



It's Simpol !

The Simultaneous Policy News • Summer 2006

Grassroots Policy Development Now Under Way

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It's Simpol !



The Simultaneous Policy

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Editorial

Congratulations to all involved in the **incorporation of Simpol-NZ**, scheduled for July 2006. The announcement from New Zealand about this event naturally features as the first item in this issue. It is further evidence of the growing conviction, at the grassroots of the global justice movement, that 'we the people' have to initiate the change we want to see.

Our Spring issue recorded the creation of Simpol-UK's provisional Policy Committee. Membership nominations and elections are scheduled, as reported on p.7, **so another important step forward has been taken in the realisation of SP's "elegant political strategy."**

Political parties rely on think-tanks or focus groups - or even the whims of their leaders - to help them create voter-friendly policies for their manifestos.

And traditional parliamentary procedures offer voters a choice between policies that are intended to ensure good governance through debate between elected representatives, followed by majority voting along party lines. But all such policies are, of course, totally framed and constrained by the need for nations to maintain their international competitiveness and are thus unlikely to have any significant impact on global problems.

The Simultaneous Policy leaves this imperfect system in place, but adds to it a "parallel democracy" that allows politicians - across the world - to carry on supporting their party's policies at national level but drives them to support, and ultimately to implement global-level policies that citizens and voters are working across frontiers to create.

Now there is news that such citizens and voters may indeed be a political force of increasing importance. In the UK, as an example, a recent BBC survey suggests there has been a shift of opinion towards SP-like values.

This is because the survey reveals "the emergence of a dynamic, socially engaged and environmentally conscious" voter - estimated to be 20 million in number (see the **News-watch** citation on p.11).

And in the USA, according to Donna Zajonc, cited by Center4Change, the maturing 'Millennium Generation' "will have a huge impact on politics and society" because they will "transform cultural

attitudes, revolutionize work environments and empower the disenfranchised by blending their fierce independence with a vision for the common good.”

So this Summer issue responds to this encouraging news by publishing articles offered by two SP Adopters as initial contributions about suggested policy measures, to generate debate among this wider citizen audience as well as Adopters. Both articles concern the imbalance of power between unaccountable transnational corporations (TNCs) and governments, and the shortcomings of TNCs in respect of their social and environmental responsibilities (as explored in the UK House of Commons Policy Forum featured in the previous issue).

Announcement : Forthcoming Incorporation of Simpol-NZ

New Zealand/Aotearoa is about to join the Simpol family. It is planned Simpol-NZ will be incorporated as a Registered Society during July 2006, and that publicity campaigning and the signing of pledges will follow immediately.

New Zealand has a population of only 4.5 million but has nevertheless been in the avant garde of many important developments in Western democracy. These range from being the first nation to give women the vote, the first nation to introduce many of the provisions of the welfare state and the first member of the USA Cold War alliance against communism to abandon the doctrine of nuclear war.

Following a referendum, in 1996 the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system was abandoned in favour of MMP, a multiple voting system similar (without the federal component) to that of Germany. Parties need to have either an elected constituency member or at least 5% of the party vote in order to get a seat. There is only a three-year electoral term and no upper house.

The two main, fairly evenly balanced, centrist parties are National to the right and Labour to the left - with four or five minor parties (currently, none with more than 7% of the vote) generally in a position to provide the swing from which coalitions can be formed. This gives minor

These articles and this issue's **Cartoon** thus show a new way by which 'we the people' can express a collective voice - as we are encouraged to do by Andrew George MP in his article about **Power to the People** in which he argues that "politicians can regulate, but people power can often be more effective."

Finally, readers will see there is once again a good range of **Campaigning** news to report, this time including initial information about - and encouraging results from - Simpol-UK's 'meet-the-people' summer promotional programme. We plan to give more space to cover this important new initiative in the Autumn issue.

parties much more potential to influence government policy than is the case in FPTP systems such as the UK's. Currently, the government is formed by a coalition of Labour, New Zealand First and the Greens (who have 5%.) It is anticipated that these constitutional arrangements, and the generally egalitarian and moderate New Zealand approach to politics, will offer Simpol a favourable environment.

Simpol-NZ is being set up as a not-for-profit organisation by **Lady Rhyl Jansen** and **Hugh Steadman**. Rhyl is the recently elected President of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, a member of the Maori Party and a long-term member of New Zealand political society. Hugh is a former British Army officer and New Zealand businessman who founded the Sapiens Movement, which is NZ's only mondial organization. He sees Simpol as the best practical hope for establishing a grass roots movement capable of drawing public attention to, and addressing, the rapidly mounting problems facing global society.

All contacts with other Simpol organisations are welcomed. Success in one country, no matter how complete, will have no value without similar success in many countries. Pending the creation of the Simpol-NZ website, the contact email address is hugh@sapiens.org.nz.

Political support : First SP head of government



Nobel Peace Prize winner, José Ramos Horta, has been a supporter of the Simultaneous Policy campaign for several years. It was announced at the beginning of July that he is to be appointed Prime Minister of East Timor.

The country has been experiencing unrest and Dr. Horta has a challenging time ahead.

However, when the time is appropriate perhaps he will make his government the first to officially pledge to implement SP alongside other countries and advocate for other governments to make the same pledge.



