Popular environmental struggles in South Africa, 1972-1992

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1. Introduction

On 17 October 1974, in his inaugural lecture as the newly appointed Shell Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT), Prof. Richard Fuggle identified complacency on the part of both the government and the public, as South Africa's major environmental problem. In his view South Africans in general lacked the interest and commitment necessary to address the plethora of environmental challenges that faced the country at the time. The major challenge was thus first to change this attitude if environmental problems such as pollution and soil conservation were to be addressed successfully.[1]

Fuggle's remarks should be viewed within the context of the time. Internationally radical changes had occurred in the official administration of environmental affairs as a direct result of the environmental revolution of the 1960s and the important 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE, Stockholm).

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1. R.F. FUGGLE, *Collision or rapprochement: environmental challenges in South Africa* (inaugural lecture, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 17.10.1974), pp. 4-7.

Active public participation in environmental matters was further at an all-time high with groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth constantly extending the parameters of non-governmental environmental action.[2]

In South Africa, however, the department of planning and the environment was a little more than twenty months old and still concentrating mainly on physical planning and dividing up the country's empty spaces for future mining and industrial purposes.[3] Public participation was further confined to the 50 odd environmental non-governmental organisations (ENGOs) operating in the country, 26 of which were founded between 1965 and 1974.[4] Though South Africa experienced an upsurge in non-governmental environmental activities from 1965 onwards, the problem was not the number of ENGOs in existence, but the fact that many of them were ineffective and failed to rally support for their cause. On the other hand, those groups who did succeed in mobilising public support for their environmental agendas, were to a large extent caught up in the euphoria generated by increased public and governmental interest in environmental issues. Amidst these feelings, dominant ENGOs were slow to react to the new demands of the global environmental movement, and governmental activities that had a detrimental impact on the South African environment.[5]

This article aims at exploring non-governmental environmental activities in South Africa between 1972 and 1992.[6] The twenty years under discussion represent a very important development phase in the non-governmental sector of the South African environmental movement, in which the sector gradually moved away from its apolitical, racially exclusive conservation-based agenda to an environmental agenda that was politically charged and addressed a wide range of environmental issues of which conservation was but one.

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2. For more information see P. STEYN and A. WESSELS, "Environmental non-governmental contributions to the global environmental movement" in *Journal for Contemporary History* 24(2), December 1999, pp. 96-113.
3. J.A. PRINGLE, *The conservationists and the killers: the story of game protection and the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa,* (T.V. Bulpin and Books of Africa, Cape Town, 1982), p. 278.
4. See C.D. SCHWEIZER, Environmental and related interest groups in South Africa, 2 (M.Sc., UCT, 1983), pp. 3-59.
5. J.A. PRINGLE, *The conservationists and the killers: the story of game protection and the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa*, p. 277.
6. The period 1972-1992 represents an important formative phase in the global environmental movement. During this phase, the global movement developed rapidly from the first tentative political steps taken at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, to acknowledging at the Earth Summit in 1992 that the world at large needed a new development model (sustainable development) if humankind and other life forms were to survive.

Acknowledging the artificialness of periodization, this article will divide 1972 – 1992 into three periods: 1972 – 1982 in which the ENGO sector in South Africa was dominated by conservation issues that were important mostly to white people; 1982 – 1988 in which the focus areas of the ENGO sector started to shift away from predominantly white conservation concerns to include environmental concerns of people of colour as well, and 1988 – 1992 which saw the emergence of radical politicised environmental activism aimed at governmental and business activities that were either harmful or held the potential to be harmful to both the human and the natural environment.

2. The conservation agenda: 1972 – 1982

The environmental revolution of the 1960s heightened public interest in environmental issues in South Africa. This increased interest carried on into the 1970s and resulted in membership growth for established ENGOs such as the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa (hereafter the Wildlife Society) and the Botanical Society of South Africa (Botsoc), whilst new ENGOs were founded to address a number of neglected environmental issues. While some of the newly founded ENGOs did address non-conservation issues, the non-governmental environmental sector was dominated by the conservation agenda, focusing in particular on proposed new developments and the conservation of particular fauna and flora species.

Though ENGOs in South Africa differed with regards to their focus areas, the ENGOs operating in South Africa between 1972 and 1982 shared some common characteristics. An important characteristic of South African ENGOs in this period was their apolitical nature. There was the general tendency to keep the environment and politics separate; the link between the environment and politics, which had already been established elsewhere in the world by 1972, was therefore not yet made in South Africa and was even, in some instances, being resisted. Despite changes in their focus areas, the emphasis continued to fall predominantly on the natural environment, while emphasis on the human environment with its social and political dimensions was remarkably absent in the Republic. Not only were ENGOs at fault here, but the government resisted any possible attempt to politicise environmental issues. The environment was not very high on the priority lists of politicians and, in general, they preferred to keep it that way.[7]

The result of this apolitical nature of ENGO activities was the absence of highly publicised, confrontational and emotional campaigns that are generally associated with ENGOs such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth (FoE) and Earth First! The only possible exception to this is the little-known FoE branch that existed in South

7. F. KHAN, Contemporary South African environmental response: an historical and socio-political evaluation with particular reference to blacks (M.A., UCT, 1990), pp. 95-96.

Africa around 1975. Following in the footsteps of FoE United Kingdom,[8] its main achievement seems to have been the dumping of an estimated 1 000 non-reusable cold drink containers in the lobby of a container manufacturer. Apart from this, little else is known about the FoE branch in South Africa, and from the consulted sources it was not possible to ascertain when they ceased to exist.[9]

A second characteristic of South African ENGOs was that they preferred to co-operate with, rather than oppose the government. Clashes between the ENGO community and the government did occur, but in general its relations with the government were on friendly terms. ENGOs like the Habitat Council, the National Veld Trust (NVT) and Keep South Africa Tidy received annual grants from the government, while the NVT and the Wildlife Society had the State President as their patron until 1984. Khan identifies the height of ENGO and government co-operation as the joint publication of *The soldier and nature* (an undated booklet for the South African Defence Force – SADF) by the Wildlife Society and the SADF. The publication was partly funded by the Southern African Nature Foundation.[10]

A third characteristic of South African ENGOs was that their membership reflected the racial policies of the government and was restricted, in most cases, to whites only. Few exceptions such as the Wilderness Leadership School did exist, but in general ENGOs tended to keep people of colour out of their organisations. The need for ENGOs to cater for black people's environmental needs as well, were acknowledged prior to 1972 when the NVT established the African National Soil Conservation Association and the Natal chapter of the Wildlife Society, the African Wildlife Society. Unfortunately these two organisations did not exist for very long, and black people were left without an environmental voice.[11]

With the exception of National Environmental Awareness Campaign, the environmental movement remained confined to the white population group. In black communities concern for the natural environment was a luxury few could afford in their daily struggle to make ends meet. Of more importance, amidst the government's ignorance of the needs of black people, were the community-based organisations, such as the Black Community Programmes set up by the Black Consciousness

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8. FoE UK's first direct action after its establishment in 1971, was the dumping of 1 500 non-returnable bottles outside the London offices of Cadbury Schweppes in May 1971. R. LAMB (in collaboration with Friends of the Earth), *Promising the earth* (Routledge, London, 1996), pp. xv, 37-38.
9. C.D. SCHWEIZER, Environmental and related interest groups in South Africa 1, p. 81. No specific information about the dumping of non-reusable cold drink containers was provided by the consulted source. No reference was made to this incident, or to the existence of a FoE branch in South Africa, in any of the other sources consulted in the research for this article.
10. F. KHAN, Contemporary South African environmental response: an historical and socio-political evaluation with particular reference to blacks, pp. 97-99.
11. *Ibid*., p. 98.

Movement, which strove for the provision of basic health and welfare services in black communities. It is doubtful, if given the opportunity, whether black people would have participated in the existing ENGOs, given the close relations the apartheid government had with environmental activities. The relocation of the Makulele community to unify the Kruger National Park (KNP) in 1969, the persecution of black poachers in national parks and game reserves, and the involvement of the department of planning and the environment in industrial decentralisation, to name but three aspects, did not make a positive contribution towards creating environmental awareness among black people. Rather, it showed black communities that nature was more important to white people than black people were.[12]

2.1 Role-players and focus areas of the non-governmental environmental sector

According to Khan three national ENGOs, namely the NVT (founded in 1943 to promote soil and water conservation), the Wildlife Society (founded in 1926 to protect and promote wildlife) and the Botsoc (founded in 1913 to promote the conservation and cultivation of indigenous flora) played the predominant role in the ENGO sector of the South African environmental movement. In her view, they were the main role-players who influenced environmental perceptions and they also determined the content of the prevailing environmental perspective in the country.[13] Khan is correct in her assumption that these three ENGOs played a significant role in influencing the environmental perceptions of the general public. The conservation agendas of both Botsoc and the Wildlife Society were popular with their support base and the general public, which explains their phenomenal growth between 1972 and 1982. The Wildlife Society especially experienced an unprecedented interest in its activities with membership growing from 8 554 in 1970 to over 20 000 members by 1982.[14] The NVT's agenda of soil and water conservation, on the other hand, was not the most popular and declining membership resulted in fears being voiced by D.P. Ackerman, in his 1981 chairman's report, that the end of the organisation might be in sight.[15]

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12. For more details on the environmental alienation of black people in South Africa, see M.S. STEYN, Environmentalism in South Africa, 1972-1992: an historical perspective (M.A. dissertation, University of the Free State, 1998), pp. 122-123.
13. F. KHAN, Contemporary South African environmental response: an historical and socio-political evaluation with particular reference to blacks, p. 95.
14. C.D. SCHWEIZER, Environmental and related interest groups in South Africa 1, table 4.2, unnumbered page following p. 75; J.A. PRINGLE, *The conservationists and the killers: the story of game protection and the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa,* p. 274.
15. JAN GILIOMEE PRIVATE DOCUMENT COLLECTION (hereinafter JGPDC), Habitat Council, Member organisations' annual reports: National Veld Trust, Chairman's Report 1981, 22.9.1981, pp. 1-2, 6.

