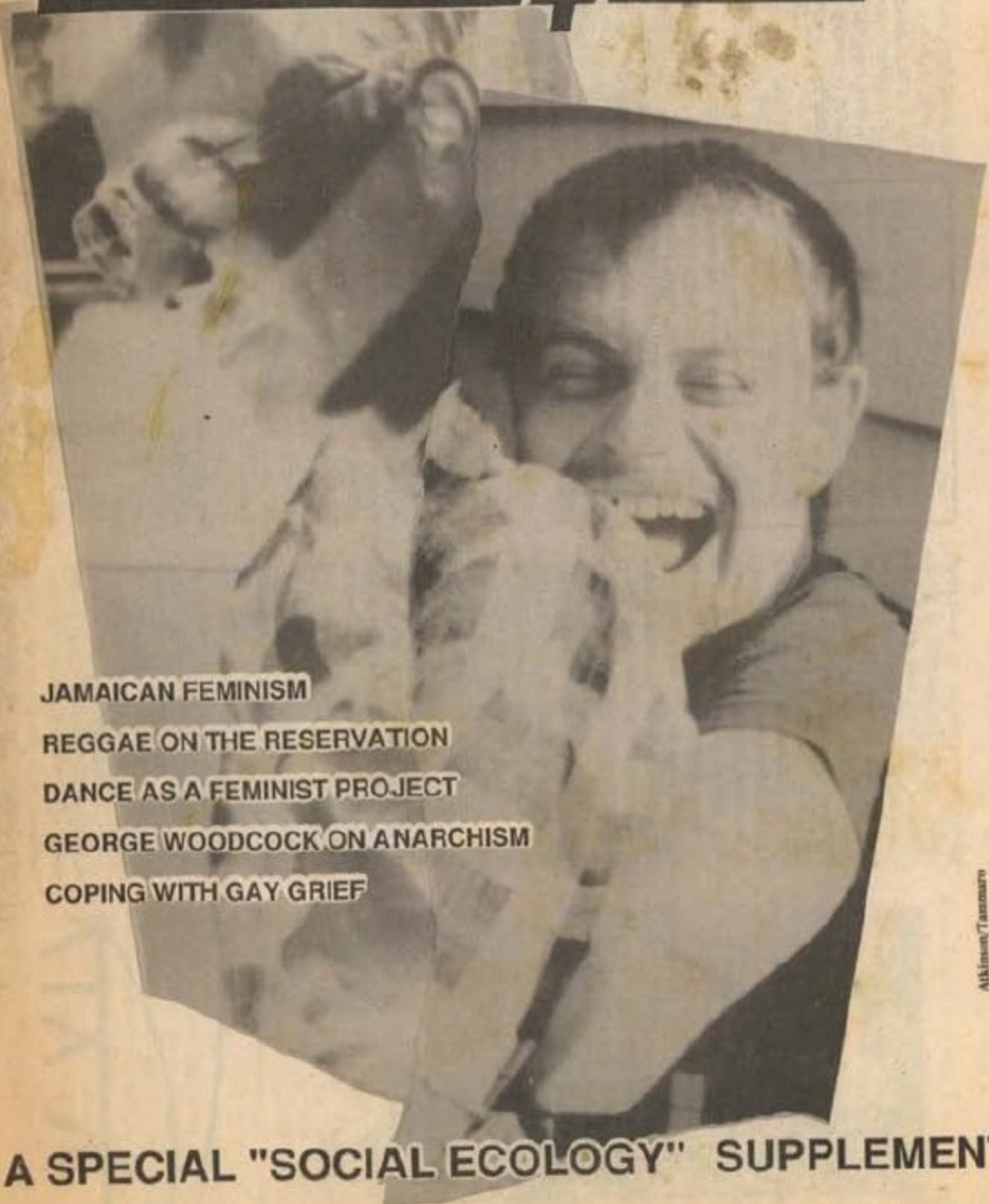


# KICK IT OVER®



JAMAICAN FEMINISM

REGGAE ON THE RESERVATION

DANCE AS A FEMINIST PROJECT

GEORGE WOODCOCK ON ANARCHISM

COPING WITH GAY GRIEF

Aki Kinnari/Tansuuro

A SPECIAL "SOCIAL ECOLOGY" SUPPLEMENT

CANADA - USA - AUSTRALIA - \$2.00 UK 75p No. 20 COPING WINTER 1987



Tammara

With this issue we are embarking upon a new 'visual' look -- that is, a greater commitment to the power of visual imagery to stand on its own and communicate ideas and feelings with strength. We believe that the power of visual imagery has been traditionally underrated by radical publications. So, we are attempting to redress this imbalance and hope that you will understand and enjoy our new look as it evolves over time.

**T**

his issue was supposed to be about "coping". However, because of the variety of fine articles we received, including two challenging contributions to the "ecology debate" by ecofeminist, Janet Biehl and social ecologist, Murray Bookchin, this issue isn't exactly on topic. This issue is more of an *example* of coping. Members of the collective have had many life crises to contend with as exemplified by the interview with collective member, Robyn Turney, on coping with gay grief, as, we're sure, have many of you. These are not easy times. So, if we're slow to respond to letters, or requests, or to publish, there are reasons.

"Just barely coping" is the best way to describe our financial situation, so we have decided to change our subscription rate from 6 issues for \$7.50 to 4 issues for \$7.50 (which is what a lot of people seem to think it is anyway). We will continue to send reduced subscriptions to those who can't afford the current rate and, of course, we will still send free issues to prisoners and psychiatric inmates. Because of the threatened loss of preferential mailing rates for Canadian magazines currently being discussed in the Canadian/U.S. "free" trade talks, we may be in a more precarious position yet. So, if any of you can help out with a donation, or getting a friend or library to subscribe, asking a bookstore to carry us, distributing KIO yourself, or suggesting that someone advertise in our pages, it would help us a lot. In fact, it is only because of the *mutual aid* extended to us by many of you that we have been able to survive to our sixth anniversary. We continue to need your help as we hope you continue to want, and need, to hear all of our voices.



## AN INTERVIEW WITH DUB POET AFUA COOPER

# WOMEN ARE FIGHTING BACK

The following is an edited interview with Afua Cooper, a dub poet from Jamaica currently living in Toronto. She is the author of *Breaking Chains*, a book of poetry, and has appeared on the album *Woman Talk* and on the cassette, *Poetry is Not a Luxury*. The interview was conducted by Patrick Andrade.

Afua: In Jamaica, the way people react to feminism generally, -- I shouldn't say people, I should be more specific and say men -- is that it is "white women's business, a bunch of lesbians" kind of thing. But, in Jamaica, the women are the ones, in my opinion, who run the show...that take care of the children. Even if they are not working, they make sure that everybody in their household will survive. Incredible strength! I'm not glorifying them or anything because I think they were forced to be strong. They had no alternative. If they weren't strong, they would just die. It's not that these women want to be strong women.

On the other hand, they really defer to their men. Some of these guys are really jerks, but the woman will still cook his meals, do his clothes, and do everything to make him "feel like a man."

While they are very strong, they also defer a lot to their men, which leads one to think "why is this so?" I think it's like most women everywhere: it's the way they have been socialized. We think we still have to have a man. We can't make him feel bad. We have to have men even if they are assholes.

I think women are fighting for certain basic rights. They might do so in various political organizations or at the community level, but I think they are beginning

to be aware of themselves as women.

A lot of times people will say, "How come a lot of these women aren't conscious?" People have to find time to be conscious. You cannot just become conscious overnight. The time has to be there. If you are really fighting and struggling to get a dollar to buy bread to feed your child, to pay the rent, it's very difficult for you to think of yourself as an individual and say, "I am a woman, and I am suffering this way by virtue of the fact of being born female." It's very difficult because you are caught up in the struggle.

In Jamaica, the women have not yet got, in terms of legislation, what the women have here in Canada. To give just one example, the law here protects women (maybe not effectively, but the bill has been passed) against spouse abuse. He [the man] can be charged. That the courts and the judges take a long time is another thing. But, in Jamaica, there is no protection for a woman. She can be beaten up. The police won't intervene. They'll say, "It's a domestic situation. You deal with it."

It is very interesting that there [in Jamaica] they have equal pay legislation. If you and I do the same work, we are going to get paid the same. But then again, it brings one around to the question of what is the percentage of women employed in the work force, and, of course, the percentage of men is higher than of women. Or the women are still in the traditional jobs such as typists, maids, prostitutes -- that's a traditional job.

The women are fighting back. There are several women's groups that have come under attack, but they are still fighting. Finally, I think they have started a

women's studies program at the Trinidad campus of the University of the West Indies after years of debate. That is something positive in itself.

In music, the women face a lot of sexism. I know for a fact that if a woman feels she has "stuff" -- good things she wants to put out -- more than likely she's going to have to sleep with some producer or somebody just to get it out, or they don't think she is good enough, or they will give the man opportunity more than the woman.

For me, as I see it, reggae is very male-oriented. It's a man's music. A lot of the words and phrases are very male. They are taken out of male language. There is hardly any female language in reggae. If you listen to the lyrics, they cuss women: "She's dis, she's dat, she can't cook, she's committing adultery." They want a slim girl, they don't want a fat girl [laughter].

Now you don't find women singing that kind of thing. They will sing about the political situation. I'm not saying the men don't, because reggae is also a very political music, liberatory. A lot of the music that is coming out right now is very anti-woman, and not even just now, because you'll find a lot of that music also from the sixties and seventies.

There aren't many female reggae singers. Where you have women making a lot of contribution is in the area of deejaying, because you have a lot of women deejays. I think that *Sister Nancy* was the first popular woman deejay. And after that, you had a whole set of women deejays, and some of them deejay different things from the men. They talk about their children, religion, about the political situation. The men do too, but they spend a

lot of time cussing women. The women seem to have a more political bent. I would say the same for the poets, too. For instance, if you listen to the words of *Jean Breeze*, she is very political and feminist in her perspective.

Patrick: I have heard men say, as an excuse, for the anti-women songs, that in the dance halls these songs get the biggest applause from the women.

Afua: That's true, but why do you think a woman would listen to a song that is cussing her out, and is really degrading to her and her sex? Why?

Patrick: Are you asking me?

Afua: Yeah, I'm asking you!

Patrick: I think a person in that situation realizes that is what the men see as cool, and the system is set up to reflect the standards males set. I don't even know personally if they do like it as much as people say they do. I'd feel a lot more comfortable talking to them...

Afua: ...and making your own judgement.

Patrick: Yeah. I think, behind the scenes, you would find a lot of women who really don't like it, but who aren't comfortable speaking out against it; who might be afraid of what happens if they talk out against it. I don't agree it's because women applaud, that is why men perform these songs.

Afua: No, that's totally fallacious.

Patrick: Unfortunately, that's an excuse I hear men using. They kind of laugh and say, "Well, the women like it." Seemingly saying it can't be that bad.

Afua: No, you can't use it to justify it, that's a lot of b.s. [pause]. A lot of women will tell you they don't like it, and that they will boycott those deejays. It's really disappointing to me personally, because I

listen to some deejays that I really like. I hear one of them cuss Ronald Reagan -- some really good lyrics -- and, then, in another song, he'll go, "...and the girl can't cook" [laughter], and I was really disappointed. I think the reason some women accept this is because of what we have internalized; what we have been brought up to think. Women have generally been brought up to distrust other women, because she's going to take away your man, or something like that. We identify with male values, the way males see things. It's like brainwashing. They have done a great job on us.

**Patrick:** I was telling you about the argument I had with *Mutabaraka* about his negative attitude towards lesbianism. Can you see more people becoming more accepting about that?

**Afua:** It's difficult to say. In 1985, I spent the summer with some musicians in Jamaica and, of course, that came up, and they weren't too accepting at all [laughter]. I know what some people in Jamaica say. They will say; I can accept two women living together, loving one another, but two men -- that's out! Both men and women are more tolerant to female homosexuals than males.

**Patrick:** Is it also just seen as a "white" thing? This is one of the things *Mutabaraka* and I argued about. He was saying this, and I was pointing out many historical instances that contradicted this.

**Afua:** Some people you talk to will say it's white women who bring it in, white tourists who bring it in. They see it as something decadent, and anything that is decadent is brought in by the tourists. Or is it these black women following white feminists? And these feminists "are nothing but lesbians." If you are a feminist, you are a lesbian.

Even though they know, within themselves, this is not true, because anyone will tell you when they were growing up, they always heard whispers that "That woman over there was funny." That's how we say it in Jamaica. That's way back --

the fifties, the sixties. So, they know it's not white women who bring this thing in, but, of course, they have to justify it because it's decadent and dirty, and that we as clean people are never with that. It had to be brought in.

Then there is always the fear that if a woman is like that, she doesn't want a man. I think for some men, it is really difficult to accept the fact that a woman doesn't want him as a sexual partner. There is also that "No man wants her and all she needs is a good fuck," and she will see the light and turn around [laughter].

**Patrick:** A friend of mine says she always replies, "Yes, that's true, if only I could find one [laughter]."

**Afua:** That's a good one [laughter], but, in Jamaica, women are really moving.

**Patrick:** Did you notice men in Jamaica trying to change sexist attitudes?

**Afua:** I hope I haven't painted a bleak picture of men in Jamaica, and all you have down there is a bunch of sexist men. There are men who are trying to change themselves and engage their brothers in constructive dialogue around the issue of sexism. The men who have the power out there are the entertainers. The people listen to them and respect them. They could do a lot for the struggle against sexism. Of course, they are struggling in the national context against colonialism and imperialism; they are in the forefront of that fight, but not for sexism because they don't recognize it. They say, "You are a woman, I am a man, we have different roles, it's natural." So, even trying to get them to acknowledge sexism is a battle, and they have the power. They are in the dance halls, on the airwaves. They could do a lot. That's why it's important for more women to get out there to write, read poetry and perform.

**Patrick:** Wouldn't it be nice for a change, instead of men waiting for women to prod them into changing, they would change themselves.

**Afua:** Yeah [pause]. It's a long fight. □

## contents

<b>An Interview With Dub Poet Afua Cooper</b> .....	2
<b>Dance as a Feminist Project</b> .....	4
<b>Challenging Development</b> .....	7
<b>Reggae on the Reservation</b> .....	9
<b>The Right to Grieve: Gay Grief</b> .....	12
<b>From Tradition to Revolution</b> .....	16
<b>Rehabilitation or Revenge?</b> .....	18
<b>Letters</b> .....	20

## Special Insert: The Ecology Debate

<b>An Eco-feminist Critique</b> .....	2A
<b>Bookchin on 'Deep Ecology'</b> .....	4A

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... perhaps all revolutionaries should be required to dance... bye for now -- Christopher Alice



Joanne Howry



# DANCE AS A FEMINIST PROJECT

by Dale McDonough

Dear Friends:

I am feeling a host of emotions bursting to be expressed, and not knowing where to begin. After being disconnected for these past months, I still feel the urgency, the purpose which we summoned up while together.

By writing, I want to encourage the memory of our relationship and reawaken its dynamism. Most of all, I want to share with you why I feel our dance experiment was so important. It was such a demanding and enervating experience for each of us both personally and academically because, paradoxically, it had such immediately exhilarating effects and tremendous potential for self-growth and the development of community.

Having to rein in my thoughts and feelings for the sake of translating them onto these pages will surely not do justice to their intensity or breadth so I beckon you to read my words with this purpose in mind: as a clarion call, as strong words arising from my sense of humility and vulnerability in the face of the expansive process we have begun and our enormous project ahead. It is my way of love to you.

I believe we came together because we knew something was missing in our practice as feminists. Our combined radical, theoretical insights were astounding, but

how we lived in our bodies and with each other's bodies belied their integration. In various ways, we still clung to the myth that stereotypical beauty was an achievement (remember our shame, anger and jealousy that bubbled up at odd, inconvenient moments?). We shared experiences of the pain that comes from "not fitting" — even when we had whittled our bodies down to so-called perfection; of the fragile bruised egos we still shouldered; of knowing nothing about our bodies beyond intellectual studies and the myths created by the psychology of gender and the politics of power in our society.

Yet, we rebelled against the internalization of victimhood, the suppression and invalidation of women's desire and dared challenge bipolar, women-hating myths, to take back our bodies for ourselves. At times, it felt as if there was no escape, no safety as in intellectual somnolence, only a thin ledge to tread into the fire.

After a time, surprisingly and quite spontaneously, of working together and gaining trust, the vision of rebellious, joyous freedom to move unselfconsciously became an overwhelmingly infectious urge. The static body of mythology was now confronted by the fluid, diffuse and rapturous moving body — the dancing body. And perhaps now the spiritual body? When we read Kim Chernin, we discover that North American culture

gives nothing to women, no ceremonial models for female rites of passage, no tradition of female power, we are left with an enormous spiritual yearning.<sup>1</sup>

Reading the *écriture féminine*<sup>2</sup> of French feminists, as well, focuses our attention on woman's cultural and metaphysical alienation in society. In Catherine Clement's words: "Woman is the dark continent to which woman must return."<sup>3</sup>

In other words, women must return to and find value in the bodies which have been so maligned; to walk into the fire of deeply encultured fears, to uproot patriarchal-capitalist sources. Women need and desire their own feminine, bodily clarity and truth. As I see it, the confrontation with body, and the creative use made of it that dance affords, is one elemental rite of passage basic to self-esteem.

At the same time, by choosing dance as an option for our group, were we not also rejecting academic elitism whose sterile discursive abstractionism has starved the body, distanced sensual awareness and repressed our "felt sense"?

In a marvelous little book called *Focusing*<sup>4</sup>, which a concerned friend gave to me recently to help me through a depression, the author, Gendlin, argues for the healing value of being open to our "felt sense." He calls the "felt sense" our deepest bodily knowledge of memory, experience, thought, feeling, "an internal aura that encompasses everything... (the) total brain-mind environment as we know it."<sup>5</sup>

When we deny our "felt sense," we deny our sensuality, our anger and physicality, and we eventually get sick. The body tries then to signal us that all is not well through symptoms/emotions which are the front runners for the felt sense. We need to learn to listen, to allow the felt sense to come to consciousness so that repair and resolution can take place, for the body as homeostatic creation, is always pushing for equilibrium. We need to learn to trust this bodily-knowing.

The felt sense has nothing to do with intellectually internalized misogynist propaganda which acts to constrict and prod women to self-censorship. It is rather a wholistic sense coming from within our being, deeper than internalized ideology. That causes an opening outwards, a positive yielding to life.

Trusting and exposing our internal sense is a risk and an act of faith, for these feelings are unclear, not predetermined and therefore unpatterned. If stereotypical gender roles require predictable, expected and clear emotive patterns, then the felt sense of feminists, of human beings, needs new forms of action and a new vocabulary. No longer is it sufficient to change content without also changing its form. — Our dance group was uniquely located to test these waters.

But just how do we understand this new paradigm? In what way can we make this workable? The feminist theologian, Eleanor Hancy, another enlightening



photographs by Alan Mullin

writer, has suggested that new ways of being together, of creating new visions, new patterns that develop more humane communication and community structure need to operate from a "doing ethics," that is, an ethics which integrates and emerges out of our concrete activity.<sup>6</sup> On the personal level this translates into embodiment: we embody the vision, the hope and the passion that catalyzes our inner resources to take up decisive action for change. In tandem with others, embodiment reverberates outward and beyond, exponentially, having global effects towards interdependence.

I found Randy Martin's work captures this new-wave concept in her writing on dance. She suggests that what goes missing in most radical political organizations is not the theoretical justifications but the desire -- the physical agent of activity -- to act politically.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the embodiment of vision and passion which dance inspires suggests that dance may be on powerful route towards promoting and activating societal transformation.

Since the body-mind acts as recipient and transformer of the social environment, it is also the source, the groundswell of desire. And, as activity, desire causes human agency. No wonder that in our detached, dislocated, abstract, disembodied groupings we have not made more headway to change.

What Martin calls the "dancer's desire" or kinetic intent" is the desire to act. She focuses on the production of intention that dance begets and calls this motivation, or the intentional activity, which can push theory into the level of practice.

A similar thread in this new fabric is feminist theologian and author Beverly Harrison's view of the body as "emergent," as "potentiality in the doing of struggle" -- as "desire" in the engagement with others in the struggle for freedom and justice.<sup>8</sup> Harrison's eloquent thesis is that the dynamic, material body is

not an end in itself but the means by which and in which our human species can strive towards a more universal, spiritual human community. Here then, the radical work of dance is the radical work of love -- of struggle to create community both moral and sensual.

The doing of dance has the potential to direct our passionate and rightful anger at injustice outward. When we embody our feelings by facing them, owning them and giving shape to them through movement, along with others, we validate our righteous indignation against oppression and foster our innate strength.

It has always been an act of bravery, passion and risk to take a stand as a woman in a misogynist society, but we are in a decidedly safer position than most women of other times and other cultures.

Against the historical torrent of assumptions which have oppressed and alienated women for "the dark continent of their own bodily self," *écriture féminine* describes how women have channeled their desire into diversionary, counter-cultural roles of hysteric and witch.

Women were branded as witches in the 14th century by the Church for healing without regulation by the masculinist medical profession.

*Witches didn't work miracles but they did know their bodies and that is why they could cure... Because they were in contact with the life of their bodies, and the bodies of others in order to encourage life... because they dared to live in their bodies, to live their sexuality...<sup>9</sup>*

They were burned at the stake, martyred, and called witches.

Xavier Gauthier explains why women were feared:

*Why witches? Because witches dance. They dance in the moonlight. Lunar, lunatic women, stricken, they say, with periodic madness. Swollen with*

*lightninglike revolt, bursting with anger, with desire, they dance wild dances on the wild moors. Wild women, uncivilized, as the white say of some blacks (as bosses say of some strikers, as the rich say of the poor, of men about women).*

*The witches dance wild and unjustifiable like desire.<sup>10</sup>*

The theme of dance as a medium of creative rebellion is echoed in Catherine Clement's account of contemporary peasant women in southern Italy:

*...illiterate and always poor. (women) are... bitten by tarantula spiders and then afflicted with languor so that treatment according to an archaic rite is required... They dance for twelve hours mimicking the spider... but tarantulas do not exist in this region and no insect bite produces these precise symptoms: thus we are dealing with imaginary insects... The hysterical peasants dance until they are touched by the grace of St. Paul; then they are cured (?) for the year but they must put themselves in a crisis state regularly, for life... These women are bitten with they are in an affective or economic situation that is so conflict ridden that the crisis is the only way out... The crisis is at once a prison and a liberation.<sup>11</sup>*

These adopted persona, say Helen Cixous and Catherine Clement, offer a "way out": "through an escape that is also an attack... (these roles explore) the continent of female pleasure... out of which a reposition and reaffirmation of (our) own deepest being" may develop.

Dance becomes a positive strategy to cope with unbearable conditions. The splitting of mind from body -- the condition which prevails for these women 99% of the year -- a living state of constant dislocation, can no more be tolerated. Life has meaning and joy for only a few short hours each year when creative expression,

viewed as pathology, lives.

Splitting the ego into good and bad parts to isolate and control what is feared, according to Kleinian psychology, will produce polarity, distance and fear of our own annihilation. Klein's thesis is that "if aggression is not experienced, it will be split off and thus there will be no motive to care for the world."<sup>12</sup>

Her theory of splitting is crucial to our self understanding but it is debatable whether good feelings only come from a feeling of guilt and thus the need to do reparation. And I wonder whether Klein's work may have more to do with male aggression and lack of caring than with women. But more useful is a feminist overview which would put this scenario of experienced anger into a context of love so that anger would not seek out a scapegoat but could be balanced and assimilated by love. In other words, how can witches find a way to dance all year long? Some form of integration of mind and body needs to transpire; a new form of organization of the individual and the collective needs to evolve. Adrienne Rich initiates this process when she implores us to: "Think through the body," to "touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, our bond with the natural order, the corporeal ground of our intelligence"<sup>13</sup> -- to start with ourselves.

This initial step paradoxically is usually difficult for women. As females, we are attuned to what Alexandra Kaplan calls "affective connections and the primacy of mutually enhancing reciprocal relatedness... (with) the capacity to take in and appreciate the affective life of another,"<sup>14</sup> as a consequence of our sex role. What we usually lack is a strong sense of self. Without a strong self, attempts at community building flounder in distrust, envy, anger and shame. To produce strength we have to come from strength and that is what our dance group tried to initiate.

Intuitively we all knew the power we





were broaching and thus, our contradiction: of balancing our fear with our fascination and desire. It was a chance, now academically legitimated, to move beyond who we thought we were and to engage in self-exploration and community building.

Like the act of birthing and all creative acts, dance offers the opportunity to be centrally located in the praxis of developing and nurturing dignity, and connection.

My friends, it was an act of courage for each of us to commit ourselves to a process that at times was frightening: to risk exposure and confront our perfectionism and weaknesses; to risk unexpected, spontaneous feelings in the body; to risk publicly, emotions of love and anger and being vulnerable. It would have been far easier to hide behind the cloak of academic intellectualism and refuse our bodies' felt sense, to refuse each other.

Above all, it was an act of love, to create personal bonds, to deepen our intuitive selves, to explore feelings together, to get beyond stereotypes and projections of all sorts which inevitably came bubbling up, to creatively develop a "body politic."

I couldn't agree more with Harrison than when she calls this sense of love, a radical feminist activity:

*in struggling to lay hold of the gift of life, to receive it, to live deeply into it, to pass it on... we must learn what we are to know of love from immersion in the struggle for justice.<sup>15</sup>*

And we did struggle in dealing with our sensual power. Throughout our meetings we persisted in daring to ask the difficult personal questions, challenging our limitations, urging each other to take one more step, always careful to guide our challenges with honesty, self-reflection and care -- to "act-each-other-into-well-being."<sup>16</sup>

In this way our dance group encouraged integrity: the sensual and moral form by which our powerful feelings could be felt,

expressed and then integrated. Most appropriately here, Dr. Scott Peck reminds us that the verb "to integrate" is at the root of the noun "integrity." He movingly writes to advise his readership:

*Genuine community is always characterized by integrity... It does not seek to avoid conflict but to reconcile it. And the essence of reconciliation is that painful, sacrificial process of emptying. Community always pushes its members to empty themselves sufficiently to make room for the other point of view, the new, the different understanding. Community continually urges both itself and its individual members painfully, yet joyously into ever deeper levels of integrity.<sup>17</sup>*

Our contemporary society's fascination with machines and abstracted modes of ruling poses an enormous threat to our entire ecosystem and sense of human community. When forms of disembodied power remove feelings from action, a whole population can be detonated without a drop of remorse. When a button pushed in New York can kill millions in Cambodia without a twinge of identification by Americans, we are deeply in trouble. If we cannot be "touched" by someone else's pain, or someone else's joy, how then can we "feel"? If we cannot assimilate our own aggression, but project it onto others, our survival as a species is seriously threatened.

