

ECODEVELOPMENT-EDUCATION-POLITICS

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Introduction

Ecodevelopment as an issue has been appearing in programs of international conferences and in numerous publications for some years now. Since 1969 it has been more and more popular in Poland as well.

Ecodevelopment is understood as a new style of living, a new model of management, according to which all production activities, all forms of recreation and education are aimed at harmonious coexistence with nature. This is a great idea which has already been put into practice in many developed countries of the world. In Poland this conception has just gone on its way.

During the last 45 years, it has been the social-economic policy in Poland to exploit natural resources maximally and to transform natural surroundings radically, all according to ideological principles. The rate of natural resources exploitation, the extent of industrial production or the area of the swamps drained dry and then ploughed etc. was of great importance to the authorities. There has been a great deal of propaganda about the necessity of intensively transforming nature with the greatest possible economic profits, for the sake of humankind.

The results of such politics have brought about growing deterioration of nature and environmental pollution. At the beginning of the eighties the pollution was so high that 6% of the country's territory was regarded as ecologically endangered and 5% as areas of ecological disaster. In total, 11% of the country's area exceeded considerably the permissible level of environmental pollution with 30% of Poles living there.

This has had an extremely negative effect on the wholesomeness of people. For instance, in one of the cities in Silesia, with zinc works nearby, the miscarriage index among pregnant women was 52%. The average life span of women in Lodz is 3 years shorter than the country's average.

The health of forests in Poland reflects this difficult ecological situation. Approximately 50% of forests here show unfavorable physiological changes resulting from air pollution. Total deforestation of a whole mountain range has taken place in the Izerski Mountains.

Programme of Biopolitics in Poland

In the last few years, a number of scientific publications have been issued, dealing with the ecological and economic consequences of environmental pollution in Poland. A chance for an essential change in the politics of the state arose only in 1989, when a new strategy was adopted to base the new economic system on eco-development. Based on these agreements, the Ministry of Environmental Preservation prepared a document in 1990 entitled Ecological Politics of the State.

Three stages are considered in this document, to improve the environmental situation in Poland:

- A. The Long Term, 20-30 years, during which harmony must be reached between nature and the economy.
- B. The Medium Term, a period lasting 7-10 years during which the environment preservation requirements will approximate the world standards.
- C. The Short Term, a period of 2-3 years during which the most serious environmental hazards will be overcome.

Obviously the state of harmony between nature and economy cannot be reached right away all over the country. It is a very difficult and long-lasting process. It is quite realistic and fully justified to introduce the principles of eco-development in areas of great natural and scenic beauty. In Poland these areas are legally protected and known as National Parks (17), Landscape Parks (70) and Protected Landscape Areas (running spatially, amoebaform system). These areas constitute 20% of the country's territory and there are some restrictions imposed on economic activities there. Ecodevelopment in these areas consists of:

- propagation of ecological agriculture
- use of biotechnology
- waste utilisation
- use of unconventional sources of energy
- ecological improvement of landscape by shaping mid-field afforestation, biological zone protection of rivers, renaturalisation of flood waters and swamps, regeneration of rare and protected species. (Figure 1a, b, c.)
- settlement and architecture planned in harmony with the landscape and suitable for man's habitual needs. Realisation of these ambitious plans will only be possible if four fundamental conditions have been fulfilled:

Environment preservation will be an important and real element of state politics: this condition has partly been fulfilled.

Modeling of ecological conditions will be essential for land use planning: this condition has hardly been fulfilled until now.

Widespread use of modern technology in agriculture industry, housing & fulfilment of this condition requires considerable help from developed countries.

