

Origins of a Concept

The origins of this publication lie in the experiences of a volunteer fireman in the 1960s and 70s in rural communities in western Massachusetts and then in coastal Maine. Involvement with oil spills and their environmental impact led to a special interest in toxic substances, including chemical fallout and anthropogenic radioactivity. Organization of the 1970 Earth Day sit-in at Logan Airport, which led to the successful termination of the production of the supersonic transport plane in America, was followed by almost four decades of research into and publications about anthropogenic ecotoxins. The compilation of a publication with the controversial title “Biocatastrophe” is the culmination of a life-long interest in the proliferation of ecotoxins in the environment. This text is published in the context of a global financial crisis that heightens our emerging awareness of the limits of growth of the American model of free enterprise capitalism and the global consumer culture that it engendered. The social effects of this economic implosion, including rising levels of unemployment or underemployment, are now being felt by all economic classes throughout the world. Much more invisible is the interrelationship of the ongoing world financial crisis with overpopulation and the multiplicity of ecotoxins and pathogens produced by human activity. A late middle age global consumer culture may yet rise again but will inevitably be limited to the necessities of survival on a planet with finite resources and tragically and painfully reduced population levels. This publication is an exploration of the historical impact of the imposition of human ecosystems on natural ecosystems and the unfortunate outcome of the synergism of this interaction: biocatastrophe.

