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rectly in the face, not obscure it with irrational thinking and a fog of dense, obscurantist myths.

The Left Network of the Vermont Greens has already taken the all-important step of trying to formulate a truly radical program — "Toward a New Politics" — that sketches out the basic concepts of a Left Green ecological movement. It openly describes itself as an "ecological humanism" (to use this term in its best sense, not the perverted meaning given to the word "humanism" by "deep ecology.'" And it advances the basic principles of social ecology as they apply to American political life. Either ecology movements and the Greens will free themselves of subtly hierarchical "centricities" — "bio" or "anthropo" — and develop a clearly defined and coherent body of social principles based on ecological concepts or they will become a marginalized collection of privileged encounter groups — one that may learn to "think like a mountain," as Devall recommends but one that will be justly ignored as another fad, a target of derision at worst or healthy ridicule at best.

evolution took a wrong turn ages ago when it shifted from egalitarian institutions and relations to hierarchical ones. It took an even worse turn a few centuries ago when it shifted from a relatively cooperative society to a highly competitive one. If we are to bring society and nature into accord with each other, we must develop a movement that fulfills the evolutionary potential of humanity and society, that is to say, turn the human world into a self-conscious agent of the natural world and enhance the evolutionary process — natural and social. All the eco-babble of Devall, Sessions, Naess, and their acolytes aside, if we do not intervene to act creatively on nature (indeed, to rescue it from itself at times), we will betray everything of a positive character that natural evolution itself endowed us with — our potentially unprecedented richness of mind, sympathy, and conscious capacity to care for nonhuman species. Given an ecological society, our technology can be placed as much in the service of natural evolution as it can be placed in the service of a rational social evolution.

To call for a "return to the Pleistocene," as "Earth First!" has done, to degrade humanity as so many misanthropic "antihumanists" and "biocentrists" have done is not only atavistic but crudely reactionary. A degraded humanity will only yield a degraded nature as our capitalistic society and our hierarchical history have amply demonstrated. We are direly in need not only of "re-enchanting the world" and "nature" but also or re-enchanting humanity — of giving itself a sense of wonder over its own capacity as natural beings and a caring product of natural evolution. A Supernature, peopled by "earth-based" deities, must be replaced by a healthy naturalism in which, as a movement, we will re-establish our severed ties with nature by naturalistic means and heal our terribly wounded society by social means. For Greens, in particular, this means that we must formulate a new, independent, revolutionary politics, using this word in its broadest possible sense, not recycle old, shopworn, sedating deities — be they Eastern or Western, pagan or Christian, "earth-bound" or "heaven-bound". We must learn to look reality di-

American ecology movements — and particularly the American Greens — are faced with a serious crisis of conscience and direction.

Will ecologically oriented groups and the Greens become a movement that sees the roots of our ecological dislocations in social dislocations — notably, in the domination of human by human which has produced the very notion of dominating nature?

Or will ecology groups and the Greens turn the entire ecology movement into a starry-eyed religion decorated by gods, goddesses, woodsprites, and organized around sedating rituals that reduce militant activist groups to self-indulgent encounter groups?

These sharply conflicting alternatives are very real. And to openly state them is not "divisive" or "confrontational." Accusations like "divisiveness" and "confrontation" are being used with outrageous cynicism to blur significant differences in outlook and prevent a careful exploration of serious problems. The phony cry of "Unity!" has often been used to silence one 'viewpoint in the interests of another. We can certainly have unity — and discussion, if you please — despite major differences. "New Age" rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding, this what democracy is all about.

In fact, real growth occurs exactly when people have different views and confront each other in order to creatively arrive at more advanced levels of truth — not adopt a low common denominator of ideas that is "acceptable" to everyone but actually satisfies no one in the long run. Truth is achieved through dialogue and, yes, harsh disputes — not by a deadening homogeneity and a bleak silence that ultimately turns bland "ideas" into rigid dogmas.

The Basic Differences

Let's face it: There is a major dispute in the ecology and Green movements, today. It is a dispute between social ecology and "deep ecology" — the first, a body of ideas that asks that we deal with human beings primarily as social beings who differ profoundly as

to their status as poor and rich, women and men, black and white, gays and "straights," oppressed and oppressor; the second, that sees human beings as a mere "species" — as mammals and, to some people like the "Earth First!" leaders, as "vicious" creatures — who are subject almost entirely to the "forces of nature" and are essentially interchangeable with lemmings, grizzly bears (a favorite species!), or, for that matter, with insects, bacteria, and viruses.