By crediting the Wildlife Society, Botsoc and the NVT with "determining the shape and content of the prevailing conservation ideology",[16] Khan ignores the role played by the Habitat Council (HC) from the time of its establishment in March 1974 until 1982. The founding of the HC was a direct result of requests from the government to the ENGO sector to form a single co-ordinating council that would act as the united voice of this community. On the initiative of the NVT and the South African Nature Union, the Council for the Habitat (generally known as the Habitat Council) was formally established on 5 March 1974 and more than 50 ENGOs joined.[17]

The HC differed considerably from the NVT (which was predominantly agriculturally based), the Wildlife Society (English upper classes based) and Botsoc (botany orientated), in that its member organisations came from the whole environmental spectrum operating in South Africa. Though only a co-ordinating council, the HC developed a character of its own and it became the most influential ENGO as far as the government was concerned. The existence of the HC therefore seriously undermined the influence of individual ENGOs with the government and apart from the existing links with a few individual ENGOs, the government preferred to deal with the HC.[18] The government played a prominent role in advancing the status of the HC, especially by granting it representation on several of the government's environment-related committees, boards and commissions such as the South African Committee on Environmental Conservation, making it the only ENGO to obtain this status. The government also made annual financial contributions towards the HC. The government, determined to deal only with one voice from the public sector where environmental matters were concerned, further actively encouraged organisations to join the HC.[19]

The HC played an important role in determining the dominating environmental agenda in the country through its thematic conferences that took place, at first annually and from 1980 bi-annually, at its annual general meetings. The first

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16. F. KHAN, Contemporary South African environmental response: an historical and socio-political evaluation with particular reference to blacks, p. 95.

17. J.A. PRINGLE, *The conservationists and the killers: the story of game protection and the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa* p. 198; C.D. SCHWEIZER and K.H. COOPER, "Voluntary organisations and the environment" in R.F. FUGGLE and M.A. RABIE (eds), *Environmental concerns in South Africa: technical and legal aspects* (Juta, Johannesburg, 1983), pp. 138-139; JGPDC, Society for the Protection of the Environment: Minutes of the management committee, 28.3.1974; Interview with Jan Giliomee, Stellenbosch, 26.3.1998.

18. J.A. PRINGLE, *The conservationists and the killers: the story of game protection and the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa,* p. 198; C.D. SCHWEIZER and K.H. COOPER, "Voluntary organisations and the environment", pp. 138-139; Interview with Jan Giliomee, Stellenbosch, 26.3.1998.

19. J.J. LOOTS, "Opening address" in Council for the Habitat, *Coastal areas: conference proceedings* 1. *Durban, 3-4.4.1975* (*s.n.*, *s.l.*, *s.a.*) , pp. 2-4.

conference focused on coastal areas (1975),[20] and thereafter on mountain environments (1976),[21] on creating environmental awareness (1977),[22] on re-evaluating activities (1978),[23] roads and the environment (1980)[24] and on conservation policy statements (1982).[25] The HC occupied this influential and privileged position until the beginning of 1983 when the statutory Council for the Environment was established in accordance with the Environment Conservation Act (no 100 of 1982). After that, the newly established Council undermined the HC's influence and put the latter on a path of steady decline.[26]

The period also saw an unprecedented growth in community-based ENGOs like the Kleinmond Ecological Society (1978), the St Francis Bay-Kromme Trust (1981) and the Save Gordons Bay Society (1982). The aim of these organisations was the protection of the human and natural environment in specific areas, mainly along the coast where development plans or the possibility thereof threatened to alter the immediate environment in the areas.[27] Opposition to proposed developments was not confined to community-based ENGOs, but also led to co-operation between groups and individuals over a wider geographical area. The Save the Garden Route Committee (SAGRACOM), for example, was founded in 1973 to oppose the building of a highway along the Garden Route.[28]

Flora conservation was a favourite pastime of many South Africans, with Botsoc and its numerous affiliated societies (e.g. the Eastern Province Wildflower Society, 1954, and the Clanwilliam Wildflower Society, 1971) being the leading organisations in

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20. *See* COUNCIL FOR THE HABITAT, *Coastal areas: conference proceedings* 1. *Durban, 3-4.4.1975* (*s.n.*, *s.l.*, *s.a.*).
21. *See* COUNCIL FOR THE HABITAT, *Mountain environments: conference proceedings* 2. *Johannesburg, 13-14.5.1976* (*s.n.*, *s.l.*, *s.a.*).
22. *See* COUNCIL FOR THE HABITAT, *Creating environmental awareness: conference proceedings* 3. *Stellenbosch, 5-6.4.1977* (*s.n.*, *s.l.*, *s.a.*).
23. *See* COUNCIL FOR THE HABITAT, *Activities in retrospect: conference proceedings* 4. *Johannesburg, 19.5.1978* (*s.n.*, *s.l.*, *s.a.*).
24. *See* HABITAT COUNCIL, *Roads and the environment: conference proceedings* 5. *Johannesburg, 19.9.1980* (*s.n.*, *s.l.*, *s.a.*).
25. *See* HABITAT COUNCIL, *Conservation: policy statements. Conference proceedings* 6. *Durban, 22.10.1982* (*s.n.*, *s.l.*, *s.a.*).
26. Interview with Richard Fuggle, Cape Town, 26.3.1998.
27. C.D. SCHWEIZER, Environmental and related interest groups in South Africa 1, pp. 81-82. See also "People have the right to plan their environment" in *African Wildlife* 29(1), 1975, pp. 8-11.
28. See for example "Knysna freeway: still in the balance?" in *African Wildlife* 28(1), 1974, pp. 21-22; "We meet Mr Driessen to discuss THAT freeway" in *African Wildlife* 28(3), 1974, p. 33.

this regard.[29] Groups such as the Tree Society of Southern Africa (1958), the Dendrological Foundation (1979) and the Dendrological Society (1981), on the other hand, were engaged in tree conservation and the promotion of indigenous trees.[30] The South African Ornithological Society (1930), the Cape Bird Club (1948) and the Bloemfontein Bird Club (1977) were among those ENGOs that promoted the conservation of bird life in the Republic. Coastal bird conservation also received attention through the South African National Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB, 1968).[31]

Wildlife conservation was important to and popular with the general public. Three ENGOs, namely the Wildlife Society (1926),[32] the Southern African Nature Foundation (SANF, 1968)[33] and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT, 1973)[34] dominated non-governmental wildlife conservation activities in the country. The support base of the three organisations differed considerably: the Wildlife Society operated on public support, the EWT operated on public, corporate and institutional support, and the SANF on a corporate base only.[35] The Dolphin Action and

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29. See for example R.A. DYER, "Botanical research in South Africa in the twentieth century" in A.C. BROWN (Ed.), *A history of scientific endeavour in South Africa* (The Royal Society of South Africa, Cape Town, 1977), pp. 240-241; D. HEY, "The history and status of nature conservation in South Africa" in A.C. BROWN (Ed.), *A history of scientific endeavour in South Africa*, p. 152; C.D. SCHWEIZER, Environmental and related interest groups in South Africa 1, pp. 66-67.

30. See for example M. MORISON, "Tree Society of Southern Africa: a retrospective view" in *African Wildlife* 37(2), 1983, pp. 79-80; C.D. SCHWEIZER, Environmental and related interest groups in South Africa 2, pp. 22, 35.

31. See for example D. HEY, "The history and status of nature conservation in South Africa", p. 159; A.C. BROWN, "The amateur scientist" in A.C. BROWN (Ed.), *A history of scientific endeavour in South Africa*, pp. 465-466; C.D. SCHWEIZER, Environmental and related interest groups in South Africa 1, pp. 67-69; SANCCOB, "SANCCOB: South African National Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds. Who is SANCCOB?", http://www.exinet.co.za/enviro/sanccob/ sanccob1.html, *s.a*.

32. See for example J.A. PRINGLE, *The conservationists and the killers: the story of game protection and the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa,* pp. 281-298; WESSA, "The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa", http://www.wildlifesociety.org.za/, *s.a.* See also its magazine, *African Wildlife*, for more details.

33. See for example C.D. SCHWEIZER and K.H. COOPER, "Voluntary organisations and the environment", p. 137; D. HEY, "The history and status of nature conservation in South Africa", p. 158; J. DEACON, "Stigting vir bewaring" in *Suid-Afrikaanse Panorama* 34(10), November/December 1989, pp. 14-19. See also its magazine, *Our living world*, for more details.

34. See for example "The Endangered Wildlife Trust reports..." in *African Wildlife* 32(2), 1978, pp. 27-29; EWT, "Endangered Wildlife Trust", http://www.infoweb.co.za/enviro/ewt.htm, 28.7.1997. See also its magazine, *Quagga*, for more details.

35. The SANF's membership is limited to corporations only. It has no individual public members. Interview with Ian MacDonald, Stellenbosch, 1.4.1998.

Protection Group (1977), on the other hand, did very important and pioneering work in the conservation of dolphin and whale species in the South African territorial waters.[36]

A focus area that grew considerably between 1972 and 1982 was that of environmental education, with environmental conservation incorporated into the syllabuses of some black, coloured, Indian and white schools. Key role-players in the development of environmental education in South Africa were groups like the Wilderness Leadership School (1963), the Wilderness Trust (1972), the South African Nature Conservation Centre (1975), the Wildlife Society, the NVT, the SANF and the anti-pollution groups.[37]

Concern about the high pollution levels in the country was also voiced between 1972 and 1982. Anti-pollution groups such as the Institute for Water Pollution Control (1937), the National Association for Clean Air (1969) and the South African Council for Conservation and Anti-Pollution (1972) did important work in this field. The widespread problem of litter in the Republic led to the establishment of Keep South Africa Tidy (renamed Keep South Africa Beautiful) in 1971. Together with its individual branches and affiliates in the major cities, Keep South Africa Tidy embarked upon a campaign to promote a clean and tidy environment in the country, drawing support from both government and the container industry.[38] Concern about high pollution levels was not confined to the white population group, but also led to the founding of the National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC) by Japhta Lekgetho in Soweto in 1977. NEAC's main objective was to promote environmental awareness in Soweto and to start with clean-up operations to reduce environmental pollution in the township.[39]

The development of the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station by Escom was not acceptable to all and a group of Capetonians formed Stop Koeberg in 1980. The

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36. See for example Dolphin Action and Protection Group, *The Dolphin Action and Protection Group* (pamphlet, Fish Hoek, DAPG, *s.a.*), pp. 1-4; Interview with Nan Rice, Fish Hoek, 1.4.1998. See also its newsletters *Dolphin and Whale News* and *Dolphin Whale Watch RSA* for more details.

37. See for example C.D. SCHWEIZER, Environmental and related interest groups in South Africa 1, p. 82; D. and R. SULLIVAN, *South African environment* (Macdonald South Africa, Cape Town, 1977), pp. 52-55, 58-59.

38. See for example C.D. SCHWEIZER, Environmental and related interest groups in South Africa 1, p. 78; D. and R. SULLIVAN, *South African environment*, pp. 52-53; "Introducing Zibi - superbird with a super job - cleaning up South Africa" in *Veldtrust*, Autumn 1979, pp. 27-29.

