

EARTH FIRST MANIFESTO



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INTRODUCTION

Earth First Manifesto addresses the crucial issue that faces all of us today, namely the relationship that each of us has with the Earth that is our home. What is our level of **Earth Awareness**? Although we are all well used by now to the dire warnings concerning the state of the planet, it seems that few of us consider this to have anything to do with us as individuals. Instead we are content to accept that it is the job of politicians to come up with a solution, if we even accept that there is a problem. That there is indeed a problem is now undeniable, and it is of such magnitude that we can not rely on politicians to solve it.

The first part of this manifesto, **Admission of Acceptance**, discusses the nature of this problem. It also argues that we must take personal responsibility both for the cause and for the solution. Until we admit that we are all at fault, and that we need to change our ways, the situation will only continue to deteriorate. It is no good expecting that someone else will sort out the mess and that we can carry on as if there was nothing wrong. Much as an addict has no hope of a cure until they admit to themselves that they have a problem, so must we admit to one in our relationship with the Earth.

Unlike most relationship problems this one is solely caused by one partner, us. The Earth will not change its ways nor can it. It has created us and given us life, without it we would not exist. Yet, far from being thankful for this gift of life we choose instead to treat the Earth with contempt, as if its only function were to provide us with whatever we might want. Our attitude extends to all other life on the planet which has suffered greatly at our hands, and we also need to own up to this. As part of **Earth Awareness** we need to develop the concept of **Life Rights**.

The **Admission of Acceptance** is just that, an admission that we are at fault and that we must change. It is also an admission and acceptance that this must be personal change voluntarily entered into. Waiting for others to sort it out for us is not acceptable and will not work.

The laws by which we are told that we are supposed to live are

designed with only one intention which is to tell us what not to do. So long as we do not break these laws we may seemingly do whatever we wish with no fear of retribution. In other words they are entirely unethical as they make no attempt to provide guidance as to how we should live our lives. The second part of the manifesto, **Statement of Principles**, suggests that what we need to help us solve our problems is an ethical framework which we can use when making decisions. Positive guidance rather than negative prohibition. Three principles are given which can be used to assess the consequences of our actions. The intention is to enable us to reason in a more reasonable manner.

The law is the playground of the legal profession that enriches itself at the expense of justice. The more laws there are, and the more complicated they become, the more chance there is of finding a fancy loophole to slip through. A case is not a matter for judicious deliberation but merely something to be won. At the heart of the problems we are facing is a lack of natural justice, a complete inability to associate right and wrong with cause and consequence. No matter the effects of our actions, if they are not illegal then there can not be a problem. Intelligence, based on the available evidence, tells us otherwise. We must, therefore, be prepared to put our actions as individuals up against the scrutiny of proper examination. This is the purpose of the principles.

Having acknowledged and accepted our personal responsibility we need to make a **Commitment to Change**. This brief section is effectively a bridge between our old way of life and the one we would aspire to. Between a life lived primarily for the moment and one which is seen as part of a sustainable existence flowing seamlessly from generation to generation. It asserts the life affirming qualities of such an existence and points out the necessity of spreading this message as far and as wide as possible. Those of us who make this commitment are at the forefront of change and we need to see ourselves as pioneers. The future depends on it.

It would be impossible to discuss in detail the necessary thought processes surrounding each and every action we might take. The section, **Articles of Consideration**, focuses on various areas of our day to day lives and seeks to develop a meaningful context by

integrating the three principles. We are not trying to learn rules but to adopt a mindset better suited to sustainable living. The articles provide food for thought in this respect and are not intended to be all inclusive. An ethic is a general concept which we choose to accept, not a network of rules through which we are seeking to slip.

As humans we are all the same, yet each entirely different. No two people share the same experience and it is unlikely that we will all react to the ideas in this manifesto in the same way. It is vital, therefore, that if certain propositions seem entirely unacceptable that we do not ditch our entire commitment to change as a result. We are all individuals and hopefully entitled to our opinions. However, what many of us should be able to agree on is that there is a problem and that we need to do something about it. **Earth First Manifesto** is an attempt to make a contribution towards solving that problem.

There are a growing number of people increasingly aware that our relationship with the Earth has to alter radically. In various ways these people are already trying to effect change. The final part of this manifesto, **Call To Action**, urges that we all do everything we can to contribute to this effort. Be it by joining existing campaigns or starting new ones, be it individually or in cooperation with others, there is much to be done if we are going to make a difference. Remember, the future is ours to decide.

ADMISSION OF ACCEPTANCE

The Earth is currently experiencing the fastest mass extinction event in its history and the perpetrators of this holocaust are none other than ourselves, the human race.

Knowledge now tells us that all life branches from the one tree, that every one of what we call species are related, that life comprises only one family. What scientists refer to as ecosystems or habitats are, to put it more simply, homes. Yet, every day vast areas of the Earth, including the magnificent ancient forests, are razed to the ground in pursuit of profit, and their inhabitants killed or left to die.

We who call ourselves human are, in scientific terms, classified as a member of the ape family. This makes obvious, to all but those who are lost in the willful ignorance of religious fundamentalism, that the other great apes are our closest living relatives, and all other species, or lives as we should learn to think of them, merely slightly less closely related. Yet, there is virtually no form of life that in some part of the world is not ruthlessly exploited, oppressed, abused or killed. To feed us, clothe us, entertain us and enrich us or even, by some, for the perverted pleasure they take in the act of killing.

There is no doubt that many battles have been won in the ongoing war against the many forms of prejudice that exist in our minds. The front line of this war must now be extended to include **Life Rights**. Life is life, and though it is too late for the many we have already driven to extinction, battle lines must now be drawn to protect the rights of all who remain. All lives have the right to self determination in the journey of life on Earth that we call evolution.

When scientists speak of protecting a species by removing it from its natural home and creating captive breeding programmes, what they are seeking to conserve is the perceived diversity of life. Nature tends

toward increasing complexity and thus diversity. This is made visible to us through our human ability to appreciate the quality of beauty. However, rather than the conservation of this seeming diversity being our only motivation, we should act out of respect for life itself. There is only one life force and whilst it might differ in form it does not differ in worth. Each individual life is just that, a unique individual whose integrity and right to self determination should be respected.

For many it will be hard, at first, to grasp the concept that it is completely unacceptable to continue acting as previously in regard to all other life. But, in the same way that we now accept that slavery, racism, sexism, homophobia and many other types of prejudice are unacceptable, it will also come to be seen that to discriminate against any form of life should no longer be acceptable. It has been argued that other animals may not be accorded rights as they can not accept responsibilities, but should we award ourselves rights that we would deny another? **Life Rights** need to become a fundamental human responsibility.

As well as the many direct ways in which humans destroy the natural world and kill its inhabitants, there are many indirect ways in which we poison and pollute. In their accumulated effects, these actions pose an even greater threat, one which might well lead to catastrophic change. This is due to a lack of **Earth Awareness**.

Our world has entered the age of the global economy, in which the politics of permanent economic growth, called capitalism, is the accepted form of production, consumption and control. There is now no state for which this does not hold true. Legal ownership is claimed of the entire surface of the Earth and with that ownership is conferred, with very little constraint, the right to rape, pillage and plunder in pursuit of economic gain. The role of the state is now that of custodian to the rights of business from the oil companies downwards, and the mightiest and most fearsomely armed military machines are deployed in protection of those rights.

As a result, the completely unrestrained burning of carbon fuel that drives the industrial machine is massively disrupting the balance of gasses that form the Earth's atmosphere. This causes it to heat up as

the Sun's energy becomes trapped and is unable to reflect back into space. As this process continues and accelerates, a potentially catastrophic disruption of the planet's climate now seem likely, one that will kill a large proportion of all life on Earth. In addition to this, every life that lives in the waters that make up the world's ocean is having to cope with the consequences of the enormous quantities of toxins which are daily discharged into the seas. The air we breathe becomes fouler every day, as ever greater amounts of poison are pumped into the air, and all this happens in full knowledge of the damage that is being done.

However, far from government imposing restrictions on all actions that adversely affect the natural balance, everything possible is done to encourage these activities in the name of economic progress. No effort whatsoever is made to reduce levels of consumption to mitigate the effects of our actions. Nor, beyond inducements to recycle, (an industrial process used largely as an excuse for the continued expansion of production and consumption), are individuals expected to take responsibility for the reasonable governance of their own lives. In these circumstances how much credibility is there to the state's claim to the right of ordering our existence?

It has long been accepted that greed is not good. From this it follows that there is no right to be rich, to accumulate as much material wealth as we want no matter what the consequences for all other life and for the Earth. Yet this is the promise of our economically based societies. There is also no arguable right to poison and pollute earth, air or water to the detriment of all, merely because we wish to pursue our chosen life style and decide not to care. Because, for those who do decide to lead such lives, there is no longer any defence to be found in ignorance. We must develop **Earth Awareness**.

All the information is now available for any concerned individual to make an intelligent decision, as conscience demands. A decision to act in the most responsible and reasonable manner possible. Twenty four hour news media, television, radio and newspapers, are now augmented by the seemingly unlimited amount of information available on the internet. Those who do not have a computer have only to go to the library. To choose not to change, not to care, is simply not

acceptable.

Though it is not readily apparent in their attitude, it is said that politicians are the servants and not the masters of the people. Given that in a democracy they rely for their positions on the votes they receive this must, at least to an extent, be true. However, thus far they have paid little more than lip service to the idea that we will have to dramatically change our ways, and have given no credence whatsoever to the principle that all life is equal. It seems that the majority do indeed choose not to care. How then do the growing number of us who do care react to this situation? This is the main purpose of **Earth First Manifesto**, to suggest how we might change our own behaviour and then bring pressure to bear on the behaviour of others.

It has been said that all it takes for evil to prevail is for good people to do nothing, and never has this been more important to recognise. For though we will all be aware of the litany of horrors that litter the course of human history, never before have we been in the position of knowing that we may be responsible for destroying the majority of life on Earth. Intelligence being defined as the reasoned and reasonable application of all the available information, we need to make the intelligent choice. Admit that we are at fault and accept that we must choose to change, there is no viable alternative. This is the **Admission of Acceptance**.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

We need to commit to change, to commit to be aware of our actions, and to accept full personal responsibility for their consequences. But how do we assess whether any proposed action is reasonable or not? **Earth First Manifesto** applies three guiding principles as a test of conscience, all of which can be related to any situation. These are:

- 1. All life is born equal and should not be exploited or abused.**
- 2. There is no right to poison, pollute or destroy.**
- 3. As little as we need, not as much as we want.**

Many of us reading these principles for the first time might think them to be simple but severe. However, we might also realise that if we choose to live by them, the overall quality of life would be greatly improved and the outlook for the future much brighter. By adopting these principles as our ideals we will have given ourselves a positive aspiration. They will act as our guide as we start to make those changes to our lives which will produce the profound impact which is required. Surely we do not wish to bequeath to our children the appalling legacy of trying to clear up the mess which we and our predecessors have made.

Another argument routinely used to avoid making any decision to change is that there is little point because no one else will bother so it won't make any difference. This argument is used by so many people that it soon becomes obvious that if we do choose to change it will actually make a considerable difference. The expression that every little bit helps may seem trite but it also happens to be true. Surely, it is

incumbent on each of us to do what we can by choosing to change. We would then be in a position to put pressure on the politicians to start reining in the excesses of corporate business, rather than seeking to promote and protect it.

Each of the three principles will now be discussed, not only to argue their validity, but also to help us realise how great a range of our activities they can be applied to. Later, in the **Articles of Consideration** section of this personal manifesto, that is one we choose to accept rather than one that is imposed on us, a range of issues will be set up against the test of the three principles. We should then be in a position to understand the power that we hold in our own hands. The power which we have to change both ourselves and the world around us.

Before this, however, it will be useful to discuss how it is that we come to be in such a dire position. This will be of help in considering what changes to our mindset, to the many attitudes that we take for granted, might be helpful in making it easier to begin the process of change.

We accept that, at an ever younger age, we will be taken by the state and educated as it sees fit. Effectively, given that the younger we are the more impressionable we are, the mindset of successive generations is moulded according to the diktats of the state. Why are we so accepting of this idea? How many of us, at any stage of life, stop to think about the purpose of this education and whether it is at all appropriate?

So what is the purpose of this education? It could be to give us the ability and enthusiasm to go out into the world with an increased understanding of, and respect for, the Earth which has given us life. Unfortunately not. What it has instead become is a soul deadening process of preparation for lives spent in the service of business and the pursuit of money. Lives in which we are nothing more than cogs in some infernal machine which we now know is likely to bring about our downfall. Lives spent not treasuring the Earth but destroying it.

It is surely to be desired that as we live we also learn, and this should be a lifelong process. In this way we can develop a deeper understanding of those qualities which make us human. An appreciation of the astonishing beauty of the natural world, a compassion leading to respect for all life, a belief in the virtue of peace over conflict. What we are now trained to do is to go out into the world and acquire material riches. Consider how many of the words which are the tools we use to make sense of the world, and of our place in it, have been subverted from their original intention to the world of money and business. Words such as value, worth, interest and exchange. Instead of being used to describe a world based on cooperation and mutual trust, these are now the weapons of a world based on conflict and competition.

Knowledge is now as one with science in its ever more particular specialities. As a result it has lost the capacity to form a holistic and all embracing view of the world. It is as if we are so close to the Earth that we are not aware of it. We lack **Earth Awareness**. The vast majority of scientific research is now funded by business with the sole aim of achieving the maximum financial profit. Its integrity is fatally flawed. Yet it is to science alone that government will defer, and by so doing once more bends the knee to its actual master, not the people by whom it is elected, but the multinational corporations of the global greed machine.