The particular masculinist goal of distance and separation promoted by all hierarchical structures leads us away from our bodies, our base of "sensual knowing." That is why our dance group was a moral feminist project. By its very presence it challenged the status quo of distrust and competition among women, and allowed for the reevaluation/transformation of the female body in its presence, its dynamic functioning. Therefore, I urge you friends, in all your doubts, to proceed with the ideals of our project wherever you are.

For my part, I aim to nurture Starhawk's version of an alternative form of consciousness, what she calls immanence:

*The awareness of the world and everything in it as alive, dynamic, interdependent, interacting and infused with moving energies, a living being, a weaving dance... Immanent power, power-from-within is not something we have, but something we do.<sup>18</sup>*

We can bring about immanence through the integration of dance in any locale by directing energy and desire into thoughtful action, risk and hope. We do movements to display our feelings, our bodily wisdom and way of communicating. Together we dance-each-other-into-life, just as we act-each-other-into-well-being. The joy of movement itself connects us to life and when compounded and energized by other beings, summons up our inspiration to seek our higher purpose.

A wholistic integration of mind and body in the here-and-now lived world of sensuous experience is found only "in-relation," being vulnerable and responsible to others, being accountable through active engagement or "mutuality." Being immersed bodily in the practice of mutuality is key to our human moral community -- our survival.

With love in our sisterhood.

Dale McDonough

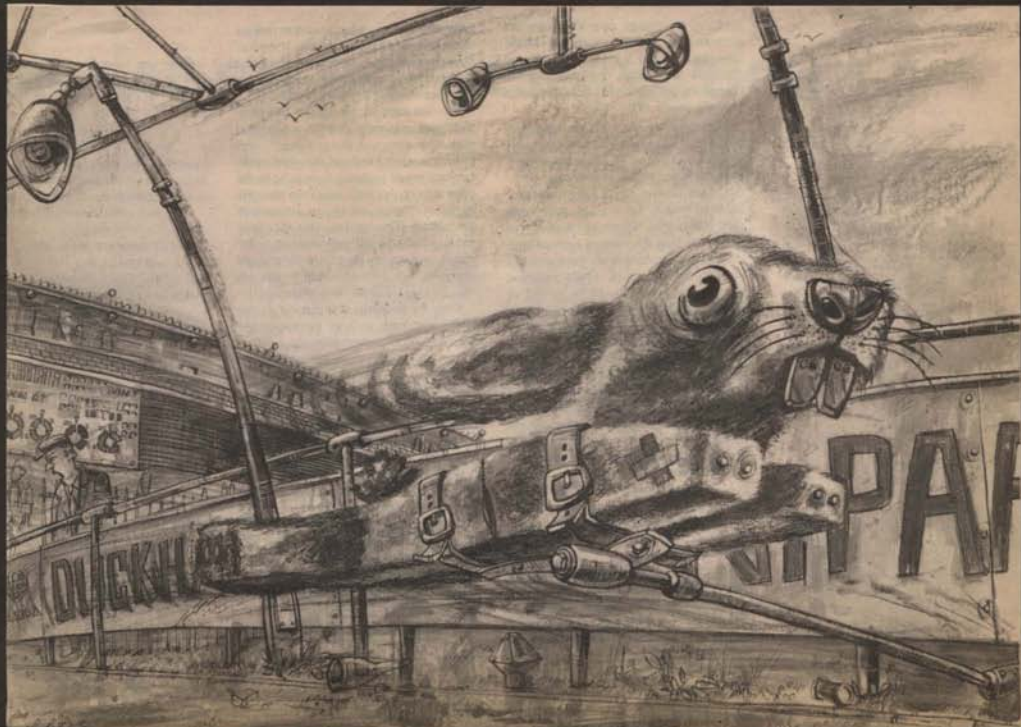
#### Notes

1. Kim Chernin, "The Hungry Self" in interview with Richard Revlin in *East West Journal*, January 1987, pp. 36-43.
2. *Ecriture feminine* was born out of the French feminist/theoretical groups, and takes its inspiration from Helene Cixous and Catherine Clement. It focuses on the sometimes oppressive, sometimes privileged madness of women, and on the wilderness out of which silenced women must finally find ways to scream, cry and dance in "impassioned dances of desire." The body, which has been so maligned and abused by patriarchy, is seen as the way

to return to the "centre of our knowing." Women must challenge "phallogocentric" authority through an exploration of the continent of female desire, which is neither dark nor lacking. This exploration involves the construction of an "erotic aesthetic" rooted in bisexuality free of Freudian castration anxieties -- a delight in difference, in multiplicity.

3. Elaine Marx and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds., *New French Feminisms*, (New York: Schocken, 1981), p. xvi.
4. Eugene Genelin, *Focusing*, (Chicago: Bantam New Age Books, 1981).
5. Genelin, *Focusing*, p. 32.
6. Eleanor Hunter Haney, "What is Feminist Ethics?" in *Journal of Religious Education* 8/1 (1980), pp. 115-124.
7. Randy Martin, "Dance as a Social Movement" in *Social Text*, 1985, pp. 54-70.
8. Beverly Wildgen Harrison, "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love," in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, Vol. 36, Supplementary 1981, pp. 41-57.
9. Marks and de Courtivron, *New French Feminisms*, p. 199.
10. Marks and de Courtivron, *New French Feminisms*, p. 199.
11. Marks and de Courtivron, *New French Feminisms*, p. 133.
12. Marks and de Courtivron, *New French Feminisms*, p. 133.
13. Naomi Goldenberg, "Resurrecting the Body: An Agenda for Feminist Theory," paper written for the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ottawa, 1984.
14. Alexandra Kaplan, "Male or Female Therapists for Women", (Stone Center: Wellesley College, No. 83-02, 1984), p. 1.
15. Beverly Harrison, "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love", p. 45.
16. Beverly Harrison, "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love", p. 45.
17. Dr. M. Scott Peck, *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p. 235.
18. Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), p. 12.





## Challenging Development: Or the Many Uses of Guinea Pigs

by Danielle McArthur

*Danielle McArthur, a writer and activist, was a participant in an exchange program for several months in Peru.*

We were nearing the end of our first month in the tiny village of *Racracalla*, Peru (a wonderfully remote village of 500 people in the central Peruvian highlands—so remote that they had just built a road there a couple of years earlier), when Jim described his extraordinary experience to the rest of the group.

Our discussion had focussed on the wealth of natural medicines that each of us had observed in every facet of village life. When the Peruvians in the group first

mentioned the use of guinea pigs as a means of diagnosis and cure of illness, we were a little taken aback. Medicinal plants we could see; after all, we knew that many of our synthetic medicines had originated from natural sources, but guinea pigs? Those furry, squeaky little critters most often found in pet stores or laboratories back home? Surely not.

Imagine our surprise when Jim quietly interrupted our expression of disbelief to say that he had witnessed something that would forever leave him with a great respect for these furry creatures. When he had first moved in with his family in the village he had spent many a sleepless night listening to the cries of the youngest child in the family, a mere baby who coughed incessantly and who appeared to

have some sort of lung infection.

After a week where the child's condition only worsened, the "wise woman" of the village was brought in, and a young guinea pig was selected from the family's supply. While Jim watched, the elderly woman entered a trance-like state induced in part by chewing on coca leaves. She then picked up the guinea pig and moved it over the small child's body. Incredibly, the guinea pig died and the child stopped crying almost simultaneously. The skin of the dead guinea pig was removed and its organs examined. To Jim's utter astonishment the lungs of the little animal showed signs of a considerable infection even to his admittedly untrained eye. From that day forward the baby rapidly regained its health.

It is a little difficult for us to accept this treatment under the heading of "natural medicine" as we understand it, but this is perhaps only because our understanding of the subject is too often limited to that

which finds its roots in solid, scientific facts. For the native people of Peru and Ecuador (who share a common ancestry as descendants of the Inca) and for many other native groups worldwide where "healing" is more commonly linked to the spiritual world, this was hardly an extraordinary occurrence. For many of us in the group, Jim's experience was a small but important glimpse of these forces of healing which are so wonderfully unexplainable.

Throughout my stay in *Racracalla*, I was often astonished by the breadth of people's knowledge of natural cures. This knowledge was available to everyone. No one person could possibly develop a monopoly over something which formed such an integral part of everyday life. The herbal teas which were the families' only beverage were always introduced in the context of their medicinal qualities, and the smallest child could point out these herbs growing wild in the fields or by the



roadside. Of course, over the years the older members of the community would have accumulated a greater amount and depth of knowledge, but this did not change the availability of this knowledge to all the people of the village.

Time and time again, the medicinal qualities of plants, which I had previously dismissed as being of the weed variety, were explained to me, as were their methods of preparation. These last instructions, although widely known, are quite complex and it was not simply a matter of blindly sticking the plant in a pot of boiling water and serving it up. Each cure had its own special recipe which indicated whether the plant should be boiled or simply infused in boiled water, and for how long. Each recipe described to me also contained a warning about health-harming side effects which would occur if the plant was not used correctly. Healing with natural medicine was no easy art, and yet, even in its complexity, it was an art shared by many. Each member of the community had the power to maintain his/her health and the health of their family members. The importance of this power was to strike me forcefully following later events in the village. Racracalla was soon to be the site of a government project to modernize health care in the countryside.

The entire group attended the ceremony for the opening of a village dispensary which was to bring modern medicine to the village. On first sight it did indeed seem like a possible improvement in health services, since we imagined it to be the equivalent of a friendly neighbourhood drugstore. However, the first thing we noticed was that there was no one who could possibly fit the description of a pharmacist dispensing the medicines. One man, with the equivalent of a basic first-aid certificate, was soon dispensing potentially dangerous medicines.

Antibiotics were being sold on an as-many-as-you-afford basis, which most often turned out to be inadequate quantities. Later, in a discussion with a young doctor in *Huancayo* (the nearest city), I was told of the new and epidemic strains of diseases which were showing up in the countryside, and which could be traced back to the improper use of antibiotics. I saw children receiving injections of penicillin for the smallest cold, and *chloramphenicol* (a dangerous antibiotic) being handed out as easily as cough syrup.

The local people trustingly accepted the advice of the only person who had even a tiny bit of knowledge about the new medicines, and a new relationship began to develop where one person had control over the distribution of, knowledge about medicine. This was a relationship that I knew only too well, and it struck me that this was not a case of progress towards greater health care for the people. They were moving from a system which gave them control over their own healing to one which concentrated that control in the hands of a few, not often incredibly scrupulous, sources.

I remembered Haiti, where I had seen baskets of antibiotics, in a wide assortment of colours, being sold by women at the market. I recalled the many cases of international pharmaceutical companies using the people of the Third World as guinea pigs for their new products, or as dumping grounds for products that had been outlawed in our own countries. I looked around me at the people of Racra-

calla who had as yet no reason to distrust these new medicines. The very fabric of their community was made up of trust in each other; a trust developed through centuries of living as a small community.

My first urge to dig up the new road and build a giant wall with a sign that read, "*No Progress Here, Please*", was overcome when I realized that, first of all, I myself would probably have to be on the other side of that wall, since we too were agents of change just by our presence in the village. This village, like the thousands of other small communities in the Andes mountains, could not long avoid exposure to the rush towards "*development al estilo norteamericano*."

What I'd forgotten was that the people who I had such an urge to protect had been looking after themselves for a hell of a long time, and had all the mechanisms to continue to do so. Decisions were still made collectively in community assemblies, and a long tradition of farming community lands collectively had produced mechanisms for working together that seemed to work well.

What made them vulnerable in the face of the new medicines was a lack of information with which to judge their usefulness to the community, and control their usage. Unfortunately, we realized that this kind of information could hardly be said to be very available in our own countries, and what they were more likely to be exposed to would be the type of don't-worry-we-know-what's-good-for-you instructions that so often accompany development efforts, or even worse the hard-nose advertising of pharmaceutical companies.

Still, we were determined to start them off with some alternative views on the subject. In response to requests by the women of the community to talk about birth control methods, the group held an assembly where we spoke honestly about our own fears about potential side-effects from new and old methods. We told them about the disastrous use of the *Dalton Shield IUD* in our countries which had resulted in *Pelvic Inflammatory Disease* for many women, rendering others totally sterile. We added that, when the *Dalton Shield* had finally been forced off the market, a lot of the remaining stock had been bought up by *USAID* (a U.S. relief organization), and was said to be still floating around Third World countries. We talked about how *Depo Provera*, an injectable form of birth control is being used on women in parts of Africa while it is not yet allowed in our own countries.

When we left the community, we presented the book, *Where There is No Doctor: A Village Healthcare Handbook* (in Spanish) to the community in an assembly. We hoped that this book, which looks at the use and misuse of any common drugs, and which emphasizes the use of natural cures whenever possible, would represent a view of medicine which is more in tune with the reality of health care possibilities in Racracalla.

My experience in this tiny Peruvian village was one I will not soon forget. For two months, I was able to be part of a native community and learn an enormous amount about natural remedies. More importantly, I realized the importance of a system of health care where (unlike our own) there is no monopoly over information; a system where every individual has the ability to participate in maintaining his/her own health. □



# REGGAE ON THE RESERVATION

by Patrick Andrade

Patrick Andrade grew up in Jamaica and is a writer, musician and cultural activist. He has had a long standing interest in Native culture and spirituality.

For a second, I really couldn't believe my eyes. I had just passed the slogan, "Roots, Rock, Reggae," spraypainted on a huge boulder. Except that I wasn't in Jamaica or another of the better known reggae strongholds; I was on the most isolated Indian reservation in the United States situated at the bottom of the enormous Grand Canyon. Suddenly, the adrenalin started to flow as I realized how close I was to meeting what had been described as one of the most intriguing set of reggae fans in the world: the Havasupai Indians.

Turning through the pages of a *Reggae Beat* magazine, I had once come across an article commenting on the first reggae concert held on the Supai reservation. The reaction of the residents, the Havasupai, to reggae was described in such overwhelmingly enthusiastic terms that I wanted to find out more than what was in this brief article, and to see for myself if these reggae fans were a reality or merely an exaggerated account.

A few months later I found myself in a town called Kingman, located in the state of Arizona. With my destination 110 miles away, with no public transportation and extremely limited traffic, I began to understand why Supai was described as the most isolated reservation in the United States.

I managed to hitchhike to the Hualapi Reservation at Peach Springs which was

approximately fifty-five miles from Supai. This was a very small reserve containing a restaurant, gas station and general store. Walking down the main road, I thought I heard the sounds of the reggae group, *Black Uhuru*, somewhere in the distance, but I couldn't be certain. However, as I turned around the corner, the distinctive sound of *Black Uhuru* was indeed booming out from in front of a store, where a scene reminiscent of what I had often seen in Jamaica was happening. A whole group of youth were skanking and dancing away to the music.

As I came closer, one person saw me and suddenly the whole group swiveled around to check out this guy with dreadlocked hair coming towards them. At first, the group of Hualapi, with their assortment of red, green and gold t-shirts, belts and armbands, were real cool and aloof. However, after about five minutes, when somebody asked me where I was from, the ice broke and soon I was literally mobbed by people who were touching my hair and who wanted to ask me questions.

The next day I arrived at Hualapi Hilltop from which I would descend eleven miles down the steep canyon cliffs by mule to Supai. After a few hours of navigating the narrow precipices of the canyon while simultaneously learning to ride a mule, I finally arrived in Supai.

Immediately, I was reminded of a rural Jamaican setting with its dirt roads, green fields and small houses lined up along the pathways. The sound of the waterfalls could be heard in the distance, and people were generally hanging about or travelling about on horseback. As I made my way through the village, practically every

house I passed had some kind of reggae music coming from it, and several Havasupai walked around with ghetto blasters that emitted the familiar rumbling drum and bass sounds of reggae music. While people were very curious about my presence (I would often, out of the corner of my eye, catch people pointing at me), they were also willing to let me be if that was what I wanted.

I spent a few days in Supai hanging out, participating in a sweatlodge purification ceremony, playing music and talking with people — especially two youth called Benjamin and Monyaka, who discussed reggae extensively with me. During that time, as I savoured the beauty of Supai and the warmth of its people, I observed and learnt many things.

## The Impact of Reggae

One can't help but notice the impact of Jamaican culture on both the Hualapi and the Havasupai. The Rastafarian colours (red, green and gold) are found in abundance on everything from t-shirts to wristbands. Hualapi I spoke to in Peach Springs said people liked the colours and, for them, red stood for the people, the earth and the red canyon walls. Green represented the trees, and gold the sun.

Numerous Jamaican expressions and reggae lyrics were incorporated into everyday speech by the Hualapi and Havasupai. It was quite the experience talking to someone in a place so faraway from Jamaica to suddenly have them break into some heavy *patois* (the language of Jamaica), complete with the accent. Certainly, the stereotyped association of

rastas and ganja seemed to have made its impact on the area. Trying to understand why so many people had asked me for ganja (often being extremely irritated when I said that I didn't have any, and totally shocked when I said that I didn't smoke), I talked to Benjamin about this. He definitely felt that people he knew believed that all rastas smoked ganja, even though he was personally aware this wasn't the case.

From what I gathered, most people's knowledge of the Rastafarian religion came from reggae lyrics. In Peach Springs, a Hualapi youth, Valgene, told me he felt most people didn't know enough about the religion to get into it and were more concerned trying to talk like Jamaicans than trying to understand the religion.

Benjamin, for his part, tried to mix his traditional Havasupai spirituality with the Rastafarian faith. Among the things he described as doing in this vein was wearing red, green and gold, reading the bible, reflecting and meditating on the reggae musicians' lyrics. However, he disagreed with the Rastafarian attitude of not eating pork because he felt that god gave Indian people dominion over all things and that animals were there for him to use.

Bob Marley is said to have been the first reggae artist heard in Supai. While there is uncertainty about how exactly reggae reached this isolated reservation, one story that is prevalent is that some California Indians were listening to Bob Marley's "Positive Vibration" album on the Hualapi Hilltop and gave a copy to a Havasupai who took it down to Supai where people made copies and it spread like wildfire. However, as Benjamin put



collage by Ghislain Sherwood



it, "It doesn't matter who first started listening to it but that we all listen to it!"

And that is certainly true! Everywhere I went in Supai it seemed I heard reggae music. Most people hitchhike the one hundred and ten miles to Kingman or to Phoenix two hundred miles away to order reggae tapes and to buy a variety of reggae paraphernalia that is so evident in Supai.

While Bob Marley was the artist I heard the most, with his lyrics often quoted in conversations, people appreciated a variety of reggae artists from *Steel Pulse* to *Augustus Pablo*. Dub music (the instrumental form of reggae) was favoured by a lot of people, and I was really surprised to find out how many fans there were of Augustus Pablo, who most reggae fans find difficult to listen to due to his very experimental approach. In fact, this was the largest most concentrated group of Augustus Pablo fans I had ever personally encountered at any one time.

With the hardcore enthusiasm of the reggae fans here, one immediately wonders if there have been reggae bands who have realized the support they enjoy and come to play in the area.

One of the earliest people to pick up on reggae's support in the Arizona area was Chris Blackwell, president of Island Records (the latter being responsible for launching Bob Marley's career). He had been in a Phoenix record store when he noticed a group of Havasupai purchase a quantity of reggae tapes. Curious, he asked them where they were from and decided to go down to Supai himself. Once there he was so impressed he made arrangements to bring Bob Marley's mother, Cedulla Booker and Walter keyboardist Tyrone Downie to Supai. Upon their arrival they were greeted warmly and followed around according to Benjamin "like it was President Reagan." While they were there, Blackwell did some filming for a documentary on Bob Marley's life.

The number of reggae concerts in the area has steadily risen from the first concert in Supai by a Los Angeles group of *Shag'natty*. On the nearby Hopi reserve, artists like *Freddy McGregor*, *Black Pablo*, *Idren*, *Don Carlos*, *The Meditations*, *Mutabaraka* and *Michigan and Smiley* have appeared. News of concerts in the area seemed to have spread to other reggae artists. When Benjamin spoke to *Burning Spear* after a Los Angeles concert, he found he was aware of Supai. Similarly, *Rita* and *Ziggy Marley* expressed a desire to play there.

One report of the Michigan and Smiley performance stated that the crowd responded enthusiastically when the duo changed the words of "black awareness" and instead sang

*There was a time in Indian history!  
There was no slavery or brutality!  
No sadness and no misery no confusion  
no sick mentality! The time has come  
for every Indian to know himself!  
And fight against downpression! We call it  
Indian awareness.*

Freddie McGregor played with Michigan and Smiley at that gig which was held on June 6, 1984 - the first reggae concert on a Hopi reserve. In an interview with Hein Marais, he said that "the first feeling

I got was that they were similar to Jamaica in their mood and vibes. What I have learnt is that they share the same struggle that we are going through and that's what makes them very close to us."

Concern over misuse of the land was pointed out to me as a common feature in Havasupai concerns and reggae lyrics.

Jamaican dub poet Mutabaraka, talking to Jill Taylor, stated that black and Indian people have similar problems and this "is because of the land -- which was taken away from both sets of people. So that the sentiments in the poetry is easily grasped by people who have had the land problem. Most of the poetry we write is either social or spiritual...and the Indians are a very spiritual people. You'll find that the lyrics necessarily catch on because the sentiment there is the same. The quest for control, for ownership of the land, the quest to be free in your own place, to be able to control your own destiny and environment." Talking to another Havasupai, Lonnie Brooks, he said, "We relate to the Jamaicans in their situation of how they have been conquered as a people, as a nation and exiled in their own country. I can always remember my own history and relate to them."

While the lyrical connection is often articulated, the musical similarities between Indian and reggae music is more difficult to pin down. Listening to some traditional Nyabingi music (*folk-religious music from Jamaica out of which reggae developed* - ed.), Benjamin commented to me how it was similar to his own traditional drumming. Speaking to Allen Deleary of the reggae band, *Heart and Soul* (who are based in Ottawa, Canada and who are comprised of black, white and Indian musicians), he commented that "if you take the 'one drop' away from reggae, you are left with a traditional honor beat." The honor beat is a distinctive drum pattern found in Indian music that is used to salute the four directions and elements.

Whatever the explanation, there is no questioning the fact that Indian people enjoy the pulsating, hypnotic reggae beat.

#### The Impact of Aboriginal People on Reggae

Not only has there been a visible effect on Native culture due to reggae's impact, additionally there is a new growing awareness of the situation of aboriginal people by reggae artists. *Burning Spear* has written pointed lyrics disputing the myth that Christopher Columbus "discovered" Jamaica, instead acknowledging the existence of the Arawak Indians before the arrival of the Spanish, who then exterminated them. The vocal group, *Culture*, also acknowledges the Arawak Indians and Jamaican deejay, *Super Cat*, also refers to himself as Apache because of the affinity he feels for the Arawaks. On the cassette, *Poetry is Not a Luxury*, dub poet Afua Cooper, in her piece *Christopher Columbus* for the first time in recorded Jamaican music describes in great detail not only the way the Arawak and Carib Indians were wiped out but also the way the Indian population in the rest of the Caribbean, Central and South

America were exterminated and disposessed of their land.

Another dub poet, Mutabaraka, also has written several poems that deal with the plight of Indian people in the United States. In one of his poems described as a song "Blacks in America", he warns Black people that "they are trespassing on the red man's land as much as the white man." On his album, *The Mystery Unfolds*, he notes that, in America, "The true owners of your nation are forced to live on a reservation." The reggae group, *Natty Majesty*, in their song *Native Nature*, also comments on this fact.

The parallels between the situation faced by black people under the South African apartheid system and the Native population under the reservation system studied by the South African government and used as a model and inspiration for South African homelands and other aspects of apartheid, like the pass laws. *Ah-dri Zhini Mandiela*, a poet and reggae artist based in Toronto, Canada, makes this connection very clearly on her single, "S'peshal Rikwes".

#### Looking to the Future

In looking to the future, I think that it would be likely more Indian people might become involved in playing reggae themselves. In Supai, a local band played one or two reggae tunes, and I heard there were Indians playing reggae and doing deejaying. In Canada, the band *Heart and Soul* have been playing reggae to an enthusiastic response, especially when they performed at the Moose Factory reservation in northern Ontario. Also, it is quite likely there are other Indian people involved in reggae music that we are unaware of.

Another possible trend is the combination of traditional Indian music and reggae musical forms. Perhaps the most important indicator of what can happen when the two cultures collide occurs on the cassette, *Poetry is Not a Luxury*.

This cassette features the first Native recorded dub poets in Canada (and possibly North America), *Graig Young Ing* and *Pineshi Gustin*. Pineshi performs her haunting poem, "Ode to Billy John" against an atmospheric piece of dub music created by Toronto's *H.M.S. Dub Band*. *Graig Young Ing* does his poem, "Bury My Heart" against a pounding drum and bass reggae riddim provided by members of *Heart and Soul*. However, it's really on the track, "I am Mixed Blood", that the full potential of the cultural synthesis occurs.

The piece is the culmination of an idea hatched a few years ago by *Graig Young Ing* and *Patrick Andrade* when they were doing a reggae radio show, "Culture Shock", together. They had the idea to do a reggae track that would utilize the distinctive sounds of the traditional Native drums, while at the same time reflecting a combination of their own respective Indian and Jamaican cultures. The large traditional drum which can often be seen being played at pow wows by four or five people was used to approximate a reggae backbeat. After the drum patterns were recorded, *Allen Deleary* and *Peter Di-*

*Graig* of *Heart and Soul*, aided by *Graig Young Ing* and *Patrick Andrade*, laid down the rest of the instrumental tracks to compliment the groove created by the drums. Not only do you hear the "heartbeat" sound of the traditional drum, but the piece also incorporates the traditional honour beat patterns that are also effectively and intriguingly used in a dubwise section at the end of the song. This track is historical in that it represents the first ever recorded reggae track that features the large traditional Native drum and Indian drum patterns as the centre-piece of the song.

