UNIT 14 GREENPEACE MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE

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14.1 INTRODUCTION

Greenpeace, the International environmental organisation founded in 1969, during a nonviolent direct action campaign against US nuclear weapons testing in Alaska, probably has been the most successful of the many environmental organisations that use nonviolent action. Certainly it was one of the first, and by combining a philosophical base, clear strategic design, scientific research, political and legal research and lobbying, courageous direct action, and brilliant use of media attention, it has made tremendous gains both for the organisation itself and for the environment it has sought to protect. The central philosophy of that original "Greenpeace" organisation was nonviolent direct action on behalf of the planet earth. It was an inspiring concept, and it created a movement.

Greenpeace has earned a unique role in the international environmental movement due to its willingness to take direct action and its refusal to compromise on the issue of critical environmental import. Greenpeace works on issues of global importance; yet, unlike more mainstream nature and wildlife conservation groups, it uses confrontational tactics to change corporate and government behaviour. Greenpeace is not a local membership group, although its toxics, energy, and genetic engineering campaigns increasingly work at the grassroots level to enhance environmental activism in communities worldwide. Although Greenpeace is a self-proclaimed direct action group, its commitment to non-violence precludes the use of property damaging tactics such as those employed by decentralised and anarchistic direct action groups. Greenpeace does not participate in party politics or support political candidates; however, it does lobby with governments and holds them

accountable for failing to adopt stringent laws to safeguard human health and the environment.

Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- The concept and mission behind the Greenpeace Movement.
- The nature of its non-violent campaigns.
- Its accomplishments, criticisms and relevance in the 21st century.

14.2 ORIGIN AND MISSION

Origin

Greenpeace is an international group of non-governmental organisation for the protection and conservation of the environment. Greenpeace utilises direct action, lobbying and research to achieve its goals. Greenpeace has a worldwide presence with national and regional offices in 46 countries, which are affiliated to the Amsterdam-based Greenpeace International. The global organisation receives its income through the individual contributions of an estimated 3 million financial supporters. Bill Darnell has received the credit for combining the words "green" and "peace", thereby giving the organisation its future name. Irving Stowe, Paul Coté and Jim Bohlen are co-founders of Greenpeace.

Greenpeace had its origins in nonviolent action. In October 1969, the newly formed 'Don't Make a Wave' Committee discussed how to continue the momentum of what was both an anti-war and environment movement protesting the US underground nuclear testing at Amchitka Island, Alaska. American Marie Bohlen who, with her husband, Jim, had been one of the founders of the British Columbia chapter of the Sierra Club, suggested sailing a boat to Amchitka and mooring it near the bomb site. At a later meeting, as American Quaker Irving Stowe left the meeting with his usual peace sig, Canadian Bill Darnell added, "make it a green peace". Jim Bohlen said they could name the boat Greenpeace if they ever found one.

Greenpeace, originally known as the Greenpeace Foundation, was founded in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1971. While the boat never reached its destination and was turned back by the US military, this campaign was deemed the first using of the name 'Greenpeace'. In 1972, the Greenpeace Foundation evolved as a less conservative and structured collective of environmentalists who were more reflective of the days of counterculture and hippie youth movements who were spearheading the social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. The social and cultural background from which Greenpeace emerged heralded a period of de-conditioning away from the old world antecedents and sought to develop new codes of social, environmental and political behaviour. The focus of the organisation later turned from anti-nuclear protest to other environmental issues: whaling, bottom trawling, global warming, old growth, nuclear power, and even genetically modified organisms.

Mission

Greenpeace is an independent global campaigning organisation that acts to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace by:

1. Catalysing an energy revolution to address the number one threat facing our planet: climate change.
2. Defending our oceans by challenging wasteful and destructive fishing, and creating a global network of marine reserves.
3. Protecting the world's remaining ancient forests, which are depended on by many animals, plants and people.
4. Working for disarmament and peace by reducing dependence on finite resources and calling for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.
5. Creating a toxic free future with safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals in today's products and manufacturing.
6. Campaigning for sustainable agriculture by encouraging socially and ecologically responsible farming practices.