East Timor

Graphic: Vardion (wikimedia commons)

A voice from parliament : Power to the People



Andrew George MP represents the St Ives and Isles of Scilly constituency in the UK House of Commons, and is a member of the Liberal Democrat Party. He has lent his support to campaigning activities organised by his local

SP Adopters' Group, which are being extended this Summer 2006 into other areas of the UK (see p.10). Readers will note with interest his comment below that "politicians are not as powerful as they are assumed to be" and, therefore, that well-focused action by consumers has an important role to play in campaigning for fair trade, because "people power is sometimes greater than anything that politicians can muster."

What kind of world do we want?

Soon, politicians will be turning their attention to their September Party conferences. It is their shop window to the world and, even though increasingly stage-managed, can throw up some surprises and embarrassments for the Party leadership.

Around the conference auditorium itself is found the "fringe"; hundreds of stalls and meetings that have become increasingly populated with multinational companies which are either without or in desperate need of political friends because they have either wrecked the planet, exploited the poor, or done both and have come to display their sudden and complete remorse.

I am sure that many of those who support Simultaneous Policy recognise that it is what it says: i.e. policy - in other words politics. It doesn't mean to say that it has fallen into the trap of the tribalism of "party politics" but it is still about the process of making decisions about what kind of world we and our successors should live in and how we are to secure a better life.

But sometimes political decisions have to be made on the basis of a balance of probabilities and best judgement.

The wish to establish "fair trade", "freedom, security and equal opportunity for all", etc., is best done through international agreements. The alternative, telepathy, is a great thing but it is open to misinterpretation! For example, it is surely better to work with the United Nations and to encourage its member states to bring forward policy proposals for agreement and implementation, rather than having to reinvent or recreate another international body. Similarly, the widely loathed World Trade Organisation presents a platform through which potentially welcome rules can be agreed for international trade. The alternative would be international economic anarchy that would clearly favour the largest and strongest corporations and the richest and most powerful nations.

The constraints of party politics

So the question is, how do we implement policies that achieve fair trade, peace, conflict resolution and

environmental sustainability? Well, you could either join a political party which you judge represents best the values that you hold dear, and use that opportunity to press those parties and their political leaders and spokespeople to work energetically for that outcome, and to encourage others to join in and to offer their support. Or you could stay outside and engage in single-issue campaigning.

If, like me, you choose to join, judgements, of course, still need to be made about whether, in an attempt to push these kind of policies, you become one of the very same people you entered policy debate to oppose - i.e. a politician! In other words, someone assumed to be motivated by an unworthy purpose, more concerned about their own popularity than doing the right thing and with eons of intergalactic space between them and the real world.

What many people need to appreciate is that most politicians are not as powerful as they are assumed to be and certainly not as powerful as many would like them to be. As many articles in *It's Simpol!* make clear, the power of multinational companies and the media have a much greater influence than the average politician.

SP and the potential for harnessing people power

As those who support the Simultaneous Policy initiative acknowledge, people power is sometimes greater than anything that politicians can muster. For example, I still feel that we failed to capitalise on the impact that millions of people could have had after the marches, concerts and demonstrations last summer in support of the "Make Poverty History" campaign shortly before the G8 Summit at Gleneagles, a year ago.

What concerned many, including myself, was that those who had marched to "Make Poverty History" could well have then walked into a local supermarket and bought products which consigned the producers (farmers and growers) to poverty.

As the Simultaneous Policy suggests, even the large multinational corporations that run these supermarkets would have to listen and concern themselves with any potential and substantial public relations problems if the millions of people demanded action. People power could and should be used to tame those supermarkets who refuse to consider the consequences of their abuse of market muscle upon smaller suppliers - whether a plantation worker in a developing country or a small dairy farmer in the UK. Large corporations, which depend on establishing a good reputation with their customers, are highly susceptible to the possibility of a public relations disaster. So it is reasonable for those who came in to use their stores to demand clear and transparent evidence of the "fair trading" of all of the products on their shelves. Politicians can regulate, but people power can often be more effective, particularly in persuading image- and brand-conscious corporations to operate according to more noble principles than they do.

So I wish the promoters of Simultaneous Policy well in their endeavours in persuading many other politicians to sign up to this noble cause.

Policy debates : The Role of the UN Global Compact in SP



As a contribution to the on-going debate about corporate accountability **Shilpa Shah**, a freelance writer specialising in this and environmental issues and a member of Simpol-UK's provisional Policy Committee, describes the United Nations' voluntary Compact with the

global corporate community that aims to "foster a more beneficial relationship between business and society."

However, though it is based on ten universal principles and is thus a laudable initiative that is attracting increasing support, she considers it is largely ineffective because governments have failed to endorse it with regulatory legislation, for fear of first-mover disadvantage. She therefore suggests there is scope for complementary UN-SP action, in which application of SP's strategy by governments could help to fulfil the Compact's objectives. (Contact: shilpashah23@yahoo.co.uk)

The status and limitations of the Global Compact

With 3137 member companies from across the world (at the time of writing), the United Nations Global Compact is one of the world's most significant efforts to improve the operations of big business. It is of interest to Simultaneous Policy Adopters because the convening power of the UN, with its 191 member states, makes this initiative the current multilateral corporate governance initiative with the furthest global reach. And, as well as individual corporations, governments across the global North and South are increasingly showing their support.