At the moment, there are more collaborations planned in this cross-cultural vein. *Sisseton Dakota* Indian poet, *Tom LeBlanc*, will be doing an across the continent collaboration from his studies in California and the *HMS Dub Band* in Toronto, Canada. Tom's poetry which evokes powerful images of the situation facing aboriginal people all over the world will be mixed over some heavy reggae riddims provided from Toronto for a cassette tentatively titled, *Your Silence Will Not Protect You*. The cassette will also feature some dub poetry theatrics provided by an experimental offshoot of *Heart and Soul*, a trio going by the name of *Thom E. Hawk* and the *Pine Needles*, with their contribution being a piece entitled, "John Wayne" -- a humorous view of this mythic movie star, written from an Indian perspective, that is quite different from the versions offered by Hollywood. Additionally, *Techawbe Sound* will be releasing a compilation of music by *Heart and Soul*, *Thom E. Hawk* and the *Pine Needles* and a poetry collaboration with *Graig Young Ing*, *Patrick Andrade*, in tandem with the *Big Door* label, will certainly be encouraging and producing collaborations in the reggae Indian vein.

A lot has been said about the failure of touring reggae acts to achieve a major breakthrough in North America. However, one result of this touring has been the contact between reggae musicians and Indian people. Through this increased contact, each side has learnt more about their similarities and differences. It is clear both sides have accepted stereotyped images of one another perpetuated by the mainstream media. Reggae musicians are automatically assumed to be ganja smoking Rastafarians. Touring reggae artists don't know what to expect when going on reservations, often anticipating seeing Indians with bows and arrows.

It is hoped that whatever happens in the future, as these two cultures become acquainted with one another and even if a new form of fusion between reggae and traditional Indian music doesn't become a major trend that at least each group will have a new awareness of each other that will erode some of the existing misconceptions and stereotypes and instead leave each culture richer as a result of the contact. □

The cassette, *Poetry is Not a Luxury*, is distributed by: *Patrick Andrade*, 170 Booth St., Apt. 311, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 7W1. Send a \$10.00 U.S. cheque or money order, or \$10.00 Canadian (plus \$1.00 for postage), payable to *Patrick Andrade*.

## ■ FINDING COMMON GROUND



## in brief

An interview with noted American poet, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, appeared in a recent issue of *New Pages*. In it, Ferlinghetti talks about the anarchist influences on him and Peter Martin, co-founders of *City Lights Bookshop* in San Francisco:

"Peter...was the son of Carlo Tresca, the Italian anarchist ...and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was his aunt. So he had this libertarian Italian-anarchist background ...Our political position was always that [of anarchism] ...[We] used to get these Italian anarchist newspapers, and the old Italians from the neighborhood in derbies would come in and get them."

*New Pages*, published 3 times a year, is an excellent source of resource material. Books, periodicals, pamphlets, and audio-visuals are all reviewed in a highly attractive 32-page format. Subscriptions are \$12.00 (U.S.) for 6 issues. Send money to: *New Pages Press*, P.O. Box 438, Grand Blanc, MI 48439.

Also of potential interest for magazine publishers is the fact that *New Pages* sells its list of progressive U.S. bookstores (1,050 in all) for \$35 (U.S.) + \$5.00 shipping.

Editor, Dennis Gould, is looking for songs/poems for a new paperback anthology entitled, *Anarchist Poets*. Contact him at: *Freedom Bookshop*, in Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

The 1988 *Housmans World Peace Dictionary* and *Pocket Diary* is available for \$3.50 (\$6.50 U.S.) from *Housmans Bookshop*, 5 Caledonian Rd., London, N1 9DX.

**MAYDAY!** A new continental newsletter for the anarchist movement has been founded by two dedicated activists in the U.S. To contribute news items, write to: Gabriela Arensdorf, 12531-G Harbor Blvd., Suite 188, Garden Grove, CA 92640.

To get on the mailing list and make a donation, write to: Denise Unora, 1459 Foster, Chicago, IL 60640.

A new anarchist publication is scheduled to come onto the scene called *North American Anarchist Review*. It will consist of reviews of anarchist (and related) books, pamphlets and periodicals, as well as advertisements by anarchist publishers, book distributors and bookstores. For more information, contact: *North American Anarchist Review*, c/o POB 380, Columbia, MO 65205.

If you or your project can qualify as anarchist, libertarian Marxist, direct actionist, radical pagan, bio-regionalist, prisoner support, prison abolitionist, traditional Native, or supporter thereof, you are entitled to be listed in the *Canadian Black Book*. Send your name or that of your project, a contact address, and a brief de-

scription (donation of money or stamps appreciated, but not mandatory) to: *Chaotic Distribution*, P.O. Box 15642, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5B4.

15 political prisoners in Chile face the death penalty. To save their lives, your help is needed. For more information on how, and on other political killings by the Chilean government, write to: *Chile Democratic*, 95-97 Old Street, London EC1W 9JH, UK, or phone 01-608-1920.

13 anarchists in Greece face serious charges resulting from a demonstration in Athens against the use of nuclear power after Chernobyl. For more information and to send messages of support, write to: *Basil Karaplis*, 8 Aristidou, 10559 Athens, Greece.

For more than a year now, *Kick It Over* has been receiving copies of a well-produced journal called *The Philippines Human Rights Update*. For key insights into an important aspect of the Filipino people's struggle, send \$2.00 + postage to: *Update*, c/o Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, Sisters Formation Institute Building, 214, N. Domingo St. Cabao, Quezon City, Philippines.

An anarchy-feminist group in Toronto has been set up to aid women in prison. If you would like to help, write to: *W.P.S.N.*, c/o *Anarchist Black Cross*, P.O. Box 6326, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P7.

Avi Nafel, a British anarchist held prisoner in Arizona, and Tim Goodwin, a gay prisoner in Kansas, are each reaching a crucial stage in their legal battles with the state. To find out more, write to: *Boog Highberger*, P.O. Box 1313, Lawrence, KS 66044.

*Seikon Cinque T.M. Kambai* (a.k.a. William J. Turk) is seeking donations to aid in his legal battle for release from Holman Prison in Alabama. For more information, write to: *Seikon Cinque T.M. Kambai's Defense Fund Committee*, c/o General Davis, 1150 Seneca Street, Mobile, AL 36605.

Jello Biafra, former lead singer for the *Dead Kennedys*, and four others, have been charged with "Distribution of Harmful Matter to Minors" in connection with a poster by artist H.R. Giger, set designer for the movie *Alien*, which appeared in the D.K.'s album, *Frankenchrist*. The defendants face a possible one year sentence. To help, contact: *No More Censorship Defense Fund*, P.O. Box 11458, San Francisco, CA 94101. **STOP PRESS:** They have been acquitted.

*The Black Wedge*, an ensemble of anarchist poets and musicians, recently toured Canada. For information on the individual acts, and their availability for gigs, write to: *The Black Wedge*, c/o 304-2230 Wall St., Vancouver, B.C. V5L 1B6.

An indigenous tribe, the Penans, in the

Malaysian province of Sarawak, have had their lands taken away by timber companies, who have killed fish and animals and bulldozed people's fruit trees. Confronted with imminent starvation, the Penans have taken their case to the capitol. To find out how you can help, contact the news service of *Sahabat Alam* (Friends of the Earth) *Malaysia*, 37, Lorong Birch, Penang, Malaysia. *The Asia-Pacific People's Environment Network* can be contacted at the same address.

A new networking bulletin for East-West activists is now available. For a sample copy, send \$1.00 (U.S.) to: *Gogol Boulevard*, 151 First Ave., #62, New York, N.Y. 10003.

A semi-annual gathering is held for Jewish Lesbian Daughters of Holocaust Survivors. To find out more, write to: *JLDS*, P.O. Box 6194, Boston, MA 02114.

For those living in the Boston area, an excellent free lecture series is hosted every year by the *Black Rose Collective*. For more information, write to: BR, 37 Paul Gore St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, or call Peter or Donna at (617) 524-0781.

For information on the activities of the New York-based *Libertarian Book Club* (they host forums and art shows, etc.), write to: LBC, 339 Lafayette St., Room 202, New York, N.Y. 10012 or call (212) 505-6590.

Established in 1945, they are looking for new members to help sustain them during financially difficult times. Annual memberships are \$10.00. Lifetime memberships are \$100.00.

Leonid Gromov, a Russian toolmaker in an auto plant in Ulyanovsk in the Soviet Union, who undertook a one man campaign of sabotage against military vans (and documents and support facilities involved in the production thereof) for Afghanistan, has been arrested and sent to a "Special Psychiatric Hospital" for compulsory treatment. Twenty-four years old, Gromov is likely to be subjected to mind-altering drugs and psychiatric torture. To help, send letters of protest to: *Mikhail Gorbachev*, Kremlin, Moscow, USSR. For more information, write to: *Neither East nor West*, 339 Lafayette St., Rm. 202, New York, N.Y. 10012.

Don Weitz, editor of the anti-psychiatry journal, *Phoenix Rising*, is seeking personal or eyewitness accounts of psychiatric torture in Canada. To contribute, write to: *Don Weitz*, 100 Bain Ave., #27 The Maples, Toronto, Ontario M4K 1E8.

A new 4-song E.P. by *A.P.P.L.E.*, entitled "A Sensitive Fascist is Very Rare", is available for \$3.00 (U.S.) from *Vinyl Communications*, P.O. Box 8623, Chula Vista, CA 92012.

1988 is the 20th anniversary of 1968 -- a momentous year in radical history. *Edithrie A* and *IRL* are collaborating on an

anthology of articles analyzing the year's significance and long-term impact. To contribute, write to: *Edithrie A*, Cas. post. 17120, 20170 Milan, Italy or *IRL*, c/o ACLR, 13 Rue Pierre Blanc, 69001 Lyon, France.

A new book, entitled *Gandhi Today: A Report on Gandhi's Successors*, has just been published. The cloth edition is \$20.00 (U.S.), the paperback, \$9.95. To order, write to: *Simple Productions*, 12 East 15th St., #3, Arcata, CA 95521.

Over one million people worldwide speak the "universal" language of *Esperanto*. *Murray Bookchin's Toward An Ecological Society* can be obtained in Esperanto, as can the writings of Peter Kropotkin. To find out more, write to: *Mike Giglio*, 161 Habitant Dr., Weston, Ontario M9M 2P4.

Those interested in the preservation of tropical rainforests should contact: *Rainforest Action Network*, 300 Broadway, Suite 28, San Francisco, CA 94103 or *Rainforest Information Centre*, 1256 6th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94122.

The *Committee Against Reinstatement of the Draft (CARD)* is launching a campaign to press for the release of Gilliam Kerley, sentenced to 3 years in prison for refusing to register for draft. Write to them at: P.O. Box 6583, T Street Station, Washington, D.C. 20009 or at their Midwest Office: 731 State St., Madison, WI 53703.

The *Fifth Estate* is the granddaddy of them all! They've been publishing for over twenty years, and the quality remains constant issue after issue. Their August issue featured a thought-provoking review of the Minneapolis anarchist conference, an article on the role of dance in Native culture, and a special issue will soon be available critiquing "deep ecology". To subscribe, send \$5.00 (U.S.) or \$7.00 for foreign and Canadian orders to: *Fifth Estate*, P.O. Box 02548, Detroit, MI 48202.

*Kick It Over* currently enjoys an exchange with *Gay Community News*, out of Boston. *GCN* is published weekly(!), and is a source of up-to-date and comprehensive information and opinion on the struggle against heterosexism. Going for 15 years, it is most reading for those who believe that freedom of sexual orientation is crucial. To subscribe, send \$33.00 (U.S.) to: *GCN Subscriptions*, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116.

*KIO* had the good fortune to be listed (in connection with the *Emma Goldman Resource Group*) in the Fall 1987 issue of *TRANET*. *TRANET* (Transnational Network for Appropriate /Alternative Technologies) is a quarterly newsletter, "a directory...of people who are participating in transformation." The newsletter is available to members only. To join, send \$30.00 (U.S.) -- individual rate -- to: *TRANET*, P.O. Box 567, Rangeley, Maine, ME 04970. □



# COPING WITH GAY GRIEF

by Glynis Sherwood, transcribed by Robyn Turney

*It is a cloudy but balmy Sunday in early autumn. Robyn and I sit nestled on my weather-beaten sofa and prepare to discuss the subject of grief -- his grief. In September 1986 Robyn lost his lover of several years to AIDS. I have known Robyn for two years through our work in the Kick It Over collective. Up to this point my relationship with Robyn was that of a co-workmate rather than intimate friend. So the devastation of his loss was something which I could sympathize with as a 'comrade' but not feel very deeply. Robyn took me on a journey to the centre of his grief -- to a place where despair, loneliness and anger howl and rage to be heard and acknowledged. His voyage through grief has been a solitary one. He received little support from either the straight (which was to be expected) or gay communities. Robyn's experience reminded me of the singular importance of empathy and the ability to be a good listener: to go deep inside and try to really feel what a grieving person is experiencing. We all encounter grief in this life and it manifests itself in many ways from the personal to the political. I believe that we must tune into this feeling and provide support for ourselves and others if we are truly to evolve towards a healing or wholeness of self. I thank Robyn for sharing his insights and experiences in this two part interview, and, in the process, for bringing me a little bit closer to my own true 'humyn' nature.*

**Glynis Sherwood:** What was your initial reaction to Bob's death, given the fact that he had a long, drawn out illness?

**Robyn Turney:** Well, I hadn't entirely prepared myself for it the way I should have. I think I suffered more of a shock when he was initially diagnosed with AIDS in 1984 than I did when I found out he was dying. I wasn't really prepared for it. I had allowed myself to become complacent because he had done so well fighting opportunistic infections with the various drugs that they used to fight the pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP) and the cytomegalovirus (CMV) retinitis which eventually blinded him. Since he survived for almost two years and he'd done well, I just assumed that he would continue to be able to fight the opportunistic infections with the help of antibiotics and the experimental drugs they were giving him. I hadn't really prepared myself for him to pass away when he did. I thought he would actually have survived long enough to be eligible for something like Azidothymidine<sup>1</sup> which is now prolonging the lives of persons with AIDS (PWAs).

**GS:** It sounds to me like there were certain interventions going on (accompanied by new developments with anti-AIDS drugs) that gave you a sense of false hope rather than preparing you for the inevitability of Bob's death.

**RT:** Well, false hope seduced me and took me completely into its complacent clutches. I didn't even think about the inevitability of Bob's death. Bob and I talked about moving in together--which would have involved me moving to Ottawa--in the spring of last year and I took my time as if death was in no way part of the future scenario, calculating when I would give my 60 day notice to my housing co-operative, what I would pack, etc. It was on the very day that I was about to give notice to my housing co-operative that Bob telephoned me and told me that he couldn't fight anymore and that he was dying and I was totally unprepared for it, because, as I indicated previ-

ously, he had been doing so well. You would never even have been able to tell that he was suffering from AIDS between opportunistic infections except for the fact that he looked a bit thinner. But other than that he looked fine and to a large extent he felt fine. But when I received that telephone call it was as though someone had shattered a pane of glass directly above my head.

I saw everything that I had planned and that we had planned for together just evaporate before my eyes.

**GS:** How long after his notifying you that he was in the final stages of the disease did Bob manage to live?

**RT:** He grew progressively worse in hospital and then in a palliative care unit where he finally died on September 14th, 1986.

**GS:** You were there with him the whole time throughout his last few weeks, weren't you?

**RT:** Yes, I was. I went immediately to Ottawa. There was very little I could do. After the first few weeks I had been there the CMV entered Bob's central nervous system, the gastrointestinal system, and began to attack the brain. For the last two-and-half months Bob withered away in hospital and at times he didn't even recognize me, or, when he did, he forgot I was there in the room with him. He was suffering from CMV dementia and there was so much that I really wanted to say to him and so much I wanted to talk about with him before he passed away and he was just totally beyond my reach because his mind was progressively deteriorating.

**GS:** I guess that was probably one of the most, if not the most, difficult aspects to deal with. How did that feel?

**RT:** That was more difficult to deal with than his actual physical death. There he was; still alive in front of me but I had no way of reaching him. The death itself wasn't so difficult to deal with as was the suffering he endured in the last few months of his life and the frustration I endured at my total inability to communicate with him.

In all the scenarios I had envisioned of his last moments I had pictured him as being lucid and communicative right up until the end. That sort of thing would have been possible had Bob been struggling with a fatal dose of PCP because many people with the pneumonia can remain intelligible up to the end, but not with CMV. Bob had CMV retinitis and he was totally blind by the time I arrived in Ottawa. He had been losing his vision hitherto, very slowly, because he was on an experimental drug that was inhibiting the CMV, but the drug was not a completely effective treatment--as well as being quite toxic--so total blindness was inevitable. After Bob lost his sight completely, he more or less gave up, and the next thing to go was his mind. The greatest agony I suffered was to actually be there with him, with his physical body, in the hospital room, while at the same time realizing that in a very real sense he wasn't there at all.

**GS:** Was he in physical pain at the time?

**RT:** Yes and no. Bob also had herpes, which is excruciatingly painful, and more exquisitely so in PWAs because it's so much more aggressive, but he was being given high doses of morphine, which I think mitigated most of his discomfort. Or, if not, he certainly didn't let on or complain that he was in pain. He found the pain from the herpes almost unendurable in the last few days of his life, but he was given more morphine and that seemed to take care of it.

**GS:** In the readings I've done around the subject of grief there's been strong suggestion that people go through different



**An Eco-feminist**

**Looks at Deep**

**Ecology**

JANET BIEHL

**Social Ecology**

**vs.**

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MURRAY BOOKCHIN



**Special Supplement**

**KICK IT OVER**



# it's deep, but is it broad? an eco-feminist looks at deep ecology

by Janet Biehl

Janet Biehl is an eco-feminist living in Vermont. She is active with the Burlington Greens.

Recently, a number of male deep ecologists have been claiming that there are theoretical affinities between deep ecology and ecofeminism. One deep ecologist calls deep ecology "that form of environmentalism which comes closest to embodying a feminist sensibility."<sup>1</sup> Kirkpatrick Sale, too, maintains, "I don't see anything in the formulation of deep ecology... that in any way contravenes the values of feminism or puts forward the values of patriarchy."<sup>2</sup> Bill Devall and George Sessions, co-authors of *Deep Ecology*, the authoritative text of the new ideology, even see affinities between the way women generally view the world and deep ecology: "Some feminists claim that deep ecology is an intellectual articulation of insights that many females have known for centuries."<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, as Ynestra King has pointed out, an unusually large number of male ecologists are writing articles as avowed adherents of ecofeminism these days. Many of them are advocating an alliance in some form or another between the ecofeminist and deep ecology movements.

Deep ecology's advocates repeatedly assure us that deep ecology's distinction is to ask searching questions. Writes Arne Naess, "The essence of deep ecology is to ask deeper questions. The adjective 'deep' stresses that we ask why and how, where others do not."<sup>4</sup>

In this spirit, ecofeminist have a number of deep, searching questions to ask of male deep ecologists about the alleged affinities between the two. These questions are central in any discussion of the prospects for a union between the two movements.

## Differences Among Humans

Deep ecologists are critical of what they see as Western society's "anthropocentrism," which is defined by one deep ecologist, John Seed, as "human chauvinism... the idea that humans are the crown of creation, the source of all value, the measure of all things."<sup>5</sup> In anthropocentrism, humans see themselves as separate from nature, we are told, and objectify nature in order to exploit it. In Michael Zimmerman's characterization, the anthropocentric worldview "portrays humanity itself as the source of all value and... depicts nature solely as raw material for human purposes"<sup>6</sup> (emphasis added). Anthropocentrism is thus "deeply implicated in the global environmental crisis," says Devall and Sessions.<sup>7</sup> Anthropocentrism is thus "deeply implicated in the global environmental crisis," says Devall and Sessions.<sup>7</sup> Anthropocentrism is thus "deeply implicated in the global environmental crisis," says Devall and Sessions.<sup>7</sup> Anthropocentrism is thus "deeply implicated in the global environmental crisis," says Devall and Sessions.<sup>7</sup>

For ecofeminists the concept of anthropocentrism is profoundly, even "deeply" problematical. It assumes that humanity is an undifferentiated whole, and it does not take into account the historical and political differences between male and female, black and white, rich and poor.

Ecofeminists, among others, have shown that historically not all of

"humanity" has been privileged to be depicted as "the source of all value," to use Zimmerman's language. It is mainly economically privileged white males who have been seen as "the source of all value." Other humans — women, blacks, the poor — have, like nature itself, been depicted as "raw material for human [read male] purpose."

In Western culture men have historically justified their domination of women by conceptualizing women as "closer to nature" than themselves. Women have been ideologically dehumanized and called less rational than men, more chaotic, more mysterious in motivation, more emotional, more sexual, more moist, even more polluted. Far from being seen as a "source of value," women have been, like nature, seen as a source of "raw material for human purposes." Women's bodies have thus been freely plowed and mined like the earth for their reproductive capacity — the "raw material" in question.

Ecofeminists have tried repeatedly to show that women are no closer to nature inately than men are, and further that the fulfillment of women's human capacities has been denied them under patriarchy; that both men and women are capable of reason and emotion and sensuality; and that the human mind that evolves out of first or primal nature is both a female mind and a male mind.

Moreover, ecofeminists need to attain their individual and social fulfillment in a way that does not accept the capitalist, industrial, patriarchal, managerial society that Western men have developed. Rather, they seek to create alternative, nonhierarchical contexts in which both male and female potentialities can truly be fulfilled.

Deep ecologists, by single-mindedly defining the human problem as anthropocentrism — the centrality of all humans and their "domination" of nature — ignore millennia of patricentric history and implicitly include women in their indictment. By not excluding women from anthropocentrism, deep ecologists implicitly condemn women for being as anthropocentric as they condemn men for being — that is, for presuming to be above nature, for mastering it.

The problem is not simply that deep ecologists have failed to exempt women from anthropocentrism. It would not improve matters simply to "subtract" women from the ranks of anthropocentrists. This gender-blindness is symptomatic of deep ecologists' stubborn, willful ignorance of the social causes of problems. They assert that all our problems are primarily caused by our attitude toward nature and how we treat nature. They do not sufficiently emphasize that the way we view nature itself has a social origin, let alone explore what its origins are in history. They have no inkling that societies have existed that, as Murray Bookchin has pointed out, could "revere" nature (such as ancient Egypt) and yet this "reverence" did not inhibit the development of full-blown patricentric hierarchy.

Thus women are caught in a circular trap in deep ecology. On the one hand, they have been defined as closer to nature by patricentric culture (and, as we shall see below, continue to be so defined by deep ecology); on the other hand, they are held accountable for "anthropocentrism" and are blamed for being as removed from nature as men are. Women are left going around in circles in deep ecology. Clearly

this body of thought was not formulated with women in mind.

## Differences Between Human and Non-human Nature

Not only does deep ecology ignore differences among groups of humans, such as men and women. It also ignores differences between human and nonhuman nature. "The central insight of deep ecology," as expressed by Warwick Fox, is "the idea that we can make no firm ontological divide... between the human and the non-human realms... [T]o the extent that we perceive boundaries, we fall short of deep ecological consciousness."<sup>8</sup> Devall stresses as a principle of deep ecology "the identity (I/Thou) of humans with non-human nature... There are no boundaries and everything is interrelated."<sup>9</sup> According to Sessions and Devall, we must "cease to understand or see ourselves as isolated and narrow competing egos and begin to identify with other humans from our family and friends to, eventually, our species... to include the nonhuman world."<sup>10</sup>

One wonders just what happens to the significance of species in nature when we can make "no ontological divide" between or among them. If all is the same in nature, are all differences among species illusions? Is humanity's self-awareness as a species a delusion? Is anthropocentrism itself based on a delusion of separateness as a species?

Thus, just as deep ecologists ignore social history — especially that of patriarchy — they also ignore natural history. One wonders how deep ecologists explain any of the leaps, or discontinuities, apparent in the paleontological record, or the evolution of mind.

It is clear that deep ecology's ignorance of social history is a major issue for ecofeminism. But why should deep ecologists' ignorance of natural history be of concern to ecofeminism?

The answer is that deep ecologists make use of what they see as female consciousness to buttress their ahistorical view of nature. In at least a decade of feminist theory it has been seen as both a nightmare and a blessing that women experience a "sense of relatedness," an attenuation of the boundaries between self and other, that men do not experience. A decade of feminist psychoanalytic work has shown that women develop "soft ego boundaries," whereas men develop "rigid ego boundaries." This has been both good and bad for women: good in the sense that connectedness is real and women are more aware of it; bad in the sense that the lack of clearly defined ego boundaries creates difficulties in women's individuation and development of autonomy, attributes that are necessary to become rational beings and to fulfill their potentiality. Thus, boundaries and lacks thereof have been a subject of profoundly ambivalent dialectical philosophizing by feminist theorists such as Nancy Chodorow, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Jane Flax, among others.<sup>11</sup>

Deep ecologists steam-roller over this dialectic between self and other, between the individual and the collectivity. A vague "connectedness," they seem to feel, is all important. Their solution is to forget all of the agonizing individuation so necessary for the development of women's personalities and sense of control over

their destinies. Never mind becoming rational; never mind the self, they seem to say; look where it got men, after all: women were better off than men all along without that tiresome individuality; and women should give up their attempts to attain it. Presumably, women are supposed to be connectedness, women have no ego boundaries, and there are no boundaries in reality. We have to "cultivate ecological consciousness," according to deep ecologists. All of us need, we are told, "a more receptive, 'feminine' approach."<sup>12</sup>

Deep ecologists, who are often highly individualistic middle-class men themselves, in effect render the feminist dialectical discussion about boundaries irrelevant. Just as women naturally experience "connectedness" with other people, we are told, all humans must now experience connectedness with nonhuman nature. There is no boundary between human and nonhuman nature in deep ecology; a person is an "inseparable aspect of the whole system wherein there are no sharp breaks between self and other."<sup>13</sup>

Deep ecologists are fond of adducing Eastern metaphysics as exemplary of the kind of self on which we should model ourselves. "Taoism tells us there is a way of unfolding which is inherent in all things... People have fewer desires and simple pleasures... To study the Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barriers between one's self and others."<sup>14</sup> Women and men alike are thus asked to efface themselves before nature, to ignore their identity as a species in a surrender to boundaryless, cosmic "oneness." In reality, the fact is that women know from long experience that when they are asked to become "one" with a man, as in marriage, that "one" is usually the man. Ecofeminists should be equally suspicious of this "ecological" oneness.