39. L. LAWSON, "The ghetto and the greenbelt" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa* (Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1991), pp. 64-65.

organisation was later renamed Koeberg Alert, presumably because of their inability to actually stop the development of this nuclear power station.[40]

While many ENGOs tend to focus on a single issue within a specific geographical area, there were ENGOs in existence, which addressed a broad environmental agenda. Probably the first ENGO to adopt such an agenda was the Society for the Protection of the Environment (SPE, 1970).[41] The SPE addressed a wide variety of issues ranging from campaigning against proposed developments in ecologically sensitive areas to campaigns against non-reusable containers, unchecked population growth, industrial expansion, road developments and pollution. It also actively campaigned, albeit in a more intellectual manner through letter writing and meetings, for environmental impact assessments during the planning phases of proposed developments.[42]

The established ENGOs such as the Wildlife Society and the NVT were not oblivious to the concerns of the environmental revolution, and both organisations adopted new agendas in the course of the seventies. In November 1973 the Wildlife Society formulated a new aim which directed the Society away from focusing solely on the conservation of wildlife towards broader issues that included the conservation of the earth, air, water, soil, plants and animals. The conversion to a broad environmental agenda took some time and the Society's main achievements remained in the wildlife conservation field. Despite many achievements between 1972 and 1982, its main contribution to the environmental movement in this period was the formulation of a conservation strategy for South Africa. Published first in 1978 as *A policy for strategy and environmental conservation in South Africa*, the policy was updated in 1979 and was published in 1980 under the title *A national strategy for environmental conservation in South Africa 1980*.[43] The NVT also began to address a wider range of environmental issues than before in the 1970s, while the HC, due to its diverse membership, could claim to have had a broad environmental agenda.

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40. C.D. SCHWEIZER, Environmental and related interest groups in South Africa 2, p. 52.

41. This would explain why Friends of the Earth approached the SPE in 1973 to support their campaign against commercial whaling, and not the other more established ENGOs in the country. See JGPDC, Society for the Protection of the Environment: Minutes of management meeting, 10.4.1973.

42. See JGPDC, Society for the Protection of the Environment: Minutes of management meetings, 8.9.1970-29.7.1982; *Society for the Protection of the Environment Newsletter* 1(1), 1971 - 12(4), 1982.

43. J.A. PRINGLE, *The conservationists and the killers: the story of game protection and the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa*, pp. 278, 295.

2.2 Major environmental issues pursued by South African ENGOs

While the rest of the world was up in arms against pollution, ENGOs in South Africa took up the struggle against developments of all kinds. Particular emphasis was placed on road developments after the government made its intention known to develop a Garden Route highway in 1973. This proposed development was strongly opposed by ENGOs such as SAGRACOM, the Wildlife Society and the SPE, which resulted in a confrontation between them and the government. Victory in the short term went to the ENGOs, but it was not their opposition that led the government to shelve the project until 1979. It was the oil crisis that began in October 1973 and the resulting speed and fuel restrictions that not only made the Garden Route highway, but also other proposed road developments, both unrealistic and unnecessary.[44]

Development plans were not restricted to roads only, but were also pursued within areas that were formally protected, either as nature and game reserves or as national parks. The most publicised campaign against developments in protected areas was that fought against the proposed coking coal mining in the Kruger National Park. Despite prospecting and mining of any nature being prohibited in terms of the National Parks Act, the Department of Agriculture (under which authority the National Parks Board fell) gave the Department of Mines permission to prospect for coking coal in the KNP. It found sizeable deposits and by 1978 it seemed as though the government was willing to give up a third of the KNP to allow for the mining of coking coal to commence. This decision met with a lot of resistance from both ENGOs and the general public, and by 1980, due to public pressure, the government was forced to abandon its plans.[45] Though a success, the campaign left many ENGOs involved with wildlife conservation uneasy, for it highlighted the non-commitment of the government to environmental matters in general, and wildlife conservation in particular. It also left the question open that if the government was willing to sacrifice its flagship, the KNP, what protection did the other lesser known officially protected areas have against development projects?[46]

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44. See *Society for the Protection of the Environment Newsletter* 3(2), 1973, pp. 1-21 for a detailed discussion of the confrontation between the ENGOs and the government. See also "Roads: problem number one?" in *African Wildlife* 27(3), 1973, p. 110; T. COETZEE, "Road building, environmental impact and South African historical writing" (unpublished paper read at the 15th biennial conference of the South African Historical Society, Grahamstown, 1995). The Garden Route highway was eventually built in the early 1980s after a detailed environmental impact assessment had been conducted.

45. See for example "Coal mining in the Kruger Park?" in *African Wildlife* 32(1), 1978, pp. 8-9; "It is wrong to mine the Kruger National Park" in *African Wildlife* 32(3), 1978, p. 8; "Minister Hendrik Schoeman asks: 'Is this fuss really necessary?' " in *African Wildlife* 32(3), 1978, pp. 16-17.

46. J.A. PRINGLE, *The conservationists and the killers: the story of game protection and the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa*, p. 277.

Despite a long conservation history several fauna and flora species achieved endangered status in the course of the 1970s. By 1972 the total number of mountain zebras was less than 100, black rhinoceros less than 400, roan antelope less than 350 and the brown hyena population was down to about 300. With three extinct species (the Cape lion, the blue buck and the quagga) already listed on the country's environmental track record, the government was none the less slow to address the problem of endangered species. It was up to ENGOs like the EWT, the Wildlife Society and the SANF to work towards improving the situation.[47] Environmental deterioration was not restricted to individual species, but was most evident on one of the biggest national assets, namely Table Mountain. By 1978 a commission of inquiry concluded that the general environment of Table Mountain and the Southern Peninsula Mountain Chain had deteriorated to such an extent that it could never be completely restored. Like so many other problems, the government had to be prompted by ENGOs, in particular those active in the Western Cape area, before real action was considered.[48]

A recurrent issue in the environmental movement was the annual seal harvest along the Atlantic coastline. The seal industry, being the oldest example of sustained exploitation of wild animals in Southern Africa and more than 300 years old, was completely controlled by the government. Widespread public opposition to seal culling led to the passing of the Sea Birds and Seals Protection Act (no 46 of 1973) in which the government extended some protection to seals. However, the annual harvest continued.[49] The period also saw official protection of whales instituted when the government enacted regulations in this regard in 1980. These regulations made South Africa's laws to protect whales the strictest in the world, and were a direct result of campaigning by the Dolphin Action and Protection Group (DAPG). The DAPG also launched the Dolphin Whale Watch RSA project, which was linked to International Dolphin Watch, and which has proved to be very popular with the general public.[50]

While ENGOs, in general, were very active in the conservation of fauna and flora, few were active in the field of pollution. Favourite issues were littering and environmental marring (largely due to developments), but popular concern for air, water and radiation pollution remained very low. Groups such as the National

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47. J. CLARKE, *Our fragile land: South Africa's environmental crisis* (Macmillan South Africa, Johannesburg, 1974), pp. 100-101.

48. *See* REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA (RSA), Report on the future control and management of Table Mountain and the Southern Peninsula Mountain Chain (The Government Printer, Pretoria, 1978) for more details.

49. See for example R. RAND, "A case for controlled killing of the Cape fur seal" in *African Wildlife* 27(2), 1973, pp. 64-67; P.D. SHAUGHNESSY, "Controversial harvest" in *African Wildlife* 30(6), 1976, pp. 26-31.

50. Dolphin Action and Protection Group, The Dolphin Action and Protection Group, pp. 2-3.

Association for Clear Air did exist, but their close relationship with the government resulted in their voicing the opinion of the government rather than being a watchdog for the general public.[51] The Cleaner Air, Rivers and Environment (CARE) campaign launched by *The Star* in 1971 (aimed at exposing pollution, indifference towards the country's conservation needs, poor town planning and all abuses of the South African environment) did more important work in the anti-pollution lobby than any ENGO could claim to have done between 1972 and 1982.

3. From conservation to environmental justice: 1982 - 1988

The six years between 1982 and 1988 can be regarded as a transitional period in which existing ENGOs gradually began to change their agendas to reflect the political and social realities of the time. Probably the most important change was that made to the membership policies of mainstream ENGOs such as the Wildlife Society and the NVT which opened up their organisations to people of colour in 1984 and 1985 respectively.[52] By adopting a non-racial membership policy, mainstream ENGOs acknowledged that the improvement of the state of the South African environment depended on the co-operation of all the racial groups and not just that of white people.

Changes in membership policies did not result all of a sudden in large numbers of black, coloured and Indian people joining the previously white ENGOs. Decades of political and economic marginalisation of black people, the inability and at times unwillingness of white ENGOs to address those issues important to black people, such as poverty, provision of basic services and lack of land, and the participation of some ENGOs in activities in which black people were denied access to their traditional land and resources, all contributed to the cultivation of a negative attitude towards white ENGOs among black people.[53] Although an important first step, constitutional changes alone therefore did not guarantee black participation in mainstream ENGOs.

As a result, the non-governmental section of the environmental movement continued to be dominated by white people between 1982 and 1988. English speakers in turn dominated white participation with a disproportionately lower number of Afrikaans

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51. Dr E.C. Halliday, the founder of the National Association for Clean Air, was also the chairman of the governmental air pollution advisory committee. Halliday was very critical of all opinions lodged against the high air pollution levels in the big industrial areas in the country, quickly pointing out that on average South Africa was still better off than countries like the USA and Britain. See for example *The Star* (supplement), 30.3.1971, p. 1.

52. F. KHAN, Contemporary South African environmental response: an historical and socio-political evaluation with particular reference to blacks, p. 98.

53. Ibid., pp. 47-60. Discussion of the effect of apartheid legislation on black environmental perceptions and attitudes.

speakers active in the environmental field.[54] However, the emergence of black community-based environmental organisations was an important new development during this transitional phase, as it gave voice to the environmental concerns of people of colour for the first time.

3.1 The predominantly white ENGOs

The creation of the statutory Council for the Environment seriously undermined the influence of the HC as the most influential ENGO from 1983 onwards. Two factors contributed to this situation. Firstly, the public and many HC member organisations saw the Council for the Environment as taking over the role of the HC. This perception, though unfounded, was enhanced by the fact that Roelf Botha, the president of the HC, was appointed as chairman of the newly established Council for the Environment. Three other members of the executive committee of the HC were also appointed to the Council, namely Eric Hall, Emil Adler and Richard Fuggle.[55]

The second factor relates to the functions of the HC. Though established as a co-ordinating ENGO, the HC's influence with the government grew considerably to the extent where its advice on environmental policy issues was sought on several occasions. The HC thus ended up performing the functions of a co-ordinating, liaison (between the private sector and the government) and policymaking body, even though its original mandate included only co-ordinating and liaison powers. The establishment of the Council for the Environment ended the HC's participation in governmental policy formulation and dealt a severe blow to its liaison with governmental departments. The HC was not ignorant of the possibility that the Council could threaten its existence and redefined its role shortly after the latter began with its work in 1983. It identified its major function as being the watchdog of the ENGO-community. However, individual members assumed the role of watchdogs and the HC, at most, can be credited with performing a co-ordinating role between 1982 and 1988.[56]

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54. J.F. DU PREEZ, "Die rol van vrywillige bewaringsorganisasies" (unpublished paper read at the SADF seminar, Meerdoelige grondgebruik: die rol van sekondêre bewaringsgebiede in die RSA, 27-28.7.1988), p. 9.