However, since its inception in 1999, the Global Compact has attracted severe criticism from campaigning NGOs working to improve levels of corporate accountability across the world. While its supporters have extolled the merits of its unique global status, a coalition of civil society groups declared that the Global Compact "rewards rhetoric rather than deed and undermines our efforts to bring a measure of corporate accountability... into the intergovernmental arena."

The Winter 2004/05 issue of this newsletter defined the term "Corporatocracy": undue power and influence in the hands of private vested interests such as transnational corporations (TNCs), private banks and investors. The widening of a 'governance gap' between the sheer power and global reach of many of the world's TNCs, and the capability of individual governments to regulate the social and environmental impacts of TNC operations, has posed the increasingly pertinent question of how to address the issue of corporate accountability effectively through multilateral cooperation.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) promotes corporate interests on a multilateral basis. For example, it advocates the prising-open of low-income country markets to Western corporate interests through the

General Agreement on Trading in Services (GATS) and through implementing strict intellectual property rights agreements. But, without a global overarching authority with the power effectively to promote more normative social and environmental concerns, all-powerful TNCs can largely operate with impunity, especially in low-income countries keen to attract foreign investment opportunities.

The UN's past relations with business had consisted mainly of failed attempts to bring about a binding multilateral agreement concerning the regulation of TNCs, as the Simultaneous Policy approach would advocate. The UN Center on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC) facilitated discussions between governments in the 1970s and 1980s, before the whole concept was killed due to powerful corporate interests.

From voluntary action to effective monitoring?

The Global Compact is the UN's first endeavour to engage with business in what is said to be a constructive way: focusing on companies implementing voluntary "consensus-based solutions", hoping to "foster a more beneficial relationship between business and societies, paying particular attention to the world's poorest people". The initiative aims to involve UN agencies, labour organisations, states, civil society organisations and thousands of large and small companies from all over the world in a discourse aimed to help embed ten universal principles concerning human rights, labour standards and environmental protection into business practices, giving a "human face to the global market."

But campaigning NGOs, including Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, the Third World Network and Corporate Watch, have severely criticised the initiative. The ten principles themselves have come under fire for their vague, 'motherhood and apple pie' nature. One cannot disagree with their warm, positive character, but it is difficult to understand what they really mean, or measure their implementation.

A number of NGOs protested against the lack of entry criteria into the initiative when famously irresponsible companies such as Shell, Nike, Rio Tinto and other controversial corporations were announced as founding members in 2000. Coca-Cola joined the initiative in 2006, following ongoing protest about its links with paramilitary violence in Colombia and allegations of depleting groundwater supplies and selling toxic waste as pesticide to farmers in India.

The lack of independent monitoring of business practices once a company has joined has led to calls of Bluewash!, as it is possible for companies to benefit from the good public relations arising from associating themselves with the world's foremost intergovernmental body, without significantly improving their conduct.

While these NGOs are highly supportive of the concept of a United Nations and its mission, there is a feeling that corporate interests are supplanting the priorities of 'we the peoples'. The Global Compact is perceived to be more in the interests of its company participants than of stakeholders affected by corporate irresponsibility.

The Global Compact secretariat is keen to point out that this 'corporate citizenship' initiative is NOT intended as a substitute for effective regulatory action by governments, thus presenting it as an attempt for the UN to modernise and stay relevant as the traditional lines between the responsibilities of the state, private sector and civil society become blurred.

Resistance to change in corporate law

But business organisations such as the International Chamber of Commerce and the Confederation of British Industry have pointed to the Global Compact as evidence to support their drive against stricter governmental regulations. In the UK, where a Company Law Reform bill is currently being debated in parliament, many pro-business decision-makers are using the existence of voluntary corporate responsibility initiatives to ensure that company law is not changed to take account of social and environmental concerns more effectively.

Supporters of the Compact attempt to take the moral high ground, arguing that the creation of a space of learning and debate to encourage corporations across the world to spearhead change in their own practices is better than dragging them, kicking and screaming, to more sustainable modes of operating through effective legislation.

In this context a well-known ditty about the days of East India Company rule comes to mind: *Jis nagri me saudagar banega raja, tho prajaka bajeka baja*, meaning In the land where the interests of the trader are paramount, may God help the people. Our cut-throat world economy allows global capital the flexibility to chase short-term profit as the 'corporate globalisation' ideology legitimising the never-ending drive for economic growth remains supreme, supported by the strength of the business lobby whispering in the ears of public authority across the world. Governments will not make the first move to regulate business in a more effective way, especially if initiatives

such as the Global Compact are held up as shining examples of a seemingly successful yet easier route.

The current 'prisoner's dilemma' situation, where no single government is prepared to be the first to regulate out of fear of becoming uncompetitive in the global economy, is being challenged even by business leaders, albeit the more conscientious ones who want laws to ensure that the more irresponsible companies brush up their behaviour. Voluntary initiatives are important for learning and spearheading modes of best practice, especially in areas of weak governance. But time and time again, we see that their ad-hoc nature is not enough.

Scope for complementary UN-SP action

The Simultaneous Policy shows a possible way forward. The implementation of transnational laws requiring companies to be more transparent about their external impacts and more accountable to those affected by their operations will function effectively only on a multilateral level. As explained during the Policy Forum about 'Holding Corporations Accountable' in the UK House of Commons in March 2006, exerting a meaningful level of control over transnational companies will work only when governments act together, simultaneously.