Moreover, deep ecologists tend to promote a disregard of reason, even of subjectivity. Reason and subjectivity are what distinguish humans in nature, however. But for deep ecologists, to affirm them would be to uphold a boundary — and boundaries, as they have told us, do not exist in nature. Worse, in deep ecological terms, to give boundaries their due would be to be guilty of anthropocentrism. According to Bill Devall, we must "begin our thinking on utopia... by trying to 'think like a mountain.'"<sup>15</sup> Just as there is no boundary between human and nonhuman nature, there is also no boundary between the consciousness of a mountain and the consciousness of a human being, for deep ecologists.

And here we are obliged to return again to social history. For it was precisely men who created the cultural boundary between men and women in constructing a gender barrier. Marginalized for millennia, passive and receptive for millennia, "connected" to the point of self-effacement for millennia, women are now intensely striving for subjectivity, precisely for selfhood and for a full recognition of their subjectivity and selfhood in a new society.

This aspiration is the revolutionary heart of the feminist and ecofeminist movements. Many of our lives now involve new and radical insight into our own condition of chronic oppression. We



have come into subjectivity and consciousness of our oppressed situation in patriarchy, and we have affirmed our own rationality after millennia of being defined as irrational by patriarchy. We are becoming active where we had long been taught to be merely reactive, and we are becoming creative rather than passively receptive. We are externalizing ourselves into fully embodied and well-defined beings.

To ask women, with their new subjectivity, to "think like a mountain" is a blatant slap in the face. It asks women to return to the arena of their oppression -- to their nonbeing and nothingness -- indeed, even to embrace it.

Yet deep ecologists tell us to abjure the self and become "receptive" in the interests of male-defined "nature." As Nancy Hartsock has pointed out, it is telling that now, just when women and other oppressed groups have come into subjectivity, subjectivity itself is suddenly condemned. Now we are asked to be "receptive," to return to oblivion in the name of the liberation of nature. It is, Hartsock points out, the privileged people at the centre -- white men -- who are now obliged to be receptive and listen, and not those of us who have been marginalized and receptive by coercion in the past.<sup>16</sup>

To drop our recent, painfully attained recognition of the socially and historically created gender boundary would be to return to the oblivion of unconsciousness. Behind the smoke and mirrors of "goddess" worship is a terrifying renunciation of self, a retreat into oppression. Deep ecology requires, in effect, that women remain egoless, unformed, and supine, presumably in the name of a Taoist oblivion of the self. To feminist sensibilities, deep ecologists appear to be paraphrasing the Wizard of Oz, saying, "Pay no attention to that gender divide behind the curtain!"

Deep ecology denies the reality of difference, let alone the reality of gender oppression, at the same time that it appropriates an aspect of feminist psychology for its own quasi-religious purposes. Deep ecology trivializes the emancipation of women, a centuries-long revolutionary process of coming into self-awareness and individual freedom, when it talks of dissolving the self and the boundary lines of the self-determining ego. Indeed, it asks women to abjure the very selfhood that can resist the rationalization that produced the industrial crisis.

## Wilderness

Deep ecologists' ignorance of the social becomes strikingly apparent in their discussion of wilderness. "[the] sacred place, [the] *sanctum sanctorum* of nature.<sup>17</sup> We are told that humans need the experience of wilderness, among other reasons, to "cultivate the virtues of modesty and humility."<sup>18</sup> Again, it is precisely humility, with its passive and receptive obedience to men, that women are trying to escape today.

Historically, especially in North America, men have responded to nature by defining it as wilderness -- usually as a pretext for trying to master the natural world. Countless stories exist in American literature of men in the wilderness -- of Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, and the like; their descendants in our day are John Wayne and the Marlboro Man. Just as nineteenth-century American literature expressed a cultural male desire to depart into the wilderness to escape from the overly domesticated Victorian woman's sphere -- one in which women were denied personhood and therefore became tedious to men -- so deep ecologists seek to

escape into the wilderness to avoid an overly rationalized and mechanized society that denies nature's complexity and thus becomes tedious as well. In both cases men are trying to escape an oppression that they have created themselves, to escape in both cases from what is precisely a social problem: first, the domestication of women, and second, the rationalization of society. The point is to reclaim women and society as free, not to leap into an allegedly chaotic, nonsexual realm called "wilderness."

Although deep ecologists seek affinities with Native Americans, it is notable that Indians have no word for "wilderness." Luther Standing Bear, an Oglala Sioux remarks, "We do not think of the great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills, and winding streams with tangled growth, as 'wild.' Only to the white man was nature a 'wilderness' and only to him was the land 'infested' with 'wild' animals and 'savage' people. To us it was tame. Earth was bountiful, and we were surrounded with the blessing of the Great Mystery."

The concept of "wilderness" and the egocentric male solist -- who sees "wilderness" as a challenge or an object of conquest or a realm of personal freedom -- is connected to the Western male social mentality. Indeed, Luther Standing Bear's commentary reveals that the concept of wilderness has a social origin: "Not until the hairy man from the east came and with brutal frenzy heaped injustices upon us and the families we loved was it 'wild' for us. When the very animals of the forest began fleeing from his approach, then it was that for us the 'wild west' began."<sup>19</sup>

To define nature as "wilderness" is to presuppose a separation between men (literally) and nature. Indeed, "wilderness" is precisely the *nonsexual*. Deep ecologists perpetuate this conceptual separation, even as they ask people to respond to it with "humility" rather than "mastery." Men are just as cut off from external nature, let alone internal nature, in deep ecology, as they ever were. Far from dissolving the boundary between humans and nature, deep ecology basically validates it.

(To his credit, Jim Cheney has criticized male deep ecologists for aggrandizing the male self by extending it to all of nature rather than denying it. He quotes Lewis Hyde: "the disappearance of the self is really self-aggrandizement on a grand scale."<sup>20</sup> Guyatri Spivak's criticism of postmodernism could also apply to deep ecology: she says it is "about men apologizing for their own mistakes; women, go elsewhere." An aggrandizement in false apology is still an aggrandizement.)

Just as white patricentric males define rational women as irrational as a pretext for their domination, so they define nature as a "wilderness" as a pretext for its domination. The description of "sacred" nature as wilderness -- presumably "irrational" nature -- is analogous to the conventional Western description of women as irrational humans. But only when men are separated from nature is nature perceived as irrational; and only when men are culturally divided from women are women perceived as irrational.

The point is that women are not "chaotic" but rational; and nature, too, is not "chaotic" but rather follows a logic of development toward increasing complexity and subjectivity, replete with differences, individual variations, and the slow formation of selfhood. If ecofeminists are serious about combating the domination of nature that they see as analogous to their domination, they must fight this conceptualization of nature as irrational and of selfhood as an impediment to natural evolution, just as they have fought their own conceptualization as irrational, egoless, and "natural."

## Overpopulation

The implications of deep ecology for ecofeminism are more than theoretical. As deep ecologists themselves so confidently and correctly point out, there are political implications as well as theoretical ones in their viewpoint. "Certain outlooks on politics and public policy flow naturally from this [deep ecological] consciousness."<sup>21</sup>

At the March 1987 conference of ecofeminism at the University of Southern California, for example, George Sessions expounded the principles of deep ecology before an audience of ecofeminists. He read point number four, which states: "The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease."<sup>22</sup>

It is a central thesis of deep ecology that there are "too many" people on the planet. According to Arne Naess, "I should think we must have no more than 100 million people if we are to have the variety of cultures we had one hundred years ago."<sup>23</sup> Deep ecologists invoke Malthus on this issue: "Malthus, in 1803, presented an argument indicating that human population growth would exponentially outstrip food production, resulting in 'general misery,' but his warning was ignored by the rising tide of industrial/technological optimism," lament Devall and Sessions.<sup>24</sup>

Now, Malthus is notable for his view that population increases geometrically while the food supply grows arithmetically. This view has been repeatedly shown to be false since his day; even during his lifetime agriculture and industry were growing faster than the population.

But Malthus is also notable for the view that "natural" forces such as diseases and starvation will relieve "overpopulation," as if by natural law, and that nothing should be done to mitigate suffering from social conditions. This includes women's suffering at the hands of men: "It may appear to be hard that a mother and her children, who have been guilty of no particular crime themselves, should suffer for the ill conduct of the father; but this is one of the invariable laws of nature; and, knowing this, we should think twice upon the subject, and be very sure of the ground on which we go, before we presume to counteract it."<sup>25</sup> No friend of women would call obedience to men an "invariable law of nature"; yet deep ecologists ask ecofeminists to take this writer to heart on overpopulation.

At the USC conference, Sessions interrupted his own recitation to patronizingly ask ecofeminists what they intend to do about the overpopulation problem: He stated that the ecofeminist position on overpopulation was as yet unclear to him.

Ecofeminists understand that men have historically mined women for their reproductive capacity as they have mined nature for its resources; the domination of women and the domination of nature have been parallel. As feminists of all tendencies have stressed, childbearing and childrearing are often onerous and often obviate any other kind of work. The denial to women of reproductive choice has often entailed a suppression of their development and personality, a curtailment of their selfhood and freedom, and a foreclosure of any future but one of childbearing.

By denying women their selfhood in the name of a denial of the ego, men have often reduced women to mere baby-making machines, that is, to only one of their many biological functions. They have curtailed women's full participation in society's second nature -- in culture -- thus denying them the full exercise of both their first and second nature, their biological selfhood.

Which is not to say that many women don't choose to have children, or that their childbearing capacity is not important to them. The point is that in varying degrees throughout the world, men have tried to leave women little choice in life but to be childbearers. In some patriarchal cultures a plenitude of children enhances a man's status in society. The more children his wife bears, the higher his status among other men.

Fortunately, women have responded to this in recent years by demanding full control over their own reproductive capacities. Women do not want childbearing to be mandated by the status requirements of male culture. Whether women decide to have or not to have children, the decision must ultimately be theirs.

Apparently it must be spelled out to Sessions that a woman's participation in society as a political, social, intellectual, and emotional being often goes hand in hand with her decision not to have children or to have fewer than men want for their status needs. Amazingly, at a conference whose stated goal, among others, was to make the connections between deep ecology and ecofeminism, Sessions completely failed to grasp that the answer to the "overpopulation problem" was staring him directly in the face: feminism itself. Perhaps the most important single factor today in reducing population is the increasing control women have over their bodies and reproduction.

Session's inability to grasp this is more than just myopia. Although embracing feminism as a solution to "overpopulation" clearly would best solve what he sees as a serious problem, it would also wreak havoc on his sexist ideology, for an alliance with ecofeminism would entail including women as full, participating, individuated persons with rational selves into his political movement. But his ideology, which prescribes selflessness for women and asks them to "think like a mountain," could not contain this; indeed, this would blow it apart. For in deep ecology woman is the model non-being, the model "thinking mountain."

The solution to "overpopulation" that Sessions et al. propose is fertility programs. "Optimal human carrying capacity should be determined for the planet as a biosphere and for specific islands, valleys, and continents. A drastic reduction of the rate of growth of population of homo sapiens through humane birth control programs is required."<sup>26</sup>

It is only too well known that so-called fertility programs often become programs to sterilize both Third World women and women of colour in the United States. Far from granting women free choice in reproduction, these programs often attempt to coerce women into not having children at all. Because deep ecology lacks a commitment to the full actualization of all women's human potentialities, particularly their selfhood, there is no more in its recipes that would prevent the coercive rationalization of women into reproductive factories than there is in present patriarchal governments.

It would be arrogant and presumptuous beyond belief for a group of white men wandering around in a "wilderness," experiencing "humility" in a nature that they see as irrational -- as irrational as they think women are -- to tell women whether women should give birth. Moreover, it would be foolish beyond belief for women to allow them to do so, for indeed it would mean acceding to "fertility programs."

Despite all their piety about wilderness and nature, deep ecologists' solution to "overpopulation" would rationalize them in the same way that modern industrial society rationalizes nature, producing the very society that deep ecologists denounce.



Deep ecologists denounce industrial society in one breath and in the next demand the technique of fertility programs. They would rationalize women in the name of an emancipatory nature. They would deprive women of reproductive choice in the name of a spiritual connectedness with the natural world. They would ask women to abjure their selfhood and subjectivity in the name of a oneness with the natural world. They would ask women to do without individuality and control over their own lives in the name of "humility" toward the natural world. And they would ask women to give up their awareness of boundaries -- and, by extension, of oppression -- in the name of antianthropocentrism.

#### Conclusion

In the schism between deep ecology, with its avoidance of social and natural history, and social ecology, with its orientation toward these histories, male deep ecologists seem intent nonetheless on forming an alliance with ecofeminists.

Ecofeminists have nothing to gain in such an embrace. The alleged affinities between deep ecology and ecofeminism exist mainly in the minds of male deep ecologists. Deep ecology's strange mixture of macho John Wayne confrontations with "wilderness" and Taoist platitudes about self-effacement are suited more to privileged white men with a taste for outdoor life than to feminists and their struggle for selfhood, individuation, and a truly human status in both nature and society. Deep ecology traps women in nonsensical and circular arguments.

Both social ecofeminists and spiritual ecofeminists have by and large resisted the attempted seduction by deep ecology. Ecofeminists roundly hissed Sessions at the USC conference in response to his question. Ecofeminism's affinities, if it is to have any, must be with a tradition that stresses ecological individuation and har-

mony rather than deep-ecological self-oblivion. □

#### Footnotes

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# SOCIAL ECOLOGY

by Murray Bookchin

*In past issues, Kick It Over has aired debate about "overpopulation" and immigration issues which have been surfacing in the ecology movement in the United States and elsewhere. These differences came out in the open at the first national "Green Gathering" held in Amherst, Massachusetts this past summer, where it became apparent that these are illustrative of a broader philosophical chasm. In the following article, Murray Bookchin offers, for the first time, a full-blown critique of the "deep ecology" position. We recommend that you arm yourself with a dictionary, as we at Kick It Over have not yet come to an agreement as to how articles with a lot of unfamiliar words and concepts should be notated. Good luck and bon voyage!*

The environmental movement has travelled a long way beyond those annual Earth Day festivals when millions of school kids were ritually mobilized to clean up streets and their parents scolded by Arthur Godfrey, Barry Commoner, Paul Ehrlich, and a bouquet of manipulative legislators for littering the landscape with cans, newspapers, and bottles.

The movement has gone beyond a naive belief that patchwork reforms and solemn vows by EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) bureaucrats to act more resolutely will seriously arrest the insane pace at which we are tearing down the planet.

This showup "Earth Day" approach toward "engineering" nature so that we can ravage the Earth with minimal effects on ourselves -- an approach that I called *environmentalism* in the late 1960s -- has shown signs of giving way to a more searching and radical mentality. Today, the new word in vogue is "ecology" -- be it "deep ecology", "human ecology", "biocentric ecology", "anti-humanist ecology", or, to use a term that is uniquely rich in meaning, "social ecology".

Happily, the new relevance of the word "ecology" reveals a growing dissatisfaction among thinking people with attempts to use our vast ecological problems for cheaply spectacular and politically manipulative needs. As our forests disappear due to mindless cutting and increasing acid rain, the ozone layer thins out because of the widespread use of fluorocarbons, toxic dumps multiply all over the planet, highly dangerous, often radioactive pollutants enter into our air, water, and food chains -- and innumerable hazards threaten the integrity of life itself -- far more basic issues are raised than any that can be resolved by Earth Day cleanups and faint-hearted changes in existing environmental laws.

More and more people are trying to go beyond the rapid environmentalism of the early 1970's and develop a more fundamental, indeed, a more radical, approach to the ecological crises that beleague us. They are looking for an ecological approach: one that is rooted in an ecological philosophy, ethics, sensibility, image of nature; an ecological movement that will transform our domineering market society into a non-hierarchical co-operative society -- a society that will live in harmony with nature because its members live in harmony with each other.

They are beginning to sense that there is a tie-in between the way people deal with

each other, the way they behave as social beings -- men with women, old with young, rich with poor, white with people of colour, First World with Third, elites with "masses" -- and the way they deal with nature.

The question that now faces us is: what do we really mean by an ecological approach? What is a coherent ecological philosophy, ethics, and movement? How can the answers to these questions and many others fit together so that they form a meaningful and creative whole?

If we are not to repeat all the mistakes of the early seventies with the hoopla about "population control", the latent anti-feminism, the elitism, the arrogance, and the ugly authoritarian tendencies, we must honestly and seriously appraise the new tendencies that today go under the name of one or another form of "ecology".

#### Two Conflicting Tendencies

Let us agree from the outset that the word "ecology" is no magic term that unlocks the real secret of our abuse of nature. It is a word that can be as easily abused, distorted, and tainted as words like "democracy" and "freedom". Nor does the word "ecology" put us all -- whoever "we" may be -- in the same boat against environmentalists who are simply trying to make a rotten society work by dressing it in green leaves and colourful flowers, while ignoring the deep-seated roots of our ecological problems.

It is time to honestly face the fact that there are differences within the so-called "ecology movement" of the present time that are as serious as those between the "environmentalism" and "ecologism" of the early seventies. There are barely disguised racists, survivalists, macho Daniel Boones, and outright social reactionaries who use the word "ecology" to express their views; just as there are deeply concerned naturalists, communitarians, social radicals, and feminists who use the word "ecology" to express their own views.

The differences between these two tendencies in the so-called "ecology movement" consist not only of quarrels with regard to theory, sensibility, and ethics; they have far-reaching practical and political consequences. They consist not only of the way we view nature, or that vague word "Humanity", or even what we mean by the word "ecology"; they also concern how we propose to change society and by what means.

The greatest differences that are emerging within the so-called "ecology movement" of our day are between a vague, formless, often self-contradictory and invertebrate thing called "deep ecology" and a long-developing, coherent, and socially-oriented body of ideas that can best be called *social ecology*. "Deep ecology" has parachuted into our midst quite recently from the Sunbelt's bizarre mix of Hollywood and Disneyland, spiced with homilies from Taoism, Buddhism, spiritualism, reborn Christianity, and, in some cases, eco-fascism. *Social ecology* draws its inspiration from such outstanding radical decentralist thinkers as Peter Kropotkin, William Morris, and Paul Goodman, and others, who have advanced a serious challenge to the present society with its vast hierarchical, sexist, class-ridden, statist apparatus and militaristic history.

Let us face these differences bluntly:



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# VS DEEP ECOLOGY

## A CRITIQUE BY MURRAY BOOKCHIN

"deep ecology" despite all its social rhetoric, has virtually no real sense that our ecological problems have their ultimate roots in society and in social problems. It preaches a gospel of a kind of "original sin" that accuses a vague species called "Humanity" -- as though people of colour are equitable with whites, women with men, the Third World with the First, the poor with the rich, the exploited with their exploiters.

This vague undifferentiated "Humanity" is essentially seen as an ugly "anthropocentric" thing -- presumably, a malignant product of natural evolution -- that is "over-populating" the planet, "devouring" its resources, destroying its wildlife and the biosphere. It is as though some vague domain called "Nature" stands opposed to a constellation of non-natural things called "Human Beings" with their "Technology", "Minds", "Society", etc. "Deep ecology", formulated largely by privileged male white academics, has managed to bring sincere naturalists like Paul Shepard into the same company with patently anti-humanist and macho mountain-men like David Foreman of *Earth First!*, who preach a gospel that "Humanity" is some kind of cancer in the world of life.

It is easy to forget that it was out of this kind of crude eco-brutalism that a Hitler, in the name of "population control" with a racial orientation, fashioned theories of blood and soil that led to the transport of millions of people to murder camps like Auschwitz. The same eco-brutalism now reappears a half-century later among self-professed "deep ecologists" who believe that Third World peoples should be permitted to starve to death and desperate Indian immigrants from Latin America should be excluded by the border cops from the U.S.A. lest they burden "our" ecological resources.

This eco-brutalism does not come out of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. It appeared in *Simply Living*, an Australian periodical, as part of a laudatory interview of David Foreman by Professor Bill Devall (who co-authored the book, *Deep Ecology*, with Professor George Sessions -- the authorized manifesto of the "deep ecology" movement). Foreman, who exuberantly expressed his commitment to "deep ecology", was to frankly inform Devall that

"When I tell people how the worst thing we could do in Ethiopia is to give aid -- the best thing would be to just let nature seek its own balance, to let the people there just starve -- they think this is monstrous... Likewise, letting the USA be an overflow valve for problems in Latin America is not solving a thing. It's just putting more pressure on the resources we have in the USA."<sup>1</sup>

One can reasonably ask such questions as what does it mean for "nature to seek its own balance" in a part of the world where agriscience, colonialism, and exploitation have ravaged a once culturally and ecologically stable area like East Africa. Or who is this all-American "our" that owns the "resources we have in the U.S.A.?" Are they the ordinary people who are driven by sheer need to cut timber, mine ores, operate nuclear power plants? Or are they the giant corporations that are wrecking not only the good old U.S.A., but have produced the main problems these days in Latin America that send largely Indian folk across the Rio

Grande? As an ex-Washington lobbyist and political hackster, David Foreman need not be expected to answer these subtle questions in a radical way. But what is truly surprising is the reaction -- more precisely, the lack of any reaction -- which marked Professor Devall's behavior. Indeed, the interview was notable for the laudatory, almost reverential, introduction and description prepared by Devall.

### What is "Deep ecology"?

"Deep ecology" is so much of a "black hole" of half-digested, ill-formed, and half-baked ideas that one can easily express utterly vicious notions like Foreman's and still sound like a fiery radical who challenges everything that is anti-ecological in the present realm of ideas.

The very words "deep ecology", in fact, clue us into the fact that we are not dealing with a body of clear ideas but with a bottomless pit in which vague notions and moods of all kinds can be sucked into the depths of an ideological toxic dump.

Does it make sense, for example, to counterpose "deep ecology" with "superficial ecology" as though the word "ecology" were applicable to everything that involves environmental issues?

This is not an example of mere word-play. It tells us something about the "mind set" that exists among these "deep" thinkers. To parody the word "shallow" and "deep ecology" is to show not only the absurdity of this vocabulary but to reveal the superficiality of its inventors. Is there perhaps a "deeper ecology" than "deep ecology"? What is the "deepest ecology" of all that gives "ecology" its full due as a philosophy, sensibility, ethics and movement for social change?

This kind of absurdity tells us more than we realize about the confusion Naess-Sessions-Devall, not to speak of eco-brutalists like Foreman, have introduced into the current ecology movement as it began to grow beyond the earlier environmental movement of the seventies. Indeed, the Naess-Sessions-Devall trio rely very heavily upon the ease with which people forget the history of the ecology movement, the way in which the same wheel is re-invented every few years by newly arrived individuals. Well-meaning as they may be, they often accept a crude version of highly developed ideas that appeared earlier in time. At best, these crudities merely echo in very unfinished form a corpus of views which were once presented in a richer context and tradition of ideas. At worst, they shatter such contexts and traditions, picking out tasty pieces that become utterly distorted when they re-appear in an utterly alien framework. No regard is paid by such "deep thinkers" to the fact that the new context in which an idea is placed may utterly change the meaning of the idea itself. German "National Socialism", which came to power in the Third Reich in 1933, was militantly "anti-capitalist" and won many of its adherents from the *German Social-Democratic and Communist parties* because of its anti-capitalist denunciations. But its "anti-capitalism" was placed in a strongly racist, imperialist, and seemingly "naturalist" context which extolled wilderness, sociobiology (the word had yet to be invented but its "morality of the gene", to use E.O. Wilson's expres-

sion, and its emphasis on "racial memory", to use William Irwin Thompson's expression), and anti-rationalism -- all features one finds in latent or explicit form in Sessions' and Devall's *Deep Ecology* (unless otherwise indicated, all file references and quotes come from this book, which essentially has become the bible of the "movement" that bears its name).

Note well that neither Naess, Sessions, nor Devall have written a single line about decentralization, a non-hierarchical society, democracy, small-scale communities, local autonomy, mutual aid, communal-

### "Deep ecology... has... no real sense that our ecological problems have their roots in society and social problems."

ism, and tolerance, that was not worked out in painstaking detail and brilliantly contextualized into a unified and coherent outlook, by Peter Kropotkin a century ago and his admirers from the thirties to the sixties in our own time. Great movements in Europe and an immense literature followed from this writers' works -- anarchist movements, I may add, like the *Iberian Anarchist Federation* in Spain, a tradition which is being unscrupulously "red-baited" by certain self-styled "Greens" because of its "leftism".

But what the boys from "Ecotopia" proceed to do is to totally recontextualize the framework of these ideas, bringing in personalities and notions that basically change their radical libertarian thrust. *Deep Ecology* mingles Woody Guthrie, a Communist Party centralist who no more believed in decentralization than Stalin (whom he greatly admired until his physical deterioration and death) with Paul Goodman, an anarchist, who would have been mortified to be placed in the same tradition with Guthrie (p. 18). In philosophy, Spinoza, a Jew in spirit if not in religious commitment, is intermingled with Heidegger, a former member of the Nazi party in spirit as well as ideological affiliation -- all in the name of a vague word called "process philosophy". Almost opportunistic in their use of catch-words and what Orwell called "double-speak", "process philosophy" makes it possible for Sessions-Devall to add Alfred North Whitehead to their list of ideological ancestors because he called his ideas "processual", although he would have differed profoundly from a Heidegger who earned his academic spurs in the Third Reich by repudiating his Jewish teacher, notably Edmund Husserl, in an ugly and shameful way.