This returns us to the question of how those of us who see the absurdity of this system of control can do anything to change it. The answer is surely to be found in the individual acceptance of personal responsibility and the subsequent self empowerment of each of us. What we choose to do or, just as importantly choose not to do, has a cumulative effect. It is a simple but obvious example that if we decide not to buy something then that is one less thing that will be made. Consequently, less resources will need to be clawed from the Earth. If we remain committed, and as our numbers grow, we will have an increasing effect and the state will be made to take notice.

Each of us can be a force for change, but only if we first commit to change ourselves. With this in mind, let us look a little further into the

three principles which can act as our guide as we begin to give proper consideration to the consequences of our actions upon the Earth.

1. All life is born equal and must not be exploited or abused.

It has long been accepted, despite much evidence to the contrary, that the state of peace is preferable to the state of war. As part of the same process it will come to be seen that to live in harmony with the natural world is preferable to the state of dominion and destruction that currently prevails. This is the undeniable direction of human development. When Darwin spoke of the survival of the fittest he did not mean merely the strongest, but those best fitted by their various abilities to continued existence. With this in mind, how intelligent is it to degrade and destroy that on which we rely for our survival?

The present scientific paradigm has grown out of the centres of learning established by the religions which began to proliferate once we ceased to walk the world and settled our existence. Without exception, the monotheistic religions ascribed to us divine instruction to dominion over nature. Though most scientists have now dispensed with the notion of god, they have retained and strengthened their assumed rights over the entirety of the natural world, treating it as one vast laboratory for their insatiable curiosity. Unfortunately, they have failed to develop any sense of compassion in their dealings with non human life. Instead, they prefer to maintain the view of our total and unquestioned primacy.

It is, however, a finding of scientific enquiry that all life has a common origin and is therefore related. To those of us already possessed of a more reasonable consciousness it is clear that we are now in a paradoxical situation. There is only one rational and reasonable conclusion, that we may no longer continue to treat any form of life other than in the way in which we would expect to be treated ourselves.

The most obvious problem we are faced with is that the majority of people continue to rely for the cornerstone of their diet on the killing and consuming of captive bred animals. Though, as a matter of

conscience, more and more of us are choosing not to do so, it seems that it will be some time before the consuming of dead animals for food becomes a thing of the past. This will be discussed in greater detail in the **Articles of Consideration**, but it would be unrealistic not to realise that this will take time. There are many aspects to this struggle, and the most vital are those that pose an immediate threat to the viability of life on Earth. This is a struggle with many fronts and we must vigorously argue our case on each and every one of them.

The oppression and exploitation of all forms of life occurs in ways too numerous to catalogue. The horrors of the deliberate torture and bloodlust of the bullring, more suited to the arenas of ancient Rome than to the world of today. The less obvious but insidious increase in the number of zoos and animal parks which imprison and exploit life for financial gain. (Protection of endangered species is often no more than an excuse). The appalling cruelty of those who mutilate and kill to provide aphrodisiacs or other medicines of superstition. It is a long and shameful list.

One of the most obnoxious forms of deliberate cruelty is the practice of vivisection. The incarceration, torture and killing of enormous numbers of animal lives in pursuit of financial gain. Many people already feel that these practices are unjustifiable, for whatever purpose, on the basis of **Life Rights** as expressed in the first principle. To discover that the most horrifying experiments can be carried out in order to licence products such as toilet cleaner is very hard to accept.

The vast majority of chemically compounded products which are commercially available have been tested on sentient animal lives. This testing regime is due to be dramatically increased with the introduction of new legislation. This legislation, which is justified on the grounds of human health, completely ignores the issue of **Life Rights** and is unacceptable to those of us that care. Encouragingly, there is now an increasing, though still regrettably small, minority of scientists prepared to admit that these experiments are not only useless but often harmful in their consequences. There can be no exceptions to the principle of **Life Rights** and this industry is in the front line of the battle for change.

Killing for sport is still widespread and there is hardly a form of life that is safe from those who gain pleasure from this barbaric pastime. Additionally, it is seen as acceptable to take from the wild, or to breed, an enormous variety of lives for indenture into caged slavery as what are called exotic pets. Were we not the most powerful life form on Earth, how would any of us like it if the same were done to us? Even the cats and dogs, so beloved of those who call themselves animal lovers, are in fact the genetically altered descendents of their wild ancestors. The many and disparate breeds of domesticated dog are all one and the same, though you would no longer think it to look at them.

Only by applying the principle of the equality of all life, born out of our knowledge of its common origin, can we begin to perceive the multiplicity of ways in which we abuse our position of strength. However, as increasing numbers of us begin to accept personal responsibility and choose to change, we can ensure that this situation begins to improve.

2. There is no right to poison, pollute or destroy.

The Earth is now the seemingly helpless victim of a feeding frenzy motivated by the greed and arrogant stupidity of one species, the human race. We, who take ourselves to be the most intelligent form of life, are in fact committing multiple genocide against those who are no threat whatsoever to our undeniably superior strength. Often this killing is the thoughtless by-product of a multiplicity of actions that we see as being in our interest, or providing us with what we want and which we regard as ours by right.

But might is not necessarily right, and our actions will inevitably have their consequences. The more intelligent amongst us are becoming increasingly aware that the day of reckoning is drawing ever closer. As we continue, seemingly unconcerned, on our orgy of rape, pillage and plunder, the robust yet delicate balance of interconnected factors, which provide a stable basis for the evolution of life on Earth, becomes ever more stressed. When the tolerance of this balance is exceeded the resultant change may not be gradual and manageable, but sudden and uncontrollable. Previous extinction events, similar though less severe than the one for which we are currently responsible, have

been the precursors of dramatic phase transitions in the life story of the Earth. Be under no illusion that if we do not rapidly change our ways we are quite likely signing the death warrants of our descendents.

Our position as the most powerful species on Earth has led to an exponential increase in our numbers, way beyond what would normally be expected for a creature of our type. This means that our actions have an exaggerated effect. Combine our numbers with the array of technologies at our disposal and the effects become grossly distorted. We are wrecking the natural balance, achieved and maintained over millions of years, in a mere few hundred. Consider that the majority of human societies have yet to reach our level of industrialisation and it does not take a genius to work out the likely reaction. There are not sufficient resources to realise these ambitions, and the exploitation and consumption of those that there are will have catastrophic consequences.

There are those who, though they realise this, decide to use this knowledge as an excuse to treat their lives as an exercise in materialistic self gratification. They will increasingly discover that there are a growing number of us who do not regard this as acceptable behaviour. Unrestricted consumption pollutes the air that we breathe and the land on which we live. It degrades the Earth and it destroys life.

The Earth is ownerless and any laws we pass that say that it may be bought and sold have no validity other than that imposed by the power of the state. It must be our common responsibility to respect and protect the Earth and all its inhabitants from abuse. Be it corporations or individuals, scientists or politicians, all who show contempt must be held to account. The love of money must not be allowed to take precedence over love for the Earth that is our home.

The old saying that money does not grow on trees is only partly true. Every penny that we earn or spend is founded on what we call natural resources, gouged from the Earth in a variety of ways. So money is trees, as it is also animals, or the ground itself which we blast to extract ores for the metals we use. To make a single ounce of gold, a metal whose primary use is the manufacture of fashion items, many

tons of toxic waste are created. This is surely an obscenity which can not be allowed to continue.

For many years farmers, who extract their riches from the Earth, have resorted to using ever greater quantities of chemical poisons in order to maximise their profits. The resulting decimation of life seems not to bother them, though there is now a growing minority who choose to farm naturally and to respect life. However, they receive little encouragement from the state for their decision. As a result, organic food is not only considerably more expensive but has usually been flown in from another country. In a system entirely based on economic profit it is not always easy to do the right thing but it is essential that we try.

As an integral part of this process we need to develop **Earth Awareness**. In this way we will start to think of ourselves as part of the natural world and not apart from it. This means giving serious consideration to our actions and their previously unconsidered consequences. All aspects of our lives will have to be put under scrutiny, including many that we have long taken for granted. So much of what most of us currently accept as normal behaviour involves poisoning, polluting or destroying, that the cumulative effects of our actions are having radical consequences for the Earth.

Earth First Manifesto urges us to realise that each individual who chooses to change helps to mitigate these consequences. The tables can be turned on those who treat the Earth with contempt, and by our individual and collective actions they will be.

3. As little as we need, not as much as we want.

On first reading, this third principle may seem somewhat severe, even puritanical, likely to leave us stripped of many of those things that we believe make life worth living. This is not the intention. Although we need to reduce our impact on the Earth by drastically cutting the amount of resources we consume, by living more simply and in tune with nature, we can also enrich our lives. To live in simple harmony with the natural world can make apparent the qualities inherent in many of the basic activities we undertake. An intrinsic sense of fulfilment founded in our day to day lives will gradually develop. Life

will no longer require any form of external validation, we will become truly self sufficient.

For millennia, our insatiable need to know has served to separate us from the rest of nature. Indeed, the word nature now describes a world beyond the possibility of direct human experience. With this search, whose origins can be traced to the moment when our consciousness evolved to a condition of self awareness, we became increasingly enmeshed in a complicated world of our own creation.

The development of religious systems and our ever deeper enquiry into the physical properties of the material world have had enormous consequences. This joint endeavour has led us to the scientific age and its plethora of technological spin offs. Regrettably, the greatest example of this process is the potentially deadly legacy bequeathed us by those acclaimed as the geniuses of science. Now, courtesy of the massive destructive capability of thermo nuclear weapons, we possess the ability to annihilate ourselves utterly. A frightening example of how we are becoming the architects of our own downfall.

Stripping away much of this accumulated baggage will reveal our inner qualities. An innate appreciation of the beauty, diversity and sheer wonder of the natural world. An inherent feeling of fulfilment leading to a growing sense of belonging as an integral part of life on Earth. A life founded on such mental qualities will ensure that existence itself becomes meaningful.

A self aware consciousness enables the development of an evolving conscience. This should enable us to ensure that knowledge is acquired in a reasonable manner. The scientist who destroys in order to understand has not understood but merely destroyed. By accepting the principles of this manifesto we can ensure that we continue to evolve in such a way as deepens our relationship with the Earth rather than destroys it.

It is not only unnecessary material acquisitions which can be dispensed with but also a wide selection of ideas which we currently take for granted. There are many concepts which, though they help form our identity, do not have any basis in reality. These ideas can be referred to as constructs, for they are conceptual ideas which have been constructed out of the language which we use to communicate. Common understanding is better based on the reality of the world in which we live. So, in

addition to considering the daily decisions we take as individuals, and as consumers in an economic society, this manifesto will also address the issue of conceptual constructs.

Why do we feel that we require more than we need in order to validate and make worthwhile our existence? As enforced consumers it is our role to ensure that the money based economy continues to grow, though the majority of the items we purchase are entirely superfluous to our needs. All other life on Earth seems to require nothing more than food, water, shelter and the chance to procreate. We, however, crave bigger houses, flashier cars, more foreign holidays and a plethora of useless material possessions to make us feel that we have achieved something.

We have made a deal with the greed machine to provide us with what we want, in return for keeping our noses to the corporate grindstone five or six days out of every seven. Our week is called the working week, during which we must dedicate ourselves to jobs that provide us not with the necessities of life, but with money. For most, work is a time of drudgery spent dreaming of those few hours of leisure or of the annual holiday.

One life is all we have and yet we spend much of it doing things we would rather not be doing, the consequences of which are more than likely contributing to our demise. Ironically, it is often those who believe that there is some better world awaiting them, who are the first to extol the virtues of the work ethic. For them the Earth is little more than the waiting room for paradise. Fear of death notwithstanding, for most of us there is only one world, we have only one life and the future is therefore invested in all that follows us. The only way forward is to cherish and respect the Earth. To concentrate on improving the quality of our lives rather than the amount of material wealth we can accumulate.

It is therefore essential that we strip away the unhelpful aspects of our lives. Our obsession with possessions and prestige, vanities which endow us with a false sense of importance. In our hearts we may know that we are not being true to our nature, but we lack the will to change. Partly because of our fear of what others might think of us, partly for fear of how we will survive in this ever more ruthless and competitive society. The massive increase in stress related illnesses and in the number of people reliant on tranquillizers or anti depressants bears sad but eloquent testimony to this. How many of us live in contradiction of our wish for a more relevant and fulfilled life?

We need not wait to become another statistic, another victim of a system that has no heart. A system that is leading us up a long dark alley into a nightmare not of our devising. We can consider what is the little that is truly required for an enriched and fulfilled life, and what has previously been nothing better than the vainglorious pursuit of fool's gold. We can choose to change, and by gradual implementation of this change find that life has inherent quality which is ours for the asking. The future is not inevitable, it is for us to decide, and the time to decide is now.

COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

The **Commitment to Change** is a positive, optimistic and life affirming decision which aims to return to each of us control over our own lives. The way to achieve this is through the acceptance of personal responsibility. Using the concepts of **Life Rights** and **Earth Awareness**, as enshrined in the three principles, we can consider those actions which currently make up the activities of our day to day lives. In this way we hope to achieve harmony with the natural world, rather than contribute to the state of conflict in which we now find ourselves.