As the Compact continues to grow and increasing numbers of countries begin to get involved, the role of governments within it is becoming more clearly defined. There is thus the possibility for the Global Compact to become a vehicle for education about the need for legislation, both within parliaments and among voters. So it is likely Simultaneous Policy suggestions will be made that include putting duties on company directors who can then be held accountable for misconduct, and making comprehensive sustainability reporting mandatory. Indeed, with the support of the UN and its associated bodies, applying world-wide leverage to make corporations really accountable to 'we the peoples', the opportunities are immense.

Policy suggestions : Adopters Put Forward their Proposals

Every Adopter has the right to submit proposals for consideration by other Adopters for inclusion in SP. Summaries are presented here. You will find fuller information and be able to make comments and your own suggestions in the 'policy zone' at www.simpol.org.uk. Alternatively, contact policy@simpol.org.uk or write to Simpol, UK, PO Box 26547, London, SE3 7YT (Simpol-UK has offered to accept policy suggestions from Adopters in other countries for passing to ISPO). Adopters will be asked to vote to prioritise policy areas later in 2006 and there will be elections for the Simpol-UK Policy Committee and a consultation meeting with Adopters.

New suggestions since the Spring It's Simpol !

Title: The One Per Cent Solution: (TOPS)

Proposer: Mitch Gold (mgold@homeplanet.org)

Summary: A global brand label tithing program (on goods and services) administered through a higher ordered accounting function (Institute for Global Accountants)

ensuring that corporations that use the label are being accountable to triple bottom line reporting standards. The funds generated through the program will "refinance" the United Nations (or such other Global Governance Structure) that is determined. For details see: www.homeplanet.org/

Title: International Clearing Union

Proposer: David Smith (davidsmith@aic.co.uk)

Summary: This proposal was made by John Maynard Keynes in 1942 and was featured in George Monbiot's book: 'Age of Consent'. The object is to provide a mechanism to ensure every nation maintains what Monbiot calls a 'balance of trade', but is more correctly called a balance of payments. Experience has shown that once a small to medium nation gets seriously into deficit it can never climb out. Also the mad scramble to try to run a surplus encourages destructive trade. Keynes' key innovation was to give creditor nations an incentive to come back into balance as well as debtor nations. The US was determined to run a surplus after the second world war, and so Keynes' proposal was rejected at Bretton Woods.

Title: Introduction of the Solidar currency**Proposer:** Åsa Brandberg (nypeng@hotmail.com)

Summary: The debt-free currency Solidar mirrors the energy flow of Nature for the benefit of all. On www.solidar.lir.be the Solidar is presented as a local currency for countryside development. But to save humanity and the eco-system it has to be implemented simultaneously worldwide.

The Policy Committee believes the following suggestion is outside the scope of SP as competition between nations is not an obstacle to its implementation. However, it is for Adopters to discuss and decide whether to support it.

Title: Fair and Sustainable Trade Institute**Proposer:** David Smith (davidsmith@aic.co.uk)

Summary: The purposes of the Institute would be:
a. to test the various proposals for stabilising the global economy, including those in the current set of Simultaneous Policies. b. to research stable patterns of production and trade, which would be both equitable and sustainable in environmental, social and economic terms.

Simpol-UK Policy Committee elections and consultation

The Simpol-UK provisional Policy Committee is organising a consultation with Adopters to take place prior to the AGM on 14 October. An elected Committee will be in place

by that time. Voting papers and a questionnaire about the policy development process will be circulated to UK Adopters in September.

There are 9 positions on the Policy Committee available to UK Adopters. If you wish to stand please register by 14 August 2006. Elections are initially for 12 months. The provisional committee has been communicating by email and by internet conferencing, but a physical meeting can be arranged for the new Committee members. The role of the Committee is to:

- receive policy suggestions from Adopters,
- put these into good order,
- raise any concerns with the proposer,
- communicate suggestions to other Adopters.
- organise ranking of policy areas and suggestions by Adopters.
- proposing changes to the policy development process after consultation with Adopters, for approval by Adopters.

Please send the following information to Simpol-UK, PO Box 26547, London, SE3 7YT, or policy@simpol.org.uk To discuss first send an email to mikebrady@simpol.org.uk or 07986 736179.

- Your name
- Phone number
- Name of another Adopter, supporting your nomination
- Employment
- Your reason for standing for election to the Policy Committee (200 words maximum)
- Address
- Email address
- Your interest in SP (100 words max.)

Simpol cartoon : SP - New Energy for the Political Grid



Ben: Why did you go on protest marches to get these monstrosities installed?

Jenny: Most people say they want environmentally friendly energy.

B: But at what cost to your energy. Long NGO meetings, then carrying banners in the streets!

J: It is a lot of effort. What we really need is to force global action - and I've joined a campaign to achieve that. We've worked out a way by which citizens can propose and prioritise their own global policy measures in a package called the Simultaneous Policy, and get them noticed.

B: By politicians?

J: Yes. We are in direct contact with an increasing number of them who've pledged their support.

B: So how does it work? What's this Policy thing?

J: It's called the Simultaneous Policy because the measures it contains come into operation only when governments agree to act simultaneously. At elections, people who've adopted the Policy cast their votes for candidates known to support it. So, naturally, plenty of candidates sign up. And, if they are elected, they know their choices on global issues will be watched.

