



# It's Simpol !

The Simultaneous Policy News • Winter 2005/06

## It's time to get serious

Developing the Simultaneous Policy moves up a gear as news of the impact of destructive competition between nations worsens. Page 2



Fairer Distribution of Common Resources : the pros and cons of carbon trading - SP Adopter James Robertson suggests an understandable and feasible way to address climate change: page 3

Adopters Matt Gahan and Tony Harvey suggest how to address dwindling resources as Simpol-UK's provisional Policy Committee gets to work: pages 8, 10

British MP John Penrose - who has signed the pledge to implement the Simultaneous Policy alongside other governments - writes about global problems that "need a multilateral approach": page 5

# It's Simpol !



The Simultaneous Policy

## Editorial

The cover of this issue aptly illustrates the critical importance of a significant **first-time event** in the growth of the Simpol campaign.

This is the inauguration of the process which enables 'We the people', as SP Adopters, to **propose policy measures** which address global problems that cannot be implemented by a country acting alone. For the present, that applies to the UK only. But the email-based process described, involving the creation of national Policy Committees, is of course adaptable for use in other countries when suitable opportunities occur.

Another first is the inclusion of **campaigning reports from five countries**. Though the number will vary in the future, this increase reflects a welcome expansion in volunteering initiatives by National Coordinators and their local supporters.

There are also two contributions that follow up topics of global concern covered in earlier issues. They provide new information and comment on carbon trading and the **fairer distribution of common resources** in political response to climate change (James Robertson); and on a policy of **sustainability** as a logical answer to the problems posed by **Peak Oil** (Matt Gahan). British MP John Penrose shares with us the **policy measures** he favours for a "world worth living in." And Dhevdhas Nair & Brian Wills explain why the ways in which NGOs attempt to "win friends and influence people" **differ significantly from Simpol's effective role** as a "voice for the concerns of ordinary people."

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### News Briefs

An occasional newsletter published by Simpol-UK ([www.simpol.org.uk](http://www.simpol.org.uk)) for the INTERNATIONAL SIMULTANEOUS POLICY ORGANISATION (ISPO) [info@simpol.org](mailto:info@simpol.org)  
Edited by: Brian Wills ([brian.wills@wanadoo.fr](mailto:brian.wills@wanadoo.fr))

Cover photo: Recent headlines from UK newspapers, including the warning from James Lovelock, inventor of the Gaia hypothesis, that failure to act on climate change may mean it is already too late to save civilisation as we know it.

Production: Mike Brady.

### Associated weblogs:

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

## Thinking aloud about fresh alternatives : Fairer Distribution of Common Resources : the pros and cons of carbon trading



Participants in some Local SP Adopters' Groups have been examining if and how SP could address the issue of **climate change**. They are thus aware of the challenges faced by negotiators during the Montreal conference on this issue (Dec 2005) which has demonstrated

how difficult it is for national representatives to find common ground for agreement on technical issues.

In this article **James Robertson** explains why currently favoured trading schemes involving the rationing of carbon emissions may fail to achieve their objectives. He suggests we should take a wider view of the longer-term issues at stake. Thus he argues in favour of shifts in tax and public spending within nations, and globally, through treating "the value of global common resources ... as global revenue" yielding per capita shares "as a kind of global citizen's income." Though a fundamental alternative to rationing, citizens could find this proposal easier to understand and accept.

James Robertson is the author of *The New Economics of Sustainable Development* and other books, including *Monetary Reform - Making it Happen!*, with John Bunzl. Website: [www.jamesrobertson.com](http://www.jamesrobertson.com)

### Contraction and Convergence

Contraction and Convergence (C&C) has been around for a while, and has been discussed in an SP context in earlier issues of this newsletter. I certainly didn't invent it, but already in 1983 I was able to report (*The Sane Alternative*, page 41) that "the SHE (sane, humane, ecological) path of development will lead the peoples of the world's rich and poor countries to converge around an adequate and sustainable level of material consumption" - in contrast to the HE scenario that the richest countries would continue to lead the rest along a "hyper-expansionist" path.

The need for C&C is more obvious now. The question is how to implement it? By rationing particular resources, or a more general reconstruction of taxation and public spending?

### Rationing schemes

A resource in the spotlight today is the capacity of the environment to absorb carbon emissions in the context of climate change. Global and national schemes to ration them have been put forward.

The global scheme developed by Aubrey Meyer and actually called Contraction and Convergence<sup>1</sup> involves reaching international agreement on:

- 1) the overall limit to the sustainable quantity of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere;
- 2) the date by which current global emissions should fall to that target;
- 3) the year-by-year allocation of permits to countries to emit CO<sub>2</sub> to achieve that global target; and
- 4) the principle that all countries should then be entitled to an equal per capita level of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Countries needing more than their allocated limit would be able to buy permits from those which do not need all theirs.

