

# Fact or Fiction?



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## Eco-Imperialism

*"African villagers used to spend their days and evenings sewing clothes for their neighbors, on foot-peddle-powered sewing machines. Once they get electricity, they spend too much time watching television and listening to the radio."—Gar Smith, Earth Island Institute<sup>1</sup>*

*"It's just not possible for people to have the material lifestyle of the average American. I'm proud that we've been able to block almost 300 hydroelectric projects in developing countries."—Brent Blackwelder, president of Friends of the Earth<sup>1</sup>*

These comments are examples of eco-imperialism—policies that seek to protect the environment, but deny impoverished people the chance for better lives and the ability to rid their countries of diseases that were vanquished long ago in the United States and Europe.<sup>2</sup>

*Eco-Imperialism*, by Paul Driessen covers this topic quite well. Niger Innis says, "This book should have been written years ago. It reveals a dark secret of the ideological environmental movement. The movement imposes the views of mostly wealthy, comfortable Americans and Europeans on mostly poor, desperate Africans, Asians and Latin Americans. It violates these people's most basic human rights, denying them economic opportunities, the chance for better lives, the right to rid their countries of diseases that were vanquished long ago in Europe and the United States."<sup>3</sup>

Another book, *The Real Environmental Crisis*, by Jack M. Hollander, states that "Poverty is the world's most critical environmental problem. Reducing poverty throughout the world should be a top priority for environmentalists."<sup>4</sup>

But it clearly is not. Read the opening statements of this article to get a flavor for some activist's thinking on this issue. Here's another view of the hydroelectric projects mentioned in one of those statements.

Robert Bininotto reports, "Whenever environmentalists prevent the building of hydroelectric power dams in the Third World, they boast of having prevented flooding of land and the destruction of wildlife and habitat. What is seen are the press conferences where green groups crow about having spared these critters from a man-made ecological holocaust. What is not seen are the countless human lives they have taken. By depriving Third World people access to the electricity that Western environmentalists take for granted, those people remain mired in poverty, darkness, wretched sanitation, and the resulting diseases and malnutrition that take millions of lives each year. Thanks to the environmental movement, these hapless people's Hobbesian existence will remain nasty, brutish, and short."<sup>5</sup>

Ozone depletion, dioxins, nuclear wastes, electromagnetic radiation, pesticide residues, PCBs and asbestos aren't what kill people in poor countries. Environmental killers in these places are hunger, disease and unsanitary water. These make environmental issues in developed countries pale by comparison. Lack of safe water for drinking, washing, food and personal hygiene and inadequate sanitation are the two most serious environmental problems worldwide. Water-related diseases, including gastroenteric diseases, cholera, typhoid and malaria, are responsible annually for 3 to 5 million deaths and about 2 billion cases of infection worldwide.<sup>6</sup>

Besides the hydroelectric projects mentioned earlier here are some other examples of first world handling of third world issues. Environmental pressure groups, wealthy foundations and even the United Nations and World Health Organization oppose the use of DDT and other pesticides to control malaria. This killer disease afflicts 300 million people every year, and kills 2 million—mostly women and children, and mostly in sub-Saharan Africa—leaving this region one of the most destitute on Earth.<sup>2</sup>

Opposition to biotechnology is rampant in parts of Africa, causing problems for untold millions. Robert Wager reports, "Two years ago, NGO's persuaded certain leaders of African countries to block the food aid coming from the U.S. The African leaders were lead to believe the food aid was poison. The leaders refused to distribute the food aid and millions of people were left starving. Jump ahead two years and the same NGO's are at it again in Angola. They have persuaded the Angolan government to reject 38 million pounds of corn food-aid from the U.S. Two million people are starving right now because of this."<sup>7</sup>

Paul Driessen adds the following which appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, "The green brigade, which likes to buttress its political opposition to GM foods with junk

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science, is cheering Zambia's intransigence. And the willingness of Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and the like to let Africans starve in the name of someone else's ideology is [remarkable]."<sup>8</sup>

So what if Americans have been consuming this corn for years (over 34 percent of all U.S. corn and 78 percent of its soybeans are genetically modified).<sup>8</sup>

More from the *Wall Street Journal*, "The eco-lobby has targeted the Third World with a five year \$175 million campaign against GM foods. The Sierra Club is calling 'for a moratorium on the planting of all genetically engineered crops.' Greenpeace say it 'opposes all releases of genetically engineered organisms into the environment,' an act it calls 'genetic pollution.'<sup>9</sup> This is a lot of money and effort to help starving people continue to starve."