B: Hmm, sounds too easy to be workable.

J: Well, think about it. There are three levers for getting things changed for the better. As voters, we pressurise politicians. That's not difficult - many of them want change as much as we do. They pressurise governments for the same reasons. And then governments pressurise others to agree to act together, for a better Kyoto, real fair trade, making corporations accountable, or whatever.

B: Okay, so it's a kind of chain reaction. But what's the force that drives it?

J: You and me. Adopt the Policy on-line or at the cost of a postage stamp, vote selectively at elections, and help by campaigning if you wanted to. You'd be joining a potential cast of millions! - just ordinary citizens, acting democratically across frontiers, telling politicians for the first time what they ought to be doing, not the other way round. We're a bit like those windmills because we feed a new kind of power into the political grid.

Policy debates : The Stakeholder Governance Policy Measure

In the Spring 2006 issue of *It's Simpol!* one of the policy suggestions submitted by Adopters was for **Remodelling Companies to Become Stakeholder-Governed Organisations**. This proposed: *International legislation to replace archaic joint stock company law is now urgently required to "turn multinational corporations into nested networks of stakeholder-governed organisations accountable to local citizens"* (Shann Turnbull). Here Adopter David Smith suggests additional steps requiring simultaneous governmental action. (Contact: davidsmith@aic.co.uk)

- 1) Prohibit 'off balance sheet entities': i.e. make corporate accounting fully transparent.
- 2) Place restrictions on companies holding stock in another. This would mean that if company A holds more than, say, 20% of the shares in company B, and if the latter goes bust, company A bears some fraction of company B's debts. In the case of a wholly-owned subsidiary, the parent company would be responsible for all the debts.
- 3) Remove directors' legal responsibility to put profit before all other considerations.
- 4) Make directors personally responsible for any infringement of any regulation, unless they could prove that the infringements were the result of subordinates'

failure to obey orders.

- 5) Ensure that 'Corporate Social Responsibility' systems follow international mandatory standards. These standards would require external stakeholders to be involved in the monitoring of such systems, so they would no longer be greenwash.
- 6) Where a company is operating in a country in which it is not registered, oblige directors to appoint persons resident in the country where operations are being conducted who will assume the responsibility of directors. This is important where global harmonisation of environmental and other standards has not yet been achieved.
- 7) Remove 'human rights' from companies.

With regard to cooperatives, one problem is that capital-intensive industries need external sources of funds. Even if these are supplied as loans, creditors will in practice have quite a say in how the company is run.

Another point is that the details of company governance really matter. For instance, a well known British building society is theoretically owned by its members, yet no director not nominated by the board has ever been elected. Also, the rules for submitting members' resolutions are so opaque that the board can shut out anything it doesn't like. Changing the voting system from a Multiple X to a Single Transferable vote would change all this; but UK law doesn't allow it.

Letter to the Editor : Climate Change and the C&C Proposal

UK Adopter Richard Lawson has been following developments in the way government officials and parliamentarians at Westminster react to the challenge posed by the serious problems associated with climate change. Here he comments on correspondence exchanges reported in previous issues of this newsletter, updates readers on recent events and encourages them to keep pressing for decision and action in the corridors of power. (Contact: www.greenhealth.org.uk)

Colin Challen, a West Yorkshire MP, launched a cross-party Climate Change Group in April 2006 with the worthy aim of trying to establish Parliamentary political consensus on this overwhelmingly important issue. He points out that, though most parties accept that Climate Change (CC) is happening, and is caused by human activities, the issue was not given any media attention during the last election. He is also a champion of Contraction and Convergence (C&C) - the most effective policy answer to CC yet tabled.

Of course, to get UK Parliamentary consensus is one thing, but to get global action going is an entirely different kettle of smoke-blackened and malodorous fish. There are many aspects to climate change mitigation. One is that of investment in new technology that can bring in rewards; Denmark has done well by taking a proactive line in wind technology. But it is undeniable that a large part of the mix involves reducing oil consumption, and this could

produce a competitive disadvantage unless all countries jump together. So CC agreements are an ideal case to apply the Simultaneous Policy.

Regular readers of *It's Simpol!* will know that I have been corresponding with Government since February 2005, urging it to use SP in the international fora that the PM was chairing. As we might expect, they dodged and weaved. In my last letter of 2 Apr 2006 I turned the concept round. Since it is clear the UK Government (HMG) would fight shy of initiating this policy, I wrote "I would now like to explore the degree of resistance that you would offer to this approach. If another party deployed the Simultaneous Policy tactic to bring about Contraction & Convergence, at what stage would HMG join in with its own pledge? Would it come in with the first third, the second third, the last third, or would HMG not participate in C&C in any circumstances whatsoever?"

The nice civil servant who has the pleasure of dealing with this has apologised for her non-reply in May (the correspondence has been moved to DEFRA), but there is still no answer. This is a good sign. Government officers are supposed to turn correspondence around in four weeks. Delays suggest the question is causing them difficulty. At two months, though, the time is ripe for a prod. So, if any Simpol supporters would like to apply more pressure (and what more pressing problem is there to press for?), write to Ian Pearson MP, Minister of State (Climate Change and the Environment), House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA asking him to come up with an answer.