It is in no way the intention that we should embrace a regime of austerity. Rather, we should find a life enriched as it becomes less cluttered. Those things which we previously felt that we needed to be successful and happy will seem unimportant. For this to work we must disabuse our minds of the notion that happiness relies upon achieving the material wealth of money and possessions, and replace this with the notion that there is an innate sufficiency to life itself. This can be found in the value of simplicity and the qualities inherent in the wide range of activities that lie in the gift of conscious awareness. The pleasure derived from these qualities will be deep and lasting rather than short lived and superficial.

Minimising the harmful effects of our actions on the Earth is the motivation for this process. As this will result in an enriched quality of life it might well be considered a virtuous circle. Perhaps, where there doesn't appear to be a downside it might be taken as evidence that we are doing the right thing! However, the difficult part of the process lies in persuading sufficient people of the necessity for radical change. We must convince others of the double benefit of improving not only the outlook for the Earth, but also the quality of our lives.

Having made the **Commitment to Change**, and started to put in place those alterations to our lives that are necessary, we must then accept that we have a message to spread. We are in the vanguard of a movement for change that has to succeed if there is to be a sustainable and worthwhile future for the generations that follow. We can not afford to fail.

Earth First Manifesto is a contribution to the endeavour to halt the feeding frenzy to which we are subjecting the Earth. All the ideas and suggestions contained in the manifesto are based not on dogma but on common sense. They may be reproduced, recycled or reused in any way that anyone sees fit. There should be no copyright on ideas, which should be as free as air, though hopefully less polluted! Please pass it, or its ideas, on to others and become an advocate for change. Don't forget, every little bit helps and each person who chooses to change does make a difference.

By putting all aspects of our lives to the scrutiny of the three guiding principles we will absorb the concepts of **Life Rights** and **Earth Awareness**. Concepts connected to reality. It might, therefore, seem helpful to have available long checklists of individual products and particular actions. However, as it is intended that the ideals encompassed in the principles will be absorbed into our mindset, a more general approach has been applied to the **Articles of Consideration** which follow. In this way they will soon become second nature, part of what we are, as our previous decision making processes start to seem increasingly unreasonable.

If we succeed, then this time will come to be seen as a defining

moment in the strange and extraordinary emergence into awareness of human consciousness. The moment when we stopped being frightened of our own shadows and began to fulfill our true potential. However, if we fail then there is no point in denying that the future looks bleak. The importance of this movement for change can not be exaggerated. This is not about lifestyle design or this or that belief system, it is about whether life as we know it has a viable future. We should accept the challenge and make the **Commitment to Change**, there really isn't any other choice.

ARTICLES OF CONSIDERATION

AEROPLANES

The only reasonable way to describe aeroplanes is as the largest toxic tin cans in the world. It is now well known that the single fastest growing source of the gasses that contribute to global warming, an innocuous name for a potentially lethal process, is aircraft emissions. Despite this, governments once more choose to ignore the facts and, instead, do everything within their power to encourage the ever more rapid increase in air transport, both of people and freight. Aviation fuel is exempt from duty enabling a massive increase in cheap foreign holidays, whilst the number of flights carrying consumer goods has also increased enormously, due to the rapid expansion of the global economy.

If governments were to introduce personal carbon allowances, even a lenient annual limit would be more than swallowed up by one medium range flight. The truly concerned person has only one real option which is to decide not to use air travel at all. However, it is not merely personal travel that we are talking about, for how many of the things that we buy

have been transported from their point of origin or manufacture by air? In the age of the global economy and the sourcing of products from the point of cheapest manufacture, the chances are that it will be the majority. As will become increasingly obvious there is much to consider and virtually no aspect of our lives that does not need to come under scrutiny.

If we, or the things that we buy, travel by air we have no choice but to concede that we are contributing to a major cause of climate catastrophe. This is an area in which we can make a vital contribution to a sustainable future. Remember, if we don't use it they won't be able to provide it. That is the simplicity of the system of supply and demand that we can turn to our advantage, which empowers each of us that chooses to change and enables us to make a difference. How far we feel able to go in making these changes will become the subject of an ongoing conversation between ourselves and an ever evolving conscience.

CARS

There is little that has been said about aeroplanes that could not be applied to cars, the main difference being the size of the toxic tin can. However, many of us who might feel able to tackle the issue of air transport, are likely to be more challenged by the thought of applying the same considerations to our use of a car. The internal combustion engine has only been with us for just over a hundred years but, to people in the so called developed countries, ownership and use of at least one car is now seen as a presumed right. The fact can not be avoided, however, that car exhaust fumes are poisonous. Their rapidly increasing cumulative effects make an enormous contribution to our fouling of the atmosphere and the onset of human induced climate catastrophe.

The driving force of the world economy is oil. Most of the other major industries such as automobiles, pharmaceuticals, plastics and chemicals rely on the oil industry for their existence. There is no doubt, therefore, that if we are going to tackle the root problem of the devastation of the Earth and all its life, that we have to stand up to the oil industry by refusing to be reliant on the products which it wishes to

sell us.

There is no such thing as an environmentally friendly car, there are merely some cars which are slightly less unfriendly than others. This manifesto hesitates to use the word environment, because it has been hijacked by those who want to make their actions seem less damaging to the Earth. We who choose to change have no option but to wean ourselves off our reliance on cars by considering alternative options. For many this change is likely to seem difficult but it needs to happen.

Public transportation causes less emissions per person than a car, a bike none except in the process of its manufacture. Walking is best, of course, apart from all the car fumes we are forced to inhale! If public transport is lousy in our area, as it often is, then we can campaign to get it improved, and to make it as carbon neutral as possible. If cycling is too dangerous with so many cars on the roads we can lobby for cycle paths. If at all possible, however, we can choose to walk.

There are similarities between giving up the car and giving up smoking. Both are expensive, addictive and pollute the atmosphere. We seem to crave things that are bad for us, but when we manage to kick the habit our lives are inevitably improved. Only then do we start to realise how much our previous behaviour has diminished our life and the lives of others. Few, even smokers, would argue the fact that smoking is a filthy habit that kills. The only difference with cars is that they do not carry a health warning on the side, but they should because in the longer term they constitute an even greater threat to life.

The use of a car contravenes, to a greater or lesser extent, all three of the guiding principles and needs to be addressed. Look to the future. Realise that if all those in the less industrialised areas of the world attain to their ambition of having a car there will not be a future. We must set an example and choose to change while there is still a chance.

CHEMICALS

The Earth and all life on it is a work of organic chemistry forged over countless millions of years from the elements generated in the hearts of stars. It would, therefore, be ridiculous to say that chemicals are a

bad thing. The problem arises when the human race, still in its infancy, starts to play with the natural chemical balance of the Earth like a child who has just been given their first chemistry set. Most research, and virtually all of the resulting production of chemical products, is now motivated solely by greed. Short term financial gain gives no consideration to potential long term consequences. This is a fundamental problem in the way in which our world is currently constituted.

We have already considered the growing change to the chemical balance of the atmosphere caused by burning oil based fuel to power road and air transport. However, this is only one aspect of the growing and malevolent effect of the widespread use of humanly engineered chemicals and their compounds. The aspects of our lives now affected by the chemicals industry and its offshoots are many and various. The purpose of this manifesto is to establish ethical principles for our guidance as we decide how to react to this.

Virtually all everyday items use industrial chemicals in their composition. Ask why, despite the massive amounts of money poured into the search for cures, cancer is an increasing and not a decreasing problem. Each of us carries within our bodies, as a growing and life long burden, many chemical compounds that should not be there and that damage our health. So what can we do about it?

Regrettably, from the point of view of our own health the answer is only a certain amount. At the moment we are all effectively poisoning each other. But, remember that we are all responsible for each other, for the well being of all life. Until the last smoke stack of industry stops pouring its insidious stream of pollution into the air, until the last farm reliant on chemical products stops leaching its poisons into the soil and surrounding water courses, none of us who chooses to care can rest content.

The vast majority of what we buy we do not really need, but we are persuaded by societal pressures and the wiles of advertising that we do. So we end up buying an enormous array of products that are actually damaging, both in the method of their production and in their consumption, to the health of all they come into contact with. Doing

away with these items could only lead to an improvement in the quality of our lives. Do we really need the amount of cleaning products and cosmetics that we think we do? Do we really need to be constantly replacing household items that are still perfectly serviceable, just because business demands the profits we generate?

By applying the three principles to our actions we are trying to bring our lives into greater harmony with the natural world. The removal of totally unnecessary chemical compounds is a vital step in that direction. Most importantly, realise and remember that most products containing chemical compounds require, by law, to be tested on an animal life. That animal is imprisoned, tortured and killed on our behalf. In the acceptance of **Life Rights** and the first principle of this manifesto these practices are made entirely unacceptable.

The second principle, that we should not poison, pollute or destroy, is also contravened by the use of these products. As we do not really need them, or can use an acceptable alternative, the third principle actually provides the simplest of remedies. We must be conscientious in establishing the effects of our actions. This means that we are as responsible for the effects of the sourcing and manufacture of a product as we are for the consequences of using it. Both are actions under our personal control.

The subject of the use of chemicals will pervade many of these **Articles of Consideration** as it concerns the building blocks of life, the very stuff out of which we are made. They are the making of the earth from which we come and of the air which we breathe, of the water that we drink and of the food that we eat. We tamper with these naturally formed elements of our lives at our peril and at the peril of all other life, for we are tampering with the future of the Earth as a life supporting planet.

We who care, and who choose to change, should no longer tolerate the willful destruction of the natural balance by those whose only motive is maximum financial gain. For those of us whom they target as their customers, the source of their wealth, ignorance is no longer an excuse. The time to do something about it is not tomorrow but right now. They can not make us buy their products and we must choose not

to.

CLEANING

As our lives become ever more remote from the natural cycles of the Earth, it seems that many people have developed an obsession with hygiene. Far from making us healthier, this is damaging to our natural immunity and also causes massive pollution. Both our bodies and our houses are now assaulted by an enormous array of the products discussed in general terms in the previous article.

These products are provided by the cleaning and toiletries industry backed up by one of the most ferocious, perpetual marketing campaigns of any industrial sector. It is not being suggested that we need to live in filth or squalor, merely that by employing sensible organic alternatives to this blitz of chemicals we can keep ourselves and our surroundings perfectly pleasant. This will also have the happy consequence of improving our health and that of the Earth.

The body's defence mechanisms, developed over innumerable millennia, rely on natural antibodies which are a normal part of what we are. So called anti bacterial agents, which we are told by advertisers will protect us from infection, degrade these natural defences by killing the antibodies that we rely on. And don't forget that most of these products have been tested on animal lives in the vivisection laboratories which play such a large part in this business. Behind the pretty packaging and the artificial fragrances hides the heavy and destructive hand of the multinational corporations which make up the chemicals industry. Their only motivation is money, and they could not care less about the personal or ecological consequences of their activities.

We can deny them their opportunity by finding alternative and responsible ways of doing the amount of cleaning felt necessary. Plain soap which has not been tested on animal lives is available, and the more of us who use it the more readily it will become available. Organic substances such as lemon juice, baking powder and salt can be combined to perform all the cleaning jobs we need to do, with no

harmful consequences. In accordance with our principles, a few changes to the methods of doing these jobs will soon solve this particular problem. Plenty of information about how to use these alternatives is available in responsible publications and on the internet. Let's implement these simple changes and start to make a difference.

CLOTHES

When the hairless apes, who were our ancestors, first walked out of Africa into the colder climate of the north, protection against the vagaries of the weather was a priority. Thus we became, and still remain, the only animal on Earth who wears a layer of artificial covering on our bodies, and this we seem to do whether we need to or not. So conditioned have we become to the idea that our bodies must be covered and hidden from view, that to appear naked outside the confines of a friendly dwelling is to invite arrest! What started as necessary protection from the elements has become a strange mixture of moral imperative and multi billion pound industry.

Though nudity is seemingly taboo, the most expensive items cover the least area, and the dictates of fashion ensure that virtually no clothing lives out its useful life. As usual, this member of the global club of mega industries uses every trick in the book to persuade people of all ages that they can not possibly be seen wearing something that does not accord with the latest whims of the style gurus. This is the age of the designer label in which we are persuaded to advertise the makers name in return for paying three or four times the normal price. Then, before the garment is even worn in, we are told that style wise it is worn out and must be discarded and replaced.

The clothing industry is an incredibly destructive one. Large areas of what was once ancient forest, home to a multitude of lives, have now been destroyed, replaced by chemically treated fields growing raw materials for the textile industry which supplies the garment makers. These makers use enormous quantities of bleaches, solvents and dyes in their manufacturing processes. Much of the residue of these processes is discharged as effluent into rivers and other water courses, there to wreak its insidious effects, to poison, pollute and destroy. All who live in the waters of the world have to cope with the toxic

consequences of these actions.

We do not have to be slaves to fashion, the compliant victims of cultural conformity. We do not have to dispose of something if it is not worn out. If we do decide that we no longer need something then we can take it to one of the growing number of charity shops. These provide an ever changing and fascinating market place in which to search for what we think we might both need and like. They can also form the basis for an ethical economy more concerned with the welfare of all than the enriching of a few.

The styles of the clothing industry change often, in order to maximise their profits, but there is an awful homogeneity to what they produce which ends up making everyone look the same. We can become statements of our own individuality by wearing whatever we think best expresses our personality. How much more interesting would that be? We can even remember how to make and mend things. For, although we might think that we live in a time of plenty and can simply throw things away and replace them, once again it is the future that we are throwing away and that is not our right. Finally, remember that bodies are not bad or sinful, but normal and natural. If the sun is shining who needs too many clothes?

