



The Right Livelihood Award

for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people

Alice Tepper Marlin (USA)

Honorary Award (1990)



...for showing the direction in which the Western economy must develop to promote the well-being of humanity.

Photo: Wolfgang Schmidt

In 1968, a pension fund in Boston, Massachusetts, asked a young securities analyst, Alice Tepper Marlin, to compile a 'Peace Portfolio' of corporations with the least involvement in supplying the war in Vietnam. Alice Tepper Marlin found that such information was not readily available, even from the corporations themselves. When her report was completed, more than 600 other church and community groups around the United States asked for the information. Six months later, Alice Tepper Marlin founded the Council on Economic Priorities, CEP, where she served as its President and CEO for 33 years.

CEP was an independent public service organisation, the leading one of its kind in the US, dedicated to the analysis of some of the major issues confronting society. CEP pioneered the social investment field and its research was concentrated in three areas: national security, energy and the environment, and corporate responsibility. Research on corporate responsibility addressed subjects such as ethical investment, the effects of political action committees, fair employment and consumer issues.

In conjunction with its work on these topics, CEP published scores of major studies, in addition to newsletters and other research. Alice Tepper Marlin has herself edited numerous books emerging from the programme. One of the areas of CEP activity with the highest public profile was in the area of corporate social responsibility, following its study *Rating America's Corporate Conscience* (1986). Then came its consumer guide, *Shopping for a Better World*, which became a best-seller and resulted in articles in over a thousand newspapers.

CEP followed up this huge public interest with other initiatives: an Environmental Data

Clearinghouse, a further book on ethical investment, and a study of the community impacts of corporate mergers. The success of *Shopping for a Better World* also boosted CEP's 'Letters to the Editor' project, in which participants were encouraged to write to their local papers giving a local slant to some aspect of CEP-covered issues. The Council launched its annual Corporate Conscience Awards, giving recognition to those companies with the best records in terms of corporate responsibility and shaming those at the other end of the scale with 'dishonourable mentions'.

In his introduction to the 1990 Corporate Conscience Awards, the well-known journalist Bill Moyers said: "[This organisation] has become such a powerful social and moral force in the land... [CEP] has been in the forefront of serious, substantial and irrefutable research and powerful and morally significant education on corporate responsibility."

In 1997, Alice Tepper Marlin and CEP established the Council on Economic Priorities Accreditation Agency, which in 2001 was renamed to Social Accountability International (SAI). SAI is a global standards-setting organization dedicated to the ethical treatment of workers around the world, and improving workplaces and communities. Its SA8000 international standard certification for improving working conditions is used by businesses, NGOs and governments around the world. The certification allows consumers, buyers and other companies to assess good practice and to assure humane workplaces. SA8000 is based on United Nations and ILO Conventions and Declarations. Tepper Marlin now serves as SAI's president.

Alice Tepper Marlin recently concluded her term as the 2007-2008 Citi Distinguished Fellow in Ethics and Leadership at NYU's Stern School of Business.

Quotation

"Imbued with a newly influential concept, consumers have begun to embrace the simple, quiet activism of casting their economic vote conscientiously at the checkout counter, an act which can empower us all."

Alice Tepper Marlin

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