David Fleming has developed a comparable national scheme to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and distribute oil, gas and electric power fairly during supply shortages<sup>2</sup>.

- 1) Every adult would be given Tradable Energy Quotas (TEQs) of an equal number of units, whereas Industry and Government would have to bid to buy units at a weekly Tender.
- 2) To start with, a full year's supply of units would be issued. Then every week as units were used, the number in circulation would be topped up with a further week's supply.
- 3) Units could be traded, between those who needed less and those who needed more than the allocation.
- 4) When you bought energy, e.g. electricity for your household, units would be deducted automatically from your TEQ.
- 5) The total number of units in circulation would be decided by an independent Energy Policy Committee in a TEQs Budget, looking 20 years ahead. The number would go down week-by-week, step-by-step.
- 6) The Government would itself be bound by the scheme. It would learn to live within it, and how to help the rest of us to do so too.

### Rationing schemes: problems

Those schemes are the outcome of dedicated skilled work. On paper they are logical, clear and impressive. But following up the 1997 Kyoto Protocol has been a hard grind, and the European Union Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading Scheme<sup>3</sup>, which began operating under it only in January 2005, is already under fire. The heavy corporate carbon emitters to whom National Allocation Plans give big quotas will easily reduce emissions and have surplus permits to sell; polluter will be paid instead of "polluter pays"<sup>4</sup>.

Some of the practical problems of rationing and trading schemes are:

- 1) The target for the total sustainable use of a particular resource, and the date for achieving it, will be disputed.
- 2) So will the question of who the scheme should include.
- 3) So will decisions about who gets what rations: should more important people (like leaders in government and business, and workers in public services) get higher rations than other people? -- a huge potential source of dispute, corruption and mistrust.
- 4) What enforcing system will ensure that rations are not exceeded and trading them is free from fraud?
- 5) Will similar rationing schemes proliferate for other resources?
- 6) Will letting the rich buy surpluses be accepted as fair?

### A preferable alternative?

Will the principle of C&C be implemented more effectively and comprehensively by shifts in tax and public spending within nations, and by comparable new procedures for global taxing and spending?

Friends of the Earth have put forward immediate proposals<sup>5</sup>. For the longer term we need:

to shift sources of public revenue

- away from taxing the rewards (incomes, profits, value added, etc.) people and businesses get for contributing to the common wealth,
- to making people and businesses pay for the value they take from common resources (such as the value of land, the value of energy in its unextracted state, and the value from creating the public money supply);

and to shift public spending

- away from perverse subsidies for unsustainable activities and projects, and from payments to businesses for providing public services,
- to a Citizen's Income, reflecting every citizen's right to a share in the value of common resources.

At the global level, the need to develop the collection of public revenue and management of public spending (e.g. on UN programmes) is recognised as urgent. The value of global common resources should be treated as global revenue, not only to support global public spending programmes but also the distribution between nations of converging per capita shares in their value, as a kind of global citizen's income<sup>6</sup>.

This might both be a wider, more fundamental change than rationing, and also easier for people to understand and accept.

### Conclusion

People who care for the world's future, as SP Adopters do, should consider whether these alternative policies are compatible. Should we support both, or one of them rather than the other?

### Notes

1. Aubrey Meyer: *Contraction and Convergence: The Global Solution to Climate Change*, Schumacher Briefing No. 5, Green Books, Dartington, UK, 2000, 96pp, paperback.
2. David Fleming: *Energy and the Common Purpose: Descending the Energy Staircase with Tradable Energy Quotas (TEQs)*, The Lean Economy Connection, P.O. Box 52449, London NW3 9AN, 2005, 38pp, booklet - <http://www.teqs.net>
3. <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/emission.htm>
4. [http://www.via3.net/pooled/articles/BF\\_NEWSAR/view.asp?Q=BF\\_NEWSART\\_131083](http://www.via3.net/pooled/articles/BF_NEWSAR/view.asp?Q=BF_NEWSART_131083)
5. *Tackling Climate Change through the Budget*, October 2005. [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press\\_releases/budget\\_lacks\\_climate\\_chang\\_05122005.htm](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/budget_lacks_climate_chang_05122005.htm)
6. For more detail see "The future of money: If we want a better game of economic life, we'll have to change the scoring system" in the current issue of *Soundings* - <http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/>. Also "The Role of Money and Finance: Changing a Central Part of the Problem into a Central Part of the Solution" -- <http://www.jamesrobertson.com/articles.htm>



On the 3rd December 2005 people took to the streets around the world calling for our leaders to take action on climate change. For the news the corporate media chooses to ignore see [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org) where this image appeared, posted by 'Simon'.



## A voice from parliament : Policy Measures for "a World Worth Living In"

SP is gaining cross-party support. Politicians who have signed the pledge to implement SP are invited to write about their reasons.