COSMETICS

As early humans, living in the caves that were our dwellings, we became ever more aware of our existence. Beginning to develop the idea of personal identity, one of our first actions was to paint our bodies with pigments taken from the Earth. It seems that the use of cosmetic decoration was one of the first human activities not directly related to survival. Over the ages this habit has remained an almost universal human fascination. But, today, as with most common pursuits, it has been hijacked by corporate business, and is no longer the relatively innocent activity it once was.

Whilst modern cosmetics may not contain the massive amounts of lead that poisoned their users in the middle ages, they are also not the simple organic substances used by earlier humans. Mostly they are synthetic products created from a wide array of artificial ingredients supplied by the chemicals industry. Promoted by the usual perpetual marketing campaigns devised by their associates in the advertising industry, we are constantly exhorted to buy the latest item to come off the production line. Presented in a mass of useless, unnecessary and wasteful packaging, these largely useless, unnecessary and wasteful products pander to our vanity in an age when we should surely know better.

Those of us who do not yet feel comfortable in our own skins, and still feel the need to decorate ourselves, should ensure that we only use naturally and sympathetically derived organic products. This will have the added benefit that the constituents used are less harmful to ourselves and to the Earth. For this industry also contravenes the second principle in almost all of its activities. In the ingredients it uses, the packaging, the transportation of the products and the waste it creates, it is an unmitigated and unnecessary ecological and ethical disaster.

It goes without saying that none of us actually needs these products, we are merely persuaded that we do. Indeed, the third principle must be comprehensively ignored if we are to use them without giving considerable thought to the consequences of our actions. Perhaps, in time, we can begin to do without this unnatural augmentation and start to accept ourselves and others as we truly are.

DEFENCE

One of the most difficult questions for those involved in **Earth Awareness** and **Life Rights** issues is to define what constitutes reasonable behaviour in pursuit of our aims. We know that the motivation of the state runs completely contrary to the basic principles we seek to uphold. Its guiding principle is the protection of the interests of business, not of life or the Earth. The laws, which we are told it is our duty to obey, are increasingly made to intimidate and coerce us, to prevent us from being involved in the process of change. The right to protest has been severely curtailed, leaving us in a

seemingly hopeless situation.

In matters of the protection of property and human life, the law states that the individual may, if necessary, use such force as is reasonable and sufficient. When it comes to protecting the Earth and non human life no such action is permitted. This is unreasonable and unacceptable. To come to the defence of those subject to attack is right, and those that attack the Earth or any life attack us all. The state, which seeks to protect the interests of those whose business is to abuse and exploit the Earth, thinks that it has us exactly where it wants us. So what are we to do to show them that they are mistaken?

Firstly, recognise that there is no duty owed by the individual to the state, it's supposed to work the other way round. As currently put into practice the authority of the state is vested in its power to oppress and the fact that most people seem not to care. This is unlikely to change in the near future, and no matter who we vote for all we are likely to alter is the colour of the capitalism.

We should start to act outside the political system and inside the parameters of individual conscience. Let the state know, in any way possible, that we do not recognise its validity as it has not earned the right to our respect. Respect is not due by right but needs to be earned. It is we who choose not to exploit or abuse life, it is we who choose not to poison, pollute or destroy, it is we who choose to reject greed, it is we who are worthy of respect.

Earth First Manifesto does not condone either the threat or the use of violence, and states this explicitly. Violence is the unreasonable use of excessive force, and such abuse contravenes the principles we have chosen to accept. We do, however, grant ourselves the right to use such means as are reasonable and sufficient to prevent the abuse or exploitation of any life form or of the Earth itself. How far then may we take the accepted right of coming to the aid of anyone subjected to violence as, for instance, animal lives used in vivisection undoubtedly are?

At face value it might seem not only reasonable but proper to break into a laboratory and rescue animals who are subject to torture.

However, in the situation in which we presently find ourselves we must consider this carefully. Any animal that is removed from oppressive conditions, be it factory farm, laboratory, circus or zoo will be replaced. Another life will be bought or bred to take its place and to suffer the same appalling fate. It has, therefore, to be our aim to put a complete halt to vivisection and all other abuse and exploitation.

This is the start of a struggle, not the end of one, and we must act with intelligence in pursuit of success. Violence is the weapon of the cowards we oppose, and to achieve our ends we have to win the battle for hearts and minds. We have to shame those who behave in such a disgusting manner. As well as being a campaign of action this is also a psychological battle for the mindset of the majority. Once we have achieved that majority it will be our point of view that will prevail.

Democracy and the rule of law requires that it be enlightened and, when it is, it will presumably no longer be required. All people, being reasonable, will act in a reasonable manner and the need for governance will be minimal. We are a very long way from that situation, and such democracy as there is still requires that it be dragged into the age of reason by those of us who care. We must be patient in the way we act, and that patience will sometimes demand that we accept and endure pain. That it is not only our pain but the pain of others, who do not understand what is done to them, only makes it harder.

EDUCATION

The meaning of the word education is to lead out. This presumably implies that through the acquisition of knowledge we might be led out of ignorance and come to a better understanding of the world. Through the process of enquiry we have learned many things, not least that all life stems from a common source and should, therefore, be granted equal respect. However, though we now know this, the idea has yet to be realised.

Our growing understanding of the evolutionary struggle of life on Earth makes us witness to a truly wondrous story. This story continues to evolve, as do we as part of it. This is surely sufficient motivation for us to wish to acquire for ourselves the abilities to understand this journey in a way that recognises, and is in harmony with, the wonder of the natural world. Unfortunately, the reality of our system of education, as presently enforced, is very different.

Devised and implemented by the state on behalf of business, the current purpose of our education is to prepare us for a life spent with our noses firmly pressed to the millstone that grinds the Earth into money. We can not continue on the path of the primacy of economic growth motivated by the promise of material riches. That vanity displays an appalling poverty of vision.

The state has no right to usurp our integrity in this way, other than the threat to use its power against us if we refuse to comply. We do not, however, have to send our children to the officially sanctioned schools, be they state or privately financed. We can choose home learning, possibly in cooperation with others. These arrangements may still be subject to state interference but the ethos, which makes the vital difference, would not be theirs to set.

It is, however, no more our job than it is that of the state to mould our children in our own image. Rather, we should help them to develop the necessary abilities and enthusiasm to wish to become as well informed as possible about the world. For only then is any of us in a position to make intelligent life choices, to come to our own conclusions as to the correct way in which to behave. To decide how we wish to evolve. And, make no mistake, we need to evolve to a more reasonable intelligence as rapidly as possible.

Not everyone will concur with the ethos outlined in this manifesto and they can not be made to. Solutions which are imposed rarely, if ever, work. The only hope for lasting and sustainable change is for it to be founded on personal choice and self determination. Fairness demands that we give our children the right to make up their own minds, and they will be in no position to do this if the state has conditioned them to conformity before they are old enough to know otherwise.

Childhood education by the state needs to be replaced by a lifelong process of personal discovery and development for, as things now stand, we cease to learn before we have learned to live.

ENERGY

Energy generation and consumption fuels and drives the engine of the global greed machine that threatens to consume us all. Since the first human discovered the trick of making fire, our ability to turn matter into energy has increasingly disrupted the naturally occurring inputs and outputs of the planet. It is as if we had created a ring of volcanoes about the Earth to poison the skies with our emissions. However, unlike a volcano whose eruptions, though sudden and violent, are soon over allowing the atmosphere to recover, those that we create are both increasing and seemingly unending.

Our appetite for energy is so vast and all consuming, that stores of carbon laid down over hundreds of millions of years are being squandered in a mere few hundred. It does not require a scientist to realise the implications of this massive release of pollutants into the air, yet we seem to prefer our short term energy fix to any long term sustainable solution.

Though the news media are increasingly filled with stories about the threat of climate catastrophe, the state pays little more than lip service to a problem which could eliminate most life on Earth. Though so called alternative energy sources are put forward as a solution these are nothing more than a smokescreen to hide our ever more insatiable appetite. The massive industrial turbines of the increasing number of wind farms are far from some idyllic solution. Via the usual serried rows of pylons that march across the land their small contribution is added to the national power grid, lost in the ever growing demand. Their enormous blades are invisible to birds who are sliced to pieces in their thousands. In their ugliness, and by the insidious noise that they create, they blight the lives of all who live near them.

In full but silent knowledge of the situation, namely that the world we have created will soon run out of the power it consumes, the state

believes that it can solve both this problem and that of climate change by unleashing an even bigger catastrophe. Prepare to be told that the only answer to our problems is to accept a massive increase in nuclear power. This technology is so flawed, both in its conception and in its implementation, that no sane or reasonable person should consider it.

The current generation of nuclear power stations are already in need of decommissioning, but the state has no idea how to deal with this. The awkward but inescapable fact is that, as a by product of the way in which they work, they produce large amounts of highly dangerous radioactive waste. This will remain a lethal toxic threat not for tens, or even hundreds of years, but for tens of thousands. We are already responsible for bequeathing this legacy to future generations and we must do everything we can to ensure that it is not increased.

As an additional by product of the process states are able to produce the fissile material necessary to the production of nuclear weapons. No technology that relies upon the science of nuclear fission can be of benefit to the Earth. It should and must be opposed. It should and must be eradicated.

The simple answer to the energy problem is that there is no simple answer other than to use as little as we need and not as much as we want. We must also find personal solutions for our own reasonable requirements. Energy generated for individual homes from the natural forces of wind or sun, rather than an industrial energy farm on the hill. The true sustainability of self sufficiency is the way to self empowerment and the withering of our reliance on big business and the state.

This approach forms part of our commitment to find different ways of living that are more in harmony with nature, and which do not disrupt the natural balance as at present. This might seem fanciful but there is no viable or realistic alternative. And remember, once we have mitigated our own effects upon the Earth we must impress on others the need to do the same. We all breathe the same air and share a common responsibility to ensure that we do not poison or pollute. For the sake of all life on Earth we must address this problem, both individually and collectively, with the utmost urgency and

commitment.

FARMING & FOOD

In the few thousand years since we stopped living the hunter gatherer life and settled our existence, our actions have radically altered the face of the Earth. One of the major causes of this change has been farming, and its effects have mostly been disastrous for other life. As the human population continues its exponential increase ever greater areas of wilderness, home to a myriad of animal lives, are destroyed. Many crops are grown not to feed us but to feed the lives we breed to kill and eat, meaning that twice the land is required to produce the one meal.

The endless furrows of destruction ploughed by everyone from the subsistence farmer to the giant corporations of agribusiness are decimating the ancient forests of the world. As well as being home to countless lives, these forests are also the lungs that breathe in the carbon dioxide that we, and many of our machines, breathe out. With the move from small scale to industrial farming methods, the toxic poisons that we call herbicides and pesticides were introduced. These deliberately lethal concoctions destroy and kill in pursuit of greater yields and increased profits. Any idea of living in harmony with nature has become fanciful nonsense replaced by the usual motivation, greed.

Food, that most natural part of what we are, has now been subverted. From its origins as the fruits of the natural world it has become an industrial product, provided by the global greed machine. The epidemic of obesity in the industrialised world is evidence of the ever more unnatural way in which we live. That which we need has been replaced by as much as we can consume, and this is as true for food as it is for many other things. Those of us who buy our food ready prepared from supermarkets are the end users in an industrial chain. That chain stretches from the chemically maintained agribusiness, through the processing and packaging factories, via the transportation companies to the retailer and final consumer.

The food industry is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few massive conglomerates. Great fleets of aircraft and lorries ship goods

from around the globe on a truly enormous scale and at incalculable cost to the Earth. Even the growing demand for organic produce is largely met from abroad as the state sees little financial interest in encouraging more natural practices. So how are we supposed to regain control over this fundamental aspect of our lives?

In applying the three principles we will be trying to obtain food which has not been produced using poisons, which has travelled the shortest distance possible and which does not involve the abuse or exploitation of life. We will also not be eating more than we actually need. Obesity is evidence of our failure to respect our own bodies. Ideally, we would be exclusively eating food grown by ourselves or those living close to us, with whom we could exchange produce.

Between the situation we are in and the one we would like to be in, there are a number of steps we can take which will make a difference. We should be thoughtful about what we buy and where we buy it, how it has been produced and where it has come from. Many of us need to give deep consideration to the treatment of animal lives by the food industry and, at the very least, to ensure that we do not buy the inmates of factory farms.

Other than the air we breathe, nothing is more basic to existence than what we eat and drink. So we need to start to think about how unnatural this most natural of actions has become. A defining purpose of this manifesto and the principles it suggests, is the reversal of the process of our increasing separation from the natural world. This is not to say, as some would suggest, that there was an idyllic past to which we should return, that is nonsense. It does, however, mean that we can decide what adds quality to our lives and what we do not need and should learn to do without.

Unless we accept that we are a part of the natural world, and do not exist in some form of inglorious isolation, the future will be bleak. Remembering the actions of the old king, who showed the people that he could not turn back the tide, we would do well to develop a little humility in our dealings with the Earth. What better place to start than with that fundamental requirement of life, food?

FASHION

It is a basic of business that it must sell us as much as it can as often as it can. There is no interest in providing us with what we need, made in such a way as to last as long as possible at the least detriment to the Earth. As currently constituted, business only survives if it maximises profit. This motivation must change. At the root of this process is the conditioning of consumers, as business likes to call us, to the thought that we must have the latest and most fashionable product.

