008, the palm oil company PALM-CI has begun destroying this 6,000 hectare centre of biodiversity to

convert it to oil palm plantations. They are currently building drainage systems at the periphery and, once the rainy season is over, they intend to clearcut all of the forest.

If the Tanoé Forest is destroyed, the three primate species -as well as many plant species- will almost certainly become globally extinct, and large amounts of carbon dioxide will be released from the carbon-rich swamp forests.

Drainage systems are being built in order to produce seedbeds of palm tree seedlings on approximately 5 hectares of land between Kongodjan Tanoé and Kadjakro –a situation that according to many observers may arouse another land conflict before long in the department of Adiaké, since local communities have said that they are ready to defend the forest's integrity.

Unilever --one of the world's leading food and personal care consumer brands-- has been a long-term investor in PALM-CI and is represented on the company's board. They are stakeholders in a joint venture, Newco, which is the main customer of PALM-CI. Unilever publicly presents itself as a "responsible" palm oil company, being chair of the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). It announces that it intends to only buy palm oil certified as sustainable and has recently even said that it will support a moratorium on rainforest and peatland destruction in Indonesia. Are Africa's rainforests less important for Unilever than Indonesia's? (2)

Despite years of membership in the RSPO and proclamations about "sustainability", Unilever has so far not stopped purchasing palm oil grown on deforested land, drained peatland, or at the expense of communities and food production. Unilever continues to profit from the expansion of oil palm monocultures, which are intrinsically unsustainable, and certified palm oil "is unsubstantiated greenwash". (3)

Article based on: (1) "Adiake : 6 000 ha de forêt menacés de disparition", Moussa Touré, <u>http://news.abidjan.net/article/?n=294294;</u> (2) "Action Alert: Unilever Threatens Côte d'Ivoire's Primary Rainforests, Showing Promises of 'Sustainable' Palm Oil Meaningless", By Rainforest Portal, <u>http://www.rainforestportal.org/</u> and Climate Ark, <u>http://www.climateark.org/</u>, June 2, 2008; (3) "Rainforest alert", Rainforest Portal, June 2, 2008, <u>http://www.ecoearth.info/alerts/send.asp?id=ivory_coast_oil_palm</u>

<u>index</u>

- Uganda: Thousands of Indigenous People evicted from FSC-certified Mount Elgon National Park

In February 2008, the Uganda Wildlife Authority and the Uganda People's Defense Forces evicted more than 4,000 people from the Benet and Ndorobo communities living in Mount Elgon National Park in East Uganda. People's houses and crops were destroyed, cattle were confiscated and the people were left homeless. They found shelter where they could: in caves and under trees. The luckier ones stayed in a primary school or moved in with their relatives.

The eviction of the Benet started ten days after Annick Van De Venster, a Belgian tourist, was shot and killed in Mount Elgon National Park. According to UWA, which is responsible for managing Uganda's national parks, cattle thieves were responsible. UWA's executive director, Moses Mapesa said, "We believe the people who shot at the tourist's group mistook it to be a rival camp of cattle thieves."

UWA used the tragedy of a tourist's death at Mount Elgon as an excuse to evict the Benet. "Following these incidents," Moses Mapesa, UWA's executive director, said, "UWA found it prudent to address the issue of encroachment in the park, which in any case is all illegal as the boundaries of the park were redefined in 2002." Mapesa claimed that the eviction was "being undertaken humanely". He did not explain how evicting people from their homes and leaving them with nothing had anything to do with acting "humanely".

In fact, the Benet have a legal right to live in Mount Elgon National Park. In October 2005, the Ugandan High Court in Mbale ruled that the Benet were the "historical and indigenous inhabitants" of parts of Mount Elgon National Park. The ruling stated that the Benet should be allowed to "carry out agricultural activities" in the areas to which they have historical claim.

But UWA's Joshua Masereka, chief of Mount Elgon National Park, ignores the ruling. "We have always given the Benet time to vacate. We do not need them in the Park," he said.

"Such disregard for power of courts is what is making access to justice for the poor and marginalized communities in Uganda unattainable," says Chemisto Satya, a Programme Manager with ActionAid Uganda. ActionAid demanded that the government should provide immediate relief to the evicted people through its Disaster Preparedness Ministry.

Mount Elgon National Park is certified as well managed under the Forest Stewardship Council system. Clearly, the fact that the national park is FSC certified has not helped the Benet Indigenous People.

SGS Qualifor, the certifying body which issued the FSC certificate for Mount Elgon, is aware of High Court ruling that the Benet are historical and indigenous inhabitants of Mount Elgon. "UWA has accepted the court ruling in the case of the Benet tribe and undertook not to act against them unless alternative land can be found (thus recognizing and respecting their rights)", states SGS Qualifor's 2007 Public Summary of the Certification Report.

But when UWA evicted the Benet in February this year, they did not worry about finding any "alternative land". In May, a group of about 100 people who had been evicted from Mount Elgon camped outside Parliament in Kampala, demanding that the government allocate them land. A month later, Nelson Chelimo, the district chairman of Kapchorwa, near Mount Elgon, said that food aid was urgently need to save the lives of more than 1,000 Benet people. "People have no food and shelter following their eviction by Uganda Wildlife Authority and the army," Chelimo said in a statement.

In any case, FSC's Principle 3, which relates to Indigenous Peoples, does not give forest managers the right to evict Indigenous Peoples if "alternative land can be found", as SGS Qualifor suggests in its Public Summary. Principle 3 states that "The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected." Therefore, UWA is only in compliance with Principle 3 if it recognises and respects the Benet's rights to "own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources".

By evicting the Benet from Mount Elgon National Park, UWA has shown that it has no interest in complying either with FSC's Principle 3 or the significantly weaker statement from SGS Qualifor that UWA would only evict the Benet if "alternative land can be found". UWA booted the Benet out of the national park and left them without neither land nor homes.

Next month, SGS Qualifor is due to carry out an audit of Mount Elgon National Park. This time SGS Qualifor has no choice other than to admit that the eviction of the Benet from Mount Elgon National Park is in breach of FSC's Principle 3. For the simple reason that the management of the national park is not in compliance with FSC's Principles on Indigenous Peoples, the certificate must be withdrawn.

By Chris Lang, http://chrislang.org

<u>index</u>

Monthly Bulletin of the World Rainforest Movement This Bulletin is also available in French, Spanish and Portuguese Editor: Ricardo Carrere

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