

# RAISE THE STAKES!

Fall 1979

The Planet Drum Review

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## SOFT BORDERS



*Humankind.  
Our identity as a  
species sharing life on  
this planet is emerging to  
break through the political concrete . . .*

*Continued on Page 1*

## SOFT BORDERS Continued From Front Cover



COVER ETCHING BY DANIEL O. SOLPE

... and cultural artifacture of the machine-dominated Age of Production.

We are becoming the peoples of the planet.  
Our lives are growing more directly related to each other and to the life of the planet itself.

What "freedom" meant in the 18th Century and what "social justice" meant after then has become for us now the spirit of interdependence.

RAISE THE STAKES! will present ideas and information from the opening terrain of humankind identity.

SOFT BORDERS is an introduction to the spectrum of new political vision that is relating ethnic and regional preservation to wider questions of our species' adaptability and the diversity of the biosphere. For a lead-in consider this statement from a letter to the editor of a European nationalist journal, "Cultural polymorphism is just as necessary for the survival of mankind as genetic polymorphism is for that of animal species."



# THE PLANET DRUM REVIEW

## PLANET DRUM CONFERENCE

On April 7 - 10, 1979, Planet Drum Foundation sponsored a conference called "Listening to the Earth: The Bioregional Basis of Community Consciousness." Held in San Francisco, the conference was the first bioregional gathering of its scale to occur in California in modern times. The goal of the four day session was to develop strategies for living in harmony once more with the Northern California bioregion and its ecosystems, rather than exploiting or "occupying" it. The conference presented a wide cross-section of speakers: panels were made up of scholars and writers, environmental activists, representatives of state government agencies, and reinhabitory people of Northern California. Over the four days the panels were attended by close to a thousand lively participants. The event was keynoted by Raymond Dasmann.



Political issues and personal concerns merged at the conference. Some expressed their own sense of alienation and rootlessness; others tried to suggest what living in place might involve. Topics of discussion included energy use; the nature of American technology and its impact on our experience of the natural world; authenticity and nativeness; sound water policy and agricultural practices; and projects currently being undertaken by various groups to make reinhabitation a working reality.



Bioregional liberation (from left)  
Gary Snyder, Peter Berg, Murray Bookchin, Ernest Callenbach, Stephanie Mills, Morris Berman.



Photographs — Shafi Hakim

The final session was the most heavily attended and featured Gary Snyder, Ernest Callenbach, Stephanie Mills, Peter Berg and Murray Bookchin as speakers. It was characterized by strong spontaneous audience participation, reminiscent of the Paris discussions of student and worker revolutionaries of May / June 1968. Three solid hours were devoted to debating issues such as: What is the nature of (wo)man? Can we recover our future? What is the relationship between anarchism and sound ecological practice? Between poetry and political theory? What will be the sources of political and cultural renewal?

Proceedings of the conference are currently being edited by Planet Drum Foundation, and will be available in book form sometime in 1980. Excerpts of this edition will appear in these pages from time to time.

Morris Berman



## REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP

### PLANET DRUM FOUNDATION

While the financial situation of Planet Drum has been improved slightly by sales of books and bundles to non-members, the foundation is still reliant on its membership for funding. RAISE THE STAKES marks a new departure for Planet Drum — quarterly publication on a self-sufficient budget. If this goal is to be attained, the membership must double within the next year. That means that each of you needs either to recruit a new member or to renew your contribution if it's been more than a year since you became a member.

Five years of networking by Planet Drum Foundation with bioregional activists and thinkers, ethnic separatists, environmentalists and native groups has made the publication of RAISE THE STAKES possible. We know of no other forum for news and ideas pertinent to the development of new politics and economics based on planet-life priorities. The reviews will continue to be loosely organized around a theme: the next issue will revolve around "Native Economics." Submissions from writers and artists, news clippings, and letters of debate and discussion are welcome and actively solicited.

Planet Drum Foundation will continue to produce books and bundles as it has in the past. Autumn 1979 will see the publication of Michael Zwerin's *Devolutionary Notes*, first hand documentation of the widespread nationalist movement in Europe. Spring 1980 is the target date for a new Planet Drum bundle of materials on the Sonoran bioregion of North America, a transnational, bilingual survey of cultural and political response to the despoliation of desert habitats. Also due for completion early in 1980: a book form transcript of the "Listening to the Earth" conference, described earlier.