We are made to feel that in order for something to be acceptable it must be fashionable. No matter that the product, whatever it might be, is perfectly serviceable, if it is no longer fashionable it must be replaced. This con must be recognised and repudiated. The one saving grace about the economic system we are subject to is that if we don't buy things they can't make them, and if they don't make them then the Earth benefits.

Although clothing is the most obvious area dominated by fashion, it is an insidious idea which nowadays penetrates almost every aspect of our lives. Because manufacturers deliberately restyle cars they are regularly replaced according to the diktats of fashion. The more cars they sell the more money they make. We should not fall for it, and we do so only if our self image is so weak as to require external validation. Our identities should not be defined by fashion but by qualities that possess inherent worth.

This process extends to such trivia as what toothpaste we use or what we wash our hair with. Fashion is the weapon of the advertising industry. It is used because it works and it works because we fall for it. If we don't need something we can simply decide not to buy it. This will reduce our impact on the Earth and on the lives of others. Why don't we try out the radical but not exactly original idea that if we do decide that we need something it does not have to be new? So much is discarded as rubbish that is still perfectly usable. Older things often have more quality and character. Modern products are increasingly being badly made with the deliberate intention of their needing to be rapidly replaced.

Lets encourage more second hand shops, charitable or otherwise, where we take anything we no longer require and possibly find something we do. This system of exchange diminishes the damaging effects of the economy and helps those that need it. Let's bypass business, which cares nothing for us or the Earth, and develop sustainable communities. Responsible individuals empower themselves and do not fall victims to the trends of fashion. We can forge our own identities in accordance with our principles, and in this way enhance the quality of our lives in harmony with the Earth.

FURNISHINGS

How much we feel we need to furnish our dwellings is another matter for consideration. As they have long been, our shelters and their contents are constructed from the elements of the Earth. Every wooden table, chair, bookcase or sofa frame was once a tree. In many cases not even a farmed tree but a wild forest tree, magnificent in its own right and almost certainly home to many lives. The same applies to hardwood flooring, currently so fashionable, or even those carved ornaments so popular with fair trade shops but which spell death for forests and their inhabitants. Fair trade is still trade, with all its consequences, and is no substitute for the self sufficiency and empowerment of local sustainability.

The fabrics that are used to cover chairs and sofas, to make curtains or bed coverings are far from innocent purchases. Great swathes of forest are cleared to grow the crops which are then turned into textiles. The residues of dyes and bleaches are discharged into water courses, and the chemicals used as fire retardants find their way into the atmosphere. These are then returned to Earth with rainfall and, in much concentrated form, find their way into the bodies of many, often with fatal consequences. These consequences result from the sum of our individual actions and that makes them our personal responsibility.

It is a similar story with the enormous amount of plastic items now manufactured. Plastic is a derivative of the petrochemicals industry and shares with it all the usual ecological problems. The vast majority of plastic products, replacement windows being a prime example, are not readily biodegradable and take many hundreds of years to break down in land fill sites. As these are nearly exhausted the alternative for waste

disposal will be a plethora of incinerators. No matter how sophisticated the filtration system there is no such thing as a discharge free incinerator, and the ash residue is a concentrated toxic cocktail which still needs to be disposed of. One way or another these potentially lethal chemicals will find their way into the bodies of many forms of life.

As usual, the vast majority of household goods are purchased not because they are needed but to satisfy the desire to have the newest or most fashionable item possible. Most of these purchases will be disposed of as rubbish long before they are worn out, and so the cycle continues. If we do not need something we should not buy it, the accumulated consequences of this feeding frenzy of consumerism are simply not acceptable.

If we feel the need for a change then second hand shops or community exchange centres are surely preferable. Anyone who insists that they will not use something unless it is new is a victim of their own vanity and a danger to all. Apply the three principles in a reasonable manner, and it will soon become clear what we need to do in this area as in all others.

GARDENS

Whereas the world was once a natural wilderness in which we wandered at our will, leaving little trace to tell of our passing, now it has been largely parcelled up and sold off. The industrial state comprises managed land which we call countryside, mainly intensive farmland, and the cities and towns in which most of us live our increasingly unnatural lives. As we become more materially successful most of us aspire to our own little kingdom, a house with a garden. Here, safe in the confines of our alarmed and bolted castles, we can preside over our private piece of what was once the natural world.

The modern garden will rarely have an area for growing the food that we require, nor will it have untended space in which any wildlife that has survived our tyranny can take refuge. Instead, it will probably be a sterile and somewhat forlorn place. At its centre a lawn on which no growth that is not the perfect blade of grass can be allowed. This will often be fed a mixture of selective poison and artificial fertiliser,

before being shaved to within a millimetre of its unnatural life. Around this hallowed ground will be flowerbeds holding a selection of plants shipped in from all parts of the globe. These will then be regularly sprayed with deadly toxins to ensure that no life form should be so presumptuous as to damage their perfect shape. These artificial creations are an abuse of privilege and an insult to the Earth.

Not content with driving out, and often to extinction, much of the life that once lived free to roam, our actions are now decimating the populations of those that remain. Driven from the countryside by the chemical assault of agribusiness, many now find their lives threatened by the activities of an army of hobby gardeners.

A plethora of television programmes dedicated to the garden makeover have only served to make the situation worse. Recently it has become the in thing to install an area of wooden decking, not caring that this is usually made of tropical hardwood trees. These come from what remains of the great forests of the world, there since ancient times, and home to those whose numbers are beyond our counting. We do not have the right to tear these forests down just because we feel like it, or to kill all those who live there. We should realise and remember, that if we buy it then it is we who are responsible.

In accordance with the principles of this manifesto, there are obvious steps that we can take to redress the balance. On no account should we use any sort of toxic chemicals as these are designed to kill. We can dig up part or all of the lawn and grow good, natural food, but we should remember that slugs, snails and others we have called pests need to eat just as we do. Why not allow much of the rest to revert to nature, it will be a natural sanctuary and become a source of joy. If the neighbours complain, we should explain what we are doing and encourage them to join in.

When we bring in plants from other parts of the Earth we disrupt local ecosystems whose balance has been acquired over countless millennia. Life forms not usually associated with the particular place will inevitably be carried in as unwitting passengers, with unknown consequences. Likewise, plants which are in balance in their usual situation may run riot when transplanted to a different location. Where

possible why not let nature do its own planting?

Properly motivated we can look forward to a time when we can tear down not ancient forests, but the fences and walls that divide us and define our limitations. Only then will we be able to share a sense of community in surroundings once more made natural by our decision to live in harmony with nature. To be a self aware member of the life force that inhabits the Earth should be a privilege and a joy to all. Instead we remain the ever more paranoid victims of our own ignorance and separation, preferring to lock ourselves away and count our money rather than to share the extraordinary experience that is the wonder of the world.

HEALTH

Of all that we treasure and regard as essential to the quality of our lives nothing rates higher than health. Why is it then that we live in the midst of an increasing epidemic of illness? Never have so many people visited the doctor, nor have these doctors felt it necessary to write so many prescriptions for the panacea products of the pill producing pharmaceutical companies.

In these supposedly advanced times the practice of medicine is now the province of business driven science. However, despite the massive investment in research into the wide variety of cancers that prevail in our kind, the number of us contracting some form of the disease continues to increase. Mental or psychological impairments are rife, and ever more of us feel that we can not cope without tranquillisers or anti depressants. It seems that in these times of wealth and plenty that we have never been so unwell or so unhappy.

Why should this be? Where does this seeming contradiction originate? Once again it would seem that the root of the problem is grounded in the increasingly unnatural nature of the lives that we lead. Granted, there is no doubt that many of us have benefited enormously from treatments that were not previously available. These treatments, however, are products of the system that is also the root cause of the problem.

The basis of our personal health must reside within ourselves and our individual ability to remain healthy. No matter how cleverly the cures of modern medicine might alleviate the symptoms of our ailments, it is often the effects of living in the modern world that combine to cause the complaint. In other words, being well is not so much a matter of having access to the latest health care but more of managing not to get sick. This is not what those in the health care industry, better called the illness industry, want us to realise. They are only interested in selling us their products and services. They would much rather treat our symptoms than help us to identify why we are getting sick so that we can do something to prevent it.

It is now increasingly recognised that the immune system, which has been thought of as nothing more than a mechanism for fighting off unwanted intruders, is a far more important part of what we are. Environmental pollutants place an ever greater strain on our defences, not only in cities but also in chemically farmed countryside. But, in addition to this, unless all aspects of our lives are in accord, a tension is created which can lead to inner conflict and ill health.

Until recently the idea of stress related illness was unheard of but it is now recognised as one of the most important factors. The pace of modern life, the demands made on us by work and the need to succeed, combine with environmental factors to create a dangerous cocktail. Whereas, in the not so distant past, our lives would have consisted of a natural routine unchanged over millennia, the present rate of change adds increasing psychological strain to the physical factors. It is hardly surprising that many of us are failing to cope. A fundamental cause of our lack of wellbeing is attributable to our dislocation from natural ways of living. This is particularly true of disorders of the mind as we try to understand ourselves in the artificial world which we have so recently created.

Though it is not easy to avoid being poisoned while living in an industrial state, there are certain things we can do to alleviate the problem. This is not to say that we are never going to be unwell, sometimes seriously so. The nature of existence on the Earth is not that of perfection, but it has maintained a working balance over a period of time that we find hard to comprehend. So hard, indeed, that we tend to

ignore it and to think that we know better. By bringing ourselves back into accord with the natural balance we can protect our future, and if we choose not to we will only have ourselves to blame.

It is up to each of us to put this idea into practice and to ensure that we persuade others to do so as well. We need to make those changes that will place us in a position to say to those whose actions are threatening our health that they must also change. Although personal freedom is to be cherished and defended, it does not entitle us to act in ways that are damaging to others. The air we pollute is the air that others breathe. The health of each of us is the health of us all and, ultimately, it is the health of the Earth itself.

LAW

Let us ask ourselves a simple question. Why should we comply with the body of state legislation known collectively as the law? It is taken as self evident that everything we do as individuals, including acts of protest, must be held within its confines. If we stray outside these bounds the full force of the state, as exercised by the police, may be used against us. Dissent is only tolerated so long as we who disagree with state policy realise that it can be no more than a token act. So what is the true purpose of the law as it now stands and what should be our reaction to it?

Since humans first settled their existence, individuals or groups of individuals have manoeuvred themselves into positions of power and authority. Whether this authority has been manifested in the edicts of emperors, or in the legislation of parliaments, it boils down to the same thing. A tiny minority grants itself the right to tell the vast majority what they may or may not do. Be it the might of tyranny or the so called right of democracy by which it presumes its mandate, the effect for the rest of us is the same. Our lives are not our own but are in thrall to our masters as they have been throughout our short and, so far, sorry history.

The overriding purpose of the law is not to ensure the best possible life for all but to perpetuate the power of those who rule over us. As the power of politicians has been subverted to the interests of corporate business, it is now the mega corporations of global capitalism that the

law seeks to serve. That by which our leaders would have us believe our lives are protected and improved, is in fact the agent of those whose actions will destroy us all. In these circumstances it is incumbent on all of us who care to see through this charade and to empower ourselves.

Through the acceptance of total personal responsibility, and the refusal to acquiesce with corrupt law made by corrupt legislators, we must start to effect change. There is no imperative to bow down to the law. That which seems reasonable and to the general good may be reasonably accepted, but bad law which seeks to protect the interests of those who exploit and oppress should be repudiated and rejected.

Where law grants rights to those who abuse life it must be opposed. Where law protects those who poison, pollute and destroy, it must be opposed. Where law sides with those who believe that greed is good no matter what the consequence, it must be opposed. This will not always be easy, for the power of the state is considerable. Police and military forces uphold the might of the state rather than the reasonable expectations of the people. Society is now as one with the state, designed so as to make it almost impossible to live in any way other than that which is dictated to us. In these circumstances we have to use our intelligence in order to prevail.

Our first action should be to cut as many ties with the state and its laws as possible. On the basis that less is often more, it is what we choose not to do that can matter most. Refusal to participate with the expectations of the state in all areas that seem unreasonable can often be achieved without direct confrontation with the law. Where the law seems reasonable it will also seem invisible for there is no apparent contradiction of intent. However, once we have done all that we can to change our own lives in accordance with our principles, it is vital that we exert our combined efforts to oppose all actions that harm the Earth and all its inhabitants.

Little change has been achieved other than where there have been those who have opposed bad law. We now have sufficient information at our disposal for a concerned and intelligent person to know that there is much that must be changed. Do not be frightened to stand up

to the power of the state and its law, for only in this way can we hope to realise those changes necessary to a sustainable future. Never believe that it is too difficult or too late to be worth it. It may not be easy and time may indeed be short, but that does not mean that we should not do everything we can, not only for ourselves but for all life, whose future rests largely in our hands.

LIFE RIGHTS

Any society all of whose members regarded the three principles of the **Earth First Manifesto** as self obvious would be a long way towards doing away with the need for state imposed law. Unfortunately we are not in that position, and there are many areas in which we need to make progress. None is more important than that of **Life Rights**. For, once we have absorbed and accepted the idea that all life is born equal and should not be exploited or abused, then much else that is to be desired will follow from that decision.