**John Penrose, Conservative MP in Westminster for a Somerset constituency,**

shares with readers of *It's Simpol!* his belief that solutions to global problems require a multilateral approach, and explains which are the priorities for action he considers most important. (Contact: [penrosej@parliament.uk](mailto:penrosej@parliament.uk))

I originally signed up to the Simultaneous Policy because many of the solutions to today's most difficult and important issues - global warming, poverty in less developed nations, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction - need a multilateral approach if they're ever going to work at all. By building an international consensus of concerned individuals and organisations, the approach of the Simultaneous Policy is multilateral to the core of its DNA.

There's a lot to support in the current proposals, too. Implementing a truly effective Kyoto Protocol, for example, is essential if our children and grandchildren are to inherit a world worth living in. Multilateral disarmament and weapons inspections regimes are vital for everybody's safety. International agreement on competition laws, to prevent corporations from becoming monopolies at the expense of consumers, will be increasingly important in an era of global markets.

But the Simultaneous Policy accepts that the current proposals aren't perfect, and asks all of us to suggest improvements. My concerns are, simply, that too many of these ideas put faith in Governments or the state to correct the world's problems. Abolishing private funding of political parties and replacing it with Government cash, for example, gives politicians exclusive control of party-political purse strings, making it easy to throttle inconveniently popular opposition parties. Better to have a wide variety of funding, twinned with absolute

transparency about where the money comes from.

Abolishing bank lending and giving the state a monopoly on allocating credit, where it's been done in the past, has led to massive misallocation of resources as the politically well-connected were funded at others' expense, or outright fraud by politicians misusing their power. Better to keep politicians out of commercial decisions, and make them convince the voters to pay for social justice through the tax system instead.

Abolishing tax havens, where it leads to greater transparency, could provide a wonderful weapon against international criminals by depriving them of places to hide their loot. But it shouldn't be used to drive up taxes around the world if a particular country's voters have democratically chosen lower ones.

And finally, there's an important gap in the Simultaneous Policy's list of proposals that deserves to be plugged. One of the biggest sources of global poverty is the way G8 nations prevent less-developed countries from exporting their goods to us. It's a moral and economic disgrace that we make it impossible for the world's poorest people to climb out of poverty by refusing to give them access to our markets. Proposals for fairer, freer access to the rich world's consumers would make a huge difference, and should be a core part of the Simultaneous Policy's agenda for a better world.

*(Editor's note. The content of the Simultaneous Policy is being decided by Adopters. Find out how to have your say on page 10).*

### Simpol-UK recalls

In the 2005 General Election John Penrose took the Weston-super-Mare seat from the Liberal Democrats with a majority of 2,079 votes. The LibDem majority had been just 338 votes making this a key marginal. Mr. Penrose was the only candidate in the constituency to sign the SP pledge, after being asked by an Adopter on the doorstep if he had done so.

### Campaigning outside election time

Adopters in the UK received pledges from 38 candidates across 33 constituencies during the May 2005 General Election and 10 of these candidates were elected to parliament, from all main parties.

With the next general election probably four years away, there is still campaigning to be done. Check the Simpol-UK website [www.simpol.org.uk](http://www.simpol.org.uk) to see if your Member of Parliament has signed the SP pledge. If so, write and welcome this and ask them to encourage their colleagues to support SP. If not, then ask them to sign. You can also write to prospective candidates as many parties appoint them long in advance. At the next election Simpol-UK will publish the date candidates signed the pledge. Candidates can demonstrate their commitment to SP to Adopters by their efforts to support and promote the campaign in advance of the election.

Simpol-UK is also writing to MPs. A warm welcome is extended to the John Leech (of the Liberal Democrat Party, representing Manchester Withington) who signed his pledge to support SP in mid-December 2005. He won the seat from Labour in the May 2005 general election.

## Analysis : "How To Win Friends and Influence People"



On 26 Nov 2005 the UK Open University Development & Environment Society convened a meeting in London of civil society activists and academics to address the topic "NGO: Friend or Foe?". Dhevdhas Nair, who was invited to speak about the Simpol campaign under the title "Improving Democracy on Global Issues", and Brian Wills, editor of *It's*

*Simpol !*, interpret the presentations in the "Thinking Globally" session in the light of NGOs' need to win friends among the public in order to establish their legitimacy and financial support, and to influence people in power whose opinions and decisions they wish to change. And they identify the reasons why the Simpol campaign, based on the Simultaneous Policy strategy, is attracting support as a civil-society organisation operating in the international political arena. (Contacts: dhevdhas@talk21.com; brian.wills@wanadoo.fr)

### *Do Non-Governmental Organisations do what governments don't?*

We assume no reader of this newsletter needs reminding how important NGOs have become from the time of their emergence early in the 20th century. They came into existence through the concerns of individuals who felt it was wrong to suppose that governments could take all action necessary to redress deprivation or injustice. And they organised groups, functioning within the law, to assume responsibility for doing the social, awareness-creating, research, agenda-setting, policy-formulation and lobbying work they themselves considered necessary.