Becoming a Planet Drum Foundation member will bring:

- Four seasonal *Reviews* each year containing reports from regionally active groups, and articles on current issues and events.
- At least one Bundle annually
- *Correspondent's Access*: a service to members for information requests including 1) regional activist groups in your area; 2) contacts with other members and contributors to *Planet Drum Bundles and Reviews*; 3) general and local source materials
- Discounts on PLANET DRUM BOOKS

Yearly memberships are still available for \$10.00 per year.

*Sustaining membership*, at \$25.00 per year, entitles the member to receive all Planet Drum Books and other publications for a year.

*Establishing membership*, at \$50.00, entitles the member to receive all Planet Drum publications and books indefinitely.

Planet Drum Foundation is a federally tax-exempt educational organization. Contributions and membership fees are tax-deductible.

These titles are still available from Planet Drum Foundation. All prices include postage and handling.

### WATERSHED GUIDE and LIVING HERE

\$2.50 (free to new members)

A four color poster with pamphlet evoking the natural amenities of the Bay Area watershed of California

### REINHABITING A SEPARATE COUNTRY: A Bioregional Anthology of Northern California, edited by Peter Berg

\$7.00 (\$5.00 to members)

An extensively illustrated, 8 1/2' by 11' perfect-bound paperback book. Essays, histories, poems, natural history, narratives, drawing, maps and photographs

### BACKBONE - THE ROCKIES

\$3.50 (first copy free to members, \$1.50 apiece thereafter) Planet Drum's most recent bundle. The response of the inhabitants to an endangered bioregion



## Interview with a Regional Planner:

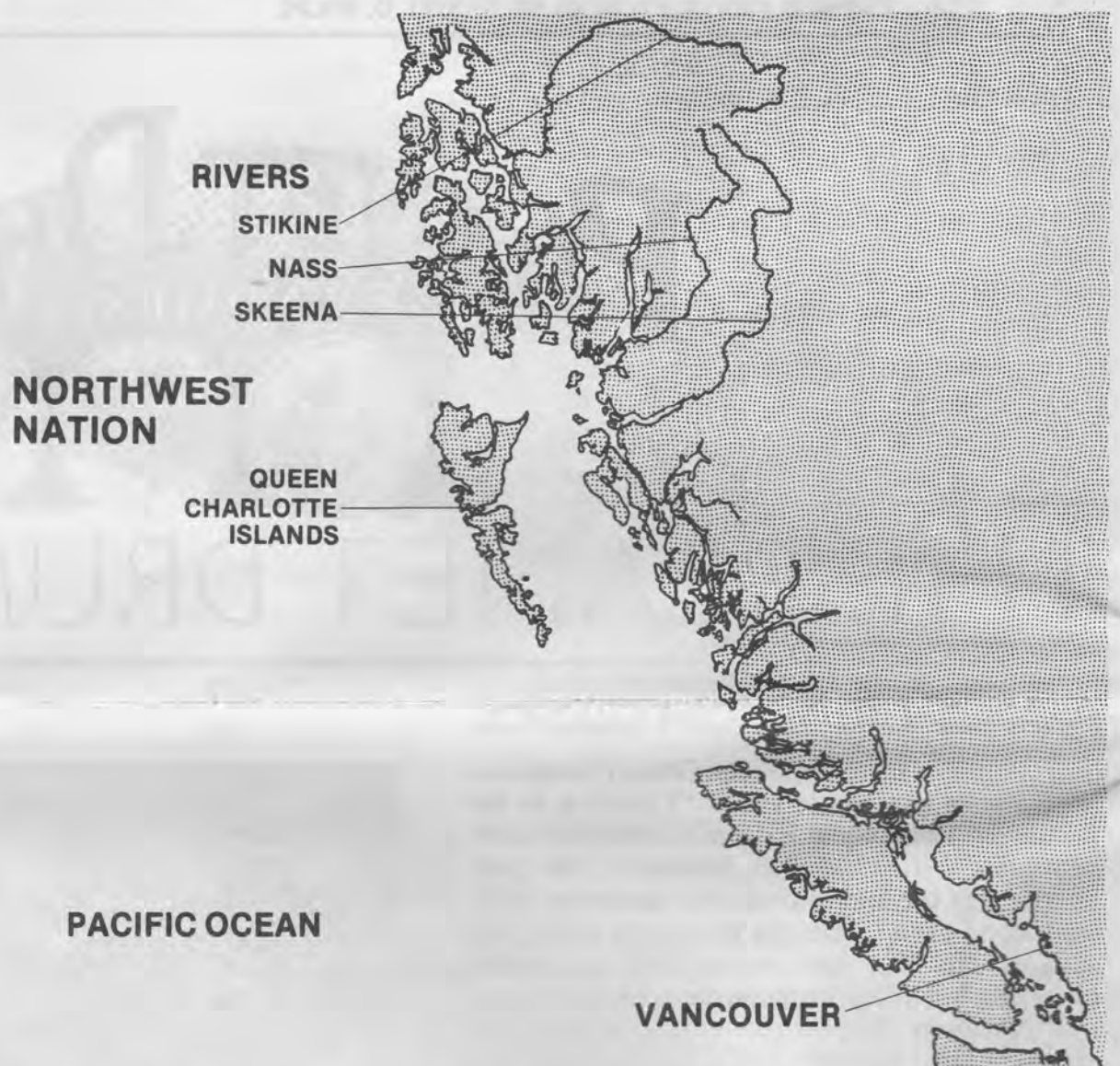
### WHERE IS THE NORTHWEST NATION?