We need to understand that for several thousand years we have lived in a paradigm based on the contention that humans have been granted divine rights over all other life. This other life has existed merely for our benefit. In the same way in which this was considered obvious, we now need to adopt an entirely different position as a basis for our lives. How much more rewarding would it be to feel that to be human was to accept an ethic of care and concern rather than of tyranny, exploitation and oppression as has been the case. To look at the evidence as to our likely future is surely to be persuaded of the need to change.

Merely to tinker with our lifestyle whilst continuing to support a society that routinely abuses all other life will not work and is not acceptable. A root and branch change to a perspective in which we see ourselves as part of, rather than apart from, all that comprises the natural world is the only answer. What we require is nothing short of a complete change of mindset, the development of **Earth Awareness**. From this it will become readily apparent what is and what is not acceptable.

We now know that all life on Earth has evolved from a common source and is therefore related. This is all the information we need to make

obvious that necessary change of attitude. In the same way that we have learned and largely accepted that it is not right to abuse exploit or kill other humans, so must the same principle now apply to all life. Despite the fact that we still have far to go in making reasonable our behaviour toward each other, principles once accepted in time become the norm. Indeed, in the implementation of change in our attitude toward all other life we can only improve our human relationships.

Unfortunately, the examples of how we choose to exploit and abuse life are too numerous to detail, but some are so appalling in their premeditation as to warrant special mention. Others will be discussed elsewhere in this manifesto as the principle of **Life Rights** is an ever present and underlying theme.

Though a reasonable person might think it obscene, even the horror that is war is now subject to the rule of law. Even in warfare it is now supposedly unacceptable to torture, or to kill other than in battle. Yet, every day, thousands of animal lives are tortured and killed in vivisection laboratories. Lives as closely related to us as primates are considered suitable to be used in experiments. Experiments so appalling that if we were allowed to see them we would be horrified and ashamed. Often these abhorrent procedures are for nothing more vital than the licensing of a new cleaning product. Even where the justification of the advancement of medical science is used, the information obtained is often useless or can be better obtained by other means.

This industry receives the support of the state and the protection of the law for one reason only. It earns large sums of money and is regarded as a valuable contributor to the economy. Not only on its own account but as an integral part of the pharma-chemical business which churns out pills, cleaning products, and much more. Each year millions of innocent lives are sacrificed on the altar of greed and selfishness, and it has to stop. There is no better example of what is wrong with us and how we need to change, and all of us who care owe it to these lives, and to ourselves, to join with those who are campaigning to put an end to vivisection.

Also worthy of particular mention is agribusiness. The methods

employed by industrial factory farms are largely hidden from us for the simple reason that they would appal. In the levels of cruelty they are prepared to tolerate in the pursuit of profit, battery chicken farms defy the imagination. The situation is little better for any other animal life unfortunate enough to be a victim of these methods.

We must make it our business to find out how the food we eat has been produced, it is surely unacceptable not to. In a capitalist society the consumer can at least call the tune and pressure must be put on those who choose not to care. The abuses of this industry are many and widespread, and time must be called on much that has previously been considered acceptable practice.

This manifesto could cite example after example of our wanton cruelty, our thoughtless disregard for all life that is not human. However, it is not the intention to describe a plethora of individual instances but to advocate the acceptance of personal responsibility as detailed in the three principles. Though different people will respond to them in different ways, these ideals are the future. We must choose to change and make it our duty to consider the effects of our actions, both direct and indirect, on all life on Earth. **Life Rights** should be human responsibilities. Life is life, whatever its form, and is due the same respect. As humans we should expect to have to earn it, for all others it must be theirs by right.

MEAT

How can we hope to live up to our intention that all life be treated as equal and continue to breed, kill and eat other animal lives. The simple answer is that we can not, and as part of choosing to change we need to accept this. For many of us this will not be easy. However, if reason leads us to this conclusion, and we make the effort, our reasonable decision will begin to deepen into an emotional commitment. Soon, what had seemed a difficult or even impossible choice to put into practice, will become easy.

The root of desire may be found in the mind, not in the physical body. If we choose to eat meat it is not because we need to but because we want to, and it is the wanting to which so many cling. As soon as a rational decision is taken that it is no longer acceptable to continue, the

problem of wanting rapidly diminishes, and any lingering difficulty is no more than getting used to a change of habit. The physical and emotional benefits of making this change are considerable, and it is likely to be the catalyst for a whole new way of relating to the Earth that is our home.

Some people say that humans eat meat because we were designed by nature to do so. This is palpable nonsense. We were not designed by anything other than our own intention. Throughout our evolutionary history we have done whatever we felt was in our best interest, whatever gave us the best chance of survival. Admittedly this may not always have been a decision making process of which we were consciously aware, but much of what we do remains part of our automatic or instinctive mechanism. However, as we evolve, more and more behavioural decisions enter the realm of conscious choice, and what we eat is now well within that. We are quite capable of existing both healthily and happily on a diverse range of diets and have no need to eat meat.

For increasing numbers of us the reason we choose not to eat meat is quite simple. It is not right. So self obviously not right as to seem to require little explanation. This is because the tide of human history, despite much evidence to the contrary, tends toward greater intelligence. This intelligence being defined as the reasonable application of all the available information, it now seems no more reasonable to kill and eat a non human animal than a human one. It is no longer disputed that all life branches from the same tree and is therefore related. Animal lives bred for food are killed as young as possible and meat may accurately, if unpleasantly, be described as the flesh of dead babies. We need to think about this. Just as cannibalism came to be seen as unacceptable, so will the eating of any other form of animal life come to be seen.

An entirely false distinction is sometimes made between meat and fish. There is no such distinction. Flesh is flesh no matter who was killed to provide it. Some people also try to justify the eating of those who live in the seas and rivers by saying that at least they lived a natural life. This argument is no longer sustainable. The days when small numbers of us lived the hunter gatherer existence, as part of the natural balance,

are long gone. Now, vast fleets of industrial factory ships scour the world ocean of its life, and imminent extinctions are rife as the devastation continues apace.

Often those caught are not the particular prey of the hunters and are merely discarded or left to die. Fish hooked on five hundred kilometre long lines are taken by seabirds who are then dragged under to their deaths. Many are now seriously endangered. Our sheer numbers, and the methods used to satisfy our ever growing demands, wreak holocaust all about the Earth. The only difference with the ocean is that what happens under the water is not so visible. As with many of our practices out of sight should not be out of mind.

Much of what we do, we do because we are conditioned so to do. Most of us are brought up to eat meat from long before we are able to consider what we are doing. This does not mean that we have to accept this as a life long commitment. We can choose to change at any stage of life. Like waking from a dream it can become apparent that we have not been living our own life but one that was designed for us. This has ever been our way and means, in effect, that we are living lives appropriate to an entirely different age. Things have changed and so must we. Ignorance is no longer either reason or excuse to choose to ignore what should by now be obvious. We humans treat all other lives in the most appalling manner, and the fact that we kill and eat them, without having any need to do so, is only the most obvious example.

MONEY

When we ceased to walk the world and settled our existence it did not take long for money to rear its ugly head. Farmers wanted a means of exchange in order to profit from their surpluses and so it was that the idea of money was born. For that is what it is, nothing real but merely an idea. That this idea should now have all of us within its thrall is testament not only to the power of ideas, but to our inability to realise that ideas may be our servants but should never be our masters.

No idea has been more damaging to the Earth than that of money. Though we fight and kill each other over many ideas, it is our love of money that drives us to destroy all that we should hold precious. It

causes untold misery and suffering, divides and separates us from each other and turns reasonable people into monsters. Indeed, money is itself the monster that is now our motivation and our master, and we need to put an end to this madness.

How many of us are any longer providers of our own requirements? Virtually none. Instead we find work which will bring us the money we need to buy the things we think we want. We work to live, and pretty much live to work. Few of us really enjoy our work and we count the days until our holiday or next day off. This process has been called alienation, and it does indeed make us seem alien to ourselves. The course of our lives becomes ever more unnatural, and this dislocated way of living brings on stress and mental disorder. All the more extraordinary is that this process is not only sanctioned by the state, but that all who do not wish to participate are vilified and persecuted.

Humans first devised writing in order to record financial transactions, and the entire development of our settled existence has revolved around an ever more complex economic system. That system has now reached the point where all its disparate parts are conjoining into an integrated global network from which none of us will be permitted to escape. Much as the slaves of our colonial past we shall be constrained to dance to the tune of our masters, lulled by the promise of our own small share of the spoils. This, of course, is plundered from the Earth and the life it promises to provide us with is shallow and worthless. Worse than this, those of us that care can now see that the whole process has been a delusion, leading us not to the promised land but to destruction.

How then are we to reverse a process that in a mere few thousand years has contributed to entirely altering the face of the Earth? How are we to unravel our entanglement with this insidious process which has made our lives so unnatural? Is it beyond us to devise ways of living in harmony with each other, and with the Earth, that do not rely on this conceptual construct? Surely we are now well enough adjusted to the conscious awareness of our own existence. We do not have to indulge in this feeding frenzy of monetary and material acquisition just to prove to ourselves that we matter. For that is what money is doing to

us, and it is doing it by our own design and with our full consent.

Even if we do feel that we need some form of mechanism to enable a fair allocation of necessary resources, our present way of operating is surely not it. Ideas can enable us to find ways of living that are an improvement on what went before, but they should never be allowed to assume control of us. We must take charge of our destiny, led by conscience to act for the common interest in accordance with our principles. This should not be difficult, indeed it should be both obvious and simple.

Human nature can not be, as some would have it, intrinsically bad, or there would be no semblance of the fairer societies to which we at least aspire. But, until the idea of fairness ceases to be equated with that of economic success for all, our efforts will fail. As people form societies based on money, those on the bottom rung of the ladder are consigned to poverty. The real poverty, however, is that of our own ambition. The problem for the poor is that they wish only to be rich. The problem for the rest of us is to find ways in which the lives of all of us may be enriched in a world that does not worship money and material wealth. If we can not do this our love of money will be our downfall, and we will only have ourselves to blame.

NATIONS

Until we learn to regard ourselves as members of the one family that is life on Earth we will continue to be divided amongst ourselves as well as from all else. Throughout our history nation has competed against nation for the right to own and control the riches of the Earth that we call resources. Nations have come and they have gone, they have changed their boundaries and their names, but the process has remained the same. Although, like money, nations are nothing more than an idea, they claim right to our allegiance and pit us one against the other. In the evolution of life on Earth, the human race is but one species among many, all deriving from a common source. All idea of nation or nationality is nothing more than a figment of our collective imagination which we accept to our detriment.

It is between nations that war is waged, normally motivated by greed,

false pride or outright stupidity. It is also between nations that the wars of our economic world are fought as each seeks to show that it is greater and more powerful than the others. Common sense and decency are placed a poor second to the rosy glow of patriotic fervour as developed nations point ever greater arsenals of nuclear weapons at each other. Amazingly, those of us who look on in horrified astonishment at these antics are supposed to feel comforted and protected by this policy of mutually assured destruction. That we now possess the ability to destroy ourselves utterly, is supposedly evidence of the progress we have made, of which we are meant to feel proud. There are those of us who would beg to differ.

Earth First Manifesto recognises no nation other than the Earth from which we come and on which we all rely. Each of us is an individual member of the family of life on Earth and as such we owe a duty of care each to every other. Why should we feel obliged to join in with, or support, behaviour that can have no justification? We should not. Those who would regard themselves as our political masters have no right to expect that we will be compliant to their will. They have not earned it and they do not deserve it.

As individuals and groups of individuals, who have chosen to change, we will make our own way. The nation state has no hold on us for it is an instrument of corruption and control. Implicit in its actions is the goal of economic primacy that involves the rape, pillage and plunder of the Earth. Its every intention contravenes those principles which we are seeking to uphold. In the age of **Earth Awareness**, the nation state is an idea which has had its time.

PACKAGING

When it comes to exposing examples of entirely unnecessary waste, little is more obvious than packaging. What is it in our makeup that makes something seem more attractive if it has been wrapped? Do we equate consumer products with gifts if they are so presented? What it does show is that in our desire to acquire material goods we are prepared to utterly ignore the related devastation that we cause. Gratification takes precedence over responsibility, and the wiles of

advertising and marketing are seemingly sufficient to overwhelm common sense.

Everything we want, whether we need it or not, we now have to buy, and packaging is used largely to help make up our minds. That it is immediately disposed of to become part of the vast mountains of waste we produce is of no concern to the manufacturers. Once again we are shown to be willing collaborators in a process that makes an enormous contribution to the degradation of the natural world. As usual, problems occur at both ends of the process. Be it cardboard, metal or plastic that is used, all these products are sourced from the Earth. The insult is compounded by whatever method is used for the disposal of a product that was almost certainly not needed in the first place.

Cardboard and paper are made from trees that are farmed as a cash crop, and trees such as these are of little use as homes for life. Sometimes, quite unbelievably, wild forest trees are destroyed for this useless purpose, bringing to an end a natural cycle established over millions of years. And all for what? Some gaudy piece of unnecessary packaging. Even if it declares itself to be recycled it has still been made by an industrial process with all the usual ramifications. The story is pretty much the same with metal. This has to be dug or blasted from the ground, and forest must often be felled to gain access to that ground. Industrial mills must then make the material, whilst yet more factories fabricate the finished package.

Probably the most insidious example is the proliferation of plastic packaging. There is little that better demonstrates our inability to care for the natural world or for the human quality of the appreciation of beauty. Virtually everywhere we walk is now despoiled by a mass of plastic rubbish, carelessly discarded by thoughtless and uncaring people. This unnatural child of the petrochemical industry, so beloved of business, is an insult to all of us who love the Earth.