55. *Habitat Council Newsletter*, January 1983, pp. 1-2; JGPDC, Habitat Council: "Die Habitatraad en die Raad vir die Omgewing", memorandum from the secretary to the members of the executive committee of the HC, 29.3.1985, pp. 1-4.

56. JGPDC, Habitat Council: "Die taak en opdrag van die Habitatraad gesien in die lig van sy verhouding tot die Raad vir die Omgewing", memorandum from the secretary to the members of the executive committee of the HC and the chairman of the Council for the Environment, 10.4.1983, pp. 1-3; JGPDC, Habitat Council: "Funksionering van Habitatraad", memorandum from the secretary to the members of the executive committee of the HC, 30.7.1985.

While the influence of the HC sharply declined, that of mainstream ENGOs such as the EWT, Botsoc, the Wildlife Society and the SANF continued to grow in the period under discussion. The Wildlife Society reaffirmed its position as the biggest ENGO in South Africa and recorded an all-time high membership totalling over 23 000 by 1986. The Society by that time consisted of eight active branches, several affiliated societies in Southern Africa, 52 centres and 484 wildlife clubs for young people.[57] The SANF, on the other hand, had a corporate membership of 220 companies by 1989. Its list of achievements between 1968 and 1989 include the raising of over R30 million for conservation projects, the establishment of five national parks (e.g. the Pilanesberg National Park, 1979, and the West Coast National Park, 1985), more than 30 nature reserves, and the launching of 160 conservation projects in the Southern Africa region.[58]

Public interest in environmental affairs, as in the preceding period, manifested itself in the founding of new ENGOs such as the Society Against Nuclear Energy (1983), the Cape Town Ecology Group (1984), the Rhino and Elephant Foundation (1986) and the Western Cape Marine Conservation Society (1988). The overwhelming majority of these groups either focused on single issues or confined their activities to specific geographical areas. Renewed interest in the conservation of the built-environment also led to the founding of ENGOs such as the Rhodes Parks Preservation Society (1983), the Franschhoek Trust (1984) and the Zastron Bewaringskomitee (1988).[59]

Conservation remained the major focus area of the non-governmental sector of the environmental movement with existing and newly established ENGOs participating in the conservation of flora, wildlife, endangered species, and the marine and built-environment, to name but a few. Special attention was paid to the plight of endangered species with the EWT, the SANF, the Wildlife Society and the Rhino and Elephant Foundation sponsoring and conducting research and conservation programmes to prevent the extinction of species like the African elephant, the white

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57. E.A. ZALOUMIS, "President's report: the Wildlife Society, 1985-1986" in *African Wildlife* 40(6), 1986, p. 206.

58. J. DEACON, "Stigting vir bewaring" in *Suid-Afrikaanse Panorama* 34(10), November/December 1989, pp. 15-19; C. LOUW, "Nuwe man by Natuurstigting vee met wetenskaplike besem" in *Die Suid-Afrikaan* 19, February 1989, pp. 37-38.

59. *The Green Pages 1991/1992: environmental networking and resource directory for Southern Africa* (WM Publications, Johannesburg, 1991), pp. 28, 39, 94, 125-126, 130-131, 133. See also G. BINCKES, "Environmental organisational structures and public participation in South Africa" in D. and V. JAPHA (Eds), *Proceedings of the national urban conservation symposium, Johannesburg, 1990* (Oakville Press, Cape Town, 1991), pp. 108-114; F. BIRD, "The conservation struggle at grassroots level" in D. and V. JAPHA (Eds), *Proceedings of the national urban conservation symposium*, pp. 115-119.

and black rhinoceros, the riverine rabbit, the samango monkey, the southern right whale, the blue swallow and the wattled crane. [60]

Attempts to conserve endangered species, especially the elephant and rhinoceros, proved to be very popular with white people in general; maybe too popular (e.g. the Rhino Pledge Day in 1989 raised more than R1,5 million) because the white 'obsession' with saving endangered species further alienated black people from the natural environment. While white ENGOs and the government spent millions of rands to prevent the extinction of fauna and flora, millions of black people had no access to safe water, adequate land, electricity and primary health care. This state of affairs contributed to questions such as whether animals were more important than (black) people, frequently being asked by anti-apartheid groups.[61]

From a human science perspective, the single most important contribution to conservation in South Africa between 1982 and 1988 came from the Purros project founded by Garth Owen-Smith and Margaret Jacobsohn on behalf of the EWT. In Purros, a village in South West Africa/Namibia, Owen-Smith and Jacobsohn succeeded in involving the whole community in wildlife conservation and set up mechanisms to ensure that the community benefited from the tourists that visit the area. In light of the successes of the Purros project, the EWT hosted an international symposium on national parks, nature reserves and their neighbours in 1988. This symposium provided the first forum ever at which the communities neighbouring protected areas could voice their opinions as to what they thought of these areas.[62]

The Purros project can be seen as a turning point in the management of protected areas in South Africa. It challenged the prevailing belief that people (especially black people) were the enemies of conservation and that they should be kept out of protected areas. It further challenged the then accepted practice that people should 'make room' for protected areas, which normally meant the forced removal of communities living within the proposed borders (e.g. the Bakgatla in the Pilanesberg National Park, 1979, and the Tembe-Thonga in the Tembe Elephant Park, 1983). The

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60. See for example C. WALKER, "The Rhino and Elephant Foundation" in *African Panorama* 40(5), 1995, pp. 50-54; E.A. ZALOUMIS, "President's report: the Wildlife Society, 1985-1986", pp. 211-213; EWT, "Endangered Wildlife Trust", http://www.infoweb.co.za/enviro/about.htm, 17.4.1996; A. BURGER, "Private sektor se aandeel" in *Suid-Afrikaanse Panorama* 37(2), March/April 1992, pp. 69-72; E. VAN WIJK, "'n Kwessie van oorlewing" in *Suid-Afrikaanse Panorama* 37(2), March/April 1992, pp. 98-103.

61. E. KOCH, D. COOPER and H. COETZEE, *Water, waste and wildlife: the politics of ecology in South Africa* (Penguin Books, Johannesburg, 1990), p. 2; C. WALKER, "The Rhino and Elephant Foundation" in *African Panorama* 40(5), 1995, pp. 50-54.

62. E. KOCH, D. COOPER and H. COETZEE, *Water, waste and wildlife: the politics of ecology in South Africa*, pp. 27-29. See also Endangered Wildlife Trust, *Proceedings of the international symposium on national parks, nature reserves and neighbours, Johannesburg, 31.10.1988-2.11.1988* (EWT, Johannesburg, 1989).

Project helped bring about a shift away from alienating communities from their traditional land and resources towards a conservation ethos that allowed for the direct participation of neighbouring communities in protected areas. This change in ethos made it possible for the Richtersveld Community Committee to successfully negotiate grazing rights and management participation in the proposed Richtersveld National Park with the National Parks Board between 1989 and 1990.[63]

Particular emphasis was also placed on the need for environmental education, both formal and informal, in an effort to create environmental awareness among the general public. An important start was the organising of an environmental education conference in April 1982 at Treverton College in the Natal Midlands, which brought together all role-players for the first time. This conference led to the founding of the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa (EEASA). It was followed up in 1984 with a workshop, organised by the Council for the Environment, on a national policy for environmental education, which eventually resulted in the publication of the White Paper on Environmental Education in 1989. The main objectives of the environmental education drive of the 1980s were the adoption of an official environmental education policy by the government, the inclusion of environmental education in school curricula and the development of resource material for both the formal and informal education sectors. The driving force behind the initiatives was ENGOs such as the Wildlife Society, the SANF, the Wilderness Leadership School and the EEASA, which co-operated closely on this matter with the department of environment affairs and the Council for the Environment.[64]

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63. *See* for example D. FIG, "Flowers in the desert: community struggles in Namaqualand" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, pp. 118-121; Association for Rural Advancement, "Animals versus people: the Tembe Elephant Park" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, pp. 223-227; E. KOCH, D. COOPER and H. COETZEE, *Water, waste and wildlife: the politics of ecology in South Africa*, pp. 17-22, 27-30; E. BOONZAIER, "People, parks and politics" in M. RAMPHELE and C. MCDOWELL (Eds), *Restoring the land: environment and change in post-apartheid South Africa* (Panos, London, 1991) pp. 155-162.

64. P. IRWIN, "15 years on and time for a reflective pause?" in *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education* 17, 1997, pp. 1-2; RSA, Working documents for a national policy on environmental education, Midmar Dam, 28.2.1984-2.3.1984 (*n.n.*, Pretoria, 1984), pp. 1-143; RSA, W.P.F.-1989: Witskrif oor omgewingsopvoeding (The Government Printer, Pretoria, 1989), pp. 5-8; H. VILJOEN, "White Paper: symbol of concern" in *Conserva* 5(2), March 1990, pp. 6-7; J. TAYLOR, "The White Paper on environmental education and the Wildlife Society's role" in *African Wildlife* 43(4), 1989, pp. 206-211. *See* also J. TAYLOR, *Share-Net: a case study of environmental education resource material development in a risk society* (Share-Net, Howick, 1997), p. 15 *et seq.* for a discussion of the environmental education initiatives of the Wildlife Society.

A new focus area that emerged from 1980 onwards was the widespread use of agrochemicals[65] by the government and the farming community. Agrochemicals became an issue after the Natal Fresh Produce Growers' Association (NFPGA) filed a lawsuit against seventeen South African chemical companies in 1985. The NFPGA claimed that the hormone herbicides used on neighbouring sugar cane and timber plantations in the Tala Valley (close to Pietermaritzburg in Natal) damaged its members' crops. Rain samples taken in the vegetable fields in the Valley in 1987 revealed extremely high concentrations of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. The concentration of 2,4,5-T, for example, was 10 000 times higher than what the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States considers safe. The NFPGA lost its case on a technicality in 1990 when the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court ruled that it should have brought the lawsuit against the users of hormone herbicides (the sugar and timber plantation owners) and not the manufacturers.[66]

Other focus areas of ENGOs in South Africa between 1982 and 1988 included pollution, nuclear energy and the creation of open spaces in urban areas. Anti-pollution activities concentrated mainly, but not exclusively, on litter and campaigns to get South Africans to clean up their environment. In co-operation with the Department of Environment Affairs, Keep South Africa Tidy launched a countrywide campaign in 1983 to promote awareness of the problems associated with litter in the Republic.[67] The Dolphin Action and Protection Group, on the other hand, addressed the problem of plastic pollution at sea and along the coastline by launching the Prevent Plastic Pollution Campaign in 1987.[68]

Only two ENGOs, namely Koeberg Alert and the Society Against Nuclear Energy, were active in anti-nuclear campaigns. Their impact, however, was extremely limited and they failed to establish a broad support base.[69] The extent to which nuclear energy was a non-issue with the general public was particularly emphasised in 1986 with the Chernobyl disaster. The meltdown of reactor no 4 at the Chernobyl nuclear power station on 25-26 April 1986 generated renewed interest in and support for ENGOs

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65. Agrochemicals refers to a variety of chemicals including pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and growth regulants that are used in agriculture. "The 'aggro' chemicals" in *Critical Health* 33, November 1990, p. 76.

