

editorial



A large, stylized yellow letter 'A' is positioned at the beginning of the text. It has a thick, solid yellow fill and a simple, geometric design with a horizontal bar across the middle. The letter is centered horizontally at the start of the first paragraph.

s Simo Laakkonen and Richard Tucker write in this issue: “Until recent times armies lived off the land; their logistical support systems were so rudimentary that nothing else was possible. This process provides the key to much of the damage caused by wars, from ancient times onwards”.

There is no doubt that the theme of war and mass violence is becoming central to historiographical reflection on the relations between human activities and natural resources. This perspective could help us to overcome the by now well-established contraposition between “l’histoire bataille” and the investigation of historical processes, which for almost the whole duration of the twentieth century has banned the “event” and its effects from social and economic historical studies. The study of the relationship between war and natural resources is a research trend that is still in the making, but has already proven itself capable of opening new perspectives on the history of the world from prehistoric times to the present day. This issue of *Global Environment* includes a monographic section comprising four articles, plus an introduction, examining the impact of World War II on natural resources. The articles

originated as papers delivered at an international workshop on environmental history of World War II held in Helsinki in August 2012, which we gladly accepted to publish here.

A first angle from which the relationship between World War II and natural resources is viewed is that of the cultural change the war has produced in our conception of nature and the environment. In his contribution, Nicolás Cuvi illustrates how during World War II the conviction spread among Latin American countries that prosperity could only be achieved by adopting a development model and lifestyle similar to those of the United States. On the contrary, the author argues, the application of this model only resulted in poverty, exclusion, public debt, and environmental damage.

In her article, Jeyamalar Kathirithmby-Wells shows how the raising of restrictions on forest use by the Japanese military administration during the occupation of West Malaysia from 1942 to 1945 had disastrous effects on health and the environment. Jacob Darwin Hamblin shows how war experiences have shaped the notion of “food security” within international organizations for many decades. Poul Holm’s article, instead, sheds light on how World War II caused an unprecedented acceleration in the exploitation of marine resources, bringing about an epochal change in the management of oceans and the organization of the trade of marine products, and imposing a forced modernization of fishing technology.

Food production crises are also the focus of Desirée Quagliarotti’s essay, which investigates the causes and implications of the end, beginning in 2006, of a long period of low food-prices, and attempts to identify possible strategies to reduce the tradeoff between the increase of agricultural production and the sustainable use of natural resources.

The theme is again to the fore in Desirée Quagliarotti and Idamaria Fusco’s interview with Oliver De Shutter Special, Rapporteur on the Right to Food, on the issue of “global food security”. Twenty-first century agriculture will have to face dramatic challenges, such as the need to produce more food for a growing population and more agrofuels for the bioenergetic market without aggravating climatic conditions and environmental imbalances.

Martin Kalb's article, instead, shows us how the concept of "environmental justice" can provide an interpretive key for historical analysis and the social sciences, when related to the concept of "unequal distribution of environmental goods and bads". Kalb uses environmental justice as a framework of reference to shed light on the rise of the antinuclear movement in 1970s Germany. Minoti Chakravarty-Kaul's essay, instead, documents the character of traditional commons systems in the forests of Siwalik in the Punjab, and analyzes their contribution to the preservation of local agrosystems thanks to a system of rights, norms and responsibilities shared out among the users of these systems to ensure the survival of the forests. Finally, Gabriella Corona's essay highlights the important role played by a group of "reformist" urban planners, from the 1960s onward, in the growth of Italian environmentalism and of a landscape management culture founded on urban improvement and renovation, and based on the theory that the expansion of cities should be respectful of people's quality of life and the sustainability of natural resources.

Mauro Agnoletti and Gabriella Corona