Our disposable society, interested only in profit and instant gratification, is well represented by this unlovely and unlovable substance. Just a few years since its development we are drowning in a sea of this stuff which adds nothing to the quality of our lives. The state would have us believe that recycling is the answer and this will

be discussed in a later article. The real answer lies in understanding that our relationship with the Earth must be a more natural one, if we are not to go the way of the many whom we have already condemned to extinction.

In limiting ourselves to what we need, rather than what we think we want, we start to address the problem. In addition, packaging that is easily removed can be left in the shop with the message that we do not require it. How long would it take the retailer to tell the manufacturer to dispense with it, if they were left with the job of disposal? We should buy loose rather than packaged if possible, and try to buy local. The further something has come the more packaging has probably been involved. If enough of us do this then the look of the things we buy, and of the places where we buy them, will start to alter. In trying to change the entire way in which we live we can only start from where we are now. The process of change is a continuous one, and each small victory marks a step along the way.

PETS

This subject can be broken into two discussions. That of the keeping of what are termed exotic, or caged, pets which is a simple one to address, and the more contentious subject of domesticated animals. It should be realised, however, that the same principle is at stake in all cases, namely that we should not exploit or abuse any other life.

No creature, other than the human, feels it necessary or appropriate to capture and keep another merely for its own amusement. Yet, there is virtually no form of life that is not subject to this indignity. Fish, birds, lizards, snakes, spiders, even lions and tigers, are taken from the wild, or bred in unnatural captivity, to supply the pet industry. This is an appalling abuse of privilege and unacceptable. Yet, with a few exceptions this wholly unethical trade is allowed to continue.

An enormous number of animal lives die en route from their natural homes to the cages of the pet industry. Their suffering is incalculable

and their lives, no different from ours, utterly ruined. In the same way that it is now unthinkable that humans should be abducted from their homes and sold into slavery, so must this vile trade be halted.

Earth First Manifesto deprecates all abuse and exploitation and opposes any trade of any animal life for any purpose. That it should still be permissible to trade animal lives is among the most glaring examples of our callous disregard for **Life Rights**. However, as such it can be a focus for action, and there are already people and organisations who have been campaigning for many years to have it stopped. They need and deserve our support because those that are abused are not able to defend themselves. Anyone who breeds animals in captivity must also be opposed. No one should be able to buy or sell someone else and that means any life.

How is it then that those of us who keep cats and dogs consider ourselves animal lovers? Indeed, what are these animals that we own, for they have not become what they are by any natural process of their own devising. The domesticated dog is probably the most striking example of our human interference in the process of natural evolution. Every one of this extraordinary array of animal lives, though incredibly different in size, shape and appearance, is in fact the same.

Each so called breed comes from a similar source and can, in theory, procreate with any other. What started as a wild creature, akin to the wolf of today, has been manipulated and modified by the selective breeding of human intervention. Once a natural creature possessing dignity and coherence, it has been reduced to a multifaceted mutation reliant on humans for its every requirement, bred to satisfy our emotional needs.

Cats, though also domesticated, have retained more of their natural integrity. This unfortunately makes them more of a danger. As with humans their numbers vastly exceed what would be expected in natural conditions. Though, like dogs, they too are fed the largely unpleasant products of the pet food industry, unlike dogs they retain sufficient natural instincts to make them the scourge of others. Each year millions of birds, frogs, mice and other lives are killed by cats who, because they have no need, do not even bother to eat them. This

carnage goes largely un-remarked and it is we the pet owners, the animal lovers, who are responsible for it.

We best care for and respect the Earth and all life by learning, as much as possible, to leave it alone. We do not achieve this by seeking to capture or control those whose lives should be their own to determine. In the case of non domesticated pets the solution is simple, we no longer breed, capture or imprison them. In the case of domesticated animals the answer might not seem so simple but is in fact the same. Just as if we stop eating meat there will be no need for captive livestock, so if we stop keeping and breeding animal lives to be used as pets their numbers will inevitably decrease. This is surely not unreasonable interference, as some would have it, but its removal.

POLITICS

The authority of the democratic state is supposedly grounded in the fact that it has been fairly elected by the people. Not necessarily, however, by a majority of the people, nor by a majority of those entitled to vote, or even of those who choose to vote. In fact power is simply assumed by the group which gets enough votes to gain a working majority. For the rest of us participation in the democratic process is limited to putting a cross in a box once every four or five years.

Power over each of us as individuals is vested in the elite cabal which happens to run whatever grouping has won the election, most of it residing in the hands of the leader of that cabal. Whatever promises have been made to attain power are usually forgotten as the real agenda becomes apparent. This revolves around paying craven homage to the economic interests of global big business in whose pockets they well and truly reside. How often, after leaving office, do they accept well paid positions with the same companies whose interests they have been seeking to protect?

This is the system which we are supposed to trust to take the necessary measures to avert climate catastrophe, but whose policies of permanent economic growth are the cause of it. This is the system which is supposed to protect the natural world and all its life, but which is

responsible for its wholesale destruction. This is the system which we are supposed to support and respect, and those of us who see through this charade and decide not to participate are told that we can not expect to have any influence over events. Well that is where they are wrong, because the purpose of **Earth First Manifesto** is to empower each of us as individuals through personal and collective responsibility for the consequences of our actions.

It is a deceit perpetrated and perpetuated by successive governments, all in thrall to business and the power of money, that politics should be limited to the confines of parliament and their cronies in the judiciary. On behalf of the global greed machine the politicians make the law and the police and judiciary enforce it. Meanwhile the Earth and all life suffers. Most people seem either too ignorant to worry or too greedy to care. Those of us who are neither ignorant nor greedy and who do care, are simply told that it is our fault if we choose not to participate. Yet if we do take part we are, of course, validating the decisions they make and with which we so utterly disagree.

We must see through the sham that parliament equals politics and realise that every action we take is potentially a political action. By choosing to change the way in which we live our lives, and combining to take whatever measures we can in defence of the Earth and of all life, we are assuming political power. This power is ours by right, as it must be, for who has the right to deny it to us? Surely not the politicians, for in a democracy they are the representatives of the people not of the state. Not just the people who voted for them, though they don't even manage to do that, but of all the people. Unlike them we do not wish to kill or to destroy, we do not wish to poison or pollute. What we do want is to live in harmony with the Earth and to treat all life as equal.

For these simple and, one would have thought, decent ideas we are likely to be treated as dangerous dissidents, a threat to the hegemony of the global greed machine. But it is that machine which is a threat to us all and which must be opposed at all costs. To do little can sometimes be to achieve much, and by starving the machine of the oxygen of consumption we can start to make our presence felt.

We must stand up to and defeat all those who think it is acceptable to abuse or exploit life, all those who do not care how much they poison, pollute or destroy, all those who think it their right to take as much as they want no matter what the consequences. Rather than might bestowing right we must show that right is in fact might. This is a battle between the reasonable expectations of the individual and the unreasonable power of the state, and it is a battle that must be won.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

It is not so very long since we left the shelter of our African caves and spread out to populate the face of the Earth. Now our dwellings and workplaces cover vast areas and consume ever more resources. What was once a simple requirement of existence is now equated with our sense of identity and importance. The size of our dwellings seem to increase in direct proportion to that of our egos. Who ever heard of a head of state or captain of industry who lived in modest surroundings?

The desire for territorial integrity, so common in nature, has been transmuted by humans into the massive legal edifice of ownership. Not only our dwellings, but virtually anything that can be described has been drawn into this web. Along with material goods, artistic and intellectual ideas are regarded as private property in order that they might be exploited for financial gain.

The history of this process is a short but consistent one. From the first agrarian societies who banded together to protect their perceived interests, to the complex network of nation states that exist today, the acquisition and protection of wealth has been paramount. This wealth comes from only one source, the Earth. The history of humanity is the history of greed in action, and the massive skyscrapers of corporate business stand as monuments to this egotistical madness.

The overwhelming greed and desire for power of those that run this system is fed and maintained by one thing only, the control of those below. The feeding frenzy must not be allowed to continue, and if we cease to participate in this system the whole rotten structure will wither away. The alternative is to continue as we are until shortage of resources causes it to collapse into anarchy. Anarchy is chaos and there is nothing

romantic about chaos, only terror and death.

That rights to ownership should be taken for granted is another example of illusion passing for fact. As reasonable as it might be to allow that each of us requires space to live and the little that we need, it can not be reasonable to take by force as much as we want. To invoke the law for the protection of economic rights is to use unreasonable force. Those of us who would seek to live in harmony with the Earth must repudiate and reject the assumed rights of those who destroy in their pursuit of wealth and power. It is on the desire for more of those who have less that they feed, and we can begin by depriving them of our cooperation.

Why should any person assume the right to an unfair and unreasonable proportion of what the Earth freely offers? Why should any person, by virtue of the economic success of their activities, accrue disproportionate wealth? This happens as a result of the system of property rights, enshrined in law and protected by the might of the state. We can now see where this process is taking us, and that the state has no intention of implementing the dramatic change of direction necessary. It is for all of us who care, and who have chosen to change, to inform them of the error of their ways.

It is a favourite saying of those we would oppose, that life is not fair, nor can it be expected to be, that we should accept our lot and make the most of it. What they fail to realise is that we do not want what they have, but neither do we accept the consequences to the Earth of their actions. To act in a fair and reasonable manner is to act in such a way that is likely to be sustainable. None of us knows what tomorrow might bring but that should never prevent us from doing the right thing today.

To accumulate wealth in the vainglorious pursuit of personal worth, with no concern for the consequences, is surely unacceptable. That this harmful practice should be upheld by the state and protected by law, removes any legitimacy from those who lead. It is now our responsibility to stop this process in its tracks. Choose to reject the validity, not of personal freedom, but of all property rights.

RECYCLING

According to those who purport to be our leaders, recycling is a panacea for our wasteful ways. All we need to do is move from burying our waste in the ground to reintegrating it into the industrial cycle and all will be well. This is errant nonsense for several reasons. Granted, reusing waste as raw material for new goods will somewhat reduce the demand for virgin materials from the Earth. However, in the context of a global economy expanding at an ever faster rate, this becomes meaningless. The demand for raw materials from whatever source is insatiable and all that the recycled goods do is help to meet this increase. So long as levels of production and consumption continue to rise, the process of recycling will remain just another part of the industrial process that is destroying life on Earth.

Political leaders are the problem and not the solution. Their only concern is to protect the interests of business in pursuit of economic growth. Their fondness for the idea of recycling is based on the fact that it contributes to this. Only if it were used as an entry point into an entirely new and different policy concept would it start to be a good thing. This new concept would be the managed contraction of the global economy and a move towards a world in which our aim was local sustainability, not the acquisition of unlimited material wealth. Unfortunately, this idea does not seem to have occurred to our self seeking leaders. Instead, they mumble warm words about recycling and alternative energy sources, whilst devoting all their efforts to driving forward the global greed machine.

These policies are akin to putting a sticking plaster on an amputation, and are entirely rejected by **Earth First Manifesto**. If political leaders are too venal or too cowardly to tell us what needs to be done, then we will have to tell them. The best way we can do that is to reject their policies and empower ourselves. By accepting the principles laid out in this manifesto we can present a true alternative strategy which will be ethically irrefutable. That we are right is already virtually impossible to contradict. The weight of evidence of the precarious position in which we have placed the future of life on Earth is now overwhelming. If the state continues to refuse to acknowledge this, or to take action, then it will have abrogated the right to rule and we will have to find new ways of running our own affairs.

The rule of the state through the enforcement of laws is a mixture of subterfuge and brute force. Their right is derived mainly from our acquiescence, as rulers have previously realised when the tolerance of the people has been exceeded. The big difference now is that far from wishing to rise up in pursuit of material wealth, our strength lies more in what we choose not to do. A refusal to participate in the economic feeding frenzy will be seen by government as a threat to their power and will bring a reaction. It is this reaction that we seek as it will enable us to engage fully in the struggle for a fairer and more just world, a world based on the ideals of **Life Rights** and **Earth Awareness**.

Our greatest weapon is our integrity. If we can bring our lives into accordance with the principles as laid out in this manifesto, we will place in a position of shame all those who treat the Earth with contempt. This may not seem likely to achieve much, but shame can be a powerful weapon, because it tends only to afflict those who know in their hearts that they are wrong. Although there will be those beyond changing, if they can be reduced to a sufficient minority their actions can be controlled. However, this will not happen unless there are sufficient of us in the vanguard of this movement to set the necessary example.

As far as recycling is concerned we should do it. But only as part of the process of moving toward living on what we really need and not on what we used to want. The amount of goods already in circulation and available for ethical recycling might well go a long way toward providing our reasonable needs. Puritan austerity is neither advocated nor necessary, just the implementation of reasonable common sense. Pleasure is as important as purpose to a fulfilled life, for what would be the point otherwise?

In addition to recycling let's move towards exchanging and reusing. If something is useful what does it matter that it is not new? Let's develop a sense of community by sharing what we have with others. From our present position as passive participants in the global greed machine, we can move toward lives that are utterly different in their motivation and, therefore, in their quality. When we do this we will have those who would be our leaders sitting up to take notice, for they need us much more than we need them.