14.3 EARLY DAYS AND STEADY GROWTH

14.3.1 Early Days

Following in the Quaker tradition of "bearing witness" and the Quaker protest voyages of the Phoenix and the Golden Rule against US nuclear tests in the 1950s and early 1960s, the Greenpeace sailed to the Amchitka test zone from Vancouver in September 1971. Although the first nuclear explosion to be protested was cancelled and the second occurred before the ship arrived, the voyages grabbed mass media attention in a pattern that would work well for Greenpeace on many issues. Shortly after the second voyage, the US military ended its use of the Alaskan area for nuclear testing.

In 1972, the yacht Vega, a 12.5-metre (41 ft) ketch owned by David McTaggart (an eventual spokesman for Greenpeace International), was renamed Greenpeace III and sailed in an anti-nuclear protest into the exclusion zone at Mururoa in French Polynesia to attempt to disrupt French atmospheric nuclear testing. This voyage was sponsored and organised by the New Zealand branch of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. CNDNZ and the New Zealand Peace Media had been lobbying the New Zealand Government and the New Zealand public to place pressure on Britain and France to agree to enforce a nuclear test ban in the South Pacific since the mid 1950s.

In 1973, the yacht Fri spearheaded an international protest of a flotilla of yachts in a voyage against atmospheric nuclear tests at Mururoa in French Polynesia. Fri was an important part of a series of anti-nuclear protest campaigns out of New Zealand and Australia which lasted thirty years, from which New Zealand declared itself a Nuclear free zone which became enshrined in legislation in what became the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987. This voyage was organised by CNDNZ and the New Zealand Peace Media. In 1974, coordinated by Greenpeace New Zealand, the Fri embarked on a 3 year 40,233 kilometres "Pacific Peace Odyssey" voyage, carrying the peace message to all nuclear states around the world.

14.3.2 Growing Area of Influence

Greenpeace's activities and membership has grown beyond its direct action origins so that it now employs a combination of nonviolent direct action, scientific inquiry, and political action to oppose such problems as toxic waste shipment and disposal, acid rain, the

slaughter of seal pubs and kangaroos, nuclear weapons at sea, whaling, driftnet fishing, and ocean pollution. By 1976, Greenpeace's active membership was eight thousand, with thirteen very active branches around the world and twenty-eight heard from occasionally, according to Vancouver Sun. By 1980 Boston alone counted twenty-five thousand contributors, and about fifty different actions took place in that year alone. By 1991 a Greenpeace publication listed offices in twenty-three countries. In the mid 1990s however, declining membership and financial concerns forced the organisation to close several local offices.

14.4 OTHER CAMPAIGNS

In 1975, the Vancouver-based Greenpeace Foundation mounted an anti-whaling campaign which encountered Soviet whalers over the seamounts off Mendocino, California. This campaign had been influenced by the work of Paul Spong and Farley Mowat as well as Robert Hunter's encounter with the Orca Skana.

In 1976, a campaign was launched against the killing and skinning of baby seals in Newfoundland for the high-fashion fur trade, targeting Norwegian ships engaged in the trade after receiving a hostile welcome from the Newfoundland fishermen involved in the hunt. Greenpeace used helicopters to move people and supplies to a base camp at Belle Isle. Brigitte Bardot later got involved in this campaign, to great effect. In the same year another anti-whaling expedition, using the James Bay as Greenpeace VII, disrupted the Soviet fleet again, but this time with the assistance of a "deep throat" source and extra funding from Ed Daly of World Airways. At about the same time visits to Japan were arranged to persuade the Japanese people that whaling should end.

By the late 1970s, spurred by the global reach of what Robert Hunter called "mind bombs", in which the images of confrontation on the high seas converted diffuse and complex issues into considerably more media-friendly David versus Goliath-style narratives, more than 20 groups across North America, Europe, New Zealand and Australia had adopted the name "Greenpeace".