These are not airy, vaguely philosophical, and remote problems to be disputed by modern-day scholastics. They underpin very practical differences. The social view of humanity, namely that of social ecology, focuses primarily on the historic emergence of hierarchy and the need to eliminate hierarchical relationships. It emphasizes the just demands of the oppressed in a society that wantonly exploits human beings, and it calls for their freedom. It explores the possibility or a new technology and a new sensibility, including more organic forms of reason, that will harmonize our relationship with nature instead of opposing society to the natural world. It demands sweeping institutional changes that will abolish a competitive "grow-or-die" market society — frankly, called capitalism, not such politically safe and socially neutral words like an "industrial," "technological," or "post-industrial" society — and replace it with an ecologically oriented society based on free, confederated, humanly scaled communities in which people will have direct, face-to-face control over their personal and social lives.

By contrast, "deep ecology" essentially overlooks the profound social differences that divide human from human and "zoologizes" poor and rich, women and men, black and white, gays and "straights," oppressed and oppressor into a biological lump called "humanity" which is, presumably, "spiritually impoverished," "anthropocentric" or "human- oriented" in "its" belief that the world was "made" (by whom? — a mean God?) exclusively for human enjoyment, and humanistic ends (whatever that word means these days). As voiced by Bill Devall and George Sessions in their bible, *Deep Ecology*, this shift from a basically social to a basically spiritual

need for a "sustainable religion," as Spretnak would have us believe, then we have created a donut rather than a movement.

Re-enchanting Humanity

Beyond any shadow of doubt, we direly need an ecological sensibility — one that is marked by a sense of wonder for natural evolution and the splendor of the biosphere in its many varied forms. But nature is not a scenic window that overlooks the Pacific coastal mountains or the New England marshlands. Nature is above all a process — a wondrous process that can admired on its own terms, not by invoking deities that are simply crude anthropomorphic projections of ourselves — male or female — in a mystified, often irrational, and sometimes a highly hierarchical form — a procedure that has served hierarchical interests for many millenia by lulling the oppressed into a paralyzing quietism and sense of resignation.

A remarkable product of natural evolution are the human beings who people the planet — beings that are no less products of nature than grizzly bears and whales. And like bears and whales, the human species — for it is no less a species when seen from a biological standpoint than it is social from the standpoint of social ecology — has acquired a remarkable capacity called conceptual thought. In this respect, natural evolution has endowed this species with powers that are unmatched by other species: powers to form highly institutionalized communities called societies that, unlike the genetically programmed "social insects," are capable of an evolutionary development of their own, however rooted they may be in nature.

The crucial question we face today — not only for ourselves as human beings but for the entire biosphere — is how social evolution will proceed and in what direction it will go. To deal with this question primarily as a matter of spiritual renewal, desirable as that may be. is not only evasive but socially disarming. Social

tence of economic death in the market place would necessarily devour the biosphere, irrespective of what people need, the numbers they reach, or the intentions that motivate them. American capitalism wiped out some 40 million bison, devastated vast forests, and dessicated millions of acres of soil before its population exceeded 100 million.

If an inherently "grow-or-die" market economy cannot produce cars, it will produce tanks. If it cannot produce clothing, it will produce missiles. If it cannot produce TV sets, it will produce radar guidance systems. "Deep ecology," with its bows to Malthus, is totally oblivious to these almost classic almost economic principles. Its focus is almost completely zoological and its image of people, indeed, of society is very deeply rooted in "natural forces" rather than social tendencies. Characteristically, it speaks of a "technological society" or an "industrial society" instead of capitalism, a piece of verbal juggling that shrewedly conceals the social relationships that play a decisive role in the technologies and industries society develops and the use to which they are put.

Technology in itself does not produce the dislocations between an antiecological society and nature, although there are surely technologies that, in themselves, are dangerous to an ecosystem. What technology does is essentially magnify a basically social problem. To speak of a "technological society" or an "industrial society," as Devall, Sessions, and "Earth First!" persistently do is to throw cosmic stardust over the economic laws that guide capital expansion which Marx so brilliantly developed in his economic writings and replace economic factors by zoological metaphors. Herein lies the utterly regressive character of "deep ecology," "Earth First!" and its religious acolytes like Charlene Spretnak, Kirkpatrick Sale, and the diaperheads who float between Hollywood and Disneyland, indeed, who threaten to remove every grain of radicality in a movement that is potentially, at least, one of the most radical to emerge since the sixties. If the biggest "hole" in the Green movement is the

outlook essentially side-steps the social (apart from a "minority tradition" that recycles the far-reaching works of Peter Kropotkin, the Russian anarchist, into a few bumper-sticker slogans) and then takes a complete nose-dive into Buddhism, Taoism, "the Christian tradition," the "question of technology," "green politics" — and, very significantly, Malthusianism.