66. M. LAING, "Jekyll-and-Hyde herbicides" in *Rotating the cube: environmental strategies for the 1990s* (Indicator South Africa, Durban, 1990), pp. 41-43; D. COOPER, "From soil erosion to sustainability: land use in South Africa" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, pp.184-186; E. KOCH, D. COOPER and H. COETZEE, *Water, waste and wildlife: the politics of ecology in South Africa*, pp. 4-5.

67. RSA, RP 28/1985: Annual report of the department of environment affairs, 1983-1984 (The Government Printer, Pretoria, 1985), p. 198.

68. DOLPHIN ACTION AND PROTECTION GROUP, *Save our sealife: prevent plastic pollution* (pamphlet, DAPG, Fish Hoek, 1997), p. 4.

69. M. GANDAR, "The imbalance of power" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, pp. 110-111.

and green political parties in Europe. However, in South Africa, the reassurances of Escom that this type of nuclear disaster could never happen at Koeberg proved satisfactory to the general public. Chernobyl therefore did not generate substantial support for the anti-nuclear groups in South Africa.[70] A more popular issue with the public was the Metropolitan Open Spaces System (MOSS) which was launched by the Natal branch of the Wildlife Society in 1983. Moss' main objective was the identification of natural areas in the urban environment that could be conserved and which could serve educational and recreational purposes. Once identified, the Wildlife Society set out to raise money for the formal establishment and conservation of such areas.[71]

3.2 Community-based ENGOs in black and coloured communities

The level of development of a country normally determines the type of environmental issues likely to be addressed. Major issues for ENGOs in developed countries thus tend to concentrate on the side effects of development, such as pollution, acid rain and nuclear energy, while particular emphasis is also placed on fauna and flora conservation. On the other hand, ENGOs in developing countries focus more on environmental problems that exist due to a lack of development, such as poverty, the lack of basic services and of primary health care, and soil erosion.

South Africa is generally considered to be both a developing and a developed country in one, the result being that the developed/developing world dichotomy in environmental issues manifests itself within the same country.[72] Apart from addressing soil conservation (largely done by the NVT), ENGOs in general did not address the environmental problems of black and coloured communities in South Africa. Involvement in the latter was mostly confined to running environmental education programmes like the African Conservation Education programme started by the Natal branch of the Wildlife Society in 1975.[73]

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70. See for example A. VAN HEERDEN, "Could a 'Chernobyl' nuclear disaster happen here?" in *African Wildlife* 40(3), 1986, pp. 92-97; *The Weekly Mail*, 9-15.5.1986, pp. 12-13; D. FIG, "Nuclear energy in South Africa" in *South African Outlook* 121(2), February/March 1991, pp. 34-37.

71. E.A. ZALOUMIS, "President's report: the Wildlife Society, 1983-1984" in *African Wildlife* 38(6), 1984, p. 224; C. COOPER, "People, the environment, and change" in *South African Institute of Race Relations Spotlight* 5/94, October 1994, p. 47; E. BOTHA, "The man who put urban conservation on the map" in *African Wildlife* 41(6), 1987, pp. 319-325.

72. J. COCK and E. KOCH, "Preface" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, unnumbered two pages following the Contents.

73. See J.A. PRINGLE, *The conservationists and the killers: the story of game protection and the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa*, pp. 256-270 for a discussion of the African Conservation Education programme.

That black people had different environmental needs from those of white people was acknowledged before 1982 with the establishment of the National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC) in Soweto in 1978. From the start the NEAC set out, *inter alia*, to promote environmental awareness, launched a campaign to combat the lack of waste removal services in Soweto (Operation Clean Up) and set up a recreational centre in Dobsonville Park to cater for the needs of the youth.[74] The founder and president of NEAC, Japhta Lekgheto, repeatedly emphasised the link between apartheid and the dismal conditions in townships, stating:

> blacks have always had to live in an environment that was neither beautiful nor clean. We have not had proper housing, roads or services because the authorities would not accept that we were a permanent part of the city scene.[75]

The greening of some black and coloured communities began in earnest in 1982 with the founding of Abalimi Bezekhaya ("Planters of the Home") by a Catholic welfare and developmental organisation. Initially Abalimi Bezekhaya focused on attempts to stimulate and promote an organic food garden culture among black communities in the greater Cape Town area in order to help people produce their own food. During the course of the 1980s it broadened its agenda to include tree planting, general greening of townships and environmental education. Two garden centres were set up in Nyanga (1985) and Khayelitsha (1989) to provide a low cost service to township residents.[76]

Similar projects were launched by the Africa Tree Centre (1984 - Edendale), Natsoc (1984 - the Cape Flats), Ecolink (1985 - Gazankulu, KaNgwane and Lebowa) and Khanyisa (1988 - Langa, Guguletu and Khayelitsha). The Mboza Village Project in northern KwaZulu, on the other hand, was established to help develop the community and to create job opportunities. It started out as a sewing project for women in the area and as a literacy centre, but developed further to incorporate issues such as the provision of safe water and primary health care. Lebowa's first conservation club ever, the Nature Conservation Club, was established in 1986 in Maandagshoek.[77] The

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74. L. LAWSON, "The ghetto and the greenbelt: the environmental crisis in urban areas" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, pp. 64-65; C. COOPER, "People, the environment, and change" in *South African Institute of Race Relations Spotlight* 5/94, October 1994, pp. 56-58; *The Star*, 6.6.1988, p. 5.

75. J. LEKGETHO as quoted by J. COCK, "Ozone-friendly politics" in *Work in Progress* 66, May 1990, p. 29.

76. C. COOPER, "People, the environment, and change" in *South African Institute of Race Relations Spotlight* 5/94, October 1994, pp. 12-13; "Abalimi Bezekhaya: the people's garden centre" in *South African Outlook* 122(1451), June 1992, pp. 81-83.

77. See C. COOPER, "People, the environment, and change" in *South African Institute of Race Relations Spotlight* 5/94, October 1994, pp. 25-26, 38-40, 52-54, 58-59; F. KHAN, Contemporary South African environmental response: an historical and socio-political evaluation with particular reference to blacks, pp. 106-108, 110-112, 121-122; L. van Niekerk, "A woman of substance" in *Conserva* 7(3), May/June 1992, pp. 12-13.

immediate environment also received attention during the political instability that lasted from 1984 onwards, through organised garbage collections and the establishment of 'people's parks' in many townships around the country.[78]

A movement similar to the Environmental Justice Movement[79] in the United States (US) began to emerge among black people in South Africa between 1982 and 1988. Occupational health and safety hazards first made headlines in August 1983 with an explosion at the Hlobane Colliery that killed 68 mineworkers.[80] In the following year, the poor state of the environment in the Mafefe district, Lebowa (80 km east of Pietersburg), ensured publicity not only for the occupational health risks involved in asbestos mining, but also for the health risks involved in living within close proximity of mining activities.[81]

Asbestos (both crocidolite and amosite) were mined in Mafefe from the 1910s up until 1975 when a drop in world demand for asbestos products forced the industry to close a number of mines in South Africa.[82] The only problem was that the mining company did not clean up behind it and left 19 asbestos tailings dumps behind which continued to pollute the environment in the district. The outcry that was caused by events in the Mafefe district should be viewed against the background of the international campaign against asbestos of the 1970s and early 1980s. The campaign succeeded in creating the perception among the public worldwide that asbestos and its products were extremely harmful to human health. This perception was in particular fuelled by medical research in the late seventies into the health hazards of exposure to asbestos, which concluded that mortality from lung-diseases like asbestosis and mesothelioma could be directly linked to asbestos exposure.[83]

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78. J. COCK, "Ozone-friendly politics" in *Work in Progress* 66, May 1990, p. 29; J. Cock, "The politics of ecology" in M. Ramphele and C. McDowell (Eds), Restoring the land, pp. 18-19.

79. Environmental justice links environmental issues with social, economic and racial justice, and focuses on the developed/developing world dichotomy in environmental issues. J.J. MÜLLER, "A greener South Africa? Environmentalism, politics and the future" in *Politikon* 24(1), June 1997, pp. 110-111.

80. J. LEGER, "From Hlobane to Kinross: disasters and the struggle for health and safety on the mines" in G. MOSS and I. OBERY (Eds), *South African review* 4 (2nd impression, Raven Press, Johannesburg, 1989), pp. 292-293.

81. M. FELIX, "Risking their lives in ignorance: the story of an asbestos-polluted community" in E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, pp. 35-37, 41.

82. Up to 90% of the asbestos mined in South Africa was exported because of a limited local demand. Asbestos exports ranked seventh among the country's non-gold exports in 1985. H.P. HART, "Asbestos in South Africa" in *Journal of the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy* 88(6), June 1988, p. 189; G. VAN HEERDEN, "Asbestos pollution well under control" in *RSA Policy Review* 6(4), May 1993, p. 41.