Campaigning : SP Links Campaigners Around the World

News from ISPO

European Social Forum

The International Simultaneous Policy Organisations was in attendance at the European Social Forum in Athens (4-7 May). As well as a stand with multi-lingual information where people from across Europe and beyond signed up as Adopters, ISPO took part in a seminar with the the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice (CSSGJ), based at Nottingham University, which has developed the methodology of Open Spaces for Dialogue and Education (see www.osdemethodology.org.uk). This approach gives all participants the opportunity to share their views in a non-threatening way and allows time for reflection on what others have said.

The slogan of the World and other Social Fora is *Another World is Possible* and the theme of the ISPO/CSSGJ seminar was *How do YOU want the world to be?* SP provides a means to empower participants at the Social Fora to discuss and develop global policies and ultimately to achieve their implementation.

Adopters interested in attending future Social Fora can contact mikebrady@simplol.org.uk for help in raising the profile of SP at them. Meanwhile ISPO will continue to work with CSSGJ to investigate using the open spaces approach for policy discussions.

World Constitution and Parliament Association

On ISPO's behalf, National Coordinator **H A Shankaranarayana** participated in the IXth session of the **Provisional World Parliament** held in Tripoli, Libya, 11-14 Apr 2006, at the invitation of the World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA).

During his address he referred to one of the key documents under discussion (World Revolution through World Law by Glenn T. Martin), and questioned "whether the law precedes revolution or the revolution precedes the law", pointing out that "nowhere in human history has the law brought about a revolution. It is changes in the institutions that have made revolution possible and revolution, in turn, has led to changes in the law."

Citing the case of his own country, he said that "India is one of the most vibrant democratic countries. We have by far the most comprehensive democratic constitutions in the world ... with many laws against discrimination and others aiming to achieve justice and equality." But he observed they have failed to usher in justice because "the law is being adhered to in letter but violated in spirit."

Thus, because he believes "the endeavour of achieving revolution through law is like putting the cart before the horse," he suggested to participants that "the Simultaneous Policy is relevant in achieving the objectives of WCPA" because its "ultimate objective is to achieve a regenerative world order through peaceful means. And it aims to alter contemporary global institutions ... through a strategy that democratically drives the nations of the world to apply global solutions to global problems

simultaneously."

He then gave more information about the phased development of SP's strategy, with particular reference to the process of adoption by voters globally, and of pledges to implement the Policy by individual candidates or political parties, resulting in electoral pressure being brought to bear on governments to agree to enact legislation simultaneously. And he ended by saying: "I am of the opinion that the WCPA can realize its world democratic government aims through peaceful means by using the power of ballot rather than the power of law."

Further information about the WCPA, which is the organising agent for the World Parliament (described as "A democratic non-military government"), is available on www.worldparliamentgov.net/. For a report on the Tripoli meeting, click on Ninth Session under Acts of the Parliament on www.radford.edu/~gmartin/.



H A Shankaranarayana (2nd from left) addressed participants during WCPA's IXth session, and later received many congratulations for his presentation.

News from Simplol-Australia

Australian Coordinator **Brian Jenkins** is planning a postal survey of the country's 230 Adopters with a view to seeking formal incorporation as an association. Brian wants to verify registered addresses and find out how many Adopters have sustained their knowledge of and dedication to SP over the past four years, during which there have been few meetings or other interaction in the eight states and territories.

Opinions will also be sought on the level of membership fee to fund incorporation and ongoing activities, and on the desirable basis of communication and service to unfunded Adopters who will always remain the organisation's policy backbone. In the meantime, a website has been started at www.simplol-oz.org, and this will be developed on a cooperative basis with a proposed new team of managers. (Contact: jenks@inet.net.au)

News from Simpol-UK

The Summer 2006 Campaign gets under way with veggie oil campervan and street stalls

Weston-Super-Mare, Totnes, Ludlow Green Festival, Chester, Newcastle Green Festival, The Forest Café in Edinburgh, and an Anti-War Coalition demonstration in Canterbury have been the first locations on this new roving campaign trail.

Building on the success that Barnaby Flynn had had in recruiting over 300 Adopters and two election candidates in Penzance, Cornwall, through the frequent manning of a publicity stall among shoppers in the town, the Management Board has allocated funds for him to set up a 6-month campaign tour. It appreciated, too, his skill in encouraging his MP, Andrew George, to sign the pledge to implement SP: see his supportive article in this issue of *It's Simpol!* on p.4.



Barnaby is impressed with his "self-contained mobile lobbying machine". This is an almost carbon-neutral Turbo Mercedes Sprinter clad with SP logos which Diesel Veg Ltd of Wolverhampton (www.dieselveg.com) equipped with a split-tank veggie oil conversion system. And a scheduled addition is a solar panel to charge Barnaby's computer battery, facilitating the early completion of new adoption information.

The campaign's basic aims are to ensure that Simpol has a visible presence in civil society summer events in the UK, and to increase public awareness of SP's political strategy in the country's marginal constituencies. But also, Barnaby writes: "to get as many new Adopters as possible, to encourage and support these Adopters to become active in doing stalls and starting SPAGs (Simultaneous Policy Adopters' Groups), which can get together with other Adopters to talk about global policy and contact their MPs to pledge to implement SP, whilst not forgetting to dive in front of as many microphones as possible" preferably those covered with fluff attached to a camera next to high-profile MPs ...