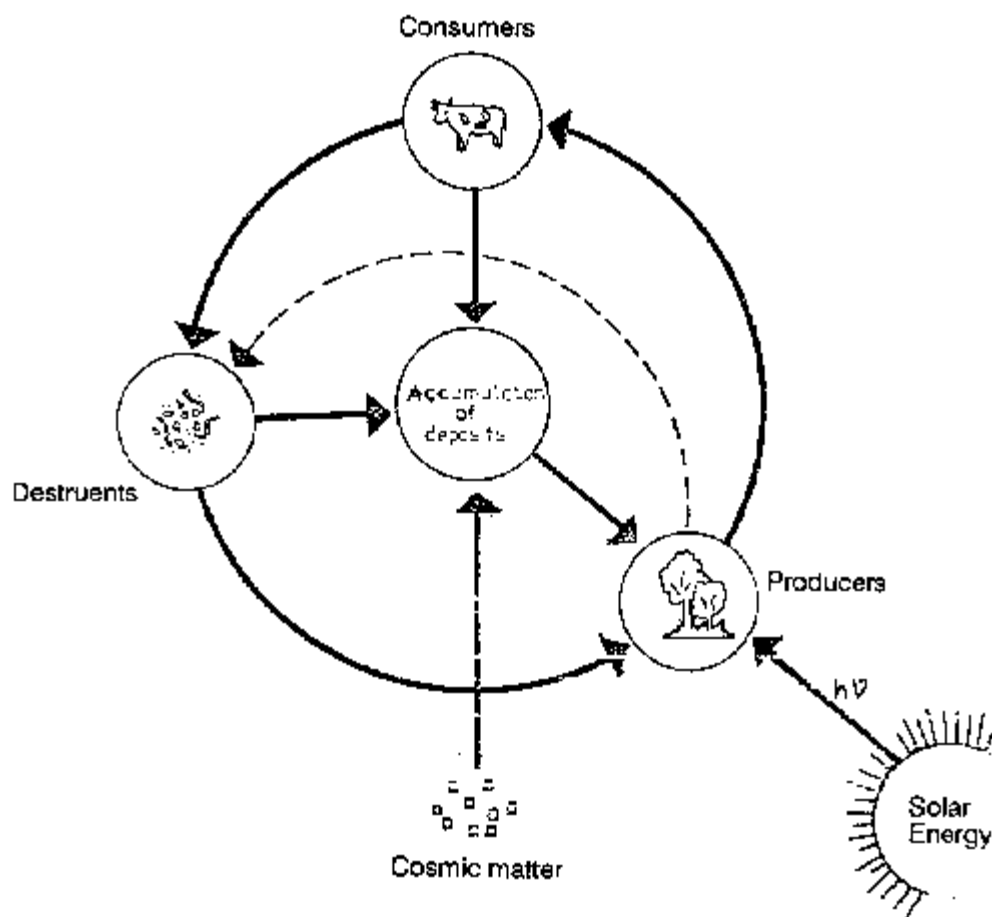


Figure 1a: Ecological model of functioning of nature.

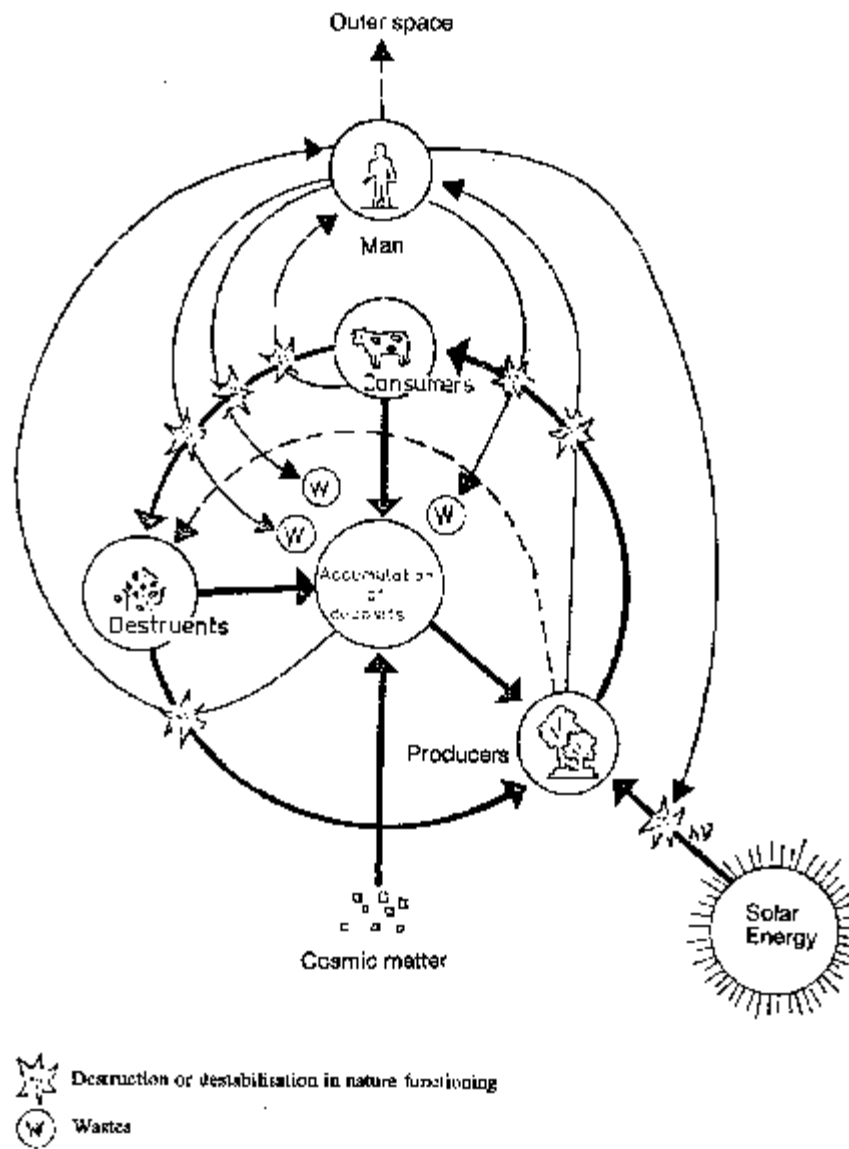


Figure 1b: Model of functioning of nature versus natural resources exploitation.