83. P.H.R. SNYMAN, "Safety and health in the Northern Cape blue asbestos belt" in *Historia* 33(1), May 1988, pp. 31-33.

In South Africa, government control over the industry was limited. The magisterial districts of Barberton, Carolina, Hay, Kuruman, Pietersburg, Postmasburg, Prieska and Vryburg were declared dust control areas only in 1985,[84] despite the fact that commercial mining in these areas started between 1906 and 1930. The districts of Thabamoopo, Sekhukhuneland and Mafefe fell under the authority of the Lebowa government, and the South African government, at most, could only recommend the declaring of dust control areas in those communities. Mafefe was only afforded this status in 1989. Inequalities also existed in the compensation of workers who contracted first and second-degree asbestosis and mesothelioma due to occupational exposure to asbestos fibres.[85]

In 1987 the National Centre for Occupational Health (NCOH) launched a project in Mafefe to study the health implications of asbestos fibres in the environment. A medical survey conducted by the NCOH in 1988 found that 40% of the total respondents had pleural changes. The NCOH not only recommended that the mine dumps be reclaimed (the government commissioned the Research Institute for Reclaiming Ecology at the University of Potchefstroom in 1989), but also that the whole community be relocated to a safer environment. The latter recommendation was based on the fact that asbestos fibres can pollute an area for well over twenty years after commercial mining activities have ceased. The NCOH worked closely with the Mafefe Asbestos Health Workers Committee, which was formed by the community to carry out health education work in Mafefe.[86]

The importance of Mafefe for the environmental movement in South Africa was twofold: firstly, it highlighted the environmental risks many people of colour had to face on a daily basis in their immediate living environment and at work, and

84. In terms of the Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act of 1956, the Minister of Health must first declare an area a dust control area before dust control measures are applicable. With asbestos mining, airborne asbestos fibres pose the greatest environmental risk. M. FELIX, "Risking their lives in ignorance: the story of an asbestos-polluted community" in E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, pp. 40-41.

85. The Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act (no 78 of 1973) compensated workers according to race. A white worker with mesothelioma, for example, was compensated with R33 207, while a black worker got only R2 052 for the same illness. P.H.R. SNYMAN, "Safety and health in the Northern Cape blue asbestos belt", p. 49. See also E. STANDER and J.J. LA GRANGE, *Investigation reports on the processing of certain minerals in the Republic of South Africa and in South West Africa* 3: *Asbestos* (The Government Printer, Pretoria, 1964), pp. 1-5.

86. M. FELIX, "Risking their lives in ignorance: the story of an asbestos-polluted community" in E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, pp. 37-42.

secondly, it prompted the government to begin imposing strict legislation that in turn forced the asbestos industry in South Africa to clean up its operation.[87]

4. New environmentalism and the South African ENGO sector, 1988 – 1992

The founding of Earthlife Africa (ELA) in August 1988 marked the beginning of radical changes in the non-governmental sector of the South African environmental movement. ELA, founded upon the theoretical principles of the German *Die Grünen* political party and organisationally based on the Greenpeace-model, actively advocated a highly politicised environmental agenda. In their view, the environment was not only a political issue, but also a new frontier on which to fight against the injustices of the prevailing apartheid system in the country. In contrast to the established dominant ENGOs such as the Wildlife Society, ELA set out deliberately to oppose the South African government in general, and the minister of environmental affairs in particular, on environmental issues. This confrontational approach ensured both environmental campaigns and the department of environment affairs exposure in the media, which in turn resulted in an increase in the awareness of and interest in environmental issues within South African society.[88]

Between 1988 and 1992 the environmental agenda in South Africa was broadened considerably and came to include issues such as industrial pollution, anti animal-cruelty, hazardous waste disposal, gillnetting and marine conservation, to name but a few. This was largely due to the efforts of ELA and the plethora of new ENGOs such as Consumers Against Pollution (1989), the Front for Animal Liberation and Conservation of Nature (1989/90), the Group for Environmental Monitoring (1991, Johannesburg), the Khayelitsha Environment Action Group (1991) and Eco-Programme (1991).[89]

While traditional conservation issues no longer dominated the agenda of the South African environmental movement, public support for ENGOs such as Botsoc and the Wildlife Society also grew during this phase. The Wildlife Society in particular showed its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and launched an ozone awareness campaign in 1988. It therefore became the first South African ENGO to campaign for a reduction in the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).[90] After news of

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87. G. VAN HEERDEN, "Asbestos pollution well under control" in *RSA Policy Review* 6(4), May 1993, pp. 42-47 for a discussion of governmental actions in this regard.

88. Interview with Greg Jacobs and Peter Lukey, Johannesburg, 5.3.1998.

89. For a detailed discussion of the ELA and the new groups that emerged in South Africa between 1988 and 1992, see P. STEYN and A. WESSELS, "The emergence of new environmentalism in South Africa, 1988-1992" in *South African Historical Journal* 42, May 2000, pp. 210-231.

90. I. MACDONALD *et.al.*, "The Ozone Awareness Campaign" in *African Wildlife* 45(2), 1991, pp. 82-84.

South African defence Force (SADF) involvement in illicit ivory trading became public in 1988, conservation groups such as the Endangered Wildlife Trust and the Wildlife Society became more critical of the role played by the South African government and its various extensions in damaging the environment.[91]

One of the main characteristics of the South African environmental movement in general, and the non-governmental sector in particular during this phase, was the highly politicised and widely reported environmental campaigns launched against numerous environmental threats or perceived threats. As such, this phase is best explained through an exploration of these environmental campaigns. Please note that limited space does not allow for a comprehensive discussion of all the campaigns and this section will therefore focus only on the major environmental campaigns against proposed mining activities in ecologically sensitive areas; toxic and hazardous waste disposal; industrial pollution; anti animal-cruelty; gill netting and marine conservation, and agrochemicals.

4.1 Proposed mining activities in ecologically sensitive areas

A decade after the controversy surrounding proposed coking coal mining in the KNP, the 1989 proposal to mine the eastern shores of Lake St Lucia unleashed unprecedented protest and outrage from ENGOs in South Africa. The mining company involved, Richards Bay Minerals (RBM), acquired extensive prospecting rights (for heavy minerals) along the Natal coast in 1976, stretching from Mtunzini in the south to Cape Vidal in the north and inland for approximately 5 km. Twice before 1989 RBM had had its mining rights withdrawn in two ecologically sensitive areas, namely Mapelane and Cape Vidal, due to the successful intervention of the Wildlife Society.[92]

In 1989 RBM applied for its prospecting lease of the Kingsa/Tojan lease area to be changed to a mining lease and thereby triggered the biggest environmental campaign in South African history. The main reason for the campaign against possible titanium mining was the fact that the Kingsa/Tojan lease was part of the St Lucia System. The latter was designated a wetland of international importance on 2 October 1986 by the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Water Fowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention, 1971) to which South Africa became the fifth contracting party in 1975. Furthermore, Lake St Lucia is the largest estuarine system

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91. For more information see JGPDC, Habitat Council: C. van Note, Statement on US enforcement of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, 14.7.1988, pp. 10-12.

92. J. RIDL, "St Lucia: the war rages on" in *African Wildlife* 44(1), 1990, pp. 13, 15; "St Lucia: facts and fallacies" in *Conserva* 7(3), May/June 1992, pp. 8-9; R. MACPHERSON, "St Lucia: a titanium struggle. A case for dune mining" in *Rotating the cube: environmental strategies for the 1990s*, p. 85.

in Africa and a potential World Heritage Site. As an internationally recognised wetland, South Africa undertook to preserve the St Lucia system in terms of the provisions of the Ramsar Convention.[93]

The Save St Lucia Campaign brought together a diversity of interest groups, including the Wildlife Society, the Natal Parks Board, ELA, the Zululand Environment Alliance, the St Lucia Action Group, *The Star* newspaper and private landowners in the area. Their position was that the planned dredge mining of the dunes would have a detrimental effect on the natural environment, and they were not convinced that RBM would be able to rehabilitate the environment to an acceptable level.[94] RBM, on the other hand, emphasised the financial benefits of the project (between R2,5 and R5 billion) and pointed out its good environmental track record which had earned it the Environmental Planning Professions Interdisciplinary Committee's award for excellence in environmental management earlier in 1989. The latter award was for its acclaimed dune rehabilitation programme.[95] A third role-player emerged during the struggle, namely the workers of RBM, many of whom were forcibly removed from the specific area in the 1970s to make way for the nature reserve at St Lucia. These workers directed attention towards the fact that no one had acted on the local community's behalf when they faced removal and that it was difficult for them now to support the conservation of the dunes from which they had been evicted.[96]

The government was caught in between the opposing sides and initially appeared to be supportive of RBM's mining application. The minister of environment affairs, Gert Kotzé, reacted negatively towards the Save St Lucia Campaign to the extent that he openly questioned and criticised the validity of *The Star*'s petition against the proposed mining, a petition that had more than 200 000 signatures.[97] The

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93. "St Lucia: facts and fallacies", pp. 9-10; RSA, South African national report to the Ramsar Convention, 1996 (DEAT, Pretoria, 1996), pp. 24-25.

94. See for example A. FORBES, "St Lucia: a titanium struggle. The case against dune mining" in *Rotating the cube: environmental strategies for the 1990s*, pp. 89-92; T. FERRAR, "Politics and economics of mining St Lucia" in *African Wildlife* 47(2), 1993, p. 51; J. RIDL, "St Lucia: the war rages on", pp. 10-16; A. BANNISTER and F. BRIDGLAND, "Striking the balance" in *Leadership* 8(10), December/January 1989/1990, pp. 108-118.

95. See for example R. MACPHERSON, "St Lucia: a titanium struggle. A case for dune mining" in *Rotating the cube: environmental strategies for the 1990s*, pp. 85-88; H.F. GOEDHALS, "Dune-mining in Zululand: mining company's point of view" in *African Wildlife* 43(4), 1989, pp. 176-177; "Ensuring the future of Lake St Lucia" in *Environmental Action*, May/June 1991, pp. 36-39; J. GOEDHALS, "St Lucia: a test case for conservation and development in South Africa" in *African Wildlife* 44(3), 1990, pp. 140-150.

96. E. KOCH, "Rainbow alliances: community struggles around ecological problems" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, pp. 31-32.

97. JGPDC, Habitat Council: W.S. Boshoff - G.J. Kotzé, 15.1.1990 (letter); *Beeld*, 15.9.1989, p. 4.

government, however, did take notice of the opposition to the mining of St Lucia and decided to delay a decision on the issue pending the completion of a comprehensive environmental impact assessments. A government-appointed panel ruled against dune mining in 1993 and opted for eco-tourism to provide the necessary revenues to enable community development in the area.[98]

4.2 Toxic and hazardous waste disposal

Toxic and hazardous waste disposal became an international environmental issue in 1988 when scandals such as the "homeless" toxic waste carrier ship, the *Karin-B*, and numerous deals to dispose of American and European toxic waste in the developing world, notably Africa, made headlines in the international media.[99] In South Africa articles on the possibility of toxic and hazardous waste importation began to appear in 1987 in which the government held that they had a 'no importation' policy. By 1989, however, the financial benefits began to outweigh the risks involved, and in February 1989 the minister of environment affairs, Kotzé, reported to parliament that the government was considering building a toxic and hazardous waste disposal facility to cater for the unwanted waste of the developed world.[100] However, soon after Kotzé made governmental intentions known, a series of highly publicised incidents involving toxic and hazardous waste disposal or the possibility thereof made national headlines, which forced the government to abandon its own plans and to reject applications from certain companies to build waste disposal facilities in South Africa.