"Doing the stalls", he continues, "I found people on the whole very receptive to the SP strategy. And I have enjoyed watching smiles come over people's faces as they realise that global cooperation can happen, and is happening, even if it is only due to the fact that we are now being forced to look for alternatives to destructive competition. 'Its all part of our evolution,' I say; 'all this

was inevitable."

As a marker of the tour's initial success there has been an average of 25 adoptions per day where a stall has been set up. And some people have offered to do their own stalls and establish SPAGs. So, addressing newsletter readers in Britain, Barnaby writes: "If you are interested or want any help in any way with campaigning, setting a stall up or a SPAG, please contact me at barnawasp@hotmail.com so that I can visit you as soon as convenient. Or, if you know of events in which you think the stall would be well received, or if you live in a marginal constituency (see the list on www.simpol.org.uk), again please contact me."

A fuller report from the campaign trail will follow in the next newsletter issue, which Barnaby hopes will contain "news of many new Adopters getting together, and newly-pledged MPs."

Campaigns Outreach and Support Officer appointed

Following recent interviews Diana Trimble has been appointed to this new part-time post at Simpol-UK. Diana will provide support to the Simpol-UK trustees and volunteer Management Board as well as Adopters wishing to promote the campaign.

Annual General Meeting and call for Trustee nominations from Simpol-UK's Company Secretary

The AGM of Simpol-UK will be held in London on 14 October 2006. More details will be circulated nearer the time. But, in the meantime, in accordance with our rules, two trustees will retire by rotation at this AGM. If you are interested in standing to be a trustee of the company, now is the time to put your name forward. If there are more than two candidates we will hold an election among the members. If there are two candidates or less then, unless a candidate's election is opposed, the candidates will be automatically elected without a vote. Trustees meet at least twice per year to scrutinise the operation of the organisation. Expenses are paid.

A carbon-neutral organisation?

Simpol-UK is aspiring to be a carbon-neutral organisation. This entails reducing travel and other energy consumption, experimenting with internet conferencing and investigating carbon offsetting. In particular flights are being offset using tree-planting services. The Trustees are interested to hear your views and ideas. Contact info@simpol.org.uk

News Briefs

Embracing democracy and good governance

John Bunzl of Simpol-UK was invited to join political leaders, experts and representatives from the business community and civil society in Athens 9-11 March 2006 to develop ideas, suggestions and concrete proposals as part of a new project to foster democracy and good governance.

The conference "Beyond the Millennium Declaration: Embracing Democracy and Good Governance" was organized by the New School of Athens which focuses on issues of globalization and democratization of world governance. In particular, it attempts to bring together the "free market" vision of globalization as exemplified by the World Economic Forum in Davos and the alternative views of sustainable development expressed by the World Social Forum in Porto Allegre. (Contact: jbzunzl@simplol.org; www.cityofathens.gr)

Money Reform Party

Newsletter readers concerned about the need for money reform will be interested to read a **Money Reform Party** has been established in the UK. The organiser **Anne Belsey** writes: "It aims to use the electoral system to educate the British people and their politicians about the debt-based money system and to campaign against the creation of money by the privately-owned banking system. It has one policy, that all money should be created debt-free by a public agency, but this one policy underlies every issue that is presented to government for solution - the economy, the environment, taxation, pensions, health care, education, economic migration, social cohesion, third-world poverty, internal and external security." (Contact: anne@cowebo.freemove.co.uk)

Integral global governance

John Bunzl is drafting a manuscript with the title *Integral*

Global Governance, proposed to be published as no.2 in ISPO's *Making it Happen!* series. In the Introduction he writes: "Instead of looking at a reform proposal to solve a specific global problem, we look at the much wider issue of global governance. .. We view the process of globalisation essentially as a natural part of human evolution. .. Since we will be taking an evolutionary perspective to global transformation and the Simultaneous Policy's potential role in bringing it about, we will be drawing briefly on the works of some of the leading thinkers in the field of evolutionary systems science", including Arthur Koestler, Ken Wilber and Elisabet Sahtouris. (Contact: jbzunzl@simplol.org)

CORE website address

Editor's correction notice: We apologise that the web address for CORE given on p.5 of the Spring issue in the article "Corporate Accountability and the Simultaneous Policy" was incorrect and should read: www.corporate-responsibility.org.

Weblogs

<http://simplol.blogspot.com>;
<http://entrepreneurialrevolution.blogspot.com>;
<http://therebeconomist.blogspot.com>;
<http://clubofcountry.blogspot.com>;
<http://clubofcity.blogspot.com>

News-watch : 20m Voters with SP Values? / Businesses Seek Eco-Rules

From *The Guardian*, 16 May 2006

Britain wants an honest leader to tell hard truths by Polly Toynbee

"The planet is in meltdown, and everyone knows it. Voters will be increasingly contemptuous of politicians .. who pretend the solutions can all be easy. ... "A large BBC commercial survey ... hints that politicians are falling way behind the curve, missing a new altruism out there. *Goodbye Middle England - Hello Big Britain* shows not apathy and alienation, but frustrated environmental and social concern. Professor Silverstone, of the London School of Economics, calls the research hopeful, "revealing the emergence of a dynamic, socially engaged and environmentally conscious" voter - not a few, but 20 million."

