I have tried to communicate to people like Bill Rees (originator of the Environmental Footprint model) that what he is doing is not science but a form of extremism, terrorizing people just like Chicken Little- the sky is falling- and then trying to control their lives.

# Playing the environmental shame game

* [Comments](http://www.nationalpost.com/#Comments)

National Post · Thursday, Feb. 3, 2011

The cult of environmentalism has now become so zealous that a six-year-old Quebec kindergartener has been punished for bringing a sandwich to school in a plastic bag: Recently, a public school teacher excluded Felix Lanciault from an art event at his kindergarten because the boy's mother had packed his lunch in a Ziploc bag, rather than a reusable container. When his mother packed a second lunch in the offending baggie, little Felix wept and implored her not to do so, for fear of being branded an enviro-criminal.

How has it come to this? A well-meaning movement -- environmentalism -- has become so radicalized that its gendarmes think nothing of shaming those who fail to conform to its dogmas, even small children.

Today's environmentalism is as much about running other people's lives as it is about saving the planet. Activists routinely hector us on what kind of shopping bags and light bulbs we can use, what forms of transportation are acceptable, how many squares of toilet paper to deploy, and what kind of diapers to buy. Yet many of these eco-warriors would likely be aghast if the tables were turned, and they were lectured on how to conduct their moral lives.

If social conservatives attempted to tell them who they could have sex with or marry, what television programs were acceptable and which books their children would be permitted to read at school, most environmentalists would rage against such censorship and restriction of personal choice. Yet their instinct to regulate choice in the name of nature is simply another expression of this desire to command and control.

There will always be eat-your-peas personalities who believe they are smarter and more ethical than their fellow citizens, and therefore have a right and obligation to share their superior insights, as well as a duty to impose them. Environmentalists are merely the new conformists, the new PTA or country club membership board, the new establishment. They are hardly the revolutionaries they fancy themselves to be, nor the guardians of erudition and enlightenment.

Consider that James Hansen of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, the inspiration to Al Gore's An Inconvenient Truth, mused while in Beijing last November that the Chinese form of government -- dictatorship -- might be superior to that of the West. Why? Because it could usher in the kind of radical lifestyle changes he believes are needed to combat global warming.

In such a world, it is no longer difficult to imagine a public-school teacher excluding poor little Felix Lanciault from a school contest because he dared to tote a sandwich in a plastic bag. Never mind that it is not even entirely clear that permanent, reusable containers are that much better for the environment, once you factor in the elements involved in their manufacture, cleaning and eventual disposal. Yet, here is poor Felix's teacher targeting him for scorn because he didn't fall in with the lockstep enviro-mentality-of-the-moment.

There may be poetic justice in such doctrinal overkill, however. Children typically rebel in their teenage years against whatever orthodoxy has been previously rammed down their throats. In a decade or so, when all the little Felix Lanciaults begin reaching high school, they may just revolt against the environmentalists' sanctimonious edicts, and reclaim some freedom for the rest of us.

Read more: [http://www.nationalpost.com/Playing+environmental+shame+game/4214512/story.html#ixzz1CuERjBlk](http://www.nationalpost.com/Playing%2Benvironmental%2Bshame%2Bgame/4214512/story.html#ixzz1CuERjBlk)

And this response below from a reader

# So many dictators, so little common sense

* [Comments](http://www.nationalpost.com/#Comments)

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Re: 6-Year-Old Blackballed Over Baggie, Feb. 1.

I'm curious how those teachers in Laval, Que. -- who kept a child out of a contest because he brought his sandwich to school in a Ziploc bag -- get to school. I assume none drive, since that would be more damaging to the environment than a plastic sandwich bag. And surely they all live in little tiny houses heated by windpower where they grow all their own vegetables, so they are not contributing to the ozone-destroying fumes generated by trucks and planes that carry food. And when school's out, where do these people vacation? Nowhere that requires a plane trip, I hope. And when it comes to recreation, I assume none hit the links, considering the damage to the environment golf courses supposedly cause.

So many dictators, so little common sense.

Amy Whitmore, Calgary.

Read more: [http://www.nationalpost.com/many+dictators+little+common+sense/4214514/story.html#ixzz1CuEy5FOA](http://www.nationalpost.com/many%2Bdictators%2Blittle%2Bcommon%2Bsense/4214514/story.html#ixzz1CuEy5FOA)