

Report from Rio by Geraldo Lino

Brazilians confront Greenpeace

The Green guerrillas' attacks on shipping and the nuclear industry have provoked a counterattack.

Although Greenpeace, the environmental multinational, managed to get away with thumbing its nose at authorities in Brazil, where it sent a ship and foreign activists to stage a number of provocations during the past few weeks, it did arouse an angry response from nationalist circles and set off an unexpected public debate on the actions of non-governmental organizations in Brazil. As a result, Brazilian NGOs, particularly radical environmentalist ones, now find themselves on the defensive.

The story began early in October, when the *MV Greenpeace* started to travel up the Amazon River. The ship was followed by a Brazilian Navy vessel, which kept the "green guerrillas" from staging one of their infamous direct actions for a few weeks. But, on Oct. 27, the radical ecologists broke loose and boarded a Ukrainian ship that was taking on a load of lumber in the port of Santarém, and paralyzed the activities of the port for two hours. The disruption caused Brazil's Federal Police to order the Greenpeace activists out of the country, for violating the country's immigration laws.

However, a federal judge issued a stay of the deportation order, and Greenpeace continued upriver. On Nov. 1, the Greenpeaceniks boarded another ship, this one in Belem, and forced a second port to shut down temporarily. The disruption prompted the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA), associates of Lyndon LaRouche, to issue a statement saying that it was an "affront to the laws and the dignity of the nation" to allow the Greenpeace tour to continue, as well

as "an audacious test of the concept of 'limited sovereignty,' one of the pillars of radical environmentalism."

The influential daily *O Estado de São Paulo* also weighed in with a series of investigative articles that focused on the fact that NGOs in Brazil move nearly \$700 million annually without any oversight. Given the right to reply in the pages of the same daily, the NGOs responded by directing attention away from the issue of providing a public account of their financing, to the spurious assertion that "every society has the NGOs it deserves," in the words of Roberto Smeraldi, director of Friends of the Earth in Brazil.

Greenpeace staged another of its "direct actions" on Nov. 23, when its activists broke into the construction site of the Angra-2 nuclear plant. The MSIA condemned this act of vandalism, asking, "How long will we tolerate Greenpeace's insolence?" A couple of days later, the operator of Angra-2, Furnas Centrais Elétricas, announced that it was taking Greenpeace to court.

That evening, Guilherme Camargo, a member of the board of directors of the Nuclear Energy Association of Brazil, appeared on television to defend Brazil's right to nuclear energy, and criticized Greenpeace for its vandalism.

Camargo was asked to participate in a televised debate on Nov. 28. When he arrived at the studio of São Paulo's TV Gazeta for the debate, Camargo found himself confronted by a decidedly hostile panel, including the leaders of Greenpeace in Brazil, a

leader of the local Green Party, and a city councilwoman from the Workers Party (PT), which is allied to Greenpeace in the campaign against nuclear power.

The debate was heated, with the environmentalists arguing that there are "good and bad" NGOs, while Camargo stressed that the point is that NGOs are used as political weapons against developing countries. As an example he cited the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), led by Britain's Prince Philip, which has been waging a campaign to prevent the linkage of the Paraná and Paraguay rivers. This project is vital for the economic integration of South America, said Camargo.

The executive director of Greenpeace in Brazil, Roberto Kishimani, took up the cudgels for the WWF. But Camargo reminded him and the TV audience that Greenpeace is subservient to the policies of Britain's royal House of Windsor.

At a meeting in Porto Alegre with the leaders of 25 NGOs from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, during the last stop in Brazil of the *MV Greenpeace*, Kishimani complained "that there are some people on the payroll of extreme right-wing organizations, who are tied to the nuclear energy industry or to whale hunting, who try to tarnish the image of Greenpeace," according to the daily *Correio do Povo*. The Greenpeace director said that "the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement and the science and technology magazine *21st Century* provide cover for the dissemination of the message against the ecologists."

But, as the MSIA said, unless the basis for ecological action is to improve the living conditions of human beings, "any concern for nature is useless, hypocritical, and against the principles of western Christian civilization to which we belong."