(Comment by Brian Wills): The consultant authors, 'Your Future', use the words Big Britain to symbolize "a new and substantial group of positive 'hidden influencers'" (see www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/bbcworldwide/worldwidestories/pressreleases/2006/05_may/big_britain.shtml of 8 May 2006, or web-search the title above). Why Big Britons could be important in future SP campaigning is because "their hopes, dreams and ambitions are already starting to bring about some of the biggest changes society has seen for decades." They are "open minded"; they "protest against injustice"; and they are "looking for alternative solutions to .. everything." But, more importantly, in the light of the

SP leaflet *How do you want the world to be?*, they "know exactly what kind of world they want to live in and they are taking steps to make that happen." (For more information see [www.bigbritain.com/.](http://www.bigbritain.com/))

From *The Independent*, 13 June 2006

UK Businesses demand an end to exploiting developing world by Andy McSmith

Tony Blair was handed a detailed plan by business yesterday for using the Government's vast purchasing power to protect the environment and end the exploitation of third-world labour. Firms that bid for the billions of pounds worth of central or local government contracts say *they want to be compelled* to recycle more, contribute less to climate change, and avoid trading with suppliers who ignore basic human rights, *as long as the same rules apply to their competitors*. [Italics added: Ed.]

But public officials say that first they have to be freed from the rules imposed during Margaret Thatcher's time in office which compel them to look for the cheapest way to get the job done. ...

The Task Force [who wrote the plan called *Procuring the Future*] warned that public opinion has turned against the idea that the Government should save money by buying goods or services produced at the expense of the environment or basic human rights.

Imagine a world

Where values matter - Where leaders listen

Where the strongest superpower is *we the people*



The Simultaneous Policy

How can *we the people* get our leaders to listen to us and not just to the rich and powerful? How can we make our values their values, values like:

- fair trade and decent livelihoods
- respect for life, health and environmental sustainability
- true democracy - not "corporatocracy"
- freedom, security and equal opportunity for all
- zero tolerance for terror of all kinds - state terror and domestic tyranny included
- unity in diversity among peoples, nations and cultures
- an end to weapons of mass destruction and to war itself as an obsolete means of conflict resolution

If we the people had a say, would we vote for "money talks" and "might makes right" or for the rule of just laws and the rights of individuals and communities? Would we vote to share and conserve the planet's resources, or to hoard and squander them?

Why aren't governments taking action?

Today, global markets and corporations so comprehensively overpower individual nations that no politician or political party dares make the first move to solve global problems for fear of putting their own nation at a significant economic competitive disadvantage. Though legislators know that serious world problems such as global warming, monopolistic corporate power, poverty and environmental destruction all demand decisive action, they are loath to implement the policies needed to solve them. They legitimately fear that in today's liberalized global economy, investors, corporations and jobs would simply pick up and leave for more congenial destinations. However good their intentions, governments feel bound to conform to a straitjacket of market- and business-friendly policies. That's why, whoever we vote for in the present system, little, if anything, changes.

The Simultaneous Policy

The Simultaneous Policy (SP) is our "people's globalization policy": a work-in-progress that all citizens who "adopt" SP are designing with the help of independent expert policy-makers. SP is to be implemented when all or sufficient nations are ready to do likewise - simultaneously. Simultaneous implementation means no nation loses out and all the excuses for inaction evaporate.

Here's how the SP strategy works

By adopting SP, we join with Adopters in our own and other countries who undertake to vote in future elections for ANY political party or candidate, within reason, that signs a pledge in principle to implement SP alongside other governments. Alternatively, if we still have a preference for a particular party, our adoption signifies our desire for our party to support SP.

For a politician, signing the pledge to implement SP does not require a change of policies until it is time to implement SP, and so carries no risk. But by moving the world a step nearer to implementation, the politician hastens the day when global politics shifts from competition to co-operation and global problems, about which many care deeply, can be addressed effectively. On the other hand, failure to sign the pledge could cost the politician their seat and hand it to someone who will support SP. With many seats decided by small majorities, the SP voting bloc could make all the difference.

SP is already gaining public and political support. It is not an alternative to other campaigns, but a parallel strategy, enabling us to look beyond fighting to change existing systems to joining with people around the world and collectively answering the question:

How do you want the world to be?

It's free to Adopt!

- I provisionally Adopt SP, and undertake to vote at elections (if I am eligible to vote) for any candidate, within reason, who pledges to implement SP alongside other governments when all, or sufficient, other governments have also pledged to do so. Alternatively, I will encourage politicians in my preferred party to make the pledge.
- I apply for membership of Simpol-UK and enclose my first annual payment of £25 (£10 unwaged/low-waged). Please send me a membership pack and Simpol-UK's Founding Declaration (UK residents or people registered to vote in the UK only - otherwise see the website for details of your National SP Organisation).
- Please send me the representative's/candidate's pledge form (politicians may also tick the other boxes).
- Please send me _____ copies of the leaflet *How do you want the world to be?*
- Please send me _____ copies of John Bunzl's book: *The Simultaneous Policy* at £12.50 each, including postage and packing (UK delivery - contact ISPO for prices outside the UK).
- Please send me _____ large/medium white/pale blue cotton round neck t-shirts with the message: *SP: How do you want the world to be?* at £12.95 including postage and packing (UK delivery - contact ISPO for prices outside the UK).



Mr/Mrs/Ms: _____ Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Tel: _____ Email: _____ Signature: _____