The crucial economic forces that divide so much of humanity into exploited and exploiter are replaced by conflicting "worldviews." Utterly opposed individuals like the authoritarian Communist, Woody Guthrie, are amalgamated with libertarian anarchists like Paul Goodman. The "development of a market economy" and the "impact of the rise of capitalism" are given short shrift. They are mentioned once, only in passing (p. 45), as issues that attract "some historians and social scientists to explain the origins and development of the dominant worldview." "Our purpose here is not to extensively review the origin and development of the dominant worldview," write *Deep Ecology*'s authors, Devall and Sessions, in what can be regarded as one of the major understatements of the book, "but to explore in general its (the worldview's) influence on current societies and on our approach to ultimate reality (metaphysics), to knowledge (epistemology), to being (ontology), to the cosmos (cosmology) and to social organization." (p. 45)

As it turns out, the expectant reader gets a heavy tribute to Thomas Malthus (pp. 45–46) for an analysis of current social problems (i.e., the "population problem"), the impact of a "technological society" as a source of personal alienation (p. 48), "basic intuitions and experiencing ourselves and Nature" as the "foundations of deep ecology" (p. 65), and a "realization of the 'self-in-Self,' where 'Self' stands for organic wholeness" as doses of metaphysics and epistemology combined. The notion that "All things in the biosphere have an equal right to live and blossom and to reach their own individual forms within the larger Self-realization" (p.67) is a sparkling issue that generated a serious discussion in the *New Scientist* on the right of "endangered viruses" like the smallpox virus

to exist and flourish. All of this is presented in a metaphoric form that evokes a sense of nausea in any thinking reader. The few social issues with which Deep Ecology began fade into paens to wilderness, critiques of natural resource conservation, and the brilliant rediscovery that organic agriculture is good and city life is bad. Besides a host of platitudes, what we need in addition to communing with nature and dissolving our burdensome "selves" into a cosmic organic wholeness, Devall and Sessions emphasize, is to turn our "opponent into a believer" (p. 200). In short, we need the personal touch: a festival of warmth, rituals, and a good dose of religion that tries to pass for politics.

That a market economy based on dog-eat-dog as a law of survival and "progress" has penetrated every aspect of society has no centrality whatever in this self-indulgent literary collage of platitudes and pieties. At a time when the "self" is being rapidly dissolved by the mass media, we are urged to further this process by dissolving all the boundaries that define us — this, in the name of a cosmic "Self" that seems more Supernatural than natural.

The Logic of "Deep Ecology"

We suffer, these days, from a bad habit. We eat "fast food," nibble at "fast ideas," scan "fast headlines," and buy our panaceas in the form of easily swallowed pills. The need to think out the logic of certain premises is almost totally alien to the "American Way" of the late 20th century. Devall and Sessions' Deep Ecology and the "movement" they have helped to launch under the presiding icon of Arne Naess, provides what is exactly needed to lull us into a acceptance of "fast ecology."

As it turn out, however, we cannot say "A" without passing into "B," or "B" into "C" until we reach "Z." And there is a "deep" or "deeper ecology" movement of which Devall is a member, formed around a periodical called *Earth First!* to which Devall is a contributing editor and Sessions a valued contributor. If there is anything fascinating about "Earth First!" as a movement and especially as a periodical, it is the fact that the periodical does go from "A" to "Z" and draws all the logical conclusions from "deep ecology," conclusions that Devall and Sessions often bury with metaphors, sutras, poetic evocations, and pretensions.

"Earth First!" means exactly what it says and what "deep ecology" implies — the "earth" comes before people, indeed, people (to the periodical's editor, David Foreman) are superfluous, perhaps even harmful, and certainly dispensable. "Natural law" tends to supplant social factors. Thus: is there a famine in Ethiopia? If so, argues Foreman to an admiring Devall in a notorious interview, nature should be permitted to "take its course" and the Ethiopian should be left to starve. Are Latins (and, one may add, Indians) crossing the Rio Grande? Then they should be stopped or removed, contends Foreman, because they are burdening "our" resources. Devall, who apparently recorded these golden views, doesn't express a word of protest or even dissent. Nor is there a known denunciation, so far as I know, from Sessions.

Given the preoccupation of Devall and Sessions with the need for an eco-culture — or religion? — what kind of culture should we protect, asks Ed Abbey, the theoretical Pope of "Earth First!"? It turns out that our society has been shaped by a "northern European culture," declares Abbey — or should we say "Aryan"? Hence there are presumably sound "cultural" reasons — an expression that some might interpret as "racial" — to keep Latins from polluting "our" culture and institutions with their hierarchical attributes. What is the "litmus test" of our adherence to "Earth First!" asks Foreman? It is the question of "population growth," you see — not capitalism and the competitive market place. No one in that entire crowd, to my knowledge, takes the care to note that if the world's population were reduced to 500 million (as Naess suggests for a demographic desideratum) or even 5 million, an economic system based on competition and accumulation in which a failure to "grow" is a sen-