

## Chasing Eden: nature, health & the politics of environment



### History Conference: First Call for Papers

Conference Date: **September 4/5, 2008**

Venue: **Eden Project & University of Exeter (Cornwall Campus)**

Although post-1960 modern environmentalism seemed to promise an increased level of political activism in relation to the environment, an awkward tension between policy and politics persisted. An increasingly urbanized, fast-paced global political economy has struggled to appreciate the complexities and different temporal dimensions of 'nature's economy'. Moreover, the rise of technocratic, professional government has alienated the necessary 'mass movement' from environmental policy, which is deemed the preserve of specialist scientists.

Similarly, the historical study of the environment and environmental ideas has become increasingly intellectually urgent, but it has engaged little with political history. A number of important historical works on the environmental history of various countries, on colonialism and the natural world, and on environmental ideas have appeared. But the history of environmental politics as a popular or electoral phenomenon remains neglected. In part this reflects the failure of environmental history to filter its methods and interests into political history. On the other hand, political historians (especially British) remain largely bound to the study of traditional topics - radicalism, liberalism, conservatism, popular politics - with little appreciation for the role of nature and the environment.

This two-day conference seeks to encourage a conversation between historians of politics and historians of science, medicine, and environment on the topic of environmental politics in the modern era (particularly the nineteenth and twentieth centuries). Among the issues it seeks to address are the following: What was the role of nature in modern politics? What role did urban public health reform have in the rise of modern environmental politics? When can we say environmentalism/ecologism became a significant political force? Why did 'Green' parties fail? What was distinctive about European environmental politics? How have political parties adapted to environmentalism and issues of environmental justice? What happened to conservation in the age of environment?

This conference is organized with the assistance and participation of the Department of History, University of Exeter (Cornwall Campus); The Institute for Environmental History, University of St Andrews; The Wellcome Centre for Medical History, University of Exeter; and NiCHE, University of Western Ontario (Canada).

**Conference organizers invite paper proposals (i.e., title and 200-word abstract) by 1 February 2008.**

Please address submissions and enquiries to:

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