One of the first incidents involved the Cape Town based company Peacock Bay Environment (PBE) which applied in 1989 for permission from the government to construct a R400 million waste incineration plant in the vicinity of Alexander Bay on the west coast. PBE's Managing Director, Sidney Saunders, challenged ELA to a series of national debates around the issue of toxic waste importation. Three debates were held in October 1989 in Pietermaritzburg, Durban (televised by the television company M-Net) and Cape Town respectively. The final debate was scheduled for 7 November 1989 in Johannesburg, but was cancelled by Saunders, because he would "no longer stand for verbal attacks from radical leftist thugs".[101]

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98. R. PRESTON-WHYTE, "Towards sustainable development in the Lake St Lucia area, South Africa" in *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 49, 1996, pp. 180-181.

99. See for example B. WYNNE, "The toxic waste trade: international issues and options" in *Third World Quarterly* 11(3), July 1989, pp. 120-122; H. SCHISSEL, "The deadly trade: toxic waste dumping in Africa" in *Africa Report* 33(5), September/October 1988, pp. 47-49; E. KOCH, D. COOPER and H. COETZEE, *Water, waste and wildlife: the politics of ecology in South Africa*, p. 43.

100. EARTHLIFE AFRICA (Johannesburg), Internal briefing documents: South Africa's hazardous waste crisis and the rush to burn (Johannesburg, ELA, 1989), pp. 1-2.

101. *Ibid.,* p. 3. (Saunders as quoted); See also *Die Burger*, 28.10.1989, p. 11; *Sunday Times*, 29.10.1989, p. 18.

These debates were extremely important because they focused public attention on the dangers involved in the disposal of toxic and hazardous waste. They also showed that the public, in general, was against South Africa catering for the unwanted waste of the developed world. The public outcry around toxic and hazardous waste in 1989 led directly to the department of environment affairs commissioning the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), to carry out an investigation into waste management and pollution control in the country. Because of the negative publicity, Saunders withdrew the application in 1990. However, he returned again in June 1992 when it was announced that PBE (by now Peacock Bay Environmental Services) had obtained conditional permission to develop an incineration plant on the farm Holfontein near Springs.[102]

Another well-publicised campaign against toxic waste disposal was launched in April 1990 when it became known that some workers at a mercury recycling plant in Cato Ridge were suffering from chronic mercury poisoning. The company involved, the British-owned Thor Chemicals (Pty.) Ltd which came into existence in 1963, was initially involved only in the manufacturing of mercury (used in the paint, textile and chemical industries) and non-mercurial compounds. In 1976 the company expanded its operations to include the recovery of mercury from spent catalyst. In the 1980s Thor Chemicals extended their operations and obtained contracts to recycle mercury for seven companies from the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom, Italy, Brazil and the Middle East.[103] The first foreign mercury shipments arrived at its site in Cato Ridge in 1986.[104]

Problems at the Cato Ridge site were first discovered by government inspectors in 1988 and late in 1989 it became known that large quantities of mercury were leaking from the plant into the Umgeni River, which flows into the Inanda Dam, Durban's main water source. In February 1990 water and soil samples were taken from the surrounding area, and the tests conducted showed high levels of mercury poisoning, with one sample being over 100 times the recommended limit. Furthermore the mercury had an organic content of over 30%. In the USA recycling plants refuse to handle mercury with an organic content of over 3%, while the processing of wastes

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102. EARTHLIFE AFRICA (Johannesburg), Internal briefing documents: South Africa's hazardous waste crisis and the rush to burn, pp. 4-10; "The doctor, the die-hard and the politician" in *Earthlife Africa (Johannesburg) Update,* 1994, p. 1; "Toxics: hazardous waste incineration 2" in *Earthlife News* [Johannesburg], September 1992, p. 1; *Beeld (Kalender)*, 8.9.1992, p. 4. See also Earthlife Africa, "Holfontein 'HH' landfill", <http://www.earthlife.org.za/campaigns/ toxics/holf-intro.htm>, 1997.

103. Borden Chemical and Plastics (USA), Calgon Carbon Corporation (USA), American Cynamid (USA), Margate (UK), Ausimont (Italy), Solvay do Brasil (Brazil), and Red Sea and Gulf (Middle East).

104. Commission of Inquiry into Thor Chemicals, *Report of the first phase* (*s.n.*, Cape Town, 1997), pp. 3-5.

with an organic content of over 4% is illegal in terms of the regulations of the US Environmental Protection Agency.[105]

The event that triggered the campaign against Thor Chemicals was a report that two workers had "gone mad", because they were saying and doing strange things and were shaking a lot (typical symptoms of mercury poisoning). The issue was taken up locally by ELA, the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU), the residents of Fredville (the affected area) and farmers from the Tala Valley, while Greenpeace mobilised support against Thor Chemicals in the USA. In April 1990 the company and its activities were brought to the attention of a wider audience when demonstrations were held at its site in Cato Ridge and in the USA at American Cyanamid plants. These demonstrations were important because it was the first time that ENGOs and trade unions in the country had united in an environmental campaign, and it was the first time that South African environmental interest groups combined forces with ENGOs and trade unions in another country (USA) to fight for a common goal.[106]

Amidst the public outcry that followed the campaign, the department of water affairs ordered Thor Chemicals in April 1990 to suspend its operations for four weeks because of heavy rains. The company continued with its activities after the temporary suspension was lifted and even applied for the expansion of its operations, which application was granted by the government in February 1991. In March 1994, after four years of campaigns directed against their activities, Thor Chemicals announced that it would cease to import toxic waste and applied for a permit to incinerate 2 500 tons of stockpiled waste without recovering mercury. Their application was challenged by the Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF) and the CWIU. It led directly to the appointment of a commission of inquiry by the government in 1995. The commission dismissed the demands of the EJNF and the CWIU that the wastes be returned to their senders, and recommended that the company be allowed to incinerate its mercury stockpile.[107]

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105. EARTHLIFE AFRICA, "Thor Chemicals: chronology of the campaign against Thor Chemicals", http://www.earthlife.org.za/campaigns/toxic/thor.htm, 1997; M. COLVIN, "Occupational hazards" in *Indicator South Africa* 9(1), Summer 1991, pp. 82-83; G. COLEMAN, "The campaign against Thor Chemicals: trade unions and the environment" in *Critical Health* 33, November 1990, pp. 69-70; E. KOCH, D. COOPER and H. COETZEE, *Water, waste and wildlife: the politics of ecology in South Africa*, p. 46.

106. R. CROMPTON and A. ERWIN, "Reds and greens: labour and the environment" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa,* pp. 82-83; G. COLEMAN, "The campaign against Thor Chemicals", pp. 71-74.

107. R. CROMPTON and A. ERWIN, "Reds and greens", p. 83; Commission of Inquiry into Thor Chemicals, Report of the first phase, pp. 9-26; EARTHLIFE AFRICA, "Thor Chemicals"; *Vrye Weekblad*, 14.2.1992, p. 4; *Vrye Weekblad*, 3.4.1992, p. 16; *The Daily News*, 21.2.1992, p. 3; *Beeld*, 15.6.1994, p. 2.

The granting of transit facilities in South African harbours also received attention with the *Maria Laura*, a vessel carrying eighteen tons of polychlorinated biphenyl from Australia to France, causing outrage among non-governmental role-players in the environmental movement.[108] The commencement of regular plutonium shipments (at two month intervals) between France and Japan in mid-1992 resulted in ELA joining forces with the Wildlife Society, the African National Congress and Eco-Programme to oppose the plutonium ships entering South Africa's economically exclusive zone. The government reacted positively to the demands of the protest campaign and barred all ships carrying plutonium from entering the country's economically exclusive zone, while the Council for Nuclear Safety offered to provide emergency assistance, under certain conditions, to ships in danger.[109]

4.3 Industrial pollution

The polluting of river networks across the country by industrial effluent became a major environmental problem and issue between 1988 and 1992. One of the most publicised cases of industrial pollution was the chemical spill at Sappi's Ngodwana Paper Mill in 1989. A large spill of soap skimming, which contained smaller amounts of toxic sulphates, occurred at the Ngodwana mill in September 1989. This spill devastated the ecosystems of the Elands and Crocodile Rivers, and killed more than 22 fish species and other forms of animal life in a stretch of river downstream from the mill. The Lowveld Environment Action Foundation, formed by landowners in the area in response to the spill, and the Wildlife Society, took up the issue, and demanded an independent inquiry into the causes of the accident. Sappi was fined only R600 for the spill and the resulting damage.[110]

The Ngodwana spill was part of a general increase in water pollution due to industrial discharges that occurred from 1988 onwards. Other spills included the dumping of toxins in the Vaal River by the SASOL I plant at Sasolburg in 1988, the leaking of poisonous chemicals into the Selati River (which runs through the KNP) by a phosphate company in 1988, the regular polluting of the Olifants and Crocodile Rivers by toxic heavy metals, phosphate and nitrogen, and the caustic soda spill of

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108. J.I. GLAZEWSKI, "Regulating transboundary movement of hazardous waste: international developments and implications for South Africa" in *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa* 26(2), July 1993, p. 235.

109. See for example M. JOHNS, "Japan's plutonium economy" in *New Ground* 9, Spring 1992, pp. 12-14; *Die Burger*, 10.7.1992, p. 9; *Beeld*, 13.7.1992, p. 8; "The plutonium threat" in *Earthlife Africa (Cape Town) Newsletter*, July 1992, pp. 1-2; C. ALBERTYN, "Govt bars nuke cargo ship" in *Earthlife Africa (Natal region) Newsletter*, August 1992, p. 2; GREENPEACE USA, *Stop plutonium* (pamphlet, Greenpeace USA, Washington, DC, 1997), pp. 2-8.

110. *The Weekly Mail*, 29.9.1989-5.10.1989, p. 5; E. KOCH, D. COOPER and H. COETZEE, *Water, waste and wildlife: the politics of ecology in South Africa*, p. 10.

the Atomic Energy Corporation into the Moganwe Spruit close to the Hartbeespoort Dam in 1991.[111] In their report on the situation of waste management and pollution control in South Africa, the CSIR found that 59.2% of all the hazardous waste in the country was discharged into water. Major stumbling blocks in the proper treatment of effluent before discharging it, were identified as a lack of technology and lack of proper enforcement of legislation.[112]

4.4 Anti animal-cruelty

The highly controversial and emotive annual culling of the Cape fur seal population finally came to a head when environmental minister, Gert Kotzé announced the indefinite postponement of the culling of 30 000 seals at Kleinsee on 17 July 1990. Even though anti animal-cruelty ENGOs had campaigned for years against seal harvesting, credit for the postponement belonged to ELA, the Seal Action Group, the World Society for the Protection of Animals, Save our Seals, and the Front for Animal Liberation and Conservation of Nature. Their highly emotional (and at times violent)[113] campaign led to the appointment of a committee to investigate the scientific aspects of sealing on 14 August 1990. Though the committee found no scientific reasons for the halting of the proposed harvesting, and further recommended the controlling of the Cape fur seal population at Kleinsee, the cabinet decided to temporarily suspend all commercial seal harvesting in South African waters in February 1991.[114]

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111. *The Weekly Mail*, 29.9.1989-5.10.1989, p. 5; "Pollution critical in SA as perennial rivers run dry" in *Chamber of Mines Journal* 33(4), April 1991, pp. 5, 11; *Business Day*, 21.11.1991, p. 5; M. VAN EEDEN, "Besoedelde rivier wek kommer" in *Prisma* 6(3), April 1991, p. 36; H. COETZEE and D. COOPER, "Wasting water: squandering a precious resource" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, pp. 134-136.