The Northwest Nation is a triple watershed. It includes the Skeena, the Nass and the Stikine Rivers, the coasts of the Pacific Ocean into which these rivers flow, and the Queen Charlotte Islands. The triple watershed is largely undammed. There are only small dams to provide power for the canneries and municipalities. Otherwise, the rivers are wild. It's amazing how powerful these rivers are naturally. And they all have their headwaters within a 500 square mile area of the Spatsizi Plateau which has just been declared British Columbia's newest wilderness park. It's a completely wild area with a herd of caribou numbering 2000, the largest southern herd.

The pattern of interaction between these watersheds was first established by native tribal areas. All transportation and trade was along the three rivers. Recent settlement patterns have also reflected these patterns. In 1912, when the railroads were built, they also followed the rivers.

Northwest climate is a distinctive characteristic of the Northwest Nation determined by the Coast Range and composed of two systems; marine and interior. The dominant large vegetation is hemlock, cedar, spruce, Jack pine.

North of the region are the Arctic drainages like the Yukon. It's a whole different space. The trees are smaller, the weather is different, and the native peoples are different. South of the northwest Nation are the coastal drainages like the Fraser River which relate mostly to Vancouver.



### HOW IS THE NORTHWEST NATION REVEALING ITSELF?

The cultures of the Northwest Nation will emerge from two groups: the native peoples of the Region and the contemporary new settlers. Real steps have been made in a dialogue between these groups about our relationship as regional people.

The culture of settlers had been that of a resource frontier. What I mean is that people have come up here to make a few hundred or a few thousand dollars and left. What's different now is that there is a group of people across the Northwest who have said, "We're here and we know we're here and something's clicked." They're making a lifetime commitment to the place. They're not colonists.

Terrace, for example, will always be a trading center on the river. In the past it has provided products from outside the region to a population that wasn't going to stay long. Now, because of where the town is, it will still provide products, but I believe that at this point people are ready to buy and live on things 90% locally produced.

Since the late sixties, people have begun moving into the old abandoned towns and considering out-of-the-way places like Hazelton and Smithers as worthwhile places to live. They've joined the hard core of oldtimers who live in those places. A lot of the older people are farmers who get one or at best two hay crops each year. Some of the new people were attracted initially by government jobs and some are professionals: doctors and lawyers. I should explain that government workers make up a significant number of the inhabitants because Canada is semi-socialist and the government presence in life is greatly expanded compared to the US.

Culturally we're different from the main society because the oral tradition is very strong here. We don't write to each other and we're not in the habit of making phone calls. If we want to talk about something, we call a meeting. A high value is placed on face-to-face gatherings in our region. Once or twice or sometimes four or five times a year we get together to swap stories, show babies and talk about, "This is what's happening in our watershed — what's happening in yours? Can you help us out?" That's when we figure out which issues are big enough to involve us all. There's a subtle kind of pleasure that comes from being together and talking, and that heightens trust and friendship. People of a like mind in a rural region are greatly dispersed, so when you get together it's something special.

### WHAT USES AND ABUSES OF THE REGION LED YOU TO YOUR CURRENT CONCEPT OF IT?

The greatest threat to the continuity of the place would be to its wildness. The first thing that hits you when you see it is that it is predominantly wild. Anything that people do here is an interruption to that wildness, but it can be a minimal impact because once people leave a site behind, it returns to wildness in



# Doug Aberly ≈ Northwest Nation

a couple of years. It's a rain forest phenomena that once people leave, their buildings rot.