In the mid-1970s, the activities of the organisation had expanded as it embraced more singularly environmental issues. Among the first of these was the antiwhaling campaign. Combining scientific research with the direct action of placing their bodies and ships between the Soviet and Japanese whaling fleets and the whales, the Greenpeace brought the issue of whaling to public attention. Their skillful photography of their direct actions was used widely in the news media. This combination became a trademark of Greenpeace work. What was not so obvious to public view, and what is not so clearly played up in Greenpeace publicity, is that this publicly visible action was accompanied by a less visible but no less important action of Greenpeace lawyers and scientists who were lobbying the International Whaling Commission. In a very short span of time, this combination began to have an effect on the positions of countries represented on the commission, and more serious restrictions on whaling began to come out of the commission.

Among the other efforts of the Greenpeace has been the campaign to save Newfoundland harp seal pubs from being slaughtered for fur by commercial sealing fleets from Norway and Canada; the campaign to save Antarctica by turning it into an international park; and the campaign to stop several European nations from ocean dumping of radioactive waste. In this last campaign, again, the Greenpeace combined the techniques of careful scientific,

political and legal research, with direct actions (banners, painting emblems on ships, placing themselves in the way of barrels of nuclear waste being dumped), photography of the direct action which was then fed to the news media, and direct negotiation with the London Dumping Convention, which regulates the disposal of nuclear waste.

One of the key factors in Greenpeace's success in capturing the interest of public was the consistency of the direct-action technique employed with the objective which, the Greenpeace was attempting to accomplish. The David and Goliath image was particularly effective in the pictures of Greenpeace members on an iceberg hugging seal pups as the iceberg was about to be hit by a government ship, and the pictures of Zodiac rafts harassing the freighter Pacific Fisher as it carried nuclear fuel rods from Japan to France and Britain. Another common technique was the physical obstruction of something they wished to stop, such as when the Greenpeace ship Sirius attempted to block the arrival of the Pacific Crane, which was carrying spent nuclear fuel rods from Japan into the France's Cherbourg harbour. A similar technique was also used to advantage in many of Greenpeace's acid rain and toxic waste campaigns when activists blocked factory smokestack and outflow pipes. In 1987, for example, demonstrators scaled to smokestacks of a garbage incinerator in Tacoma, Washington, and plugged them with giant makeshift corks.

Greenpeace has always used the technique of exposing the aspects of a debate that might be hidden. For example, the Greenpeace pictures of whaling, driftnet fishing, sealing, and toxic waste operations graphically brought issues to the attention of the international community that might not otherwise have seen the light of the day. One unique example, less dramatic but no less effective, was the chance a Greenpeace member offered the public to see the Seattle mayor's own garbage after a raid on his trash-can a few nights before. The mayor had been advocating the building of an incinerator in the south end of the city, but not in his backyard.

Greenpeace's international network has enabled it to make connections between different levels and locations of a problem and to help others to make connections as well. When Thor (a corporation from the United Kingdom) and American Cyanamid (a US Business) exported toxic waste to South Africa, Greenpeace took samples in the Valley of the 1000 Hills, worked with local organisations to educate people on the danger, and worked with Earthlife Africa to discredit an illegal waste dump and to expose water supply problems. Most of Africa is now off limits to toxic waste dumping as a result of such work.

14.4.1 Anti-nuclear Campaigns

Few of Greenpeace's antinuclear campaigns are better known than the last voyage of the Rainbow Warrior, the ship what was sunk on July 10, 1985, by French Government agents in the harbour of Auckland, New Zealand, while on a trip to protest French nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll. This trip has demonstrated two of the techniques that had been central to Greenpeace's work. First, the members of the Greenpeace were to bear witness to nuclear testing by putting themselves in harm's way in the test area. Second, the members took others out of harm's way. Prior to the Auckland stop, the Rainbow Warrior had taken four trips from Rongelap to Majeto to relocate three hundred islanders whose home had been contaminated by radioactive fallout from the US nuclear tests conducted between 1946 and 1958.

