

Ecologic Institute Remembers Konrad von Moltke

News

Konrad von Moltke, an inspiration to Ecologic Institute, passed away on 19 May 2005 at his home in Vermont. In 1976, Konrad established the Institute for European Environmental Policy in Bonn (Germany), with a mission that we carry forward today. He supported Ecologic Institute from the beginning and was particularly associated with our work on development, trade and investment, and international environmental governance. As a pioneering thinker, Konrad was an inspiration to the whole institute, as teacher and advisor he was a guide to us all, and his example and principles will continue to be a moral compass for our advocacy. Our thoughts are with his family who feel most acutely the loss of a great humanist and a towering personality.

Konrad von Moltke was a trusted advisor to Ecologic Institute on issues ranging from strategic institutional development and policy trends to specific projects on, for instance, trade and environment, or sustainability impact assessment. He helped with networking and staff development, and he owned a share in the non-profit partnership and thus contributed to the core capital of Ecologic Institute.

Brought up in Germany, South Africa and the US, Konrad not only spoke a number of languages but was at home in many places. Combining the rigour of the mathematician in him with the sense of proportion gained as a historian, he tirelessly worked to improve education on both sides of the Atlantic at the State University of New York at Buffalo in the US and during his time in Hamburg and Bonn (Germany). He also strove to strengthen civil society, which he saw as the backbone of a free, democratic society.

Seeing the future role and strength of the European Economic Community, which would evolve into today's European Union (EU), he became concerned about its lack of consideration for environmental protection in the process of unifying Europe. He convinced sponsors, notably the European Cultural Foundation in Amsterdam, Netherlands, to finance the establishment of a network of Institutes for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) first in Bonn and later also in Paris, London, Arnhem, Madrid and Brussels. Today, the network consists of IEEP London and Ecologic Institute, with a joint office in Brussels, and IEEP Madrid.

The network embodied insights and principles that guided Konrad's thinking and work. Advocacy was the main purpose, as is evident from the "for" in the IEEP's full name. Konrad abhorred violence and did not seek conflict, but he did not shy away from political debate and was a formidable and intrepid discussant with his views grounded not only in careful analysis but also in high moral and ethical principles.

Clearer than others, Konrad saw that the policy formulation process in what is today the EU did not follow established patterns in either the US or the nation states that became EU Member States. He understood the polycentric nature of the emerging EU polity, where political thought and initiative

originate more often from one or the other Member State capitals than from the centre in Brussels or Strasbourg. He wanted a network of civil society institutions in the capitals of all the Member States that were most active and left their marks on European environmental policy.

Behind this insight we see not merely a cool-headed analysis of political play in Europe. Konrad also wanted a united but polycentric Europe, based on subsidiarity and federalism. A recurring theme in his work was the relationships among different policy processes and regimes at various scales and levels, each following their own internal logic, as determined by problem structures and power relationships, and yet having to be interlinked to produce desirable outcomes.

This was and in essence still is today the purpose of the IEEP network: to understand and to learn to shape the policy dynamics behind the integration of environmental protection requirements into other policies, including the development of primary and constitutional law. Konrad started it with the IEEP, and the principle is now embedded in the EC Treaty as well as in the draft Constitutional Treaty of the EU.

After moving back to the United States in 1984, Konrad continued to think and act in the same way, arguing for the integration of environment and sustainable development into transatlantic relations and foreign affairs.

"Senior Fellow" was the title that fitted him best. He held it in North America at various institutions, including the Institute on International Environmental Governance at Dartmouth College, NH, and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Washington, DC, and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in Winnipeg, MB.

In Europe, Konrad was affiliated not only with Ecologic but also with the Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM) of the Free University of Amsterdam and the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) in Paris.

He took a particular interest in the development of international trade policy and law and other areas of the global economic order, applying the same principles that had served so well in the context of the EU. One of his primary concerns was the need of developing countries for capital and thus for an effective and equitable framework for investment.

Konrad maintained his focus on networking civil society organisations and succeeded in linking the many institutions, including in academia, in which he had a role. The resulting collaborations will live on and be a testament to his foresight and initiative. More than two metres tall and a founder and inspiration to many transnational academic and civil society networks, he frequently, and only half jokingly, referred to himself as the "largest multinational in the room".

His lasting legacy is a multitude of networked bodies that make up part of a global civil society for sustainable development, peaceful conflict resolution and democracy based on grass-roots activism and involvement.

[Read the CV of Konrad von Moltke ...](#)

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