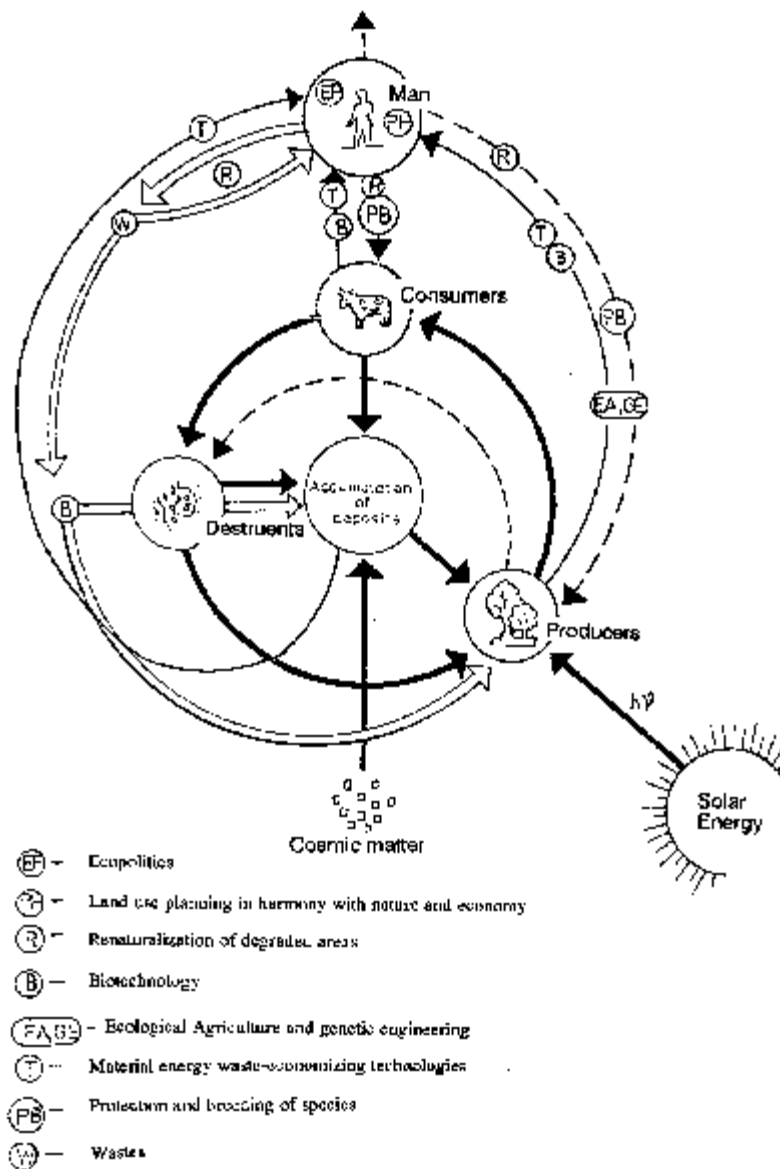


Figure 1c: Idea of Ecodevelopment

Accepting ecodevelopment as the new style of life of the majority of people may appear to be difficult since, according to sociological data, the level of ecological consciousness among the people inhabiting the areas of scenic beauty is quite low. People usually understand the value of nature and the need to preserve it, but when it comes to definite activities-such as investment-their own expenditure on environment protection, they choose to exploit the environment and not protect it.

Thus, there is a great need for ecological education of Poles. Getting acquainted with rules functioning in nature, the close relationship between nature and the economy should be taught at school and elsewhere, irrespective of age. This educational role has been taken up by some social organisations, the leading ones being the Polish Ecological Club and the Nature Preservation League. The Polish Ecological Club makes use of knowledge and experience from international ecological movements, such as Greenpeace, Friends of Earth, World Wildlife Fund for Nature.

Conclusion

A need is felt for international contacts, exchange of information and opinions. International ecological organisations should exert a great deal of pressure on the governments of States dealing with management and land use planning and on those institutions having financial means at their disposal. International organisational and financial activities should be focused on two issues: saving and protecting nature, especially in areas most endangered, and the complex protection of nature, especially in areas of unspoilt beauty.

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Dr. **Stanislaw Radwan** completed his doctorate at the University Mariae Curie Skłodowska and commenced his professional career at the Academy of Agriculture in Lublin, Poland, where he has been full Professor since 1989. He has specialised in the ecology of water animals, especially invertebrates, and the human impact on the protection of inland waters, about which he has published 60 original scientific papers and 35 scientific articles. Professor Radwan has been participating in many international, limnological congresses and has organised national hydrobiological meetings, conferences and seminars.