One could go on indefinitely with this sloppy admixture of "ancestors", philosophical traditions, social pedigrees, and religions that often have nothing in common with each other, and, properly conceived are commonly in sharp opposition with each other. Thus a repellent reactionary like Thomas Malthus and the neo-Malthusian tradition he spawned is celebrated with the same enthusiasm in *Deep Ecology* as Henry Thoreau, a radical libertarian who fostered a highly humanistic tradition. "Ecclecticism" would be too mild a word for this kind of hodge-podge, one

that seems shrewdly calculated to embrace everyone under the rubric of "deep ecology" who is prepared to reduce ecology to a religion rather than a systematic and deeply critical body of ideas. However, behind all of this is a pattern. The kind of "ecological" thinking which enters into the book surfaces in an appendix called "Ecoscopy T" by Arne Naess, who regales us with flow diagrams and corporate-type tables of organization that have more in common with *logical positivist* forms of exposition (Naess, in fact, was an acolyte of this repellent school of thought for years) than anything that could be truly called organic philosophy.

If we look beyond the spiritual "Eco-la-la" (to use a word coined by a remarkable eco-feminist, Chiah Heller) and examine the context in which demands like decentralization, small-scale communities, local autonomy, mutual aid, communalism, and tolerance are placed, the blurred images that Sessions and Devall create come into clearer focus. Decentralism, small-scale communities, local autonomy, even mutual aid and communalism are not intrinsically ecological or emancipatory. Few societies were more decentralized than European feudalism, which, in fact, was structured around small-scale communities, mutual aid, and the communal use of land. Local autonomy was highly prized and autonomy formed the economic key to feudal communities. Yet few societies were more hierarchical. Looming over medieval serfs, who were tied to the land by an "ecological" network of rights and duties that placed them on a status only slightly above that of slaves, were status groups that extended from *villains* to barons, counts, dukes, and rather feeble monarchies. The manorial economy of the Middle Ages placed a high premium on autarchy or "self-sufficiency" and spirituality. Yet oppression was often intolerable and the great mass of people who belonged to that society lived in utter subjugation to their "betters" and the nobility.

If "nature-worship" with its wood-sprites, animistic fetishes, fertility rites, magicians, shamans and shamanesses, animal deities, gods and goddesses that presumably reflect nature and its forces, pave the way to an ecological sensibility and society, then it would be hard to understand how ancient Egypt managed to become and remain one of the most hierarchical and oppressive societies in the ancient world. The pantheon of ancient Egyptian deities is filled with animal and part-animal/part-human deities with all-presiding goddesses as well as gods. Indeed, the Nile River, which provided the "life-giving" waters of the valley, was used in a highly ecological manner. Yet the entire society was structured around the oppression of millions of serfs and opulent nobles, indeed, a caste system so fixed, exploitative, and deadening to the human spirit that one wonders how notions of spirituality can be given priority to the need for a critical evaluation of society and the need to restructure it.

That there were material beneficiaries of this spiritual "Eco-la-la" becomes clear enough in accounts of the priestly corporations which "communally" owned the largest tracts of land in Egyptian society. With a highly domesticated, "spiritually" passive, yielding, and will-less population -- schooled for centuries in "flowing with the Nile", to coin a phrase -- the Egyptian ruling strata indulged themselves in an



orgy of exploitation and power for centuries.

### The Art of Evading Society

The seeming ideological "tolerance" which "deep ecology" celebrates has a sinister function. It not only reduces richly nuanced ideas and conflicting traditions to their lowest common denominator; it legitimizes extremely regressive, primitivist, and even highly reactionary notions. These gain respectability because they are buried in the company of authentically radical contexts and traditions.

Consider, for example, the "broader definition of community (including animals, plants); intuition of organic wholes" with which Devall and Sessions re-gulate their menu of "Dominant" and "Minority" positions in their book (pp. 18-19). Nothing could seem more wholesome, more innocent of guile, than this "we-are-all-one" bumper sticker slogan. What the reader may not notice is that this all-encompassing definition of "community" erases all the rich and meaningful distinctions that exist between animal and plant communities, and above all between non-human and human communities. If community is to be broadly defined as a universal "whole", then a unique function which natural evolution has conferred on human society dissolves into a cosmic night which lacks differentiation, variety, and a wide array of functions. The fact is that human communities are *consciously* formed communities. They are *societies* with an enormous variety of institutions, cultures that can be handed down from generation to generation, lifeways that can be radically changed for the better or the worse, technologies that can be re-designed, innovated, or abandoned, and

**"Natural evolution has conferred on human beings the capacity to form a 'second' or cultural nature out of 'first' or primeval nature."**

social, gender, ethnic, and hierarchical distinctions that can be vastly altered according to changes in consciousness and historical development. Unlike most so-called "animal societies" or, for that matter, communities, human societies are not instinctively formed or genetically programmed. Their destinies may be decided by factors — generally, economic and cultural — that are beyond human control at times, but what is particularly unique about human societies is that they can be radically changed by their members — and in ways that can be made to benefit the natural world as well as the human species.

Human society, in fact, constitutes a "second nature", a cultural artifact, out of "first nature", or primeval, nonhuman nature. There is nothing wrong, "unnatural", or ecologically "alien" about this fact. Human society, like animal and plant communities, is in large part a product of natural evolution — no less so than beehives or anthills. It is a product, moreover, of the human species, a species that is no less a product of nature than whales, dolphins, California condors, or the prokaryotic cell. "Second nature" is also a product of mind, of a brain that can think in a richly conceptual manner and produce a highly symbolic form of communication. Taken together, "second nature", the human species which forms it, and the rightly conceptual form of thinking and

communication so distinctive to it, emerge out of natural evolution no less than any other life form and nonhuman community. This "second nature" is uniquely different from first nature in that it can act thinkingly, purposefully, willfully, and, depending upon the society we examine, creatively in the best ecological sense or destructively in the worst ecological sense. Finally, this "second nature" we call society has its own history: its long process of grading out of "first nature", its long process of organizing or institutionalizing human relationships, conflicts, distinctions, richly nuanced cultural formations, and, in so doing, it actualizes a large number of potentialities — some eminently creative, others eminently destructive.

Finally, a cardinal feature of this product of natural evolution we call "society" is its capacity to intervene in "first nature" — to alter it, again in ways that may be eminently creative or destructive. But the capacity of human beings to deal with "first nature" actively, purposefully, willfully, rationally, and, hopefully, ecologically is no less a product of evolution than the capacity of large herbivores to keep forests from eating away at grasslands or of earthworms to aerate the soil. Human beings and their societies alter "first nature", at best in a rational and ecological way, or at worst, in an irrational and anti-ecological way. But the fact that they are constituted to act upon nature is no less a product of natural evolution than the action of any life form on its environment.

"Deep ecology" contains no history of the emergence of society out of nature, a crucial development that brings social theory into organic contact with ecological theory. It presents no explanation of — indeed, it reveals no interest in — the emergence of hierarchy out of society, of classes out of hierarchy, or of the State out of classes. In short, it ignores the highly graded social as well as ideological development which gets to the roots of the ecological problem in the social domination of women by men and men by men, which ultimately gives rise to the notion of dominating nature in the first place.

Instead, what "deep ecology" gives us, apart from what it plagiarizes from radically different ideological contexts, is a deluge of "Eco-la-la". "Humanity" surfaces in a vague and uncharitably form to embrace everyone in a realm of universal guilt. We are then massaged into sedation with Buddhist and Taoist homilies about self-abnegation, "biocentricity", and pop spiritualism that verges on the supernatural — this for a subject matter, ecology, whose very essence is a return to an earthy naturalism. We not only lose sight of the social and the differences that fragment "Humanity" into a host of human beings — men and women, ethnic groups, oppressors and oppressed; we lose sight of the individual self in an unending flow of "Eco-la-la" that preaches the "realization of 'self-in-Self' where the 'Self' stands for organic wholeness" (p. 67). That a cosmic "Self" is created that is capitalized should not deceive us into the belief that it has any more reality than an equally cosmic "Humanity". More of the same cosmic "Eco-la-la" appears when we are informed that the "phrase 'one' includes not only men, and individual human, but all humans, grizzly bears, whole rain forest ecosystems, mountains and rivers, the tiniest microbes in the soil and so on" (p. 67).

A "Self" so cosmic that it has to be capitalized is no real "self" at all. It is an ideological category as vague, faceless, and depersonalized as the very patriarchal image of "Man" that dissolves our uniqueness and rationality into a deadening abstraction.

### On Selfhood and Viruses

Such flippant abstractions of human individuality are extremely dangerous. Historically, a "Self" that absorbs all real existential selves has been used from time immemorial to absorb the individual uniqueness and freedom into a supreme "Individual" who heads the State, Churches of various sorts, adoring congregations — be they Eastern or Western — and spellbound constituencies. It does not matter how "Self" is dressed up in ecological, naturalistic, and "biocentric" attributes. The Paleolithic shaman, adorned in reindeer skins and horns, is the predecessor of the Pharaoh, the institutionalized Buddha, and, in more recent times, a Hitler, Stalin, or Mussolini.

Is there not a free, independently minded, ecologically concerned, indeed, idealistic self with a unique personality that can think of itself as different from "whales, grizzly bears, whole rain forest ecosystems [no less], mountains and rivers, the tiniest microbes in the soil, and so on"? Is it not indispensable, in fact, for the individual self to disengage itself from a Pharonic "Self", discover its own capacities and uniqueness, indeed, acquire a sense of personality, of self-control and self-direction — all traits indispensable for the achievement of freedom? Here, I may add, Heidegger and, yes, Nazism, begin to grince with satisfaction behind this veil of self-effacement and a passive personality so yielding that it can easily be shaped, distorted, and manipulated by a new "ecological" State machinery and a Supreme "SELF" embodied in a Leader, Guru, or Living God. All this in the name of a "biocentric equality" that is slowly reworked, as it has been so often in history, into a social hierarchy. From Shaman to Monarch, from priest or Priestess to Dictator, our warped social development has been marked by "nature worshippers" and their ritual "Supreme Ones" who produced unfinished individuals at best or de-individualized the "self-in-Self" at worst. This was often done in the name of the "Great Connected Whole" (to use exactly the language of the Chinese ruling classes who kept their peasantry in abject servitude, as Leon E. Stover points out in his *The Cultural Ecology of Chinese Civilization*).

What makes this "Eco-la-la" especially sinister, today, is that we are already living in a period of massive de-individualization — not because "deep ecology" or Taoism is making any serious inroads in our own cultural ecology, but because the mass media, the commodity culture, and a market society are "reconnecting" us into an increasingly depersonalized "whole" whose essence is passivity and a chronic vulnerability to economic and political manipulation. It is not an excess of "selfhood" from which we are suffering but selfishness — the surrender of personality to the security afforded by corporations, centralized government, and the military. If "selfhood" is identified with a grasping, "anthropocentric", and devouring personality, these traits are found not so much among the ordinary people, who basically sense they have no control over their destinies. It is found among the giant corporations and State leaders who are not only plundering the planet but also women, people of colour, and the underprivileged. It is not de-individualization that the oppressed of the world require — much less passive personalities that readily surrender themselves to the cosmic forces — but re-individualization that will render them active agents in remaking society and will arrest the growing totalitarianism that threatens to homogenize us all as part of a Western version of the "Great Connected Whole".

We are also confronted with the delicious "and so on" that follows the "tiniest

microbes in the soil," with which our "deep ecologists" identify the "Self". Here, we encounter another bit of intellectual manipulation that marks the Devall-Sessions anthology as a whole: the tendency to choose examples from God-Motherhood-and-Flag for one's own case, and to cast any other alternative visions in a demonic form. Why stop with the "tiniest microbes in the soil" and ignore the leprosy microbe, the yearming and striving viruses that give us smallpox, polio, and, more recently, AIDS? Are there too not part of "all organisms and entities in the ecosphere ... of the interrelated whole ... equal in intrinsic worth ... (p. 67)", as Devall and Sessions remind us in their effluvium of "Eco-la-la"? At which point, Naess, Devall, and Sessions immediately introduce a number of highly debatable qualifiers, i.e., "we should live with a minimum rather than a maximum impact on other species" (p. 75) or "we have no right to destroy other living beings without sufficient reason" (p. 75) or, finally and even more majestically: "The slogan of 'noninterference' does not imply that humans should not modify [!] some [!] ecosystems as do other [!] species. Humans have modified the earth and will probably [!] continue to do so. At issue is the nature [!] and extent [!] of such interference [!]" (p. 72)

One does not leave the muck of "deep ecology" without having mud all over one's feet. Exactly who is to decide the "nature" of human "interference" in "first nature" and the "extent" to which it can be done? What are "some" of the ecosystems we can modify and what are not subject to human "interference"? Here again, we encounter the key problem that "Eco-la-la", including "deep ecology", poses for serious, ecologically concerned people: the social bases of our ecological problems and the role of the human species in the evolutionary scheme of things.

Implicit in "deep ecology" is the notion that a "Humanity" exists that accurses the natural world; that individual selfhood must be transformed into a cosmic "Selfhood" that essentially transcends the person and his or her uniqueness. Even nature is not spared from a kind of static, propositional logic that is cultivated by the logical positivists. "Nature", in "deep ecology" and David Foreman's interpretation of it, becomes a kind of scenic view, a spectacle to be admired around the campfire (perhaps with some Budweiser beer to keep the boys happy or a Marlboro cigarette to keep them manly). Nature becomes something different from an evolutionary development that is cumulative and includes the human species, its conceptual powers of thought, its highly symbolic forms of communication and, grading into "second nature", a social and cultural development that has its own history and metabolism with pristine "first nature". To see nature as a cumulative unfolding from "first" into "second nature" is likely to be condemned as "anthropocentric" — as though human self-consciousness at its best is not nature rendered self-conscious.

The problems "deep ecology" and "biocentricity" raise have not gone unnoticed in the more thoughtful press in England. During a discussion of "biocentric ethics" in *The New Scientist* 69 [1976], for example, Bernard Dixon observed that no "logical line can be drawn" between the conservation of whales, gentians, and flamingos, on the one hand, and the extinction of pathogenic microbes like the smallpox virus. At which point, God's gift to misanthropy, David Ehrenfeld, cutely observes that the smallpox virus is an "endangered species" in his *Arrogance of Humanism*, a work that is so selective and tendentious in its use of quotations that it should be renamed "The Arrogance



of Ignorance." One wonders what to do about the AIDS virus if a vaccine or therapy should threaten its "survival"? Further, given the passion for perpetuating the "ecosystem" of every species, one wonders how smallpox and AIDS viruses should be preserved? In test tubes? Laboratory cultures? Or, to be truly "ecological", in their "native habitat", the human body? In which case, idealistic acolytes of "deep ecology" should be invited to offer their own blood streams in the interests of "biocentric equality." Certainly, "if nature should be permitted to take its course," as Foreman advises us for Ethiopians and Indian peasants, plagues, famines, suffering, wars, and perhaps even lethal asteroids of the kind that exterminated the great reptiles of the Mesozoic should not be kept from defacing the purity of "first nature" by the intervention of "second nature." With so much absurdity to unscramble, one can indeed get heady, almost dizzy with a sense of potential intoxication.

At root, the eclecticism which turns "deep ecology" into a goulash of notions and moods is insufferably reformist and surprisingly environmentalist - all its condemnations of "superficial ecology" aside. It has a Dunkin' Donut for everyone. Are you, perhaps, a mild-mannered liberal? Then do not fear. Devall and Sessions give a patronizing nod to "reform legislation", "coalitions", "protests", the "women's movement" (this earns all of ten lines in their "Minority Tradition and Direct Action" essay), "working in the Christian tradition", "questioning technology" (a hammering remark if there ever was one) and "working in Green politics" (which faction, the *Judais* or *realists*). In short, everything can be expected in so "cosmic" a philosophy. Anything seems to pass through "deep ecology's" Dunkin' Donut hole: anarchism as one extreme and eco-fascism at the other. Like the fast-food emporiums that make up our culture, "deep ecology" is the fast food emporium of quasi-radical environmentalists.

Despite its pretense of "radicalism", "deep ecology" is more "New Age" and "Aquarian" than the environmental movements it denounces under these names. "If to study the self is to forget the self," to cite a Taoist passage with which Devall and Sessions regale us, then the "all" by which we are presumably "enlightened" is even more invertebrate than Teilhard de Chardin, whose Christian mysticism earns so much scorn from the authors of *Deep Ecology*. Indeed, the extent to which "deep ecology" accommodates itself to some of the worst features of the "dominant view" it professes to reject can be seen with extraordinary clarity in one of its most fundamental and repeatedly asserted demands: namely, that the world's population must be drastically reduced, according to one of its acolytes, to 500 million. If "deep ecologists" have even the faintest knowledge of the "population theories" Devall and Sessions invoke with admiration - notably, Thomas Malthus, William Vogt, and Paul Ehrlich - then they would be obliged to add: "by measures that are virtually eco-fascist." This spectre clearly looms before us in Devall's and Sessions' sinister remark: "... the longer we wait [in population control] the more drastic will be the measures needed" (p. 72).

### The "Deep" Malthusians

The "population issue" has a long and complex pedigree - one that occupies a central place in the crude biologism promoted by Devall and Sessions - and one that radically challenges "deep ecologists" very way of thinking about social problems, not to speak of their way of resolving them.

The woefully brief "history" Devall and Sessions give us of the population issue on page 46 of their book can only be considered embarrassing in its simple-mindedness were it not so reactionary in its thrust.

Thomas Malthus (1766-1854) is hailed as a prophet whose warning "that human population growth would exponentially outstrip food production ..." was ignored by the rising tide of industrial/technological optimism. We shall see that this statement is pure hogwash. What Devall and Sessions call the "rising tide of industrial/technological optimism" was, in fact, the nineteenth century radicals who opposed the vicious abuses inflicted by industrial capitalism on the oppressed of the world, often in the name of Malthusianism. Devall and Sessions therefore extoll William Catton, Jr. for applying "the ecological concept of carrying capacity" to an ecosystem (I used this expression years before Catton in my mid-sixties writings on social ecology, al-famines, and plagues (Malthus later added "moral restraint" which was necessary to keep population down - especially, among the "lower orders of society" whom he singles out as the chief offenders of his inexorable population "laws"). (Cf. Chapter 5 of his *Essay*, which, for all its "concern" over the misery of the "lower classes", inveighs against the poor laws and argues that the "pressures of distress on this part of the community is an evil so deeply seated that no human ingenuity can reach it.") Malthus, in effect, became the ideologue par excellence for the land-grabbing English nobility in its effort to dispossess the peasantry of their traditional common lands, and the English capitalists to which children, women, and men to death in the newly emerging "industrial/technological" factory system.

Malthusianism contributed in great part to that meanness of spirit that Charles Dickens captured in his famous novels, *Oliver Twist* and *Hard Times*. The doctrine, its author, and its overstuffed wealthy beneficiaries were bitterly fought by the great English anarchist, William Godwin, the pioneering socialist, Robert Owen, and the emerging *Chartist* movement of the English workers in the early 19th century. When improved economic conditions revealed that population-growth tends to diminish with improvements in the quality of life and the status of women, Malthusianism was naively picked up by Charles Darwin to explain his theory of "natural selection". It now became the bedrock theory for the new social Darwinism, so very much in vogue in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that saw society as a "jungle" in which only the "fit" (usually, the rich and white) could "survive" at the expense of the "unfit" (usually, the poor and people of colour). Malthus, in effect, had provided an ideology that justified class domination, racism, the degradation of women, and, ultimately the empire-building of English imperialism, later to phase into German fascism, with its use of industrial techniques for mass murder.

All of this occurred long after the English ruling classes, overstuffed on a diet of Malthusian plod, deliberately permitted bait for very different purposes than Catton's and George Perkins Marsh for warning "that modern man's impact on the environment could result in rising species extinction rates" (by no means a novel notion when the passenger pigeon and bison were facing extinction, as every ecologist knew at the time). The "environmental crisis", we are solemnly told, "was further articulated by ecologist William Vogt (*Road to Survival*, 1984), anticipating the work of radical [!] ecologist Paul Ehrlich in the 1960s" (page 46).

Devall and Sessions often write with

smug assurance on issues they know virtually nothing about. This is most notably the case in the so-called "population debate", a debate that has raged for over two hundred years and more. It is a debate that involves explosive political and social issues that have pitted the most reactionary elements in English and American society (generally represented by Thomas Malthus, William Vogt, and Paul Ehrlich) against authentic radicals who have called for basic changes in the structure of soci-

### "Hunger has its origins not in 'natural' shortages of food or population growth, but in social and cultural dislocations."

ety. In fact, the "Eco-la-la" which Devall and Sessions dump on us in only two paragraphs would require a full-sized volume of careful analysis to unravel.

First of all, Thomas Malthus was not a prophet; he was an apologist for the misery that the Industrial Revolution was inflicting on the English peasantry and working classes. His utterly fallacious argument that population increases exponentially while food supplies increase arithmetically was not ignored by England's ruling classes. It was taken to heart and even incorporated into social Darwinism as an explanation for why oppression was a necessary feature of society and for why rich, white imperialists, and the privileged were the "fittest" who were equipped to "survive" at the expense of the impoverished many. Written and directed in great part as an attack upon the liberatory vision of William Godwin, Malthus's mean-spirited *Essay* on the *Principle of Population* tried to demonstrate that hunger, poverty, disease, and premature death are "inevitable" precisely because population and food supply increase at different rates. Hence war, vast numbers of Irish peasants to starve to death in the potato "famines" of the 1840s on the strength of the Malthusian notion that "nature should be permitted to take its course."

Malthusianism was not only to flourish in Hitler's Third Reich; it was to be revived again in the late 1940's, following the discoveries of antibiotics to control infectious diseases. Riding on the tide of the new Pax Americana after World War 2, William F. Vogt and a whole bouquet of neo-Malthusians were to challenge the use of the new antibiotic discoveries to control disease and prevent death - as usual, mainly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Again, a new "population debate" erupted, with the Rockefeller interests and large corporate sharks aligning themselves with the neo-Malthusians, and caring people of every sort aligned themselves with Third World theorists like Josua de Castro, who wrote damning, highly informed critiques of this new version of misanthropy.

Paul Ehrlich and his rambunctious *Zero Population Growth* fanatics in the early seventies literally polluted the environmental movement with demands for a government bureau (no less!) to "control" population, advancing the infamous "triage" ethic as a standard for aiding or refusing aid to so-called "undeveloped" countries. The extent to which this "ethic" became a formula for dispensing food to countries that aligned themselves with the U.S.A. in the Cold War, and for refusing aid to those which were nonaligned, would make an interesting story by itself. Ehrlich, in turn, began to backtrack on his attempts to peddle a seventies version of neo-Malthusianism - perhaps until recently, when "deep ecology" has singled

him out for a prophetic place in the pantheon of "radical" ecology. Rumour has it that black students in Ehrlich's own academic back yard viewed his *Population Bomb* as basically racist and neatly tailored to fit the needs of American imperialism.

In *Food First*, Francis Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins have done a superb job in showing how hunger has its origins not in "natural" shortages of food or population growth, but in social and cultural dislocations. (It is notable that Devall and Sessions do not list this excellent book in their bibliography.) The book has to be widely read to understand the reactionary implications of "deep ecology's" demographic positions.

What is no less important: demography is a highly ambiguous and ideologically charged social discipline that cannot be reduced to a mere numbers game in biological reproduction. Human beings are not fruit flies (the species of choice which the neo-Malthusians love to cite). Their reproductive behaviour is profoundly conditioned by cultural values, standards of living, social traditions, the status of women, religious beliefs, socio-political conflicts, and various socio-political expectations. Smash up a stable, pre-capitalist culture and throw its people off the land into city slums and, due ironically to demoralization, population may soar rather than decline. As Gandhi told the British, imperialism left India's wretched poor and homeless with little more in life than the immediate gratification provided by sex and an understandably numbed sense of personal, much less social, responsibility. Reduce women to mere reproductive factories and population rates will explode.

Conversely, provide people with decent lives, education, a sense of creative meaning in life, and, above all, free women from their roles as mere bearers of children - and population growth begins to stabilize and population rates even reverse their direction. Indeed population growth and attitudes toward population vary from society to society according to the way people live, the ideas they hold, and the socio-economic relationships they establish. Nothing more clearly reveals "deep ecology's" crude, often reactionary, and centralist, anti-hierarchical, and "radical" rhetoric aside - than its suffocating "biological" treatment of the population issue and its inclusion of Malthus, Vogt, and Ehrlich in its firmament of prophets.

The close connection between social factors and demography is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe, improved living conditions began to reduce rates of population increase, in some cases leading to negative population growth rates. During the inter-war period, such declines became so "serious" to countries rearing themselves for World War 2, that women were granted awards for having sizable numbers of children (read: cannon fodder for the military). More recently in Japan, industrialists were so alarmed by the decline in the country's labour force due to the legalization of abortion that they demanded the abrogation of this legislation.

These examples can be generalized into a theory of demography in which the need for labour often plays a more important role historically in population fluctuations than biological behaviour and sexual desire. If women are seen as female fruit-flies and men as their mindless partners, guided more by instinct than the quality of life, then Devall and Sessions have an argument - and, almost certainly, a crude patronizing, gender-conditioned outlook that requires careful scrutiny by feminists who profess to be "deep ecologists". If



people are not fruitless, then "deep ecology" reeks of the odor of crude biologist that is matched only by its naive reading of Malthus and Company.

Not surprisingly, Earth First! whose editor professes to be an enthusiastic "deep ecologist", carried an article titled "Population and AIDS" which advanced the obscene argument that AIDS is desirable as a means of population control. This was no spoof. It was carefully worked out, fully reasoned in a Paleolithic sort of way, and earnestly argued. Not only will AIDS claim large numbers of lives, asserts the author (who hides under the pseudonym of "Miss Ann Thropy", a form of sinister humour that could also pass as an example of macho-male arrogance), but it "may cause a breakdown in technology [read: human food supply] and its export which could also decrease the human population" (May 1, 1987). These people feed on human disasters, suffering, and misery, preferably in Third World countries where AIDS is by far a more monstrous problem than elsewhere.

Until we can smoke out "Miss Ann Thropy" (is it David Foreman again?), we have little reason to doubt that this mentality -- or lack thereof -- is perfectly consistent with the "more drastic ... measures" Devall and Sessions believe we will have to explore. Nor is it inconsistent with a Malthus and Vogt, possibly even an Ehrlich, that we should make no effort to find a cure for this disease which may do so much to depopulate the world. "Biocentric democracy", I assume, should call for nothing less than a "hands-off" policy on the AIDS virus and perhaps equally lethal pathogens that appear in the human species.