## Summary

"Environmental activists 'romanticize poverty, then they fly to 'eco summits' like one in Johannesburg, where they stay in five-star hotels, talking about poverty but not giving options to the people who are actually poor to come out of poverty. And for this, they are deemed to be 'responsible,' concerned about the poor, moral and 'passionate about the environment.'"<sup>10</sup>

Greenpeace co-founder Patrick Moore, now an outspoken critic of the group he once led, looks at it this way, "I helped start the environmental movement to protect people, as well as our planet," he said. "Unfortunately, too many policies today ignore the needs of the Earth's poorest people. That's not just unnecessary. It's eco-imperialism. It's counter-productive, and morally wrong."<sup>11</sup>

Ironic isn't it? Folks who worry and protest about the latest parts per zillion of some contaminant in our air or food, because they claim it will kill people, choose to ignore environmental issues in developing countries that could save millions in real time.

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## Finishers' Think Tank

*Continued from page 35*

- Inhibitors that form a protective barrier on the surface. This prevents over pickling or etching of the base material, after preferred conditioning has been accomplished.
- Buffers maintain optimum solution activity, prolonging the bath service life.
- Chlorides and fluorides may be incorporated in the blended acid (more commonly in powders). Dissolving the concentrate, forms additional acidic agents, for more powerful and effective surface conditioning.
- Wetting agents provide additional cleaning to remove oils and grease. They also generate and maintain a light foam blanket, which effectively eliminates corrosive misting.
- Another class of inhibitors extend the acid service life by preventing the immersion deposition of metals, such as copper on the parts being processed. Some of these additives also precipitate metal contaminants, in another way to extend the acid bath.

Extending the acid bath service life minimizes the interruption of production schedules, required to drain the old acid and make up a new one. Less acid dumps also reduce demands and consumption of additives in the waste treatment system.

The proprietary acids are available in forms that vary according to the needs of the metal finisher. The plain mineral acids can be supplemented with additive packages, containing wetters and inhibitors. Powder concentrates usually contain any or all of the candidate additives mentioned previously. Handling the powders is safer and less hazardous compared to the liquid mineral acids.

It makes practical sense to improve and streamline the surface preparation segment. This will only enhance the finishing steps (electro/electroless plating and post finishing) that must now accommodate new stricter regulations and mandates. But, the cleaning and activation steps should also indicate these treatments improve safety and contribute to environmental stewardship.

Next month we check up on trivalent chromates. *P&SF*

## Advice & Counsel

*Continued from page 34*

in place. Don't allow the cassette to flop around as the worker walks, if at all possible.

Have the worker complete a "diary" of his working day so that you can use this information to identify any activities that may contribute to high readings. Stress to the worker how important it is to put entries into the diary as he/she is working, not at the end of the day. The diary should include the time of day, activity and duration of activity.

Depending on how dependable your workers are, you might want to conduct a "dry run" before doing the actual test. You can clip an empty box with tubing onto the worker and have them complete the diary. When you are satisfied that all is going according to Hoyle, you can do the actual test. Don't do too many dry runs, or the workers will get tired of completing the diary over and over.

When the sampling period is complete you will need to send the cassette off to a laboratory equipped with an Ion Chromatograph set up for OSHA method 215 for hexavalent chromium. This newer method was approved by OSHA in 1998. The older method (OSHA ID-103) does not have sufficient sensitivity to detect the low levels OSHA proposes. *P&SF*

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