

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

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2612 Webster Street, #11
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Mr. Peter Martin
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Dear Peter,

After two months of travel in Europe and the eastern United States, I am resettled in Berkeley. My trip proved most fruitful despite a myriad of minor hassles and the ubiquitous cold, rainy spring weather. In accordance with my general plan I visited several European groups involved with forestry projects in Nepal or with research in wood fuel technology. My investigations in California regarding the problems of firewood scarcity and forest conditions in Nepal had indicated that it might be advantageous to visit the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization headquartered in Rome and the Commonwealth Forestry Institute at the University of Oxford in England. In addition several individuals at the ICWA meeting in Salisbury had urged me to talk with Geoffrey Oldham currently on sabbatical leave from the Science Policy Research Unit of the University of Sussex in England. Everyone with whom I spoke was most helpful and generous with information and referrals. As one might expect my list of "must see" individuals grew as my trip progressed. Even before my itinerary extended to include Washington, D.C., I had interviewed more than twenty individuals in ten organizations.

When I boarded a London bound plane in New York on May 8th, my schedule was loose, my only commitment being to meet with family and friends at the Chateau de Meung-sur-Loire south of Paris before May 15. After a brief visit with my parents I proceeded to Paris to initiate the research aspect of my travels. My path was to lead me eventually in a circular route from Paris to St. Cyprien and then to Rome whence I returned to London. In Paris, Bill Martin of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) referred me to several groups and individuals in England investigating Third World energy problems. At the offices of La Forêt Privée I spoke with Michel Chavet about his trial plantings of Mondell pine, a hardy variety of Pinus eldarica from Afghanistan. A subspecies of Aleppo pine (P. halepensis), the Mondell pine is reported to thrive in poor soil and extreme climatic conditions, surpassing in growth its cousins in similar environments.

With some persistence on the telephone I was able to locate Brenda and Geoffrey Oldham in a hillside cottage retreat outside of St. Cyprien in southwest France. They generously invited me down for the day and I set off for the most beautiful stretch of my journey; the spring rains which encouraged a multitude of wildflowers could not detract from the gentle beauty of the Dordogne valley. Geoffrey had returned recently from Nepal where he had visited his graduate student, Deepak Bajracharya, studying fuelwood consumption patterns in several rural communities. Geoffrey's comments were very helpful and I was encouraged to learn that the type of research which interests me could be complementary to Deepak's work to be completed this fall. The pleasant hours spent with Brenda and Geoffrey and the beauty of the French countryside put me in high spirits, valuable sustenance for the two-day train ride to Rome.

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My arrival in Rome came about one week after the recovery of Aldo Moro's body. Nevertheless, the constant hassle involved in dealing with the Italian public services for me precluded many thoughts about the local political situation. It was not difficult to recognize that with such constant aggravation over time one would develop either the patience of Job or enormous frustrations which very easily could erupt into violence. During my four-day visit, however, patience prevailed and I succeeded in penetrating the imposing fortress of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to meet with three individuals involved in forest community development programs. Mr. Wardle, most helpful in identifying recent publications addressing problems of firewood scarcity, forestry and rural development, introduced to me two of his associates who will be directing new forestry projects in Nepal. Mr. Watanabe will become FAO adviser to a new program designed to promote multiple-use forestry activities through increased community participation in joint UN and Nepalese government sponsored projects. He stressed the futility of trying to introduce new technology or institutional change from above and reaffirmed the necessity of grassroots enthusiasm and local entrepreneurship in social and economic development. Mr. Watanabe also lamented the great volume of reports issued from Kathmandu and elsewhere, which are based on very limited fieldwork and result in very little, if any, practical application or follow-up. In addition I met with Mr. Pellinck who will be involved with an upcoming reforestation project in Nepal. We discussed the numerous foreign-aid and research programs in Nepal and the growing impatience of foreign governments to entertain increasing numbers of foreigners whose interests are often primarily self-serving. He emphasized the importance of making research relevant to the needs of the group or area under study.

The final and longest stop on my European tour was London where to my great surprise and good fortune the weather was superb. Inadvertently I had arrived in London on the Thursday evening before a three-day national holiday. With the coincident arrival of the best weather in months I found almost everyone except the tourist crowd gone on vacation by Friday morning. My telephoning was to no avail so I resigned myself to enforced leisure. I visited the London Zoo and the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew and enjoyed the sun and the scenery in a river cruise down the Thames. By Wednesday of the following week business had returned to normal and I arranged a day trip to Oxford to see several professors of the University of Oxford Department of Forestry and the Commonwealth Forestry Institute (CFI). Although the man whom I had hoped to find in Oxford had moved to Ghana with a FAO project, I did meet with several other individuals with expertise in the area of my fellowship topic. I spoke with Jeff Burley who had just completed a paper on the selection of tree species for fuelwood plantations. Peter Wood informed me of a new joint CFI/UN forestry project in Nepal to be launched this fall and introduced me to the proposed project director, Peter Howland. In addition Bob Plumptre supplied me with the names of several foresters and forest research institutes to contact in South Asia. I was also fortunate to meet on this occasion J.E.M. (Mike) Arnold of FAO, who has been studying wood as a source on energy in developing countries and will be presenting a paper on this topic at the Eighth World Forestry Conference in Djakarta, Indonesia in October.