In this century, the greatest threat relates to Canada being a hewer of wood and a carrier of water for industries in the US, Europe, and now Japan. There is a slow insidious process of chopping down trees up here. It's been the main economy since the beginning of white settlement. Since the early 50's, when BC gave large concessions to multi-national companies in areas the government thought were of no economic value, that process has been stepped up. Even in the US where logging practices are bad enough, an average of \$13 per acre is spent to reforest a logged area. In BC, it's 13¢ an acre. We have huge bald lands where the lumber companies have made clearcuts.

Another threat has developed recently because of an ironic situation. Canadian unions are very strong and we have relatively high wages which discourage manufacturers from establishing here. Consequently, the BC government is encouraging hydro-electric development on our rivers as a source of growth for economics elsewhere. Much of the hydro-potential would be exported in the form of power to the northwest US. Four major dams on the Stikine are planned which will drown out an enormous area, wiping out rare species like the Peregrine falcon and threaten human communities which have been there for a hundred years.

It's always been boom-or-bust up here. We're just recovering from a bust which lasted from 1972-1976. The recovery has been slow and easy. It's been in the direction of self-sufficiency. If those dams are built, they'll involve a huge migrant work force which will create a short boom that will be followed by another more disastrous bust. We could have a stable economy without the multi-nationals. The feeling of community that exists here naturally is based on sharing the experience of the place together. It's one of the largest unbroken wild places left and everybody experiences that. People are beginning to want to keep it wildly abundant and not just cut it all down to send to Vancouver so that people can have grocery bags and toilet paper.

The spirit of the Northwest Nation is based on this protective feeling. The region is enormously rich in itself and the Haida and Tsimshian peoples protected it traditionally. If inhibitory peoples could maintain it as well as they did, there's no reason that reinhabitory people couldn't do that now. The population of the entire region is 70,000 people in 70,000 square miles. About 3/4 are European and American immigrant stock and 1/4 are related to native tribes. Among major communities, Prince Rupert has about 17,000 people; Terrace has 20,000; Kitimat (the company town for the Canadian aluminum industry) has 13,000; Hazelton, 5,000; Smithers about 10,000.

We who live here now are the best prepared to judge how the land should be used, how the resources should be extracted or enhanced, and what cultures are appropriate here. The reason why we should declare the region to be the Northwest Nation again is the same reason why people require a personal space to live a full life. When someone comes into somebody else's personal space there is a multitude of signals that inform them how to act so as not to destroy it. Our reality in the Northwest Nation points to local alternative technologies, a strong sense of community, energy conservation. Those things preclude multi-national interests; for example, a power company coming in and abusing or doing permanent damage to our rivers. The fact that multi-nationalists behave as though the signals they're receiving from the people of the region aren't important invites a whole spectrum of political action.

## WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARD SELF-DETERMINATION?

This will require political leverage, and as people live in a region longer they begin to shape policies and eventually take control of the region. It's a long process, but regional governments are starting to make representations to larger provincial and national bodies, and pretty soon they're going to begin serving on those bodies. If the regional governments can't get policies that are beneficial to them, they'll begin to seek self-determination. At some time in the future regional people will begin negotiating with urban centers by threatening to deny the resources that cities need unless there is respect for regional quality of life.

There are a lot of ways to resist, and to secure Northwest Nation autonomy. I am a regional planner and there is power in that position in terms of advising lawmakers to pass new laws. All of us who have jobs in health services, employment services, planning, etc. are slowly coming to the realization that there are bioregional priorities relating to our fields which are more important than the priorities of multi-national companies.

Realistically, our politics have to start with BC and BC's relationship to Canada. BC and the western provinces are now negotiating to change the Canadian constitution. Because Quebec is tearing Canada apart. It's a new dialogue between the provincial governments and the central Canadian government.

The next level is within British Columbia itself. There are already 26 regional governments within the province. There is a real basis for considering the regions within the present governmental framework. This idea has penetrated the staid English notion of government that was imported to Canada. The Northwest Nation is actually made up of two of the BC regional districts — the Skeena-Queen Charlotte district and the Kitimat-Stikine district. There's a natural connection between the districts in that they both relate so much to water — rain, snow and the rivers. The rivers and the coasts are its heart. Everything relates to them — settlements, transportation, economics.

## HOW DO YOU SEE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE REGIONS AND BETWEEN THE REGIONS AND URBAN CENTERS?

