# Honest Coverage and Commentary in Copenhagen - Follow Albert Bates (Part 2)

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
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Albert Bates, climate-change author and teacher in permaculture, has continued his blogging and photography from Copenhagen. Here is an excerpt of his latest entries and pictures since we covered his Days 1 and 2 on Culture Change, Dec. 6th:

Day 8 (excerpt):

When Kyoto was teetering on failure, the knight on the white horse was Al Gore, who shifted the US delegation's stance, tugged at elbows, and got a deal. That Bill Clinton never submitted it for ratification (and that the Republican-controlled Senate never would have ratified) is a continuing shame, if for no other reason that as a non-signatory, the US is not a party to talks as to the future course of the Kyoto protocol after it expires in 2012.

Today, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex 1 Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) released a new draft text outlining progress to date. This joins two other texts released today, including from the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The release of all three texts today breathes new life into the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

There is also a new white knight, and she could once more be a USAnian, this one a bit more of a surprise. At the start of this week Lisa Jackson, the administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency said that irrespective of the outcome in Copenhagen, and irrespective of what the US Senate does or does not pass, the greenhouse gas emissions of the USA will be capped and will be going down.

Day 7 (excerpt):

In Denmark the public transport system is enviable by anyone living in a country whose mass transit is, to quote Jim Kunstler, something Bulgaria would be ashamed of. I am staying at a farm an hour out in the country from Copenhagen, but it is a short walk to the nearest bus shelter and even an hour before sunrise the buses run every 10 minutes. Stepping off the bus and onto the Copenhagen train is a mere 12 strides, and, like the bus, the trains run constantly, about 20 minutes apart at this hour.

Changing to the Bella Center metro train at Norreport, another 6 minute wait, then five stops down the line we come to the metro stop for COP-15, and the gauntlet of conference security, along with the protestors who form up outside, install daily art, leaflet delegates and perform street theater.

Moving briskly to the anti-biochar side event hosted by EcoNexus, we politely sat through an hour of presentations against various bad practices in agriculture (including the mistaken lumping of organic no-till with chemical no-till) until the microphone arrived in front of Deepak Rughani of Biofuelwatch.

Rughani's 16 minute talk is now available as an audio download (22 Mb) from The Great Change website (Albert Bates' blog).

Day 6 (excerpt):

This is the face of where the fate of the planet is being decided. These square pre-fab buildings that look like warehouses from the outside and Empire Battle Cruiser corridors within are the skull that holds humanity's single most consequential cogitation.

When we were young, our mom and dad used to take us window shopping in New York City at Christmastime. The skaters in Rockefeller Center, the steam from the horses near Central Park, the Santa at Macy's, the electric trains at Abercrombie and Fitch, the thick snowflakes falling onto the sidewalks ... all these things fill the pores of our memory with happy dopamine molecules.

In Copenhagen the place to go at Christmastime is Strøget (literally "the stroke"), a car-free zone and the longest pedestrian shopping area in Europe. Strøget was created in November 1962 when cars were beginning to dominate Copenhagen's old central streets. Jan Gehl was the master planner, and described the process in Life Between Buildings in Danish in 1971, in English in 1987. During the 1950s the street had closed to traffic for a couple of days at Christmas. In 1962 the closure was disguised as an extended holiday closure, but kept on.

Day 5 (excerpt):

Hold onto your seats, this one is a stemwinder.

Once you get here, it isn't that expensive, because there is so much free stuff. For delegates, all the public transport is free (buses and subways are mostly honor system anyway — a few random conductors roaming to check tickets and keep the system honest). You can eat quite well just by attending receptions. You can sleep overnight in the Free City of Christiania. We withdrew a hundred dollars at the airport ATM last Friday and we still have most of it, although we have to acknowledge the kindness of our hosts has been a grace bestowed.

Today began with two very fiery deliveries from the least expected of sources. We took a full Volvo downtown to a palatial ashram where Hildur Jackson and Hanne Strong had assembled
a crop of select clergy from dozens of faiths — lots of beanies, saffron sarongs, beards, beads, and shaved heads. After meditation, the first up was Joan Chittister, a Benedictine sister, who took a hatchet to the athropocentrism of the Judeochristian tradition.

"The major problem facing the modern world is that the Judeochristian ethic has been used to justify domination," she said. "Our Western religious tradition teaches us this superiority...." From her iPod she quoted Genesis, "... be fruitful and multiply and replenish the Earth and subdue it and have dominion over it." Judeochristianity thus became the most exploitative of all religions, she said.

The audio recording of Sr. Chittister is downloadable from The Great Change website (Albert Bates' blog).

“Our creation is a procession of stages. Humanity outranks the universe. It is considered moral that we put our needs above the needs of all others. We teach that man is the crown of creation. We teach that God planned the world for man. We teach that Man is given nature for his use — a free lunch of enormous proportions. Humans are above nature, beyond nature. Its an incomplete, very partial world view, but tidy and simple. Those that lack the power to dominate the resource become the resource. Other sexes, other races, other cultures. Nature has no purpose except to serve civilized man.”

Day 4 (excerpt):

The Lord Mayor of Copenhagen warned hotels that prostitutes soliciting UN delegates would not be tolerated. In response, the Sex Workers Interest Group (SIO) announced that anyone showing a UN credential would receive free sex. The line at the Bella Center for credentials extended to two hours.

The UN Environmental Program released a report compiled by British economist Lord Nicholas Stern and the Grantham Research Institute. "For those who claim a deal in Copenhagen is impossible, they are simply wrong," said UNEP director Achim Steiner. The UNEP report tallyed recent pledges from the US, India, China and other rapidly developing countries, many of which assumed rich-country funding to help continued economic growth.

Doing the numbers, emissions today are about 47 billion tons CO2e. Going by IPCC-4, the UN target requires that to avoid unacceptable consequences (>2°C) all countries together should emit no more than 44 billion tons of carbon dioxide by 2020. Computing the high end of all commitments publicly announced so far, UNEP said pledged emissions will total some 46 billion tons annually in 2020.

Day 3 (excerpt):

TODAY: Sights and sounds in Copenhagen. Random messaging in the subway, the airport, newspapers, the streets.

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Read Culture Change's report on Albert's first two Copenhagen blog entries here.

Follow Albert's adventures in Copenhagen and Hopenhagen on his blog. For more on his peak oil work, see the Culture Change article Albert Bates, guide for our post-petroleum, globally warmed future. For more articles on or by Albert on this website, visit this listing.

For official news from the UNFCCC, visit their website starting with their Fact Sheets page. More than 15,000 participants, including delegates from 192 countries, are expected to take part in the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (7 to 18 December).