

BUILDING THE NEXT ARK: HOW NGOS WORK TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY

by Michael M. Gunter, Jr.; Dartmouth College Press and University Press of New England, Hanover, NH, 2004; 252 pp., \$26.00 cloth (ISBN 1-58465-383-3)

The core of the book is a comparative study of 11 green nongovernmental organizations (NGOs): Biodiversity Action Network, Conservation International, Defenders of Wildlife, Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, Earthwatch Institute, Environmental Defense, Sierra Club, The Ocean Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, World Resources Institute, and World Wildlife Fund. This sample deliberately includes national and international “activist” NGOs as well as think tanks.

Theoretical context is provided by a brief review of the complex politics of efforts to conserve global biodiversity: sovereign states and international

agreements, domestic links

to international relations, and NGOs in the political arena. NGOs are uniquely positioned to deal with a transnational challenge like biodiversity maintenance because “states are paradoxically both too big and too small.”

Building the Next Ark measures effectiveness as success in forging three critical linkages: domestic and international concerns, ecological and socioeconomic concerns, and short- and long-term concerns. Thus, an NGO is effective when it defines an issue and its definition prevails, mobilizes staff or membership around the issue, articulates the issue to key policymaking access points, and assists in implementation.

Overall, this is an optimistic book, which notes in closing that NGOs must work together, “resisting the temptation to treat a limited pool of funding and public exposure as a zero-sum game,” because “NGOs . . . are a crucial component of the design team in constructing the next ark, even acting as the lead carpenter at times.”

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THE GREEN STATE: RETHINKING DEMOCRACY AND SOVEREIGNTY

by Robyn Eckersley; MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2004; 344 pp., \$62.00 cloth (ISBN 0-262-05074-9), \$25.00 paper (ISBN 0-262-55056-3)

In the current climate of globalization, market-focused economic policies, and increasing power of transnational corporations, Robyn Eckersley’s effort to define and defend the notion of a “green state” can seem either very naive or very brave. Her inquiry swims against what she describes as a “significant tide of green political theory” that is skeptical of the promise for the nation-state to further green agendas.

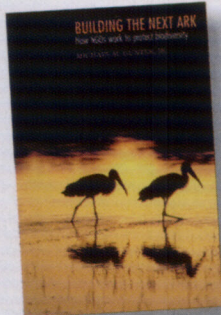
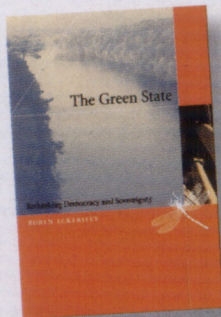
Perhaps because of this existing climate, her book offers a very refreshing analysis as well as an informative review. In the first 100 pages, she develops her perspective of “critical political ecology” and appraises the literature on international relations theory. She also examines contemporary debates about economic globalization and the state as well as the limits of the liberal democratic state. Familiarity with any of these bodies of literature will make the discussion more rewarding for readers. Eckersley works to develop her own ideas about a green democratic state, especially as it emerges from her critique of Jürgen Habermas, whose work she builds on to argue for a more representative democratic process. This requires a redefinition of under-

standings of territory and of those who stand to be represented: people as well as other members of ecological communities. What she is after is not just an environmentally sound state, but one that is more responsive to citizens’ concerns. Her ideal state is accountable also to the environmental issues of a transnational civil society—in short, a more legitimate form of representative government.

Although the book is (understandably) short on case studies and real-world examples and her conclusions about the possibilities of a “flourishing green public sphere” are sometimes overextended, Eckersley makes the most out of recent developments in environmental multilateralism, sustainable development, and environmental advocacy. Her efforts to envision just what a “post-capitalist” state might be are welcome.

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OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST

OUTGROWING THE EARTH: THE FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGE IN AN AGE OF FALLING WATER TABLES AND RISING TEMPERATURES

by Lester R. Brown; W.W. Norton & Company, New York, NY, 2004; 272 pp., \$15.95 paper (ISBN 0-3933-2725-6), \$27.95 cloth (ISBN 0-3930-6070-5)

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY: CHANGING PERSPECTIVES OF ECOLOGY AND EDUCATION

edited by Edward Johnson and Michael Mappin; Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 2005; 346 pp., \$95.00 cloth (ISBN 0-521-82410-9)