Their number multiplied impressively in the decades after World War II. And by 1986 the Council of Europe<sup>1</sup> established a convention for the Recognition of the Legal Personality of International Non-Governmental Organisations, which signified that civil society had by then become globalised. And in the current century it is no surprise that Prof. Peter Willetts, answering the question "What is an NGO?" in the UNESCO Encyclopaedia, asserted that "collectively, NGOs generate the dynamics of political change"<sup>2</sup>.

More assertively, the Global Policy Forum states that NGOs whose work includes political lobbying collectively address "the democratic deficit in a globalising world"<sup>3</sup>, by concerning themselves with such matters as corporate accountability, global taxes, reform of the International Monetary Fund, etc. And it notes they "are often the most effective voices for the concerns of ordinary people in the international arena."

Thus there is no doubt that civil society, through a huge number of organisations spread worldwide, has established itself globally as a countervailing or complementary force vis-à-vis national governments.

And, in many cases, it interacts in a similar way internationally with the United Nations.

As Lisa Jordan of the Ford Foundation points out in her paper "Civil Society's Role in Global Policymaking"<sup>4</sup>, at national level there are tradeoffs between competing goals that involve "state forces, political parties, the private sector and civil society. [But] at the global level no one system of negotiation prevails. The ground rules have to be negotiated for each institution and each new contested issue."

### *NGOs function in several different ways*

An example was cited during the meeting by David Ransom of the *New Internationalist* while speaking about big international non-governmental organisations. He noted that, because virtually the entire health service of an Asian developing country is run by a foreign-based NGO, the distinction between government and civil society had become blurred. Where similar blurring occurs it is usually because the NGOs involved have grown to acquire turnovers of billions of dollars.

We find this worrying because NGOs are usually constituted as charities, and cannot therefore be accountable to their 'clients' or 'beneficiaries', since charity laws (understandably) forbid these groups to be directly represented in NGO management. Their claim to legitimacy is therefore weakened. Nevertheless, such NGOs have win-win achievements to their credit in that their supporters provide them with sufficient funding to do the work they have chosen to do. And they have gained sufficient influence with the governments concerned to be granted permission to fill gaps in the provision of welfare services not funded by the state. But the cost, of course, is the loss of democratic accountability.

By contrast, Martyn Williams described how the NGO Friends of the Earth (UK) chooses to promote part of its green agenda by active lobbying in the British Parliament. It campaigns here for the adoption of a legally enforceable target of a 3% annual reduction of greenhouse gases because it is only governments who can effectively tackle these problems. Its strategy is therefore to encourage voters to lobby their MPs to sign an Early Day Motion on climate change measures (EDMs being initial bulletin-board proposals that may eventually evolve into Acts of Parliament); to support the establishment of a Select Committee with new powers to oversee a legally enforceable annual review; and to order a 10% cut in ministers' salaries if targets are not met.

### *Legitimacy ... influence ... effectiveness*

We note the legitimacy of this kind of campaigning is not in doubt. Contributors to FoE funds and most politicians agree that urgent action is required in addressing climate change problems. But at international level realities are not so clear. For instance, the worldwide green movement might claim that its campaigns created sufficient public awareness to influence the debates in the 2005 Montreal conference that kept the Kyoto Protocol alive. The negotiating officials involved are

likely to dispute this, arguing that the success achieved was the result of tough government-to-government bargaining. Either way, these differing viewpoints neatly illustrate Lisa Jordan's point that the ground rules for government/civil society interaction in such a situation are not yet in place.

Nevertheless, every democracy has channels by which new thinking promoted by civil society can filter up through parliamentary institutions, which occasionally 'allow' protesting voices to prevail, even up to ministerial level and, from that, into the global arena. Examples of when this process has achieved results are the Drop the Debt and Land Mine Abolition campaigns. Hence the task of lobbyists working for NGOs, whose cause for the public good is widely held to be legitimate, is to apply sufficient parliamentary pressure -- but not too blatantly! -- in order to gain the influence that ultimately achieves results.

Speaking in the same "Thinking Globally" session, however, Dhevhdhas Nair questioned whether a strategy of seeking to influence government policy through dialogue, pressure, and protest was a wholly adequate approach.

He began with an analysis of the current global economic and political situation, with governments locked into a competitive struggle for strategic and economic advantage, without being able to see the destructive effects of competition, and unable to find a practical or credible means of encouraging cooperation to achieve socially and environmentally beneficial policies.

He touched on some of the historical reasons for the rise of free global markets, and stressed how the current levels of market de-regulation are being accompanied by - indeed are partially dependent on -- a restriction of democracy, degrading to the point at which it becomes a "pseudo democracy". In this situation citizens actually have no choice between policies offered by political parties in their respective countries, since they all are confined to the narrow policy parameters that global free markets dictate.