### What is social ecology?

Social ecology is neither "deep", "tall", "fat", nor "thick". It is social. It does not fall back on incantations, sutras, flow diagrams or spiritual vagaries. It is avowedly rational. It does not try to regale metaphorical forms of spiritual mechanism and crude biologist with Taoist, Buddhist, Christian, or shamanistic "Eco-la-la". It is a coherent form of naturalism that looks to evolution and the biosphere, not to deities in the sky or under the earth for quasi-religious and Supernaturalistic explanations of natural and social phenomena.

Philosophically, social ecology stems from a solid organicist tradition in Western philosophy, beginning with Heraclitus, the near-evolutionary dialectic of Aristotle and Hegel, and the superbly critical approach of the famous Frankfurt School -- particularly its devastating critique of logical positivism (which surfaces in Naess repeatedly) and the primitivist mysticism of Heidegger (which pops up all over the place in "deep ecology's" literature).

Socially, it is revolutionary, not merely "radical". It critically unmasks the entire evolution of hierarchy in all its forms, including neo-Malthusian elitism, the ecobrutalism of a David Foreman, the anti-humanism of a David Ehrenfeld and a "Miss Ann Thropy", and the latest racism, First World arrogance and Yuppie-nihilism of post-modernist spiritualism. It is rooted in the profound eco-anarchistic analyses of Peter Kropotkin, the radical economic insights of Karl Marx, the emancipatory promise of the revolutionary Enlightenment as articulated by the great encyclopedist, Denis Diderot, the *Errata* of the French Revolution, the revolutionary feminist ideas of a Louise Michel and Emma Goldman, the communitarian ideas of Paul Goodman and E.A. Outkind, and the various eco-revolutionary manifestos of the early 1960's.

Politically, it is Green -- and radically Green. It takes its stand with the left-wing

tendencies in the German Greens and extra-parliamentary street movements of European cities, with the American radical eco-feminist movement that is currently emerging with the demands for a new politics based on citizens' initiatives, neighborhood assemblies, New England's tradition of town-meetings, with unaligned anti-imperialist movements at home and abroad, with the struggle by people of colour for complete freedom from the domination of privileged whites and from the superpowers of both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Morally, it is avowedly humanistic in the high Renaissance meaning of the term, not the degraded meaning of "humanism" that has been imparted to the word by David Foreman, David Ehrenfeld, a salad of academic "deep ecologists", and the like. Humanism from its inception has meant a shift in reason, from deities to people -- who are no less products of natural evolution than grizzly bears and whales. Social ecology does not accept a "biocentricity" that essentially denies or degrades the uniqueness of human beings, human subjectivity, rationality, esthetic sensibility, and the ethical potentiality of this extraordinary species. By the same token, social ecology rejects an "anthropocentricity" that confers on the privileged few the right to plunder the world of life, including women, the young, the poor, and the underprivileged. Indeed, it opposes "centricity" of any kind as a new word for hierarchy and domination -- be it that of nature by a mystical "Man" or the domination of people by an equally mystical "Nature".

It firmly denies that "Nature" is a scenic view which Mountain Men like a Foreman survey from a peak in Nevada, or a picture window that spoiled Yuppies place in their ticky-tacky country homes. To social ecology, nature is natural evolution, not a cosmic arrangement of beings frozen in a moment of eternity to be abjectly "revered", "adored", and "worshipped" like the Gods in a realm of "Supernature" that subverts the naturalistic integrity of an authentic ecology. Natural evolution is nature in the very real sense that it is composed of atoms, molecules that have evolved into amino acids, proteins, unicellular organisms, genetic codes, invertebrates and vertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, primates, and human beings. It is nature moving in a cumulative thrust toward ever-greater complexity, ever-greater subjectivity, and finally, ever-greater mind with a capacity for conceptual thought, symbolic communication of the most sophisticated kind, and self-consciousness in which natural evolution knows itself purposefully and willfully.

This marvel we call "Nature" has produced a marvel we call *homo sapiens* -- "thinking man", and more significantly for the development of society, "thinking woman". Her primal domestic domain provided the arena for the origins of a caring society, human empathy, love, and idealistic commitment. The human species, in effect, is no less a product of natural evolution than blue-green algae. To degrade that species in the name of "anti-humanism", "Miss Ann Thropy" (to use the coarse language of an unknown Earth First! Mountain Man), to deny the species its uniqueness as thinking beings with an unprecedented gift for conceptual thought, is to deny the rich fecundity of natural evolution itself. To separate human beings and society from nature is to dualize and truncate nature itself. It is to diminish the meaning and thrust of natural evolution in the name of a "biocentricity" that spends more time disporting itself with mantras, deities, and supernature than with the realities of the biosphere and the role of society in ecological problems. Accordingly, social ecology does not try

to hide its critical and reconstructive thrust in metaphors. It calls "technological/industrial" society *capitalism*. This is a word which places the onus for our ecological problems on the living sources and social relationships that produce them, not on a cutesy "Third Wave" abstraction which buries these sources in technics, a technical "mentality", or perhaps the technicians who work on machines. It sees the domination of women not simply as a "spiritual" problem that can be resolved by rituals, incantations, and shamanesses, important as they may be in solidarizing women into a unique community of people, but in the long, highly graded, and subtly nuanced development of hierarchy, which long preceded the development of classes. Nor does it ignore class, ethnic differences, imperialism, and oppression by creating a grab bag called "Humanity" that is placed in opposition to a mystified "Nature", divested of all development.

All of which brings us as social ecologists to an issue that seems to be totally alien to the crude concerns of "deep ecology": natural evolution has conferred on human beings the capacity to form a "second" or cultural nature out of "first" or primal nature. Natural evolution has not only provided humans with ability but also the *necessity* to be purposive interveners into "first nature" by means of a highly institutionalized form of community we call "society". It is not alien to natural evolution that a species called human has emerged over billions of years that is capable of thinking in a sophisticated way. Nor is it alien for that species to develop a new kind of community -- institutionalized, guided by thought rather than by instinct alone, and ever-changing -- has emerged called "society".

Taken together, all of these human traits -- intellectual, communicative, and social -- have not only emerged from natural evolution and are inherently human; they can also be placed at the *service* of natural evolution to consciously increase biotic diversity, diminish suffering, foster the further evolution of new and ecologically valuable life-forms, reduce the impact of disastrous accidents or the harsh effects of mere change.

Whether this species, gifted by the creativity of natural evolution, can play the role of a nature rendered self-conscious or cut against the grain of natural evolution by simplifying the biosphere, polluting it, and undermining the cumulative results of organic evolution is above all a social problem. The primary question ecology faces today is whether an ecologically oriented society can be created out of the present anti-ecological one.

"Deep ecology" provides us with no approach for responding to, much less acting upon, this key question. It rips out invaluable ideas like decentralization, a non-hierarchical society, local autonomy, mutual aid, and communalism from the liberatory anarchic tradition of the past where they have acquired a richly nuanced, anti-elitist, and egalitarian content. These ideas have been reinforced by passionate struggles by millions of men and women for freedom. It then reduces these ideas to bumper-sticker slogans that can be recycled for use by a macho Mountain Man like Foreman at one extreme, or flaky spiritualists at the other extreme. These bumper-sticker slogans are then relocated in a particularly repulsive context whose contours are defined by Malthusian elitism, anti-humanist misanthropy, and a seemingly benign "biocentricity". This biocentricity dissolves humanity, with all its unique natural traits for conceptual thought and self-consciousness, into a "biocentric democracy" that is more properly the product of human consciousness than a natural reality. Carried to its logical absurdity, this "biocentric democracy" --

one might also speak of a tree's morality or a leopard's "social contract" with its prey -- can no more deny the "right" of pathogenic viruses to be placed on an "endangered species list" (and who places them there, in the first place?) than it can deny the same status to whales.

The social roots of the ecological crisis are layered over by a hybridized, often self-contradictory form of spiritualism in which the *human "self"*, writ large, is projected into the environment or into the sky as the revered Deity or deities and abjectly "reversed" as "Nature". Or, as Arne Naess, the grand Pontiff of this mess puts it: "The basic principles within the deep ecology movement are grounded in religion or philosophy" (p. 225) -- as though the two words can be flippantly used interchangeably. Selfhood is dissolved, in turn, into a cosmic "Self" precisely at a time when de-individualization and passivity are being cultivated by the mass media, corporations, and the State to an appalling extent. Finally, "deep ecology", with its concern for the manipulation of nature, exhibits very little concern for the manipulation of human beings by each other, except perhaps when it comes to the "drastic" measures that may be "needed" for population control.

There must be a resolute attempt to fully anchor ecological dislocations in social dislocations, to challenge the vested corporate and political interests we should properly call capitalism -- not some vague entity called "industrial/technological" society, which even a Dwight D. Eisenhower attacked with a more acerbic term -- to analyze, explore, and attack hierarchy as a reality, not only as a sensibility. We must recognize the material needs of the poor and of the Third World people, to function politically, not simply as a religious cult, to give the human species and mind their due in natural evolution, not simply regard them as "cancers" in the biosphere, to examine economics as well as "souls" and freedom as well as immerse ourselves in introspective or in scholastic arguments about the "rights" of pathogenic viruses. In short, unless North American Greens and the ecology movement shift their focus toward a social ecology and let "deep ecology" sink into the pit it has created for us, the ecology movement will become another ugly wart on the skin of society.

What we must do, today, is return to nature, conceived in all its fecundity, richness of potentialities, and subjectivity -- not to Supernature with its shamans, priests, priestesses, and fanciful deities that are merely anthropomorphic extensions and distortions of the "Human" as all-embracing divinities. What we must *enchant* is not only an abstract "Nature" that often reflects our own systems of power, hierarchy, and domination -- but rather human beings, the human mind, and the human spirit that has taken such a beating these days from every source, particularly "deep ecology".

"Deep ecology", with its Malthusian thrust, its various "centricities", its mystifying "Eco-la-la", and its disorienting eclecticism degrades this enterprise into a crude biologist that deflects us from the social problems that underpin the ecological ones and the project of social reconstruction that alone can spare the biosphere from virtual destruction.

We must finally take a stand on these issues -- free of all "Eco-la-la" -- or acknowledge that the academy has made another conquest; namely that of the ecology movement itself. □



stages of the grieving process. For example, shock, depression and loneliness, physical illness, panic, anger, resistance to returning to normal, etc. Do you identify with these stages or phases?

RT: I can certainly identify with a lot of them. I don't think they progress in any particular chronological order or that any two individuals necessarily go through these stages in the same order, or even through all the same stages. I think that it varies from individual to individual in terms of order and length, as well as severity, of these stages. For me, from September 14th, 1986, until January of this year, everything remains in an amorphous blur, making it difficult for me to assess and identify which stages that I may have gone through or might still be going through. Shock was certainly one of them, and I think that accounts for the fact that my perception of the time period just mentioned is very ambiguous. Depression and loneliness were also major factors, and to a great extent they remain so.

I also went through a period of heightened sexual activity—I won't say promiscuity because that's a put-down—while Bob was dying. It may sound strange, but it's a common stage of grief that a lot of people generally don't know about, representing, as it did in my case, a desire to be touched, loved, held and wanted by a man, by any man. I was also involved in another secondary relationship in Toronto at the time—both Bob and I considered monogamy politically incorrect—that I felt ambivalent about and probably didn't help matters any. I also still have a lot of feelings of guilt.

GS: In what way?

RT: I still feel responsible for the full of complacency that I allowed myself to fall into and for not keeping the reality of Bob's mortality foremost and up front, which, had I done, I might have been able to spend more time with him instead of behaving as though I had all the time in the world to spend with him and that there was no need to hasten my move from Toronto to Ottawa.

GS: So you think that you were being complacent rather than, perhaps, protecting yourself against something which was so hard to deal with?

RT: Well, it seems that way to me subjectively. I can honestly say that, in discussing Bob's death and the period of bereavement subsequent thereto, I'm so objective that I can't possibly be objective.

There is no doubt that grief has warped my perspective and I'm not setting myself up as any sort of pinnacle of truth here. There are some things I'm still very bitter about. The events described here may not necessarily be as they actually took place but they are certainly the way I experienced them. It would be interesting to compare my perspective with that of someone else who was involved in Bob's death. But nevertheless, I really do feel that I was vacillating and dragging my feet, all the more so because in the last few months of his life I could see that Bob was urging me to make a real start on moving to Ottawa. He asked me repeatedly to begin by bringing small things like clothes and records up to Ottawa each time I visited. I sensed—more by what he implied than by anything he stated—that he knew that for him total blindness was inevitable, and that he wanted me to be there so that he would have someone to help him to function, to maintain as normal a life as possible under the circumstances, to maintain his independence, which was very precious to him and vital to his existence, so that he wouldn't have to depend on his parents or

admit himself to hospital. Bob wanted me to be there for him and I just feel that I let him down, that I failed him, and I am unable to forgive myself for that.

One of the most heartbreaking stories for me was related to me by one of Bob's friends (and I mention no names here because I don't feel that it's fair to single anyone out in this interview) after Bob died. Bob had realized that he was losing all of his vision, and he must have also known that he was dying, and he came to his friend's place seeking support. But his friend felt quite spooked by all this, and didn't know how to deal with it, so he made some excuse about being busy. He had assumed that Bob left the apartment, but somewhat later found him crying in his bathroom. All I can think of was there was Bob, totally alone in the world and facing the spectre of death, with seemingly no one to turn to. And in that moment of desperation, where was I? In Toronto. But I should have been there in Ottawa to comfort my lover, and indeed I would have been, had I not hesitated and had I been possessed of the least bit of foresight.

GS: Actually, I think that's a pretty common experience that people who lose somebody go through. Feeling that, "If only I could've done this, that or the other thing—then I could have protected or saved that person," rather than seeing it as, "Maybe I did the best I could at the time." Perhaps the perspective that can be gained over time is that you did do the best that you could.

RT: Well, I haven't arrived at that evaluation of the situation yet. I still feel very lonely at times. Bob was very much my soulmate and I find that soulmates are notoriously difficult to come by.

Besides guilt, depression and loneliness are still major hurdles for me and I feel very fixated on them. I haven't yet worked them through.

GS: Do you feel more hopeful now than you did, say, last month or a couple of months ago, or do you feel like you have to work through your feelings of depression and loneliness before you can begin to feel more optimistic about things?

RT: Well, I still feel that I have a long way to go and that has to do with, I suppose, the nature of myself as an individual and the nature of my relationship with Bob. Bob made a real difference to my life; he influenced my life in a lot of ways—Bob introduced me to Anarchism, for example—and I'm having a hard time coping with the loss of Bob's influence in my life because there just isn't anyone else in my life, or anyone else even remotely in sight, who can fulfill the same sort of role Bob played in my life. I'm not here necessarily speaking of Bob's role as a lover but of his role as someone with whom the empathy was so strong that there was nothing I could say to him that he wouldn't have been able to understand, and understand it in the same way that I myself did. We held the same *weltanschauungen*, the same worldviews, which were analogous when they were not identical. The lack of anyone in my life with a similar perspective only augments my feelings of isolation and loneliness, despite the fact that I do have friends.

GS: Do you think that the Gay grieving experience differs from the straight grieving experience and, if so, in what way?

RT: Well, I think there's definitely a difference. In terms of the Gay grieving experience, those of us who are lovers of PWAs belong to a minority which is still not accepted as valid by society at large, and our deceased lovers are mostly very young males, whereas in the case of





## *coping with gay grief cont.*

heterosexual bereavement, most survivors are older women who, being straight and family oriented, have greater access to sources of support and to relationships—both their own and those of their in-laws. Their relationships, unlike ours, are sanctioned by the law and by society's mores, whereas ours usually don't meet with the approval of even our own families, much less those of our lovers, and I think that's one of the major differences. Another is when it comes to reintegration into society and daily life. It's often much more difficult for those of us who are Gay because often our lovers constituted our only real family. If either our own family or that of our lover's or both reject our homosexuality and/or the relationship, then we are left void of any support systems, unless we're lucky enough to have a very close circle of Lesbian and Gay friends who function as our surrogate families.

GS: I was just thinking that the fact that you can't be open about your grief and you don't have the kind of familial support that straight people do is in itself a form of social ostracization, which must impact on Gay people psychologically in very profound ways. Consequently there aren't real comparisons with what straight people go through.

RT: No, and whatever the heterosexual widow or widower has to go through is exacerbated and augmented and magnified a thousand times for Lesbians and Gays going through the same thing, for the reasons which I enumerated before. And I do agree with you that, while analogies can sometimes be made between Gay and straight bereavement, as with women who have lost heterosexual lovers to AIDS and who probably have more in common with Gay men in the same situation, often analogies are imperfect and sometimes you can't even make analogies at all. For example, widows and widowers reintegrating themselves into heterosexual society do not usually have to be concerned about acquiring a communicable disease, whereas lovers of PWAs must inform all those with whom they become romantically involved in future that their previous lover died of AIDS, which may repel or frighten off a prospective love interest. They have to deal with the fact that they, too, may contract the disease, although statistics show that only a very tiny portion of lovers of PWAs have been known to fall victim to AIDS as well. And so I think that's one major difference.

GS: What would you say helped to sustain you the most during the first year after Bob's death?

RT: That's a tough one! I really don't think I know what's sustained me this far. Certainly not having to deal with employment the first six months after Bob passed away was a big help—I resigned from my job in January of 1986 in response to Bob's third bout with PCP. The doctors had only given him a 30% chance of surviving it and psychologically and emotionally I was just such an absolute mess that there was no question of me being able to hold down steady employment. It was probably the best thing I could've done, since there was no way I could've sustained any sort of job when Bob died nine months later. The stages of grief that I was going through at that time would have absolutely precluded it. I missed Bob so very much—and I still do—that I just couldn't bear to miss him anymore. Thoughts of suicide—which still recur—and fears of insanity—I literally thought that I was going out of my mind—pushed me to the threshold of a nervous breakdown.

GS: Like a panic attack?

RT: Yes. So I contacted the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) and spoke with Theresa Dobko who referred me to ACT's bereavement group, which I've attended since October of 1986. The group has helped to sustain me a lot, since there are other people there—mainly Gay men whose lovers were PWAs, but also some straight and Gay women whose friends or brothers were PWAs or who had lost a lover or friend to some other morbidity—who've endured a loss and we all share our losses in common. That's been a tremendous help to me, as well as the fact that it's a value-judgement free atmosphere—nobody is there offering up miracle cures for grief.

GS: I'm wondering what kind of support you did (or didn't) get from your family and friends.

RT: Well, I got plenty of suggestions from many quarters but I don't feel that I got any support that was of any real benefit from either family or close friends. My own family is geographically distant, never knew Bob personally and I don't think really appreciated the nature of our relationship. I couldn't turn to Bob's family for support because we just didn't get along. I'd always thought when it came to the crunch that Bob's death would bring us all closer together, but it didn't.

I really wish I could have gotten support from more people while Bob was still alive, since the support that I ordinarily would have received from Bob he was no longer capable of giving. As I previously indicated, the CMV had affected the brain and, as is typical with the dying, the closer death approached, the more Bob withdrew into himself. I wasn't even able to share personal, meaningful things. For the first time I was completely beyond his reach and vice versa.

He was totally at the mercy of other people. He didn't have control over his own life. He was too debilitated to take charge of his own dying. It always seemed to me that one of the things that most typified Bob was his autonomy, but here he was at the mercy of other people, and my hands were tied because I was not recognized legally or socially as being related to Bob, as being his "next of kin".

I think that one of the things that tore my heart out when I discussed his apartment with him was when he said to me, "Robyn, call the ambulance and have them take me home. I can check myself out." And I wanted to fulfill his request of me with all my heart, but I knew that if I had done that all hell would have broken loose and this was the first and only time in my life that Bob made a request of me that I simply could not fulfill. That just tore me apart inside. I always said that there was nothing I wouldn't do for Bob, yet here I failed.

If there was any gift I could have given Bob at that moment, other than a cure, it would have been the restoration of his independence.

And if there's one thing I've learned from this experience, it's to make damned sure that I have complete and absolute control over my own death, and I don't give a fuck what family or friends may think or want.

GS: It sounds like, in addition to grieving your own grief that, in fact, you were grieving for Bob's grief as well under these circumstances.

RT: Well, I've very much felt that. I've often said that the only person who could understand what I was going through in grieving for Bob was Bob himself and, since he's not here anymore, the one person who could've empathized and

really understood what was happening to me and where I was coming from is and was totally beyond my grasp. So I felt totally alone.

The feeling that I was perceived as the "bad guy", the intruder, the outsider, the misfit, the person who didn't belong, and not as the lover, was something I just couldn't shake no matter how hard I tried all the time I was in Ottawa. It was with me from the time I was there, while Bob was deteriorating, when he died, even at the funeral, and it persisted afterwards. Now, and this is the point in my subjectivity where I am not so sure that I didn't lose touch with reality, I felt like a nonperson. It was like I was invisible, like my existence, much less my grief, wasn't even being acknowledged. I felt that not only with Bob's family, but with his AIDS buddies<sup>2</sup>, even with the one person who I discussed all this with: the palliative care chaplain at the hospital where Bob was first admitted. I didn't get any vibes of acceptance from anyone who was closely involved with Bob's death.

I didn't feel that Bob's buddies from Ottawa's AIDS Committee Services (or AIDS Support) Group were of any help to me, partly because I found them to be quite conventional and assimilated and therefore impossible to relate to, and partly due to their incredulity that I felt I was being perceived as the "villain". I should point out that this was true only of Bob's AIDS buddies from the support group.

I felt isolated and ostracized. With one of them I tried to break the ice and elicit some support by initiating a conversation, while we were both in Bob's hospital room, about alternative, non-establishment approaches to treating AIDS, and he just reacted like I was nuts! It seems that you're a dangerous madman—or madwoman—if you don't put all your faith and hope and trust in the privileged professionals or if you dare to question their authority, and my attempt to point out analogies, like showing how professional male historians have totally distorted and falsified the authentic history of women, got me absolutely nowhere.

GS: So refusing to acknowledge reality on the part of Bob's AIDS buddies was a real stumbling block as well.

RT: I should point out that this was true only of Bob's AIDS buddies. I certainly can't fault the AIDS Committee of Ottawa itself because the ACO is full of fine, dedicated people. It was just in this particular case, with these particular individuals, that I felt that the support was all for Bob and his family and that none was there for me.

I think a lot could be explained just by the fact that I was too unconventional for most of the people close to the death. Certainly my article about Bob, published after his death in *GO Info*, the Gays of Ottawa newsletter, never won me any fans. Bob and I worked on it together in hospital when he was still alive. Since both Bob and I, as Anarchists, were completely contemptuous of eulogies, Bob encouraged me to make it objective, including his faults as well as his virtues. I did that, and while it may seem very detached, to me it is very loving. I don't love part of a man, I love the whole, virtues as well as faults. But that is not what people want to read or hear after a death. There is no room for nonconformity or individualism. Instead, we are expected to go along blindly with society's accepted death rituals as if they were somehow sacrosanct and inviolable.

I admit to being a nonconformist and I certainly have more than my share of

shortcomings and faults. But I am not an ogre, and I really don't think that I am the terrible person that I was perceived to be by certain people in Ottawa.

GS: What about the kind of response or support you got from your friends? I remember you saying to me at one point in time that what you felt you actually got from your friends, particularly friends in the Gay and Lesbian community, were nothing but platitudes. Could you say more about that?

RT: The support I did get from the Gay community came from the most unexpected sources. It came from friends who I wasn't particularly close to or from people that I barely knew, and here I must give credit where credit is due. Lillith, Taylor, and Richard Woollard in Toronto and Ron LeBlanc, Bob Read and Denis LeBlanc in Ottawa all gave me emotional support. Taylor, Richard, Denis and especially Bob Read gave me financial support. To Bob and Denis I owe the greatest debt, and one that I can never repay. They kindly permitted me to stay in their home for four long months while Bob was dying and afterwards, and it couldn't have been any picnic because I'm a trying ghost at the best of times. I still feel horribly guilty about imposing on them like that, especially since they were initially more Bob's friends than mine. I barely knew them when I asked them to put me up at a time when I thought that conflict with Bob's family would preclude me staying in his apartment. There are no words that can express my gratitude to them; I only wish I'd known them better before the crisis. I would love to have confided in them at the time, but I didn't feel that I knew them well enough, so I remained distant, only giving them some indication of where I was at months after the death in novel-length letters. But that was my own damned fault. Bob warned me to make some friends of my own in Ottawa before he died, but as usual I just didn't listen to him. I've since gotten to know Bob and Denis much better, though.

Unfortunately, the constructive support that I got from my close friends in Toronto was negligible. I think that to a large extent people just didn't know what to say. When they finally did attempt to say something, all that came across were clichéd platitudes which, in my emotional turmoil, I heard but could neither comprehend nor employ in any pragmatic sense, i.e., "Don't worry, things will get better. . .", "One day you'll put all this behind you. . .", "Time heals all wounds. . .", etc. This was precisely the opposite to sort of support which I might possibly have profited by. It would have been much kinder and much more practical if friends had acknowledged my grief rather than denying it and offered to touch me emotionally and physically whenever I needed them to and whenever I felt really crazy. □

*—To be continued in the next issue of Kick It Over. In Part II, the politics of grief, what people can do for a grieving person, death and the meaning of life, tips on dealing with grief.*

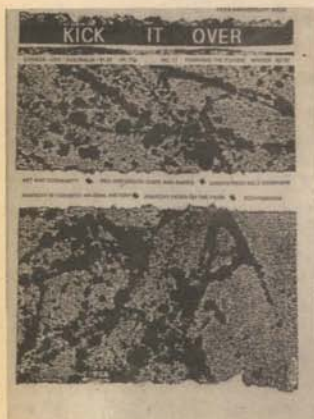
### Notes

1. Azidothymidine, or AZT, is an analogue of an amino acid which inhibits the replication of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) — the apparent main factor in the development of AIDS — at a very early stage.

2. An "AIDS buddy" is any individual who volunteers her or his time to, and is assigned by, an AIDS Committee to assist a person with AIDS (PWA) or a person with AIDS related complex (PWARC) in the management of that person's daily life and to offer emotional, physical and social support to them, their friends and family.