While in London I visited the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) where I talked with Chris Lewis who is investigating the feasibility of alternative energy sources for developing countries. Ms. Ainger of the Intermediate Technology and Development Group (ITDG), a consultancy originally organized by E.F. Schumacher, gave me the names of several sources and alerted me to the Group's bookstore offering a variety of publications describing the availability and application of technologies appropriate to developing country conditions. Additionally I spoke with Mr. Chittenden, director of the Forest Products and Fuel Technology Group of the Tropical Products Institute; he referred me to several research facilities studying biomass fuels technology in Southeast Asia. At the

the Imperial College of Science and Technology I met with Leo Pyle, professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering. He recently had helped to organize a workshop on technology, energy and rural development and currently directs research on biogas and wood pyrolysis.

The final interview I scheduled in London was with Ron Kemp, forestry adviser of the British Ministry of Overseas Development. He had returned only the previous day from Kathmandu where he had attended a conference called by the World Bank to discuss the coordination of various research and development programs in Nepal. The many foreign assistance projects in that country apparently at times have become mutually obstructive. Mr. Kemp appeared positive as to the accomplishments of the recent meeting in Nepal and was optimistic about the acceptance of my research proposal. He spoke highly of the Swiss and Australian aid programs and recommended several persons to contact in Nepal.

Exhausted from the rush of activities and encounters of the past six weeks, on June 6th I eagerly boarded a plane for San Francisco and home. Upon arrival home I was greeted by, among other things, a letter from Jim Howe and Bill Knowland of the Overseas Development Council, inviting me to attend a Department of State/Agency for International Development "Strategy Conference on Tropical Deforestation" to be held in Washington, D.C. the following week. In addition I was invited to participate in a special workshop on firewood scheduled in conjunction with the conference. With laundry and repacking to do I got only a few days of relaxation before I was due back at the airport.

The purpose of the DOS/AID conference was to bring together representatives of various government agencies, industry, the scientific and university communities, environmental groups and private foundations with policy responsibility and expertise in tropical forestry to focus on the problem of tropical deforestation. The goal of the meeting was to produce policy recommendations to guide U.S. institutions. It was, indeed, a very impressive gathering, the general conference having approximately 140 people in attendance. Despite the crowd I was able to single out several interesting individuals, the most notable being Dr. Ratna Shumshere J.B. Rana, Chairman of the National Council for Science and Technology of Nepal.

Although most of the conference presentations covered familiar material, at least in their hurried speech format, Dr. Frank Wadsworth of the Institute of Tropical Forestry at Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, gave an interesting account of a recently overworked subject, the Panama Canal. He pointed out the dependence of the operation of the Canal locks on the discharge from a nearby fresh water lake and described how the watershed of that lake gradually is being deforested. The destruction of the watershed interferes with the steady supply of water to the lake which in turn has detrimental effects on the continuous and efficient operation of the Canal. Further on in the proceedings I found it amusing when one of the foresters in attendance ascended to the podium and admonished the multidisciplinary audience for being so tardy in lending an attentive ear to the conservation message foresters have been preaching for centuries.

The firewood workshop I attended was to focus on African problems, however, the central issues associated with a scarcity of fuelwood are common worldwide. The main discussion topics, outlined in a paper prepared by David French, were the causes of depletion of firewood reserves, patterns of firewood acquisition and use, alternative strategies to provide more fuel and improve the utilization of fuel, and priorities for research and project planning. Workshop participants, approximately forty in number, were from a variety of institutions and backgrounds; several informal gatherings aided by the small size and compatibility of the group afforded opportunity for much valuable individual discussion.

My recent travel experiences have been enlightening both professionally and personally. The lack of a fixed itinerary permitted me detours and extensions which added immeasurably to my profit and pleasure. I met with a large number of

individuals working in a variety of ways on forestry issues of Third World nations. I spoke with people involved in research, policy formation, program design and project implementation. Contrary to my expectations I was not referred again and again to the same small group of researchers and research; I continually received new additions to my list of references. Moreover, although my recent research in Berkeley had uncovered only a small quantity of published data on forest resources in Nepal, my recent conversations have identified numerous projects in Nepal which could be valuable sources of up-to-date information. The Americans, the British, the Australians, the Swiss, the French and the Indians, as well as several international organizations and individual scholars, operate research or assistance projects in Nepal. Kathmandu has become a very popular foreign post.

Certainly the personal contacts I have made and the personal, institutional and bibliographic references which I have collected on my recent journey are invaluable. Equally exciting has been the glimpse into the where and the how of foreign policy decisions. Ambiance often reflects the influence of things unsaid. Although in most instances I felt the existence of a sincere desire to help one's fellow man, I also felt a lingering attitude of paternalism and a reluctance to reach for the future and recognize the dynamics of developing country conditions. To what extent does developed country foreign policy institutionalize the historic situation in developing countries? It is encouraging, however, to see in some recognition of the multidimensional nature of human problems, the participation of men and women of diverse backgrounds in the policy-making process. Change comes slowly though; the cautious and almost unconscious screening of information entry is but one evidence of the intransigence of the bureaucracy.

After speaking with dozens of individuals, forest economists, geneticists, engineers, anthropologists, sociologists and more, I have become less certain of the specific orientation of my fellowship research. I believe that my best course is to prepare a list of topics within my area of interest for discussion with individuals in Nepal as to the relevance and possible approaches to the various topics before undertaking fieldwork. I would like to see my work complement rather than duplicate past and present efforts. I look forward to my upcoming journey to Nepal with great anticipation for in all my conversations I have heard not a single negative comment about that mountain nation.

Kindest regards,



Deanna G. Donovan