The sabotage of the Rainbow Warrior, which also killed Greenpeace photographer Fernando Pereira, led New Zealanders to display the slogan "You can't sink a rainbow"

in the streets of Wellington as they began to raise money for Greenpeace. After the discovery that it was French agents who had carried out the bombing, the UN Secretary General mediated the resulting dispute between New Zealand and France. The Greenpeace, which suffered the loss of life, loss of the ship, and cancellation of the immediate campaign, nevertheless gained publicity that tremendously increased its membership. When its French office reopened in 1989, for example, it gained 13,500 members in the very first year alone.

14.5 THE NEW BEGINNING

Since its beginning, there have been signs of unity and of disunity within Greenpeace. Greenpeace's philosophy has been rooted in nonviolence and internationalism. In its willingness to employ direct action, the organisation moved beyond the activities of traditional conservation groups. But Greenpeace's diversity was both in its strength and its weakness. Composed of scientists, journalists, anti-nuclear activists, and people from various walks of life, Greenpeace experienced the usual difficulties of a family on their first voyage. As it grew and became more successful, there were two kinds of conflict. First, the growth and bureaucratisation led to accusations from more radical activists that Greenpeace was losing its direct-action impetus to more conventional political lobbying. In the Greenpeace, organisational set-up, there has been an element of tension between those involved in direct action and those involved in influencing the legal and political system by a combination of scientific expertise and lobbying. But, as the examples above suggest, this combination has also been Greenpeace's strength.

The second kind of conflict that Greenpeace experienced was due to the tremendous growth in its membership during the 1970s. Offices had varying fund-raising capabilities, and many experienced difficulties juggling assets, expenses, debts, and campaigns. Factionalism grew, resulting at one point in a lawsuit between the Vancouver and San Francisco offices. When Robert Hunter resigned as president in April 1977, Patrick Moore tried unsuccessfully to set up an international board of directors. Resolution of the various crises came when David McTaggart stitched together an agreement in which Greenpeace Europe paid Vancouver debts, and the US, Canadian and European groups formed the new umbrella organisation, Greenpeace International, headquartered in Netherlands.

Formation of Formal Global Organisation

In 1979, the original Vancouver-based Greenpeace Foundation encountered financial difficulties. Disputes between offices over fund-raising and organisational direction split the global movement. David McTaggart lobbied the Canadian Greenpeace Foundation to accept a new structure, which would bring the scattered Greenpeace offices under the auspices of a single global organisation. On October 14, 1979, the Greenpeace International came into existence. Under the new structure, the local offices would contribute a percentage of their income to the international organisation, which would take responsibility for setting the overall direction of the movement.

Greenpeace's transformation from a loose international network to a global organisation enabled it to apply the full force of its resources to a small number of environmental issues deemed of global significance, owing much to McTaggart's personal vision. McTaggart summed up his approach in a 1994 memo: "No campaign should be begun without clear goals; no campaign should be begun unless there is a possibility that it can

be won; no campaign should be begun unless you intend to finish it off". McTaggart's own assessment of what could and could not be won, as well as how, frequently caused controversy.

In re-shaping Greenpeace as a centrally coordinated, hierarchical organisation, McTaggart went against the anti-authoritarian ethos that prevailed in other environmental organisations that came of age in the 1970s. While this pragmatic structure granted Greenpeace the persistence and narrow focus necessary to match forces with government and industry, it would lead to the recurrent criticism that Greenpeace had adopted the same methods of governance as its chief foes, the multinational corporations.

For smaller actions and for continuous local promotion and activism, Greenpeace has networks of active supporters that coordinate their efforts through national offices. The United Kingdom has some 6,000 Greenpeace activists.

14.5.1 Campaigning Ships

Since Greenpeace was founded, sea-going ships have played a vital role in its campaigns. In 1978, Greenpeace launched the original Rainbow Warrior, a 40-metre (130 ft), former fishing trawler named for the Cree legend that inspired early activist Robert Hunter on the first voyage to Amchitka. Greenpeace purchased the Rainbow Warrior (originally launched as the Sir William Hardy in 1955) at a cost of £40,000. Volunteers restored and refitted it over a period of four months.