### *What Simpol has to offer as a politically-focused civil-society organisation*

In view of this inability of representative democracy to give citizens effective participation in their own governance, Dhevhdhas outlined the Simultaneous Policy within the Simpol campaign, and described how it can be applied alongside existing political structures, to achieve the kind of changes in global policies that individual supporters of NGOs want to see. And he suggested that it could provide a parallel, complementary strategy that enables NGOs to harmonise their political action on a global scale, while at the same time continuing to promote their individual campaigns.

To amplify this suggestion, we summarise our interpretive assessment of the meeting's "Thinking Globally" session with answers to key questions posed above. These outline the elements of Simpol's campaign that enable it to function confidently as a politically-focused civil-society organisation, working in partnership-links with NGOs.

- Does it "generate the dynamics of political change"? Yes, because within a few short years, with minimal

funding, SP has attracted attention as a stimulatingly innovative political strategy. And some 100 candidates and elected parliamentarians during general elections in two continents have already pledged to implement SP alongside other governments.

- Does it provide an "effective voice for the concerns of ordinary people"? Yes, because SP enables and encourages voting citizens anywhere in the world (a) to join with others who have adopted SP in formulating recommended policy measures via national Policy Committees; and (b) to vote selectively for politicians who have signed the SP pledge.
- Can it participate meaningfully in establishing "the ground rules for each new contested issue" at global level? Yes, because this is what SP was specifically created to do, focusing as it does on the need for cooperation in place of competition.
- On what does its legitimacy depend? On the fact that all citizens who sign their adoption of SP undertake to vote with discernment within existing parliamentary systems, prioritising matters of global concern. And similarly, a politician's pledge to implement SP empowers him or her to introduce global concerns into national debates in the knowledge that such action is backed by voters' support.

Finally, Lisa Jordan pinpoints the key issue among all these questions. She writes: "My ultimate yardstick for measuring success would not be the policy outcomes achieved, but the 'thickness' of participatory and direct democracy mechanisms that actually take hold and begin to shape the process of global governance. Ultimately, my highest aspiration is to see democracy prevail in the global political arena."

We would like to suggest that the Simpol campaign offers a way to fulfil this kind of aspiration, and that it will thus become much more widely known and supported than at present.

### Notes

1. <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Word/124.doc>
2. <http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willets/CS-NTWKS/NGO-ART.HTM>
3. <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/index.htm>
4. <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/intro/general/2003/0520role.htm>

### In whose interest?

The general perception of NGOs is that they operate in the public interest. This is not always the case and campaigners are lobbying for clarity, particularly when NGOs are lobbying or working with government and international organisations. Commonly used classifications are:

- PINGOs - Public Interest NGOs
- BINGOs - Business Interest NGOs
- GONGOs - Government Organised NGOs
- BONGOs - Business Organised NGOs

## Letter to the Editor : Peak Oil and SP

Some Adopters have been involved in a stimulating debate on the policy discussion on-line group and elsewhere over if and how the Simultaneous Policy should address the problem of oil supplies passing their peak and entering into decline. 'Peak Oil' is now starting to be mentioned in the mainstream media.

Adopter **Matt Gahan**, having previously asserted that Peak Oil is a real problem requiring restrictive action to prevent disaster, along the lines of the Rimini Protocol, now believes this would be both a misunderstanding of the current energy problem, and potentially disastrous if it were implemented. He explores the nature of the problem and argues that a solution can be found "by changing the debate" to one focused on establishing a policy of sustainability. (Contact: [matt@businessarc.net](mailto:matt@businessarc.net))

### *Is Peak Oil a problem that desperately needs a solution?*

To answer this question we need to be clear that Peak Oil refers to the peak of oil production. This has many associated technical issues, but, basically, the production of each oilfield has a mid-point (statistically) where the cost of extraction rises versus the rate at which oil can be extracted. This is effectively described by a bell curve. This was originally worked out by a geologist, M. King Hubbert, who in the 1970s accurately predicted to the month the peak of oil production in the USA. (And wrote, memorably: "Our ignorance is not so vast as our failure to use what we know.")

This issue has recently gained significant exposure, and is now being taken more seriously around the world. A Peak Oil bill was filed on 21/11/05 with the US House of Representatives. In part, this is because a number of geological surveys reveal results that suggest our worst assumptions could well be correct.

This is an appallingly difficult problem to get a truly definitive answer to because oil producers have been hiding key geological data, and continue to do so. There are historical commercial reasons for this, which I will not go into. However, a recent report from The Netherlands put a date as soon as 2010 for the global peak of production. Time is clearly a factor here.

So we have a problem. What is the solution?

One word: sustainability.