RELIGION

It is hard to comprehend that belief systems designed by people who lived several thousand years ago, are still used to justify our exploitation and abuse of the Earth. We do not have, and have never had, any sort of divine dominion over other life. What we do have, by virtue of our unique human capacities, is the ability to act as we see fit. To choose to reject the obvious conclusions of reason, in favour of blind faith in a next world better than this, is an insult to the Earth. What is it about these belief systems that seems to grant them immunity from rational criticism and that can equate faith with reason. In parts of the world the belief that the Earth was created in seven days, just a few thousand years ago, is actually gaining ground!

Much of our world is made up of curious contradictions, and the apparent paradox of faith and reason is just such a one. Without the centres of learning that grew out of the early churches we would not have the knowledge that now leads many to dismiss the notion of deity. So the worlds of science and religion have gone their separate and equally dogmatic ways, leaving common sense as the voice crying out in the wilderness. The question for us is whether these disparate ways of looking at the world, and our relationship to it, can be reconciled and made reasonable.

The best hope for this would seem to be for any beliefs we have to be grounded in ourselves and the part that we play in the process of continuous creation that science calls evolution. The laws of god so favoured by religion were written by the same hand as secular law. Indeed, no words have ever been written other than by the human hand, and it is only the claim of divine inspiration that confers the appearance of difference. As we come ever more to self aware knowledge of our own existence, it becomes more obvious that communications from the unconscious mind have previously been interpreted as other worldly.

That many people still crave meaning is illustrated by the flourishing variety of so called new age beliefs. The one interesting, and possibly hopeful, aspect of this is how many of these beliefs are grounded in a

respect for the Earth. The trick for us now is to realise that in order to live in a way that recognises and makes real this respect we do not need any external belief system. What we do need is to live in such a way as to make it happen.

The purpose of this manifesto is to contribute to this process and it is, therefore, a call to action and not to faith. We must have more confidence in our ability to run our own affairs without requiring recourse to the idea of divine instruction. That we are born, live and then die is a fact that we should by now be used to. Not to ground our lives in this world or to cherish the Earth for those who come after, would seem to be a betrayal of the evolutionary process of creation that has made us what we are.

The fact that we do not all act in a pathological manner, thinking only of our own benefit, tends to the belief that what we call conscience is a development of our evolutionary progress. In considering this process it is reasonable to conclude that ever more of our cognitive abilities move from the unconscious to the conscious realm of our minds. The concept of god, deriving from the unconscious and, therefore, seeming external to our being, can be seen to be evolving to the internal personal conscience. In this way faith is made reasonable in the acceptance of full responsibility for the consequences of our actions. The imposition of external authority, anathema to many, no longer necessary, replaced by individual awareness.

SCIENCE

Much as with religion, science also seeks for truth in the external world. These twin strands of our development have each, in their own way, wreaked havoc on our lives whilst assuring us that they are the means of our salvation. Whilst religion busied itself in the metaphysical realm, science took apart the world in search of knowledge that might be put to our advantage. That both should have the absolute right to their enquiries was never open to question, though it now seems clear that it is we who are being asked to pay the price. For as science travels ever further into a world that would have once seemed metaphysical, it has opened the door to an unknown and frightening future.

The first and most obvious consequence of the ability of science to tamper with the building blocks of nature now hangs heavy over the world. Each of us has to live with the knowledge that total annihilation by nuclear weapons is possible. Yet we are also told that those who developed this science are people of genius. If this is so then may we all be saved from the curse of genius. The continuing enquiries into the fundamental properties of matter now threaten to deliver a whole raft of new technologies, whose effects will certainly not be to help us develop a more natural and sustainable life. This research is generally undertaken for the benefit of business, and where the motivation is money little good is likely to come of it.

Earth First Manifesto utterly deplores the genetic manipulation of animal lives for any reason, as it also deplores altering the underlying genetic structure of plants. That this is now being done, not for some supposed good, but for reasons of commercial exploitation is totally unacceptable. All those who care for the Earth should oppose this warped science in whatever way possible. Notwithstanding the unknown and possibly catastrophic consequences of such tampering, it is an ethical obscenity.

All life is born equal and should never be subjected to such treatment. The horror felt at eugenic experiments on human animals is equally well directed at this development. The world of science is increasingly like that of the horror film, whose stories of man made monsters now seem eerily like a warning.

Humans have also become the subject of experiment as science seeks the unholy grail of creating life in the laboratory. Not content with control of our lives, it seems that we might soon be born designed to some blueprint devised by the corporate state. Any opposition to this process is dismissed as backward looking fundamentalism seeking to block the progress of science. What it is, in fact, is the last stand of common sense. To be born a compliant clone, programmed to willing participation in the brave new techno world is not to be born at all, it is to be made. All semblance of self determination removed, no better than an automaton. Even the acknowledged father of the modern scientific paradigm, Descartes, said "I am therefore I think". It seems that, if science has its way, this privilege may be denied to us.

Science is the basis of technology and technology is the basis of business. As business is now master of the political process, the state always accepts the word of science as gospel. How often do we now hear the mantra, “but we must accept the science”? How often do we then have to sit back and watch the appalling consequences unfold? Animal health crises; abuse in action. Unfolding epidemics; drugs only recently introduced already useless. Always science believes that it knows better than the natural balance of the Earth established over aeons.

Some humility would not go amiss, for the maxim that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing has proved all too true. Wherever and however possible we must oppose the monster that science has become. We must reject its arrogant belief that it has the right to do whatever it wishes. There is little point in realising that we no longer need the authority of a religious master, only to find ourselves subjected to an even worse tyranny. Do not expect the state to redress the balance for it is already bought and paid for, fully signed up to this journey into darkness. Once again it is for those of us who care to take matters into our own hands and do something about it.

WORK

For most of us the world of work is now the world in which we live. To survive we must have money to buy the things we need, and to get money we must do work for which we will be paid. No matter that we might apply ourselves with great diligence or creativity to some seemingly worthwhile occupation, if it doesn't pay it is considered worthless. In the ever tighter grip of the state controlled greed machine it is not permissible to choose not to participate in the world of work, and to survive outside it is now virtually impossible.

All aspects of our lives are controlled and dissent is not tolerated. We must pay taxes on the wages that we make and then pay more on the things that we buy. To live outside this system is not allowed. Every inch of land is owned and subject to taxation, and in this economic society the only way to opt out is to claim welfare from the state, which will then declare us parasites.

This is our democracy that claims to be acting in the best interests of us all, but whose only real interest is wealth and power. In our name the state, through the agency of global business, sponsors the holocaust we are wreaking. Each of us that participates tacitly supports the rape, pillage and plunder of the Earth and, mostly, we choose not to be concerned. In our name wars are waged around the world, normally for the protection of commercial interests. The money we invest, and that which is taken in taxation, is used by the global greed machine to finance the destruction they perpetrate, and the controls imposed upon our lives get ever tighter.

Unless we are fortunate enough to acquire sufficient wealth, we are expected to work from the moment we leave school until a few years before we die. Then we are permitted to relax, but only if we have saved sufficient money for our retirement. This is a problem for those of us who realise that every penny is taken from the Earth, and who choose to live on little rather than on much. Greed, which was for so long considered bad, now is not just approved but pretty much compulsory. The whole ethic under which we live, and which we allow the state to dictate to us, is rotten to the core. Somehow we must find a way to escape from this vice which is squeezing the very life force out of us.

Once, our lives were governed by the seasons that changed according to the motion of the Earth about the Sun. Having settled our existence these seasons dictated when we should plant our crops and when they should be harvested. Now, in the world of work, we are monitored and scheduled to the second. The labour that we must do, to validate and justify our existence, revolves around the ever turning wheel of the working week. The weeks turn into months that we count down to the arrival of a holiday or some other break from work. The months turn into years that seem to fly by ever faster until, before we know it, we are old and ready to retire. This is the great gift of advanced civilisation. To be broken on the wheel of greed and ignorance, complicit in the destruction of the Earth.

Our lives are no longer our own but are instead at the command of those who rule over us. It does not have to be like this and it is not yet too late to do something about it. We act as we do largely because we

have not yet properly come to terms with our own existence, not yet realised the empowerment brought by growing self awareness. It is as if we are perpetually trying to prove something in order to validate ourselves. But who are we trying to prove something to? No one but ourselves, and how unnecessary is that? Now that we are aware of the consequences of our paranoid rampage about the world, surely we can see that it is time to slow down and take stock. Otherwise we will go down in some, probably unwritten, history of the Earth as nothing more than a temporary aberration.

The seconds that make up a minute, the minutes that make up an hour, the days, weeks, months and years that make up our lives, are the time that we count down until we die. Almost all of these are make believe, an illusion. That the Earth revolves upon its axis, bringing the light that we call day, and the dark that we call night, this we know. That the Earth makes turn about the sun but never stops to mark the changing of the year, this we know. All else that we have created as the divisions that distinguish the passing of time are just that, construct inventions. So we pass our time, our working life, living in expectation of some better time that will be ours if we just work hard enough. No matter the consequences, we must work to live and live to work.

Those of us who care, and choose to change, need to develop new cooperative ways of living that are not motivated by greed or fear. Ways of living more closely associated with the natural cycles of the Earth, that are holistic and sustainable. Science defines work as the expenditure of energy, and energy as the fundamental force of nature. The Earth and all life on it are manifestations of universal energy, and the wages of our over energetic work have been death and destruction on an appalling scale.

Unless we learn to live within our means we have no future, for our capabilities far outweigh our intelligence. The natural world is founded on cause and effect and we are not immune from this process. It is both fair and indifferent, and just as we have had more than what might seem our fair chance, so will it also be indifferent to our demise. There is no time to waste, the moment, as always, is now. We must choose to care, we must choose to change.

CALL TO ACTION

The articles in the previous section of this manifesto are not intended to be all encompassing. Nor do they claim any dogmatic monopoly on truth. As well as helping us to change the way in which we act, they are intended to illustrate the mindset of those who seek to control us, to show what interests they really represent. The forces they have assembled to protect these interests are formidable, and we will have to use considerable intelligence in devising campaigns of action likely to bring us success.

Earth First Manifesto explicitly rejects the use of violence but supports the use of all reasonable means on the basis of ethical reasoning. To come to the defence of another life being subjected to violence is right. To come to the defence of the Earth that is our home is right. We must not be cowed by those for whom violence is a way of life into believing that any practical action is wrong. It is they who are wrong and we must do whatever it takes to put an end to the rape, pillage and plunder of the planet that goes on unabated. This feeding frenzy, fuelled by greed, is killing untold lives and destroying the Earth. It has to stop.

With the acceptance of responsibility and the ensuing decision to live on the little that we need, our most effective tactic requires no specific action against any other. All that matters is that we manage to persuade sufficient people to choose to change. Results will become readily apparent, and momentum will gather as more of us realise the

seriousness of the situation we have created.

It would, however, be naïve to believe that this approach alone will achieve the sustainable future we desire. Nor will it put an end to the abuse and exploitation of life, or of the Earth itself. Once we have committed ourselves to the process of personal change, it is vital that we come together to oppose these destructive forces by all appropriate means. For this reason we must issue a **Call to Action**.

Those who govern us would have us believe that they support the right to so called democratic protest, and we must put this to the test. The barbaric acts of crazed religious fundamentalists are neither reason nor excuse to curtail the personal freedom of all. Do not be cowed by the state into dull conformity, for those who govern us do so only because of the actions of those whose protest unseated the tyrants who preceded them.

Democracy attempts to claim our allegiance not just by the promise of material wealth, which we reject, but also by endowing all people with maximum personal freedom. Regrettably, power has always tended to corrupt, due to its addictive nature, and those who exercise it need constant reminder of this. Any action that does not impinge on another should be no business of the state, but they protect the indefensible and prosecute the innocent.

As a society we appear to be some way from being able to live in such a way as to dispense with all governance, but that which we have is unacceptable. It has no ethic other than greed and seems indifferent to the plight of the Earth and all other life. Based on greed and sustained by the greedy, it has no mandate other than greed. This must be changed.

There are already many groups who actively campaign in the fields of **Life Rights** and **Earth Awareness**. Often they are wrongly pilloried as extremists by those in authority who are the real culprits. Each of us must act in accordance with our conscience when deciding on appropriate behaviour. If some protest might seem to have overstepped the mark the frustration is surely understandable, and no action has been taken that in any way compares with the appalling abuse and

exploitation which is being opposed.

Let us join with and contribute to these groups and support them in any way we can. All the information we require is readily available on the internet. If we wish to we can start new groups, the more the merrier, for we are no one party state but a movement of concerned individuals. Above all we must make our voices heard.

Earth First Manifesto does not purport to be a definitive document but merely a contribution to this vital debate. We watch the drive towards wealth of billions of people in the less industrialised world and fear for the future. We must, however, realise that they only want what we already have. It is only we, therefore, who can stand up and admit that we were wrong. That the dream we were chasing is fast turning into a nightmare. Its allure of glamour an illusion, its promise of fulfilment an empty one. Our technology driven world and the wealth it has accrued are fool's gold scoured from the Earth. Unless we choose to change we shall end up as nothing more than masters of our own desolation, and those who wish to join us will find only dust and ashes awaiting them.

This Earth on which we live is home to us and to all other manifestations of the force which we call life. We must learn to cherish it and to cherish each and every other. Life is life and to regard one form as lesser than another not acceptable. There is only one world, the one in which we live, and we each have but one chance. For us to waste that one chance we have to make a difference would surely be a shame. So we must choose to care, to accept responsibility, to change, for in that way the future will be ours to decide. Evolution has favoured us with this ability, but it is we who will decide whether we deserve it, or whether we will be relegated to the status of a footnote in the extraordinary story of life on Earth.