First deployed to disrupt the hunt of the Icelandic whaling fleet, the Rainbow Warrior would quickly become a mainstay of Greenpeace campaigns. Between 1978 and 1985, the crew members also engaged in non-violent direct action against the ocean-dumping of toxic and radioactive waste, the Grey Seal hunt in Orkney and nuclear testing in the Pacific. Japan's Fisheries Agency has labeled Greenpeace ships as "anti-whaling vessels" and "environmental terrorists".

In 1985, the Rainbow Warrior entered into the waters surrounding Mururoa Atoll, the site of French nuclear testing. The sinking of the Rainbow Warrior occurred when the French government secretly bombed the ship in Auckland harbour on orders from François Mitterrand himself. This killed the Dutch freelance photographer Fernando Pereira, who thought it was safe to enter the boat to get his photographic material after a first small explosion, but drowned as a result of a second, larger explosion. The attack was a public relations disaster for France after it was quickly exposed by the New Zealand police. The French Government in 1987 agreed to pay New Zealand compensation of NZ$13 million and formally apologised for the bombing. The French Government also paid £ 2.3 million compensation to the family of the photographer.

In 1989, the Greenpeace commissioned a replacement vessel, also named the Rainbow Warrior, which remains in service today as the flagship of the Greenpeace fleet.

In 1996, the Greenpeace vessel MV Sirius was detained by the Dutch police while protesting the import of genetically modified soybeans due to the violation of a temporary sailing prohibition, which was implemented because the Sirius prevented their unloading. The ship, but not the captain, was released half an hour later.

In 2005, the Rainbow Warrior II ran aground on and damaged the Tubbataha Reef in the Philippines while she was, ironically, on a mission to protect the very same reef. Greenpeace was fined $7,000 USD for damaging the reef and agreed to pay the fine, although it said that the Philippines government had given it outdated charts.

14.6 GREENPEACE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

On August 21, 2007, Yvo de Boer, head of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), angered the environmental groups with his suggestion that "rich nations should be absolved from the need to cut emissions if they pay developing countries to do it on their behalf". Doug Parr of Greenpeace opposed Mr. de Boer's suggestion: "The current trading system is not delivering emissions reductions as it is ... Expanding it like this to give rich countries a completely free hand will simply not work." On August 22, 2007, the Philippine Department of Energy's plan to develop nuclear energy as an alternative source of power was opposed by Von Hernandez, campaign director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, who warned that exploring nuclear options to bolster energy demand is "dangerous and misleading." He said the risks of accidents like Chernobyl or the most recent Kashiwazaki nuclear plant leak in Japan after an earthquake are real.

Four Greenpeace activists breached security at Heathrow Airport on February 25, 2008 to climb on top of a British Airways plane and protest plans to build a third runway. On May 23, 2008, Greenpeace blocked coal shipments of Team Energy Philippines and the intention was to prevent expansion of coal power plants in the country. They sprayed a banner saying "Quit Coal" on the ship, but after negotiations they withdrew.

In August 2008, a Greenpeace ship started dropping 150 2-3 ton boulders into the North Sea in order to stop trawling, which it says harms marine life, demanding that Germany and the European Union implement a ban on heavy net bottom trawling in the protected area. The German fishermen said that the rocks could damage boats and threaten fishermen's lives. The Federation of Fishermen Associations refused to talk with Greenpeace after the action and its president Ben Daalder made the statement "We don't negotiate with a criminal organisation."

In September 2008, 6 Greenpeace activists who damaged a chimney at a power plant in the UK were declared "not guilty" of property destruction by a jury because they argued, through James Hansen, who supported them in person, that they actually prevented greater property destruction due to climate change.