We currently live in a wasteful society against the backdrop of the commonly held fantasy that we can continue to live this lifestyle indefinitely. And sustainability is the answer to the coming energy crisis because it addresses the same central problem: our consumption of energy and its associated effects. It also addresses the environmental impact for both the use of permanent (non-renewable resources) and renewable sources. Issues such as rights of access to water are of obvious importance and highly appropriate in the global

nature of policy adoption.

### *So does Peak Oil need a specific policy response?*

My answer is that to adopt such a response would be a dire mistake, because the Peak Oil issue alludes to a much bigger problem that requires our prior attention.

First, the peaking of oil production is happening alongside the peaking of natural gas supplies, which is the next best source of energy. They are part of the same reserve of energy, and are physically located in the same places.

Secondly, the current world order is largely defined by the global markets and global energy companies, not by nation states. Countries are simply clients of the energy companies. Any attempt to restrict supply within current depletion rates, as suggested by the Rimini Protocol, will simply push the problem elsewhere.

Thirdly, we are asking the wrong question. The question "What do we do about the oil running out?" needs to be recast as "How do we fulfil our energy requirements with the minimum of impact on our environment?"

### *An appropriate policy response to "the problem"*

Clearly, political action must be very carefully considered because the best intended actions can go badly wrong. An example is the failure of the Kyoto Protocol to achieve its aims, coupled with the terrible cost that it is now beginning to exert on our environment.

A news item in the *New Scientist* of 22/11/05, "Forests paying the price for biofuels", demonstrates exactly this point. The Kyoto Protocol's requirements have, in the last year, pushed up the price of palm and soya oil to a point that is now causing an unsustainable acceleration of deforestation in the third world. And George Monbiot subsequently wrote in *The Guardian* on 06/12/05: "In terms of its impact on both the local and global environments, palm biodiesel is more destructive than crude oil from Nigeria."

Brazil, for example, had up to this point managed to create an internal production capacity of 50% of its fuel requirements sustainably from bio-ethanol production -- a perfect example of what can be achieved. But due to the sudden rise in the global market prices of these oils (directly attributable to the adoption of Kyoto) there is now a massive expansion of the market that is expected to have a very serious environmental impact as trees are felled to create agricultural land.

European governments are now indirectly funding (with tax breaks) the destruction of the world's forests. This, ironically, will offset the carbon reduction it is attempting to achieve due to the fact that these forests consume carbon in our atmosphere.

Similarly, because coal remains as a major energy resource, its exploitation as an alternative to oil, subject to normal market forces without improvement in its combustion technology, could clearly have a devastating environmental impact.

Summarising, the "much bigger problem" that emerges from the above consideration of future energy supplies is expressed in the question: "How do we allocate access to essential resources in situations where supply is always limited?"

I am strongly of the opinion that legislative restrictions on the problems of restricted resources, at best, provide mostly ineffective short-term fixes.

So the question of how sustainability is to be achieved must start by changing the debate from one about fulfilling supply to one that affects demand. And if Simpol is to promote a meaningful policy commitment, it must necessarily be in this context if it is to achieve widespread acceptance.

### Relevant sources (2005)

Jim Fitzsimons: *An Introduction to Peak Oil*.

<http://www.thesharpener.net/?p=41>

*Rimini Protocol*. <http://www.peakoil.ie/protocol/>

George Monbiot: *How Much Energy Do We Have?*

<http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2005/11/29/how-much-energy-do-we-have/>

George Monbiot: *Worse Than Fossil Fuel*.

<http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2005/12/06/worse-than-fossil-fuel>

Rep. Roscoe Bartlett and Co-Sponsors: *Peak Oil Resolution in the US House of Representatives*.

[http://www.truthout.org/issues\\_05/112305EA.shtml](http://www.truthout.org/issues_05/112305EA.shtml)

Fred Pearce: *Forests Paying the Price for Biofuels*.

<http://www.newscientist.com/channel/earth/mg18825265.400>



"'Peak oil' enters mainstream debate" reports the BBC on its website and recently turned over its flagship *Newsnight* programme to the topic.

You can make your own policy suggestions in the Policy Zone of [www.simpol.org.uk](http://www.simpol.org.uk) (see page 10).

You can discuss policy on-line at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/simpolicies-general/> (if you didn't register when you adopted, you can do so now) or contact your local SP Adopters' Group and suggest holding a policy forum (contact details via the sites or contact ISPO).

## Campaigning : SP links campaigners around the world

### News from Simpol-India

H.A. Shankaranarayana, National Coordinator  
([meghasandesha@yahoo.com](mailto:meghasandesha@yahoo.com))

On behalf of ISPO I participated in the Global Symposium "Towards a New World Order" at the 6th International Conference of Chief Justices of the World held in Lucknow, India, 10-14 Dec 2005.

There were about 250 delegates from 102 countries, and the theme for this year's conference was enforceable International Law. It was felt that the absence of an enforceable international law had created a climate of lawlessness, confusion and chaos throughout the world.