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Eco-Feminism and Bio-Regionalism  
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Reviews of Rudolph Bahro and Andre Gorz  
Art and Utopia



#18:

Interview with "Working Girls" director,  
Lizzie Borden  
Anarcha-Feminism, Past and Present  
Greenham Common Women  
The "Other" Womyn's Music  
Women in India and Africa



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# From tradition to Revolution!

by George Woodcock

*This is Part 2 of a longer article, which Kick It Over has taken the liberty of printing in the reverse order. Part 1 (actually Part 2) was published in #19 under the title of "The Underside of Canadian History: Searching for Radical Traditions". This part focuses on the evolution of anarchist theory in response to changes in the character of the state, and the necessity to begin rebuilding society at the grassroots level. KIO would welcome comments from our readers as to specific strategies.*

## Community vs State

From the beginning it has been one of the commonplaces of anarchist thought that men and women are naturally social; that left to themselves people will develop voluntary associations to meet their social, economic and cultural needs; and that if these needs are met there are no strictly political needs that go beyond them, since freely organized institutions would make government as we know it, with its rigid laws and systems and bureaucracies, entirely unnecessary. Human societies, the theory goes, took a wrong turn long ago, about the time human beings shifted from a simple tribal or early urban communities, with their folk moots and their citizens' assemblies organizing everything from below by direct participation and mutual aid, to the imperial or feudal model in which the social pyramid was reversed, everything was brought in from above rather than at the ground level, and the necessities of power brought in coercive institutions. This is the progression sketched out by Kropotkin in works like *Mutual Aid and Modern Science and Anarchism*, and referred to earlier on by William Godwin in his *Political Justice* (1793), where he declared that:

*Men associated at first for the sake of mutual assistance. They did not foresee that any restraint would be necessary to regulate the conduct of individual members of the society toward each other or towards the whole. The necessity of restraint grew out of the errors and perverseness of the few.*

Godwin also anticipated the later anarchists when he pointed out how government impeded the natural dynamism that emerges in a free community. He claimed that:

*...government "lays its hand upon the spring there is in society and puts a stop to its motion." It gives substance and permanence to its errors. It reverses the general propensities of mind, and instead of suffering us to look forward, it teaches us to look backward for perfection. It prompts us to seek the public welfare, not in innovation and improvement, but in a timid reverence for the decisions of our ancestors, as if it were the nature of mind always to degenerate and never advance.*

Subsequent history has done nothing to lessen the force of Godwin's exposure of the stultifying effects of government. For when government has put on a mask of benevolence, and has transformed itself in the welfare state, it has proved just as destructive as it had been in its more openly malevolent manifestations, since the presumption that a bureaucratic machine can

care for men and women from birth to death and keep them happy in the process results not merely in the intensification of the state's grip over the lives of its subjects by registration, regulation and supervision, but, more importantly, in the erosion of those voluntary institutions that appear naturally in a free society.

In this way the welfare state becomes just as ingenious a means of repression and regimentation as any more overtly totalitarian system. By destroying the voluntary elements out of which a different kind of society might be developed, it makes its own replacement more difficult and increases the danger of a relentless progression towards the society based on total submission for which George Orwell invented the telling image of "a book stamping on the human face -- forever." In compensation for such perils, the welfare state does not even keep its promise of making people happier: witness the high rate of suicides in Sweden, surely the most cushioned of cradle-to-the-grave pseudo-democracies. But if the welfare state has obviously failed in its avowed aim of creating a more joyful life, it has certainly succeeded in its covert aim of making men and women less free, for, in more devious and unobtrusive ways than an overt dictatorship, it has made them more dependent by eliminating or co-opting voluntary institutions and dissolving the spirit of mutual aid under the pretense of providing security.

The welfare state has not merely bribed people to exchange freedom for a promise of material sufficiency that in the end is kept only at the price of a life of dependent idleness instead of productive leisure, as millions of recipients of welfare and UIC payments now realize. It has also consolidated the power of the state more effectively than any secret police apparatus, since, apart from its vast network of information on people and their affairs, it has created in its dependents a haunting fear that if they rock the political boat too violently, their social security may be endangered. (And, in parenthesis, consider the ambiguities of the word "security" in a modern "democracy". It describes the subsidies by which the state seeks -- like Roman emperors -- to keep its subjects quiet, and it also describes the repressive forces -- the security agencies -- that can be used to detect and frustrate rebellion. So, by a coalescence of connotations, the word shows how the "benevolent" and the malevolent aspects of the state apparatus are the obverse and the reverse of a single coin.)

## Revolution and Evolution

This is one of the reasons why there has been a fading of the old anarchist dream of a revolution in the near future which would demolish the old order and allow a world without authority or property or war to spring up immediately in its place. That dream was based on a failure to understand the protean adaptability of the state, which enabled it to change at will from the reality of malevolence to the appearance of benevolence. Bakunin certainly believed in the revolutionary dream until he declined into old age, and so, for large parts of their lives, did militants like Malatesta and the syndicalist Pelloutier and many of the Spanish anarchists. There were times indeed, in Spain after the peo-

ple of Barcelona, with the anarchists in the lead, had defeated Franco's generals and in Russia when Makhno led his mobile guerrilla columns over a Ukraine largely liberated from Red and White armies, when the eve of the great social transformation seemed, at least locally, to have arrived. But revolutions are times of peril as well as hope, particularly for those who search for freedom, since they open the way not only for the people who seek to destroy authority, but also for the more ruthless people who seek to transfer it in their own favour. And in both Russia and Spain at the times of their respective civil wars, it was the revolutionary authoritarians who won at the expense of the revolutionary libertarians. In Spain the revolutionary authoritarians, playing Stalin's totalitarian game, were willing to let the country fall into the hands of their rival authoritarians of the right rather than allow truly revolutionary gains in terms of workers' and peasants' control of the means of production to be sustained.

Kropotkin was one of those who began with a belief that the libertarian revolution could come in the near future, and in the articles he wrote in the mid-1880's and eventually collected in *The Conquest of Bread* he actually sketched out the kind of society, based on voluntary associations, that might come into being on the morrow of the revolution. In 1902, when he published *Mutual Aid*, Kropotkin's attitude had changed considerably, and without actually stating a loss of faith in a revolution in the near future, he began to place the emphasis, in books like *Mutual Aid*, less on what might happen in a revolutionary situation and more on the kind of voluntary institutions that had existed in the past and in many cases had stayed alive even in a society dominated for many centuries by governmental systems.

I think there are three reasons for Kropotkin's shift in emphasis. The first was the generally anti-utopian attitude of the anarchists, who dislike the idea of people in an unfree society prophesying what might happen in a liberated world: better get ahead, in however a modest way, with the process of liberation. The second was the inclination of the scientist -- and Kropotkin wrote *Mutual Aid* as a concerned scientist rather than as a propagandist -- to prefer basing his conclusions on actual phenomena -- happenings in the past or present -- rather than on unverifiable futuristic speculation. The third was an inclination, as an evolutionist who saw revolutions as speedups -- or rapid mutations -- in the evolution of society, to consider the fact that evolution can continue by other means even in a non-revolutionary period. Voluntary associations can emerge at any time: in favourable circumstances they can survive even in an authoritarian society, and by demonstrating in *Mutual Aid* how many voluntary associations still operated in the world he knew, Kropotkin was clearly intent on demonstrating that here and now, within a modern society, there existed a potential parallel structure to that of government. It might appear uncoordinated and ramshackle because it embraced the efforts of millions of people and thousands of groups often working unaware of each other. But, in all its diffuse variety, it operated as a genuine network of mutual aid which performed, without the aid of the state, many of the vital functions of soci-



erty in his time.

#### Mutual Aid -- Then and Now

Kropotkin wrote at the turn of the century. In the eight years since then the mutual aid network has not disappeared, but it has radically changed in form, since in many fields once largely dominated by voluntary groups and individual initiative, like education, welfare and medicine, the welfare state has largely taken over. It has made the scope of these services more universal, but that could certainly have been achieved by voluntary groups if they had access to the proportion of social wealth which the state has appropriated, and it would undoubtedly have been done more efficiently and more economically than the best of bureaucracies could do. But in spite of this, voluntary groups continue to proliferate in other fields: groups dedicated to protesting infringements on rights or liberties; groups devoted to environmental protection or to ending nuclear weaponry; groups representing minorities; groups devoted to foreign aid and doing it more efficiently than government departments; groups devoted to theatre, to music, to art, to crafts, to intellectual interests of all kinds; mutualist institutions like credit unions and co-operatives increasing in numbers and assuming new forms. Obviously some of these groups -- like the right-wing fundamentalist movements -- are not in themselves either libertarian or anything but regressive. Yet even they represent the stubbornness of the human inclination to co-operate voluntarily in the achievement of group aims and an equally stubborn awareness among people even of conservative views that the state cannot and should not be relied on for everything. What we do for ourselves is better done and more satisfying than what is done for us by impersonal bureaucratic agencies. A growing awareness of this fact is at the base of the increasing distrust of politics and politicians that one sees and hears expressed in so many countries nowadays.

#### Revolutionary Situations

It is always possible that such a dwindling of confidence in the current political process may produce a crisis situation of revolutionary dimensions. Political regimes that for decades or generations seemed impregnable are very often so fragile, so dependent on the image of power rather than its reality that they collapse at the first serious assault. In recent years we have seen several such regimes fall apart with dramatic suddenness: the rule of the Shah in Iran, the rule of the Duvalier dynasty in Haiti, the rule of the Somozas in Nicaragua, the reign of Marcos in the Philippines. These breakdowns of government were due to a combination of the inner exhaustion of the regime and a growing popular discontent, which produced a revolutionary situation. Revolutions, as Bakunin and Kropotkin and the other anarchist theoreticians have argued, are not initiated by self-styled "revolutionaries", whose attempted coups inevitably fail whenever the essential conjunction of a weakened regime and well-nigh universal discontent fails to materialize. The "revolutionaries", the Lenins and Castros and their kind, who later take control if the people are not vigilant as well as rebellious, are not rep-

resentative of the original insurgent masses; the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the Islamic fanatics who now control Iran, were in fact -- like the Bolsheviks in Russia at the end of 1917 -- single-minded minorities who moved into the vacuum of power because there was no alternative in the form of an emergent libertarian society based on an existing network of voluntary associations. The fact that the anarchist model remained a viable alternative in Spain during the early stages of the Civil War was due to the existence of such a strong network of syndicates in the industries and anarchist cells elsewhere that the voluntary groups were able immediately to take over the means of production and other vital aspects of society in large areas of Spain. That the experiment failed was due not to inherent faults but only to circumstances that the Communists who opposed it were provided with the arms that in the long run assured their superiority and, as a consequence, the collapse of the anti-Fascist cause in Spain.

#### Building the New Society in the Shell of the Old

Such considerations suggest the wisdom of the approach adumbrated by Kropotkin in his later books, and followed by a number of contemporary anarchist thinkers like Colin Ward in *Anarchy in Action* and Paul Goodman in books like *New Reformation*, *Drawing the Line* and *People or Personnel*. Such writers point out that anarchism is not a matter of future societies only. It is a matter of sustaining libertarian ideas and models in a practical manner so far as that can be done here and now. As Kropotkin showed in *Mutual Aid* and Ward in *Anarchy in Action*, one does not have to wait for a revolution to begin living like an anarchist of finding anarchist ways of doing things. Indeed, the anarchist ways are always there, even if people do not recognize them, sustained in a network of voluntary efforts and organizations that even the welfare state has been unable to destroy. Paul Goodman has often been described as that paradoxical animal, a conservative anarchist, and so in a way he is -- in the sense that he recognized that there are positive as well as negative values even in existing society, areas of improvisation and spontaneity and traditional mutual aid that are threatened by the homogenizing tendencies of the modern world and that must be defended if we are to move forward in the direction of a free society. I don't think either Ward or Goodman can be accused of gradualism *per se*; what they are suggesting is that the infrastructure of an anarchist society exists in skeleton around us, partly in the form of the battered remnants of a less regimented society in the past, partly in the form of new spontaneous urges towards cooperative and voluntarist organization. Our task now should be not to wait passively for the revolution, which may never come or, if it does come are we unprepared, will strike us off our guard. It should be to strengthen and encourage all the libertarian and mutualist urges, whether they are constructive in the sense of creating new libertarian organizations, or rebellious in the sense of resisting new attacks on freedom or seeking to put an end to old tyrannies and discriminations. We should

strengthen and tighten the infrastructure of an alternative society so that even now we can become less victimized by manipulative politicians and so that in the future we may be able to act positively and effectively in times of crisis.

#### Anarchy and Tradition

How we can act depends a great deal, I suggest, on the traditions of the community to which we belong. Anarchists have always had ambivalent attitudes towards tradition. They rightly denounce it when it is used to justify the perpetuation of authoritarian institutions: churches, monarchies, party organizations, etc. But throughout libertarian writings you find the inclination to look back in history and search out the clues that add up to a different kind of tradition: the tradition of mutual aid, of free, spontaneous associations which together build up a history of the people quite different from the history of governing classes of states.

The tradition anarchists maintain is not embodied in any institution, for the idea of a rigid framework for human co-operation is anathema to those who love freedom; by the same token it is not embodied either in a constitution, like that of the United States or the one recently acquired by Canada, or a sacred and immutable text like the Bible or the Koran or the Communist Manifesto, for we do not believe that people now or at any period can lay down how others should act until the end of time. The tradition anarchists recognize is embodied in the free and changing arrangements that men and women have come to in many different circumstances without the help of governments or priest-hoods (religious or political); it is also embodied in the thoughts and writings and the symbolic acts (which some anarchists have called "propaganda of the deed") of the men and women who have the exponents of anarchism, or merely seekers of freedom according to their own lights, but who never claimed the finality of Divine Revelation or the immutable authority of Marx and Lenin for their thoughts or words or actions.

The anarchist heritage, compounded of all these strands of mutualist action and rebellious thought, is a true tradition, but it is frozen into no institutional frame and it is subordinated to no authority, physical or intellectual; it is no respecter of persons or, for that matter, of precedents. Nevertheless, it finds in the past much that illuminates the present, and more than other more rigid traditions it learns from history, since history is not for anarchists, as it is for orthodox Christians and Jews and Moslems and Marxists, an eschatologically conceived progression towards an inevitable millennium. It is much more like the vision of the early Greek philosopher Heraclitus, in which, within the given physical order of the universe, humanity lives in the flux of everlasting change; by accepting and observing that process of change which is not necessarily progression, we come to realize that men and women can learn and live by the laws of mutual attraction that operate within the given order and can utilize them to create a free and viable society. This is the great paradox of liberty within destiny, which gives meaning to the journey of life between the darkness of birth and death. □



OR

# RE HABILITATION

by Michael (Rainbow) Hanks

At Union Correctional Institution, Raiford, Florida

*The Kick It Over collective does not condone all the attitudes expressed in this article, but we feel it expresses invaluable truths about the hell that is prison.*

I wish to reveal my innermost thoughts today: the thoughts that can no longer be suppressed. I wish to reveal these thoughts to all individuals affected, directly or indirectly.

I am a thirty year old, white male currently serving a twenty year sentence in prison for dealing in stolen property and escape. I have now served seven and one half years of that sentence.

Have I been "rehabilitated"?

I was sent to prison to be punished for my crimes and, in theory, to be remodeled into a law abiding citizen that would fit into society. In reality, I am now cast apart in a non-living world that is full of dreams, fantasies, shattered hopes, hatred, rage, and the cold emptiness of lonely desolation.

This is not a hard-luck story. Nor am I seeking sympathy. I only wish to bring this reality that viciously controls the lives of many in here to the attention of everyone involved and affected. And everybody is, in one way or another.

We are the outcasts, the misfits, the deviates of this society. We are a major problem, and like many other problems, it is not accepted by most. It is cast to the side, just as we have been cast to the side, discarded, "out of sight, out of mind". The screams of hate and rage are never heard; the painful tears of hopelessness and consuming loneliness are never seen. Eyes look the other way; ears plugged; thoughts filled with trivial necessities of daily life,

not much concerned with the lives and welfare of your fellow human beings who for one reason or another chose not to conform with the laws and accepted norms of social behaviour of this society.

The problem is set to the side, but it has not ceased to exist.

A man is taken from the mainstream of life for a criminal conviction. He has to be charged; he has to be punished. He is now thrown to a world of daily existence where every single day is exactly like the last, exactly like the one still to come. Day in, day out, the same monotonously dismal routine.

To escape this wearisome non-life, the prisoner is forced to create an imaginary world in which to live a semi-normal life. Since that world is self-created, every circumstance, every detail, is completely controlled.

To give you an example of this world: every human being has a natural sex drive, for it is an instinct of survival and self-preservation. In here, sexual encounters with members of the opposite sex are contained too (I speak only of men, for these are the thoughts, feelings, and experiences within men's institutions. Conditions may differ in women's institutions).

Magazines, television, movies, fantasies, daydreams, etc., are complicated and manifested by the limited range of contact (visual/verbal) with females who are employed by the State of Florida to work within the institution—their presence only inciting extreme carnal lust.

The humanity of this single aspect of our lives is incomprehensible. To see the pain and anguish of fruitless desires for love, affection, and sexual release, being emotional yearnings, is saddening enough. But to see a natural human desire turned into a physically-tormenting, emotionally-torturing, self-devouring perverse obsession is truly gut-wrenching. That is only

the beginning of a cruel and vicious cycle that becomes part of one's life within this unyielding world of living death. We do not live, for this is not life; we only exist.

Imaginary meetings, conversations, words of love, gentle touch and tender kisses, lovemaking... the fantasizer directing everything, every word that is spoken, every move that is made. This is not limited to sexual/emotional longings; it is a whole make-believe world to be able to subsist in the mundane reality that surrounds us.

We make love to the women displayed in magazines. We visit towns on the television screen, walking down the streets, talking, partying, joking, laughing, living in the memories of days gone by, and future days that will only be lived in the mind.

Two... four... six... eight... ten years of this consumingly destructive way of life, in which we control everything, and one day we are going to be released back into the real world, a world that we have no control over; enter into conversations and have no rule over what is said and done.

Years void of any form of affection, loneliness, that sometimes unbearable pain of wanting, wanting someone to love, someone to be loved by, multiplied over years of suffering and abandonment.

It is out of this pain and desperation that men begin to see feminine characteristics in other men, whether real or imagined. The emptiness that eats away at you, day after day, will finally digest you until sexually normal men, deceiving themselves to escape the hellish torments of loneliness, fall deeply in love with another man. It is in total desperation that a man can see another man (and relates to him) as if he was a real woman. Not so much for sexual gratification, but for simple affection.

A puzzling thought. The females that are employed here, are so for exactly what

reason? In my opinion, they are employed here beyond any reasonable logic whatsoever. Their function and usefulness within the prison can in no way justify the psychological damage that their presence here encourages, nor the prevailing threat to their safety, the safety of the other employees or the safety of the prisoners (if their safety was to be considered; it usually is not).

In the seven and a half years of observation during my incarceration, I have not yet understood why a woman, unless having a sadistic desire to sexually entice those that are vulnerable and/or dominate the men subject to their authority, or, unless needing to be sexually/emotionally fed by the myriad of mouth-gaping stares, obvious vehement lust, knowing that they are the subject of many a fantasy, would submit themselves to this type of environment.

Is it for money? For lack of jobs? I would hardly think that they would endure these circumstances just for the meagre salary if it were not for some underlying sexual or egotistical satisfaction that could not be obtained elsewhere.

This has indeed puzzled me for the past seven and a half years and I am still without an answer. I am speaking mainly of those prisons that have not adopted congenial visiting programs; conditions may vary under that program.

As the loneliness eats away at your mind, leaving only cold, empty hatred, you desperately search for love. If you have not already chosen to seek comfort in the feminine projections of a fellow prisoner, one of the ways to search for love is through correspondence.

Letters for most prisoners is a kind of rope that saves them from the pain of feeling abandoned. But letters too can become a vicious cycle of love and rejection, comfort and anxiety.



# REVEALING

The depression that mounts when an expected letter fails to arrive can be more painful than not ever expecting one. Paper relationships, more often than not, lead only to more pain. And of course, there are the "Dear John" letters, always from the end and love you forever; this is not a very realistic promise, but it is usually meant when spoken and is the only thing the prisoner has to hold on to.

Things in our world never change, so emotions and everything else that was a part of our lives when we were taken from society remain perfectly intact within our minds, within our memories, throughout our time in incarceration. Being told by your true love, as painful as it may be, is much more welcomed than the letters that trickle down from five a week to four... three... two... one... Then the days, weeks, months of torture, waiting for the letter that will never arrive.

Now to explore another reality of my dismal world which purpose is to first "PUNISH" (quoted from the Florida sentencing guidelines effective October 31, 1984) and, of course, to REHABILITATE (though it doesn't speak of it). From an outsider's point of view, the prison offers many opportunities. Vocational, recreational, self-help, and the like. Wonderful opportunities indeed, and in theory its purpose is a positive one. To the men, a chance to learn a skill or trade that they could use upon their release, as an alternative means to support themselves and their families. Just wonderful, from an outside view. But all of the tools and opportunities in the world are useless without motivation, and you cannot motivate a man that has been programmed to automation.

The various programs were set up to help men but, in reality, they are used to consume idle hours, and are, for outside

observers, a manipulative program of release.

You take the courses... you are released... they let you go, rehabilitated or not. The taxpayers are happy, society is happy, the man being released is happy; but then he returns to prison and the problem still exists.

A man, upon his release, must be responsible. FACT. But what happens to a man that for seven and a half years, let's say, is being told when to wake up, when to work, when to eat, when to play, when to sleep, etc., day in and day out, for seven and a half years? He falls into the habit of being told what to do, or automation, like a mindless robot. He doesn't have to think for seven and a half years and then this man is released... and three months later he returns to prison. And we wonder why??? We wonder why couldn't he function on his own???

And let us not forget the sexual advances and attacks, primarily on the young prisoners. Obsessive sexual cravings, growing rapidly intense in this world, within men with little or no hope for freedom, through the years, have been eaten away to the core with loneliness and idle hate. Such a man has nothing to lose.

A young man comes into this system and is given a choice. If he does not make waves, better are his chances of obtaining an early release. An ultimatum he has -- either his freedom, thus saving his family (and children, if any) from further pain and financial hardship, alone with his own suffering -- or his manhood.

One will result in an extension of his time, spent in the non-living, hellish world. The other, traumatic psychological damage that will prove crippling for the rest of his life.

Has he been remodeled into a law-abiding citizen?? A loving, caring, productive individual???

Of course, there is another choice. Death, in the face of the unending loneliness, is warmly welcomed.

I would also like to venture into the darkened secrets behind the Corrections Lodge, such as how they control and maintain order of the monsters they have created. It is not the fear of death, which is surely to be the retaliation--for the peace that death offers is appealing--it is only the added pain and misery that my family would be put through in my death that keeps me from revealing them now. Your imagination should paint the pictures well enough.

I came into this non-living world, my first conviction (either as a juvenile or as an adult). I have had to defend myself from sexual attacks, to keep the things that family and friends have sent me, and so that I can face myself, and some day again my family and friends, as a man. I have been unfairly harassed by guards, and I have irrationally rebelled, resulting in many months spent in solitary confinement, as my hatred grew.

I have been eaten away by loneliness, and I have lived in a fantasy for so long, to substitute for the monotony of this mundane existence, that I now fear freedom. In my imagination I have entertained thoughts of hurting others, and have contemplated the peacefulness of death as an escape from the desolation of the many wasted days of my youth that lie ahead.

The psychological and emotional scars are a life sentence.

I was once a loving, goodhearted person; now I am slowly being devoured by a heartless, hate-producing factory, a warehouse for the problems that were easily forgotten and better left unsolved.

I was once my parents' son, capable of love, kindness and feelings... now I am being turned slowly into a cold, calloused,

unfeeling animal.

I have only one hope left, and that is that my dream to change this destructive and detrimental way of reform through punishment. Very few, if any, ever consider the consequences when committing a crime; you are under the belief that you are not going to be caught. So, places such as this are not a deterrent to crime, only warehouses for criminals. My goal is to solve the problems that the masses are soon to forget.

My battles with the all-consuming hatred are not over, nor am I sure I will come out a victor, for time is running out. If I lose, I am not responsible for any actions committed by this thing that carries the Department of Corrections number A-794568, for I no longer will be the one I once was.

I speak for myself and all others similarly situated, to the family and friends of these men -- your love is the only hope they have. And to any person in the capacity to examine this growing problem, to speak about it and to work with me within my world of concrete and steel, to find a solution. □







### Of Cows and Cars

Dear friends,

I was pleasantly surprised to discover KIO. I was particularly pleased to find in (#18) that anarchists in Canada and other countries actively support animal rights. Here in France there are very few anarchists who feel concerned about this problem. Most will just laugh when you mention it. Human suffering is serious; (non-human) animal suffering is funny, so they seem to believe.

I think many people just lack imagination. White South Africans probably just can't or don't want to imagine what it is like to be Black -- it's so different, they don't speak the same, and so on. It's easier and more comfortable to consider they're just things. These Whites may actually just be selfish, but many of them are probably quite nice people with their (white) family and their (same class) friends.

Just like some of the ancient Greeks used to consider that the slaves had no sensibility, or that what they felt was not worth consideration, most present-day humans consider that what animals feel has no importance. Women, too, were for centuries considered by the catholic church to have no souls.

People tend to climb up the walls when I compare the Blacks, or the Women, with animals. I don't see why. Women are animals just like men are and so are children. Not everyone is an animal. Lettuce isn't, for example. I'm not sure lettuce has no feelings, but I'm rather sure cows do.

Of course, there are differences between humans and other animals. I believe these differences are very important. For instance, I have never been able to convince my cats not to catch mice. As far as I know, humans are the only animals capable of understanding it's important to respect other animals.

Unfortunately, the real differences between humans and other animals have little to do with the differences in attitude people have towards them. In the same way there are real differences between women and men -- chromosomes, sex organs and so on -- but that has little to do with being a typist or a soldier. The real differences act as a kind of flag: you look at the sex organs of a new-born child and then you decide what clothes you will give it and with what tone of voice you will talk to it.