112. COUNCIL FOR SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR), *The situation of waste management and pollution control in South Africa: executive summary* (CSIR, Pretoria, 1991), pp. 3, 6-9, 12; ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING GROUP, *Clean production: a preliminary assessment of the need and potential for the introduction of clean technology in some industrial sectors in South Africa* (EMG, Cape Town, 1993), pp. 16-18, 25-26.

113. A member of ELA Johannesburg's subcommittee on sealing, Vivian van der Sandt, dumped a bag filled with dog testicles and red colorant in the offices of the Namibian tourist bureau in Johannesburg on 21 September 1990. Her protest action against the Namibian seal harvesting was deemed violent by ELA and she was subsequently expelled from the organisation. For more details see *The Star*, 22.9.1990, p. 1; *Beeld*, 25.9.1990, p. 6; *Vrye Weekblad*, 12.10.1990, p. 17; *Vrye Weekblad*, 2.10.1992, p. 4 (letters).

114. *Beeld*, 5.7.1990, p. 2; *Beeld (Kalender)*, 24.7.1990, p. 5; *Beeld*, 28.7.1990, p. 9; RSA, Report of the subcommittee of the sea fisheries advisory committee appointed at the request of the minister of environment affairs and of water affairs, to advise the minister on scientific aspects of sealing (*s.n.*, Cape Town, 1990), pp. 1-3; JGPDC, Habitat Council: Media statement by the minister of environment affairs, Adv. Louis Pienaar, 14.2.1991, p. 1.

Vivisection also received the attention of anti animal-cruelty ENGOs in South Africa. It made headlines in the country for the first time in 1987 when the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) obtained a court order on 2 December 1987 against a series of experiments to be conducted on live animals at the Wits Medical School Animal Unit. The SPCA also asked for the removal of a certain cat, BC3, which was left with 50% burns and an induced peptic ulcer after a series of experiments. Largely due to the efforts of the SPCA, national guidelines for the use of animals in research, training and the testing of products were drawn up in 1989. The Wits Medical School Animal Unit once again became the object of attention when ENGOs such as ELA and South Africans for the Abolition of Vivisection held well-publicised demonstrations outside its premises in 1990. Anti animal-cruelty ENGOs further succeeded in their campaign against the planned giraffe braai (barbecue) in Lichtenburg in April 1991. Because of public pressure the organisers had to find a more acceptable animal for the event.[115]

4.5 Gill netting and marine conservation

An important development in marine conservation was the launching of a campaign against the use of gill nets by the Dolphin Action and Protection Group (DAPG) in 1989. On 9 August 1989, on the recommendation of the DAPG, the government approved regulations that banned the carrying and the use of gill nets in South Africa's economically exclusive zone, as well as on the landing of fish caught with such nets without a permit, at South African harbours. These regulations reflected the growing international concern over the use of gill nets and the detrimental impact they had on marine resources. These concerns ultimately led to United Nations General Assembly resolutions being passed in December 1989 that placed a moratorium on large-scale pelagic gill net fishing, a moratorium that came into effect in July 1992.[116]

Despite the legislation in place, Table Bay harbour was frequented by trawlers from the Republic of China (Taiwan)[117] in 1990 carrying gill nets on board and, in a combined effort, the DAPG and ELA set out to expose every illegal entry. In doing

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115. The Green Pages 1991/1992, pp. 6-10; "Abolish vivisection" in *Earthlife News* [Wits], 1990, p. 3; *Earthlife News* [Wits], 1991, p. 1; R. Muller, "Balans tussen diereregte en navorsingsnut gesoek" in *Insig*, October 1989, pp. 15-17; *Beeld*, 24.4.1990, p. 4; J. Ledger, "Biodiversity", pp. 242-243.

116. DOLPHIN ACTION AND PROTECTION GROUP, *Stripmining the oceans: drift/gill netting* (pamphlet, DAPG, Fish Hoek, *s.a.*), pp. 1-4; Earthlife Africa, "Gill nets: fact sheet", http://www.earthlife.org.za/factsheets/fs-gillnets.htm, *s.a.*; EARTHLIFE AFRICA, "Gill nets: chronological account", http://www.earthlife.org.za/ campaigns/other/gillnets.htm, *s.a.*

117. Taiwan was the only other nation licensed to catch tuna in South African territorial waters. Gill nets are mainly used for tuna. "SA calls for action on tuna gill nets" in *South African Shipping News and Fishing Industry Review* 44(6), December 1989, p. 55.

so they succeeded in embarrassing the South African government in general, and the minister of environment affairs, Kotzé, in particular. On 22 January 1990, after granting fifteen illegal entrees permits as a special favour to Taiwan, Kotzé stated that no more permits would be issued in future. However, by 21 July 1990 a total of 123 permits had been issued by Kotzé's department. By publicising the bad enforcement of anti-gill netting legislation, the DAPG and ELA forced the government to clean up its act, and to start denying vessels which carried gill nets entry into South African harbours.[118]

The DAPG and ELA also started co-operating in this regard with the militant Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU) from June 1990 onwards. The co-operation was established after revelations that at least four of FAWU's members working on a Taiwanese trawler, the *Chin Chia Ching*, had had some of their fingers amputated because of frostbite after working in the refrigeration hold of the vessel. Their combined campaign focused on both the illegal use of gill nets by Taiwanese trawlers licensed to catch tuna in South African territorial waters, and on the working conditions of the workers on board these trawlers. Nan Rice, the founder and secretary of the DAPG, subsequently became a consultant to FAWU and a working relationship was established between FAWU and the DAPG.[119]

4.6 Agrochemicals

Following the lawsuit brought against the manufacturers of hormone herbicides by vegetable farmers in the Tala Valley in 1985, the widespread use of agrochemicals became a major issue for ENGOs such as ELA and the South African Rivers Association (SARA), and for the South African Chemical Workers Union whose members were involved in the production thereof. A major success between 1988 and 1992 concerned the spraying of cannabis plantations with the defoliant paraquat. ELA and the SARA succeeded in convincing the minister of law and order, Adriaan Vlok, to place a temporary ban on the use of paraquat in the government's fight against drugs on 11 December 1990.[120]

ELA also joined forces with the Tala Valley farmers and staged highly publicised protests in Durban against the use of hormone herbicides in 1991. The printed media

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118. EARTHLIFE AFRICA, "Gill nets: chronological account"; *Dolphin Whale Watch RSA Newsletter* 8(1), February 1990, pp. 1, 5-7; *Beeld*, 6.7.1990, p. 4; *Beeld*, 19.9.1990, p. 10.

119. E. KOCH, "Rainbow alliances", p. 26; F. MANUAL and J.I. GLAZEWSKI, "The oceans: our common heritage" in J. COCK and E. KOCH (Eds), *Going green: people, politics and the environment in South Africa*, p. 209.

120. See for example "The 'aggro' chemicals" in *Critical Health* 33, November 1990, pp. 76-86; EARTHLIFE AFRICA (Natal region), *Living Earthlife: Natal's Vietnamese cocktail* (pamphlet, ELA, Pietermaritzburg, *s.a.*), pp. 1-2; M. STANFORD, "Poison for the people" in *New Ground* 7, Autumn 1992, pp. 23-25.

was also used through the placement of advertisements in *The Daily News* in which diverse representative groupings expressed their concern about the use of herbicides. A direct result of this campaign was that the government ceased to make use of 2,4-D products and some chemical companies voluntarily stopped the manufacturing of 2,4-D.[121]

5. Evaluation

Between 1972 and 1992 the non-governmental sector of the South African environmental movement underwent far-reaching changes that radically altered the racial base of its support, its focus areas and its status with the South African government. Probably the most important change that occurred was the placing of the environment on the anti-apartheid agenda and the resulting acknowledgement that the environment was indeed a political issue. This state of affairs greatly contributed to a decline in the traditionally friendly relationship between the government and the ENGO sector, and by 1992 a large percentage of the non-governmental sector of the South African environmental movement identified the government as a major cause of environmental problems in the country.

The acknowledgement that people of colour have different environmental needs than white people, was an important development from the 1980s onwards and enabled the South African environmental movement to broaden the scope of its focus areas to include new issues such as occupational health and safety, community participation in conservation and industrial pollution. The new direction further enabled the ENGOs to establish working relationships with various trade unions, which greatly increased the possibility of successful campaigning against perceived or real environmental threats.

By 1992 Fuggle's opening remarks that complacency was the biggest environmental problem in the country was no longer valid. Rather, from a governmental viewpoint, the problem was not a lack of ENGO activity but an abundance of it that challenged governmental and corporate environmental governance in every possible way in their efforts to protect and improve the South African environment.

Opsomming

Populêre omgewing-*struggles* in Suid-Afrika, 1972-1992

Hierdie artikel ondersoek die aktiwiteite van die nie-regeringsektor van die Suid-Afrikaanse omgewingsbeweging tussen die United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm) in 1972 en die Aardeberaad (Rio de Janeiro) in 1992. Nieregerings-

121. EARTHLIFE AFRICA (Natal region) *Newsletter*, July 1991, p. 16.

omgewingsorganisasies het gedurende hierdie periode geleidelik wegbeweeg van hul oorwegende bewarings-gebaseerde omgewingsagendas wat apolities en hoofsaaklik belangrik was vir blankes, na ‘n omgewingsagenda wat teen die laat 1980’s hoogs emosioneel, polities gelaai en rasse inklusief was. Die twintig jaar onder bespreking word ingedeel in drie periodes: 1972-1982 waartydens die blanke bewaringsagenda die dominante omgewingsagenda was; 1982-1988 waarin die nie-regeringsektor geleidelik begin beweeg het na ‘n agenda gebaseer op omgewingsgeregtigheid, en 1988-1992 wat gedomineer is deur hoogs politiese en emosionele omgewing-s*truggles* teen verskeie omgewingsprobleme in Suid-Afrika.