I presented a paper on "World Democratic Government and the Simultaneous Policy", and conducted a workshop about Simpol. This highlighted the significance of using SP as a tool to create an enforceable international law and a world democratic government in the future. As a representative of ISPO I am also a part of a group whose work is to conceptualise a world democratic government by 2007. The group has representatives from more than 10 countries, and it will deliberate over the issue as an ongoing project.

Many delegates who participated in the Symposium evinced interest in the Simpol philosophy and expressed their desire to adopt SP. And others who already knew about Simpol had previously become Adopters.

### News from Simpol-UK

Mike Brady, Local Group Network Coordinator  
([mikebrady@simpol.org.uk](mailto:mikebrady@simpol.org.uk))

Adopters, led by Rob Wicke, Management Board member and coordinator of the Bristol SP Adopters' Group, distributed 'How do you want the world to be?' leaflets at the climate change mass rally in London on 3 December, another example of how SP is reaching out to other campaigns. Management Board member Dhevhdhas Nair spoke at an event for activists organised by the Open University (see page 6) and Partrick Andrews at a London World Development Movement meeting.

Local SP Adopters' Group continue to promote SP with street stalls, leafleting, letters to the press, discussion groups etc. Thanks to everyone. Contact me if you are interested in starting up or linking up with a local group. See the 'SPAG' zone of [www.simpol.org.uk](http://www.simpol.org.uk) for details.

Our big news following on from the Policy Development Process planning meeting last October (see *It's Simpol!* Autumn 2005) is the formation of the provisional Policy Committee.

### Provisional Policy Committee

The task of the Simpol-UK Policy Committee is to accept policy suggestions from UK Adopters, to publicise them to other Adopters and to enable Adopters to prioritise. The Committee is due to be elected later this year. Adopters are invited to participate in a provisional Committee prior to this to develop procedures, while beginning to operate.

Current members of the provisional Committee are: Mike Brady, Jill Phillips, Shilpa Shah and Anne Spilling.

### Policy suggestions welcome

The provisional Committee is accepting Policy suggestions. The procedure is set out below and can be viewed on-line in the 'Policy Zone' of [www.simpol.org.uk](http://www.simpol.org.uk)

The following guidelines apply:

- Think first if your suggested policy is relevant to SP. If the policy has been implemented in your country, in another country, or could be implemented without fear that the country would become uncompetitive, then it is outside the scope of SP. SP is not a way to impose policies on other countries.
- If your suggested policy addresses a global problem and cannot be implemented by a country acting alone because it would make it harder for the country to compete with others, then it is relevant to SP.

Provide the following information via the on-line form, in an email to [policy@simpol.org.uk](mailto:policy@simpol.org.uk) or in writing 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).

- **Contact details:** Name (to be made public). Email address and other contact details (to be made public at the request of the proposer).
- **Title of your suggested policy.**
- **Relevance check:** Can your suggested policy be implemented by a country acting alone? If the answer is 'Yes' then your suggested policy is probably outside the scope of SP. You may still submit it with an explanation as to why you think Adopters should consider it. If you have answered 'No' explain why it is impossible for a country to implement the policy unilaterally.
- **Summarise your policy suggestion.** This is a concise summary to be publicised to Adopters. Include a primary link or reference if relevant.
- **Additional details:** Give a longer explanation and sources of supporting information if relevant.

Policy suggestions can only be made by SP Adopters (it is free to Adopt - see back page). If you submit a suggestion

you are confirming you are already an Adopter or wish to be registered as an Adopter.

The Policy Committee may contact you if clarifications are required or if they view the suggestion as outside the scope of SP. However, Adopters are the ultimate arbiters of whether they want their suggestions accepted. The Committee cannot veto suggestions. If similar proposals are made by different Adopters the Committee may suggest the proposers try to bring these together. This will help to build coalitions of Adopters championing particular approaches.

All suggestions will be brought to the attention of other Adopters. An exception will be suggestions that are discriminatory or abusive because these would be against Simpol-UK's Guiding Principles and because they may break laws on discrimination or incitement. These will be held on file and an explanation given to the proposer. The provisional Committee is developing procedures for ensuring Adopters have a means to appeal in such cases.

### Publicising policy suggestions

Policy suggestions will be posted on the Simpol-UK website and to the on-line policy discussion group. At intervals policy suggestions will be brought to the attention of all UK Adopters by email and normal mail for prioritising through a voting system to be developed by the provisional Policy Committee. A further meeting open to all Adopters is planned to discuss the procedures developed. Simpol-UK sees this as a learning process, which will proceed in accordance with our principles of transparency, accountability and democracy.