14.6.1 Criticism

Greenpeace has at times been criticised for pursuing an environmental issue at the expense of legitimate social or economic concerns. For example, in the mid 1980s, Greenpeace was criticised for advocating the "zero kill" of baby harp seals in Newfoundland, Canada, because the organisation failed to consider the effects it would have on the indigenous people. Seal hunting not only provides a subsistence livelihood for many Newfoundlanders and Eskimos but the practice also holds important cultural meaning for hunters. After this issue was brought to Greenpeace's attention, the organisation modified its position to oppose large-scale government subsidised hunts and to support subsistence hunts which have helped people meet their clothing and food needs for centuries.

In 1984, the Greenpeace was criticised by the New Jersey's Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) for failing to consider the economic and job loss implications for their campaign against the discharge of toxic waste into the Atlantic Ocean from Ciba Geigy's chemical plant. Although Greenpeace had networked with local environmental groups, it failed to contact the union despite objections from some Greenpeace campaigners. The snub backfired as potential allies turned into enemies and the union launched a

statewide smear campaign against Greenpeace. It took several years of working with unions during subsequent campaigns against polluting chemical companies before Greenpeace gained the union's trust, respect, and at times, assistance.

14.6.2 Major Accomplishments

Noteworthy Greenpeace accomplishments include securing a ban on hazardous waste trade from highly industrialised nations to less-industrialised ones; scuttling oil industry plans to bury the Brent Spar oil rig off the British coast; achieving a moratorium on the planting of genetically engineered crops in Europe; and eliminating toxic (polyvinyl chloride) plastic in baby toys manufactured by a leading toy company. At the political level, Greenpeace has helped persuade national governments to adopt international agreements that curtail environmentally destructive practices worldwide. These agreements include also establishing Antarctica as a world park, a global moratorium on the burning of toxic waste at sea and a global moratorium on nuclear waste dumping at sea and commercial whaling.

14.6.3 Connecting Social and Environmental Consequences

Greenpeace illuminates the connections between the social and environmental consequences of global industrial and agricultural production. For example, during protests against Dutch Royal Shell's oil drilling operations in Ogoniland, Nigeria, Greenpeace witnessed the company's pipelines leaking and parching the Earth in local communities. When the Nigerian government hanged nine local activists in 1995 for demanding that Dutch Royal Shell clean up its operations, Greenpeace denounced both the human and environmental abuses suffered by the Ogoni people. Similarly, in Bhopal, India, Greenpeace has participated in protests against Union Carbide (now Dow) for its failure to compensate more than 150,000 people still suffering the ill-effects from the gas leak at its pesticide plant in 1984. Greenpeace has joined local groups in their demand for health care, compensation, and environmental reparations.

In 2002, when the US government responded to the hunger epidemic in Zambia by offering genetically engineered (GE) corn against the will of the people, Greenpeace publicly demanded that the United States instead donate some of its vast supply of non-GE food stocks.

In the future, it is likely that the Greenpeace will be increasingly challenged to address social issues within the context of its environmental framework. Terrorist attacks such as the one that devastated New York City's World Trade Centre in 2001 and the subsequent reinvigoration of armed forces around the world heighten this challenge as Greenpeace seeks to define a "green" peace within a politically sensitive climate. Thus one of the greatest challenges for Greenpeace remains how to situate its campaigns within broad global, economic, and geopolitical frameworks without losing sight of its environmental mission.

14.7 SUMMARY

Greenpeace remains one of the premier environmental organisations, combining the traditional political activities and coalitions with nonviolent direct action. It is largely because of its innovative uses of nonviolent action, it has had a large influence on both the agenda of the global environmental movement and various national and international policies. Its activists spearhead six major campaigns to (1) stop global warming, (2) save

ancient forests, (3) eliminate toxic chemical production and pollution, (4) halt the genetic engineering of food, (5) achieve a nuclear-free future, and (6) protect the world's oceans.

14.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Why is Greenpeace called a peaceful non-violent movement?
2. What are the early accomplishments of Greenpeace?
3. How has Greenpeace contributed to anti-nuclear movements?
4. What kind of criticism has Greenpeace attracted for its activities?
5. What accomplishments can Greenpeace be credited with?

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