It is obvious that a cow, for instance, can experience pain, suffering and joy the same as humans can. By saying it's obvious, I don't mean it is 100% sure: maybe cows are just machines, but maybe everyone other than myself is too; however, hardly anyone considers everyone to be

just machines and it should be very natural to extend the assumption as least as far as cows. They have so much in common with us: they feel, they see, they breathe, they have muscles, etc. Of course, if you don't know personally any cows it's difficult to imagine what it feels like to be one. The same is true of different humans living different kinds of lives: they can't imagine what the others feel so they suppose they don't feel.

The fact that non-humans can't learn arithmetic has little to do with the discrimination and violence that is set against them. People see they're not human, and then decide that their life and freedom has no value, that it is okay to torture them in laboratories, and so on. Nevertheless, in a very down-to-earth way, people still do understand how close humans and other animals are. Some Nazi S.S. used to train their nerves by plucking the eyes out of cats. If you can do that to a cat, you can do it to a human and if you can do it to a human, you can do it to a cat. People are often very kind and sympathetic to their pets, but they don't mind eating meat, because they shut their minds off from the injustice this represents.

Classical anarchists are very nice people, they're full of concern and solidarity for the oppressed humans. But non-humans are just outside their scope of vision. Actually, they're not all so innocent. Many have a very particular violently scornful self-righteous injurious and aggressive way of contending that their dignity cannot suffer that human causes be compared with "animal" causes. "It's my species, be right or wrong." I feel this kind of rage in Mykel Board's response in KIO #18 to "Meat is Murder" (#17). He says a lot about human problems, and I agree they are important, but he says not a word about the basic problem in eating meat: it's immoral in itself for the victim's sake. Not being vegetarian is "dangerous" (to use his word) for the cows. But he has decided to have a blind spot here. He has complicated economic arguments to explain why farmers need to have animals killed and eaten. In France, the government says workers need the arms industry to produce and export arms. Now, this kills thousands of people in the Iran-Iraq war on both sides, but our government still explains this is necessary for employment in France. I think blind economic arguments can be very dangerous.

Another thing that hurts in Mykel Board's letter is when he says vegetarians want to be "humane". Why does he use this contemptuous word? Would he speak of being "humane" towards the women or the South African Blacks? I feel solidarity towards cows; this is as politically important and respectable as any other struggle.

Many such people are opposed to "excessive cruelty" towards the animals. This is what brings animal rights together with women's rights, Blacks' rights and children's rights. I'm not saying that women, etc. are "closer" to animals than are WASP adult men. Women, Blacks, children and WASP adult men are animals. What I mean is that for centuries, "serious" people have been opposed to "excessive cruelty" towards women, slaves, children and non-humans. These people were very "humane". This barrier of contempt is difficult to overcome and it may explain why so many women, Blacks, children and animal liberation movements tend to or have to resort to verbal or physical violence. In our society violence, at least, is considered seriously. Even the most idiotic cause will be discussed gravely in international meetings if you have only a few thousand nuclear missiles to back it.

Actually, how seriously people will listen to what you say has little to do with how serious what you say really is. With a few friends we have set up here in France an anti-car movement. It's difficult to get this message across here to the anarchists. Car traffic has killed several million people in the world; it kills over 50,000 humans each year in the EEC. Cars have invaded our environment, are at least as damaging as nuclear power stations. They force children off the streets, they kill countless non-humans, they terrify pedestrians and bicycle riders. They are a very strong symbol of the inflated adult male ego and its thirst for violence and possession. They give a very biased and perverted (and costly) image of what good living can be to the third world people. They are one of the main incentives in the petty bourgeois strive for accumulation and exhibition of private property. People who can't afford a car, children and people who physically cannot drive are marginalized and have increasing difficulties to go from one place to another.

Being against the cars doesn't only challenge the state, it means also going against the habits and the way of thinking of millions of people. This what the anarchists are supposed to be ready to do. The state exists at least partly because people side with it. But challenging millions of people's way of living (and one's own with it) is harder than just challenging the state. So, when we say we want to fight against the cars, people, and anarchists too, laugh at us like they laugh at a gnast fighting an elephant. But I think that when the gnast is right and the elephant wrong, we should side with the gnast.

I'm including some leaflets and articles we have written against cars. It's in French, and I hope some of you who might be interested will manage to read

it....

Best wishes,  
David Olivier  
Lyon, France

### A Plea For Tolerance

Dear KIO:

The first open national Greens gathering in the United States, July 2-7, had its high points and its low points. Some of the lowest of the low: the repeated and often vicious attacks on anything -- Eastern, Western, or whatever -- that looked like "spirituality". Quakers, spiritual feminists, radical Catholics, nature mystics, Buddhists, religious Jews, and all other people who were ~~spiritual~~, or ~~any~~ way, with "religion", were brought under fire in workshops and plenary sessions where speakers argued that there was "no room for religion" among the Greens. (I don't recall anyone saying that there was "no room for atheists" among the Greens. Presumably, that statement would have been rejected -- and rightly so -- as being "prejudiced", "irrational", and "unfair". So why was it o.k. in Amherst to lash out, left and right, at anything that seemed to be in any way "spiritual"? Ask the conference organizers who tolerated the attacks. Maybe they know.)

In the midst of all the assaults against "spirituality" that could be heard at the American Green gathering, it was strange to hear voices calling for more involvement by Native Americans, Third World people, white ethnic workers, women, and others, in developing a new Green politics. I can imagine how an angry atheist like Murray Bookchin would be received if he gave one of his "anti-spirituality" speeches in a typical Black, Hispanic, or Native American community. Nor would Murray be likely to win much support with an "anti-spirituality" speech given at a modern American labor or peace rally or at a major gathering of feminists or environmentalists. Maybe Bookchin and his Vermont cronies have spent too much time in their cow country cloisters. They seem to be out of touch with cultural realities. Given a choice between attacking a Pentagon boss and a Quaker anti-war activist, some of these guys might have to think twice before they figured out where to go.

The sad truth is that some Americans waste much of their time in stumbling over their own prejudices. It wasn't very long ago that many so-called "progressives" were still making cruel remarks about gay men and lesbians. Earlier generations of populists often refused to work with Blacks, Jews, and Catholics,





Tammara

and nobody, until very recently, took feminists very seriously. Currently, it's popular in some "progressive" circles to laugh and shout at "the alternative religions". When the eco-feminists, the anarchist Neo-Pagans, the radical New Agers, and the rest, get involved in progressive politics they're told to "get out", and when they stay away from political gatherings where they're clearly not wanted, they're damned for being "non-political"! History shows that the Blacks, the feminists, the gays and the lesbians, and the rest, were finally able to break this vicious cycle by forming progressive political movements of their own. Maybe the new "spiritual radicals" will have the last laugh as they turn their backs on the Murray Bookchins and start to organize their own cultures of resistance. I hope, however, that the American Greens can hold together for a while longer as a broad coalition that can accept people from a wide variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds.

The reality in today's world is that radical spirituality and radical politics are being blended together in many different cultures. This is true in the Black community, among Hispanics, among Native Americans, and elsewhere. It's even true among the white middle-class. And this simple fact is annoying the hell out of some of the old-time atheist comrades. For years, they've preached that all religious movements are basically the same -- are all political movements the same? -- and they've tried to pretend that the Vatican bosses and the Moral Majority-types are "all that there is" in religion. A new kind of spirituality-baiting has appeared in some leftist circles. (If you say that you're interested in spirituality -- any kind of spirituality -- then you're a reactionary and a superstitious sot, because the goddess-worshippers of ancient Egypt were involved with spirituality and blah, blah, blah.) If you push this kind of indiscriminate spirituality-smashing hard enough and far enough, you wind up with -- well, what do you get? Fractured coalitions. Intellectual dishonesty. New forms of intolerance and new barriers to communication among progressives. Now, who do you think benefits from that kind of arrangement?

Blessed be,  
Sara Milne  
Springfield, Massachusetts

#### Adult Entertainment

Dear Kick It Over comrades,

Comrades, I am delighted with the quality of the current KIO -- it continues

to be one of the few thoughtful and effective anarchist publications. I think of KIO more and more these days as an anarchist magazine for grown-ups -- the people in the collective and the larger KIO "family" (in which I include myself) have hung together and grown together. I'm not opposed to the spontaneous anger and ethical outrage of youth, far from it, but a political theory and praxis that is only based on gut level adolescent impulses is ultimately quite unsatisfying. Kick It Over continues to be valuable to me, after 5 years as a faithful reader, because it reflects growth and evolution in a political-personal blend, because it reflects real people in a real evolution of ideas and, most of all, because it is ideas of spirit/politics/emotion deepening and becoming more complex and satisfying. I am thirty years old, partnered, and the broad outlines of who I am and where I'm going to go with the rest of this life are pretty well decided -- I'm in for the long haul and I expect to raise my children, build my community, connect with my Gods, and live a complete real life that is consistent with Dame Anarchy, and KIO has reflected the sense of the history we make through living our lives, the possibility of being an old anarchist, the human scale that includes aging and children, parties and celebrations, work and creation, the whole real life that is not included in the ideological anarchist press.

I am too wordy, as usual, when what I really want to say is that I love us as we grow together toward the end of history.

Blessings, love,  
Larry Ingersoll

#### In the Bowels of the Deep South

Dear Kick It Over,

I am a Canadian citizen incarcerated in the great state of Alabama. I have had no contact with anyone from my home land for several years now, and when I saw your address listed in our prison law library, I knew I had to write.

Three years ago, I was charged with two class C felonies which is one step above a misdemeanor. I was found guilty, and because of prior Canadian convictions, I was sentenced to a total of 120 years.

Perhaps you all have heard horror stories of the old deep south, and I am here to inform you that they do exist. The prison systems of the old south are second

to none when it comes to brutality and sheer backwardness. One example: 50 of the last 53 executions in the United States took place in the old confederate south. I am employed in our prison law library, and am what is commonly called a "jailhouse lawyer". I would be happy to share some of the atrocities of this state with you and your readers. I have access to documented cases in our law books of people being sentenced to prison for life, for example, for stealing two cartons of cigarettes. There are many such cases.

I would very much like to receive your newsletter, and would gladly contribute articles from south of the border if you would give me an outline of what might be of interest to your readers.

I was raised in Ottawa and Montreal, and am bilingual. I attended Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Apart from receiving your newsletter, I would be overjoyed to be able to correspond with anyone from Canada on a friendship basis. We are prohibited from writing to other convicts, but I would appreciate any information on how the prison system in Canada has evolved in the past 15 years....

Sincerely yours,  
Michael L. Gwynne  
138615 W/3/24T  
100 Warrior Lane  
Bessemer, Alabama  
35023

#### They're Both Right

Dear KIO,

Many thanks for Bill McCormick's excellent letter on the Earth First!/Food First controversy. Perhaps the way to reconcile the two positions is this: In the short run, FF is right and the immediate problem is not overpopulation but distribution and social justice. In the long run, EF is right and the problem is overpopulation. If "thinking globally and acting locally" applies in time as well as space, we need to find solutions to long-run problems that deal with short-run realities.

Take care,  
Preniss Riddle  
Texas

#### An Appreciation

Dear KIO,

I send you this letter to let you know that I am still here and kicking. Although,

I have only 18 months to go before this state releases my body and allows me to join my wandering mind, my offer to help in any way I can still stands.

The last issue of KIO was superb, (getting better and wiser) all the time. Being the librarian (and legal assistant) at this unit's library allows me to place these materials where many will read them.

Please keep the informative literature coming. This population in here need it, and so do I. I ask that you keep in touch for my future work will also need progressive efforts such as yours. Thank you.

Sincerely and very truly yours I am,  
in complete solidarity,  
William Roger Sawyer  
Arizona State Captive

#### Three Cheers for Dragonfly

Dear KIO:

I would like to respond to Jim Campbell's article on Dragonfly farm, written some months ago.

Many of Jim's criticisms are undeniable, yet there is more to Dragonfly than Jim's analysis. He alludes to some of the dynamic features of Dragonfly life, but not, I think, enough.

The gatherings at Dragonfly alone are valuable experiments in consensual decision-making and egalitarian community life.

The sense of unconditional acceptance is rare indeed, and a definite healing for anyone fortunate enough to receive it. (And that is anyone who needs and appears for it.)

When I visited Dragonfly in early April those lazy, coffee-swilling hippies had launched themselves into a commercial greenhouse business. They'd repaired the old tractor (a stunning achievement) and plowed seven acres, ready for oat seeding. So much work remained to be done by so few people that I had to take several naps a day just thinking about it.

It is easy for those who have fallen back on the illusory comforts of a wage economy to criticize Dragonfly. But it is important to remember that Dragonfly holds the land, and therefore the dream, for us all. It is no small task. The fact that it is being done at all is cause on our part for deep, unconditional gratitude.

Sincerely,  
Cheryl Ray  
Welland, Ontario



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MSQ

LETTERS

Let

Critical Population

Dear KIO,

...The interview with Art Bertelot was delightful. It is so much more interesting to be part of a movement with a history. And forefolk who are story tellers find places in our hearts as well as our minds. After all, for much of our time as human beings we have lived an oral history. Machine society has put such an inordinately high value on "objective facts" and mechanical truths that we forget the need to relate to one another in the language of daily life - and then we did that ... and then we did this ... we ate, we sang, we loved, we hated. On the side we organized!!!!

Just finished reading *Unearthing the Seeds of Fire*, about Myles Horton and the Highlander Centre in Tennessee. A long history for an educational centre based on rural folk and informal learning. Learner-centred, parallel to Freire but North American. Since the thirties they have been in operation - supporting one movement at a time, usually with a changing focus every 10 to 12 years or so. The idea was to help people to help themselves. To share with them the ability to learn, to work together, to think for themselves. They are working in a problem solving framework - they work constantly with what is and what ought to be - according to the people they are working with. The main focus in the early years was labour - union organizing in Appalachia. As workers took over much of the process themselves (and the centralized unions began to boycott Highlander) they began to work in civil rights, starting Citizenship schools that laid the groundwork for the voter-registration drives in the fifties and sixties. They moved on from that, too and began to work with the poor and unemployed whites of the hill counties, who had lost everything to the mines, mills and environmental degradation. At first their work was largely social - training people to organize their local area in self-help projects, etc., but lately they've been shifting into work on environmental degradation. I've seen an incredible video of a small town in Virginia trying to stop trucks going upstream to a toxic waste dump. And they are working on the problems associated with Union Carbide both in Virginia and in India, starting before Bhopal. Their methodology is not professedly anarchist but it is compatible. People that they train

come largely from two places - the local area and schools. Outsiders who want training as training are encouraged to get involved in local actions as participants along with their teaching and workshops, and the emphasis is on *doing*. Local people come by invitation and recommendation to workshops which are primarily organized around letting them talk to one another and find in their own words a definition of their problems and usually the solutions that are most fitting. Staff of Highlander are facilitators, animators, resource persons. And it works. They use music a lot. We Shall Overcome was first performed there. Drama and story-telling are part of the process.

But back to KIO. My notes tell me I enjoyed the editorial, but that's it I'm afraid. Judy's paper, of course I've read before and have greatly appreciated. Particularly the way she introduces the notion of "othering", a crucial insight. Also she is one of the few writers in ecofeminism who doesn't condemn science as a whole.

Kirkpatrick Sale's article and its editorial comment, and the review of Bairo's book raise the problem of population that we talked about before. It seems to me this is a very complex issue and it is time it were addressed as such. On the one hand there is the question of overpopulation of a species which probably is an age-old discussion. I first became aware of it reading Malthus where he related it primarily to food production. More recently the Club of Rome studies have addressed it again, with this time 4 or 5 variables. Some books have been written in recent years dismissing it as a false problem - there aren't too many people, they say. That is understandable from the powers that be (I understand there is a conservative cabinet minister that believes that we must encourage population growth because Canada is not big enough for a fair market - he thinks 40 million would barely be enough) I needn't tell you that I think he's crazy. There are even some of our friends who believe that the problem of population is not one of quantity of food, but of distribution, and if we could just clean up our social and political act (I'd cheer) we would have no starvation problem.

Well, I do have an opinion on all this. Much as I appreciate the efforts of those who have pointed out the meat connection with agribusiness and exploitation, I believe that just changing to a vegetarian diet and improving the distribution system is not enough. We cannot count on the

production figures of agribusiness to feed people. Those figures are based on an agriculture that mines the soil, uses by far the largest part of fossil fuel consumption for farm equipment and highway trucking, adds toxic quantities of chemical additives for fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides every year, is reducing the fresh-water reserves of many places that took hundreds of thousands of years to accumulate, etc., etc., ad nauseum.

In the meantime, the export of North American methods of farming has caused severe disruption in the third world: the degradation caused by the emphasis on exportable cash cropping instead of on mutual aid among rural peoples as a consequence of this entry into the world economy! The loss of seed material as a result of the spread of Green revolution seeds and their additives - fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, and the abandonment of old practices that encouraged the maintenance of variety. The cycle is horrendous, often ending in drought and food aid.

These results have come through conscious political action and less conscious economic determination of the first world. If it is good for Esso, etc. it must be good for America, it must be good for the rest of the world. Well, it ain't good for nobody, nowhere.

To feed ourselves will be a major question for the future. And to do so without exploitation - of class by class, of country by country, even of hinterland by metropolis will be tricky to work out. It will require a lot of learning, a lot of initiative, a lot of imagination, a fair bit of land, and a lot of mutual co-operation. And some luck. And the jury is still out on whether our current world population can in fact feed itself, if we eliminate - in the short run or even in the long run - aids to agriculture and agricultural practices that are uneconomic, exploitive of others and otherwise unethical. We may still have too many people. I'm not arguing that we do or don't, but I am suggesting that we'd better be prepared to handle either situation.

Before I go on to look at possible consequences of too many people, I'd just like to pause a moment for an encouraging note. Recently folks around here have learned a lot in a short time about a collection of technique and methodology in agriculture that goes under the name of Permaculture. The term was first used in Australia and published in a book by a guy named Bill Mollison. In the time

since it was first talked about many other compatible methodologies have joined forces and now there is a world wide movement.

Permaculture is a design system. It looks at the actual situation in which one finds oneself and tries to set up a sustainable and sustaining food and other product production system that follows several basic principles. Diversity rather than monoculture. Perennial plantings where possible rather than annual cropping. Energy efficiency and recycling. Careful attention is paid to the ecological nature of the situation, to the other species that already inhabit it and ones that might come attracted by new growth. An agricultural plan is developed based on many elements - Mollison's favourite example is chickens but he might just have easily focused on other livestock or plant communities. These elements perform certain functions - food production, heating, cooling, energy production, fire protection, etc. In this system every element should perform several functions and every function should be performed by several elements. Lots of fallbacks and redundancies coupled with reduction in energy use.

One of the excitements of the process it that it can be tailored to each situation. You focus on the positive features of your place not on its lacks. There has been a great growth of plans for greening the cities based on the permaculture model. For the first time people are trying to go back to the land in their own back yard - if they have one. And because permaculture grew out of an essentially co-operative movement it also includes lots of ideas for trades between people who have land and can't work it and people who have labour and no land. Gleaning has come back, along with garden allotment systems, as well as new techniques for reclaiming city land for growing things.

It is not perfect but it does have some interesting features. It is not authoritarian or coercive - it operates on the principle that when you teach someone to grow their own food you set them free. It won't lead to genocide - it teaches people to take care of themselves and the land they work with. People are attracted to it, because it makes so much sense. You can feel a lot more secure if you can figure out how to eat without having a job. You can still have a job, but that job no longer is the total basis of your security.

The other side of this issue of population is even more tricky. We have people who feel that people are starving in the





## Don't Forget 98%

Dear Kick It Over,

Although I enjoy KIO and find it often to be a thought provoking journal, I think it does not adequately deal with labor and economic questions. While there are a number of good reasons for updating anarchist theory since the 1930's, KIO (and other non-syndicalist anarchists) have been unable to develop an approach which takes into account the same practical questions addressed by anarcho-syndicalism. How are anarchists going to convince a majority of the people that the state and capitalism can be done away with? How are people going to be organized so that they can bring it about? How are important social functions, like feeding millions of people, going to be maintained during and after the revolution?

It is easy to contrast the idealistic youth of the counter-culture (punks and hippies) to pragmatic workers trying to support their families, and come away with the notion that the former are more "revolutionary" than the latter. But how are we going to have a social revolution that ignores the needs of working people and can not involve them in their own liberation?

Working people still make up the largest sector of the population. Although within the last decade there has been a slight decline (between 3-5% according to the U.S. Census) of workers employed in traditional manufacturing industries, this has been offset by an 8% increase in service sector employment. Those who argue that we now live in a "post-industrial" society have missed the real changes. The biggest changes in the economy have been the decline in farmers and other agricultural workers, and the increased participation of women in the work force. The real shifts have been off the farm and out of the home, and into the capitalist work places. I do not see this as a "welcome" trend, not being a marxist, but it is one that we have to deal with, especially those of us sympathetic to feminism.

Too many so-called "anarchists" confuse an idealistic personal lifestyle with revolution. Vegetarianism, communal living, tribalism, nudism, low-tech living on the land, non-Judoo-Christian spirituality, and avant-garde music, may have their good points. However in a consumeristic society these personal preferences can be accommodated while leaving the state and capitalism intact. But even if they couldn't be accommodated, it should be pointed out that trying to force everyone to adopt the same lifestyle, no matter how radical, is a negation of anarchism. Anarchism always seeks to maximize individual choice, even if that means tolerating some things we find personally repugnant, as long as they aren't being forced on anyone. Emma Goldman once protested that if she couldn't dance, she didn't want to be part of that revolution. She did not say that revolutionaries should be required to dance.

By rejecting the many still valid lessons of anarcho-syndicalism in favor of an anarchism solely based on indigenous peoples, and those willing to drop out of mainstream culture, we would be taking a step backward instead of forward. Consider that native americans, according to 1980 Census figures, only comprise 0.7% of the U.S. population (probably larger in Canada but not much). Although figures do not exist for the number of punks, rastafarians, and other "cultures of resistance", I would imagine there are even fewer of these than there are native americans. Nor are there many more people involved in separatist feminist or "green" subcultures. So at best, an anarchism

based upon "cultures of resistance" could count on appealing to 2-3% of the population, even if such diverse groups could work together. (A big assumption considering that subcultures are parochial by nature.) If the working class, at about 60% of the population, can not make a social revolution, what can be expected from 3%?

I am also growing weary of those anarchists who, when pressed for examples of how anarchism might function in practice, use the Spanish Revolution as an example, but later turn around and criticize anarcho-syndicalism as a totally outmoded theory. Clearly historical experience has shown us exactly the opposite. The modern societies which have been the most shaken and came closest to having anarchist revolutions, have been those where workers have rebelled and tried to bring about self-management of industry, e.g. France 1968, Portugal 1975, and Poland 1980.

It is not only possible, but necessary, to combine an anarcho-syndicalist approach towards economic and labor issues, with an ecological and feminist approach towards other areas of society. The world we live in, is certainly not the same as Spain 1936, but we can not write off workers in 1987 anymore than we can write off women, youth, retirees, or any other large sector of the population. I think that anarchists who dismiss anarcho-syndicalist ideas without taking the time to investigate them and understand how many of them are still relevant, are turning their backs on what so far has, of all anarchist theories, come closest to being successful.

Jeff Stein  
Libertarian Labor Review  
Box 2824 Station A  
Champaign, IL  
USA 61820

world because of political and economic exploitation and that if we cleaned that up there'd be no problem. We have people who believe that no matter how much we clean up our social act (political and economic) there are still too many people for the earth to support. There are those who suggest that suggesting there are too many people leads to authoritarianism and genocide and therefore we should not bring it up. And there are those who have been pointing to various events and situations in the world -- AIDS and starvation among them -- as symptomatic of population excess. And there are those who would suggest that those who point these things out are not sensitive to others' pain and are acting selfishly.

Such is the situation when most movements splinter. Instead of attempting to enlarge the scope of inquiry to include both sets of observation and thus may lead to solution(s) mutually agreeable, two groups split both convinced that the other is "wrong" -- either stupid or insensitive. We done this one too often. We can't afford it this time. Somewhere between the prediction of overpopulation and the humanitarian need -- almost the human need -- to succor the afflicted we must find room to act.

I believe that there are too many people for this planet. My own readings in both the social and biological sciences (though limited) have lead me to believe that much of what is happening on the planet today is a result of a species population explosion the like of which has never before been seen. Yes, our history is peopled by individuals, and it is an essentially human history, not that of goats or fish. But certain behaviors seem to crop up in confined, overcrowded populations whether they be human, ape, or fish. Violence increases, copulation goes up, fertility goes down, companion species are forced out, food sources are degraded. And ultimately diseases begin to take their toll of an overstressed population. Many of the offspring of that final frenetic burst of mating before the crash are deformed or different in some way that makes them not survive, but some of the "normal" and even some of the different young survive to reproduce and carry on the species. We are seeing this right now.

What do we do about it? This suggests there is something to be done. In any case, people are dying; fertility rates seem to be dropping. Most of us immediately think of choosing, as the solution to such a problem and don't want it done by someone else. I agree. On what basis could one

make such a choice. Only a fool or a military man would dare. And we do have lots of those in the world.

Perhaps our answer -- the answer of those who believe in individual freedom -- is to figure out what it will take to survive in the future and spread the word. Learn how to support yourselves on the earth and with the earth. Teach your children, too, how to care for each other and the planet. Help them to understand that we have no longer the right to each have a child of our own. Thinking globally, and acting locally in having children means maybe not having one yourself, or at the very least being willing to share the ones you have. Learn self-government and co-operation and spread it. Learn to hear the earth and its needs. Become more sensitive to the needs of the other occupants of the planet. Such sensitivity to others is not merely a virtue that is nice to have, but perhaps a little bit idealistic; it is very pragmatic in a time of conflicting signals as to the future. The good health of the land around you will keep you alive in the future if you know how to live with it. If you don't you will be one of the ones that may die.

In the meantime we will go on working to change political systems that are oppressive, economic systems that are exploitive, social situations that are coercive, anything that is environmentally destructive on a massive scale. We have our work cut out for us. But there is some space in the middle of extreme lifeboat scientists on the one hand (no immigration, no food aid, etc.) and "Johnnie-one-note political and economic theorists on the other. There are lots of us in the middle category and we have lots to discuss. Let's not lose the opportunity to co-operate for meaningful change.

Hannah Capri

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