### First policy suggestion

The first policy suggestion submitted through the above procedure is as follows:

**Proposer:** Tony Harvey

**Contact e-mail:** [tonyharvey60@hotmail.com](mailto:tonyharvey60@hotmail.com)

**Title:** Equitable Sharing of the World's Resources

**Summary:** Each nation to be asked to make an inventory of what it produces so that the world's 'cake' is known: what we need, what we create, what we need to import. Each nation to be asked to make over in trust into a common pool that which it has in excess of its needs, and out of that common pool the needs of all to be met. Please note this idea originates from [www.share-international.org](http://www.share-international.org)

## News from Simpol-Uruguay

**Ricardo Cetrulo, National Coordinator**  
([cetrulo@adinet.com.uy](mailto:cetrulo@adinet.com.uy))

We are a group of around 20 Adopters, and we work in the Instituto del Hombre, Universidad Comunitarian, dedicated to the training of members of the community for local alternative development.

In support of the country's social movement we campaigned in the national referendum to oppose the privatisation of water supplies, and thus also supported similar campaigns in South America. These concerned the preservation of one of the three largest groundwater reserves in the world -- the aquifer guardant -- extending from Uruguay into southern Brazil, northern Argentina and Paraguay. The positive result made Uruguay the only country whose Constitution guarantees national ownership of water.

As regards other campaigning, we feel it's important to help local groups in the process of development so that civil society may be progressively empowered to press for change in the political system that is dependent on the uniform culture of transnational economics.

To this end we belong to several networks and institutions with similar objectives to ours which aim to achieve significant transformation of society at the local level. This involves working to create a micro society through: the building-up of an alternative economy based on mutual solidarity; the quest for an alternative concept of power in local political structures (power "for" and "with" instead of power "over"); and an emphasis on diversity and tolerance.

We know that capitalism is not only an economic system but also a commercial logic that deeply conditions our subjectivity. That is why we stress the need for informal education through "processes of human recuperation" because we find that people at the grassroots of society are more open to transformation than other more sophisticated social classes.

## News from Simpol-USA

**Cynthia Josayma, National Coordinator**  
([cjosayma@earthlink.net](mailto:cjosayma@earthlink.net))

Having joined Simpol and volunteered to become National Coordinator late in 2005, I look forward to contributing time each month to expand US membership and increase involvement, both on our listserv and in my local community.

A number of Simpol-USA Adopters helped draft a position paper on the WTO meetings in December 2005 that brought up some of the key issues facing our trade representatives that ultimately will affect our global commons. Simpol-USA can play a valuable role in helping American citizens both understand, and direct their interests to, our global trade representatives to support fair trade rules that are both socially and environmentally responsible, worldwide.

We currently have about 120 Adopters, and have reinstated a monthly news update and periodic listserv exchanges. My personal commitment is to reach out to other non-profit organizations, here in the Bay Area and nationwide, to inform them of Simpol's objectives, and to see where our political strategies can mutually support like-minded organizations to promote a just and environmentally accountable world.

## News from Simpol-Brazil

**Mike Brady, Temporary National Coordinator**  
([mikebrady@simpol.org.uk](mailto:mikebrady@simpol.org.uk))

Sadly the previous Coordinator of Simpol-Brazil passed away in 2004 with the campaign still at an early stage of development. As I was resident in Brazil over the summer I was asked by ISPO to step in as temporary coordinator.

Development of the network in Brazil has proceeded principally through the internet, something I am able to continue now back in the UK, though I hope to be able to hand over coordination to a Brazilian in the near future.

The main discussion of SP is on the Orkut webpages. See <http://www.orkut.com/Community.aspx?cmm=4077993>



The campaign has already received support from the Brazilian campaigning group PEBA - (Políticas Eco-sociais Brasileiras de Atitudes), which intends to register as a political party in the future. PEBA founder, Miroslav Batusich (left), has indicated that support for SP will be official policy of PEBA when it is registered.

Elections for the President, Governors and Congress will be taking place in 2006 and Brazilian Adopters are looking forward to receiving the first pledge from a candidate.

John Bunzl's book *The Simultaneous Policy* is available in Portuguese and can be emailed on request.

## News Briefs

- An article titled "Peak Oil and the politics of global solutions" by UK Adopter Gareth Douch was accepted for publication in the *Energy Bulletin* on 6 Dec 2005: see <http://energybulletin.net/11953.html>.



- Simpol-UK will be present at a seminar on 'Protecting the Right to Water' to take place in London on 2 March, 19:00 - 21:00. Franklin Fredrick, author of an article on this them in the Autumn 2004 issue of *It's Simpol !* will be one of the speakers at the event. Further details will be posted on the Simpol-UK website [www.simpol.org.uk](http://www.simpol.org.uk) in due course and sent out to alert lists.

- We apologise that, on page 12 of the Autumn 2005 issue, the Simpol Mail-Art colour image (reproduced here) was incorrectly accredited. The artist is Michel Della Vedova, Limoges, France.



# 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Return form to: ISPO, PO Box 26547, London, SE3 7YT.

Alternatively sign-up on-line.

The Simultaneous Policy

www.simpol.org