The thing that built the budding perception of a Northwest Nation was the threat of an Alaskan pipeline coming through. It would have destroyed everything that we had built, all the social environments, the natural environments. That unified us.

Through that process we learned about other areas. It was really magical the way people in Washington state and southwest BC joined us to oppose it. They could have said, "Listen, we don't have to oppose that pipeline around Kitimat. There's only 70,000 of them up there anyway." But they didn't. They said, "We don't want it here and we don't want it there. We don't want it to ruin anyplace." They didn't let another technological disaster get shunted off to the hinterlands. They supported us. The BC Energy Coalition has grown out of that and now includes peoples from the Slocan, the Kootenays and northeast and northwest British Columbia. Everyone gets together regularly to discuss things like the plan to put dams on the Stikine river. In that sense the regions are talking together in a way that's different from before.

The essential meeting ground for discussing questions between regions is the carrying capacity of a space or location. Vancouver, for example, is only a few hundred square miles in area but it supports a million people. That million requires so much food, heat, resources, power. That small piece of land can't support that many people, of course. So what they do is drain the regions around them. In turn, the city generates culture, excitement, trade and the kinds of things that many people in one place together can do in a positive sense. There is both a positive and a negative affect by the cities on the regions surrounding them.

What the Northwest Nation wants to say to the other regions is, "Let's have the city people truly understand what they're doing to the regions around them." Cities now have no responsibility to the regions that support them. Everytime there's a new dam to provide power for Vancouver or Seattle 50 of our creeks get flooded. Everytime there's an oil spill, the salmon stop coming up our rivers. Education of urban people about this should get a high priority. After all the cities can only exist at the grace of the regions that support them. Currently, there's a negative correlation between the cities and the regions. A common expression where we live is, "They cut our forest so America can wipe its ass."

## REVIEWS

### TALKING WOOD

It's odd, but one can take the same delight in learning about someone else's watershed as in learning about one's own. The gradual accumulation of underlying principles watershed to watershed, bioregion to bioregion, takes the tourism out of travel. If you can embrace a watershed you can embrace a people.

When that "other" watershed lies in the shadow of Manhattan, delight is spiced with a sense of historical and political excitement. There is hardly a less likely place to find a watershed surviving than under the scars of north-eastern New Jersey. With the advent of a magazine called *Talking Wood*, the Passaic River watershed is not only rediscovered but reasserts itself as a dominant factor in the lives of its inhabitants.

Says editor Paul Ryan, "...we will work with generalizations that might enable us to develop different habits — habits in keeping with the long term biological continuities of this region. We have no easy recipe. We have questions and a strategy. Questions like how can we rethink industrialization in terms of appropriate technology? What place does native American tradition have in the future of this region? What is the maximum number of diverse species this watershed can carry? How can we develop the positional intelligence proper to this part of the planet?"

The "strategy" refers to Ryan's unique and visionary Watershed Watch, published as an insert in each edition of *Talking Wood*. It is a technique that goes beyond the scope of any magazine and which will surely be used beyond the Passaic watershed. Watershed Watch gives the people of the place a form within which to accumulate data about "those patterns that are necessary to the major development of watershed life" through their own direct perception. A tool with which to transform woody streamside walks into new parameters for political decision making.

*Talking Wood* itself is an unusually well thought out collection of natural history, poetry and prose, and interviews, peppered with photographs, drawings, maps and satellite pictures. Available quarterly for five or ten dollars per year. *Talking Wood*. Box 364. Pompton Lakes NJ 07442.

LH

### AN BANER KERNEWEK (The Cornish Banner)

*An Baner Kernewek* is the monthly "voice of the Cornish people" published by the Cornish Nationalist Party which seeks self-determination for Kernow (Cornwall) through devolution from the United Kingdom. Editor James Whetter is primarily concerned with carrying out the program of the CNP in which he plays a leading role, but *An Baner* covers a surprisingly broad front of nationalist politics and culture. Ancient Celtic religion, Gaelic naming, "Caeltic" lunar calendars and festivals are intermixed with running debates on nationalist political strategy, profiles of contemporary separatist movements and declarations from other minority ethnic groups seeking autonomy besides the Cornish. If you want to know why some political analysts foresee a 21st Century Europe with twice as many self-governing nations than exist today, *An Baner Kernewek* is a first-hand and definitely a first-rate source. Four issues for £ 4 (overseas airmail). CNP Publications, Trelispen, Gorran, St. Austell, Kernow, (UK — for now).

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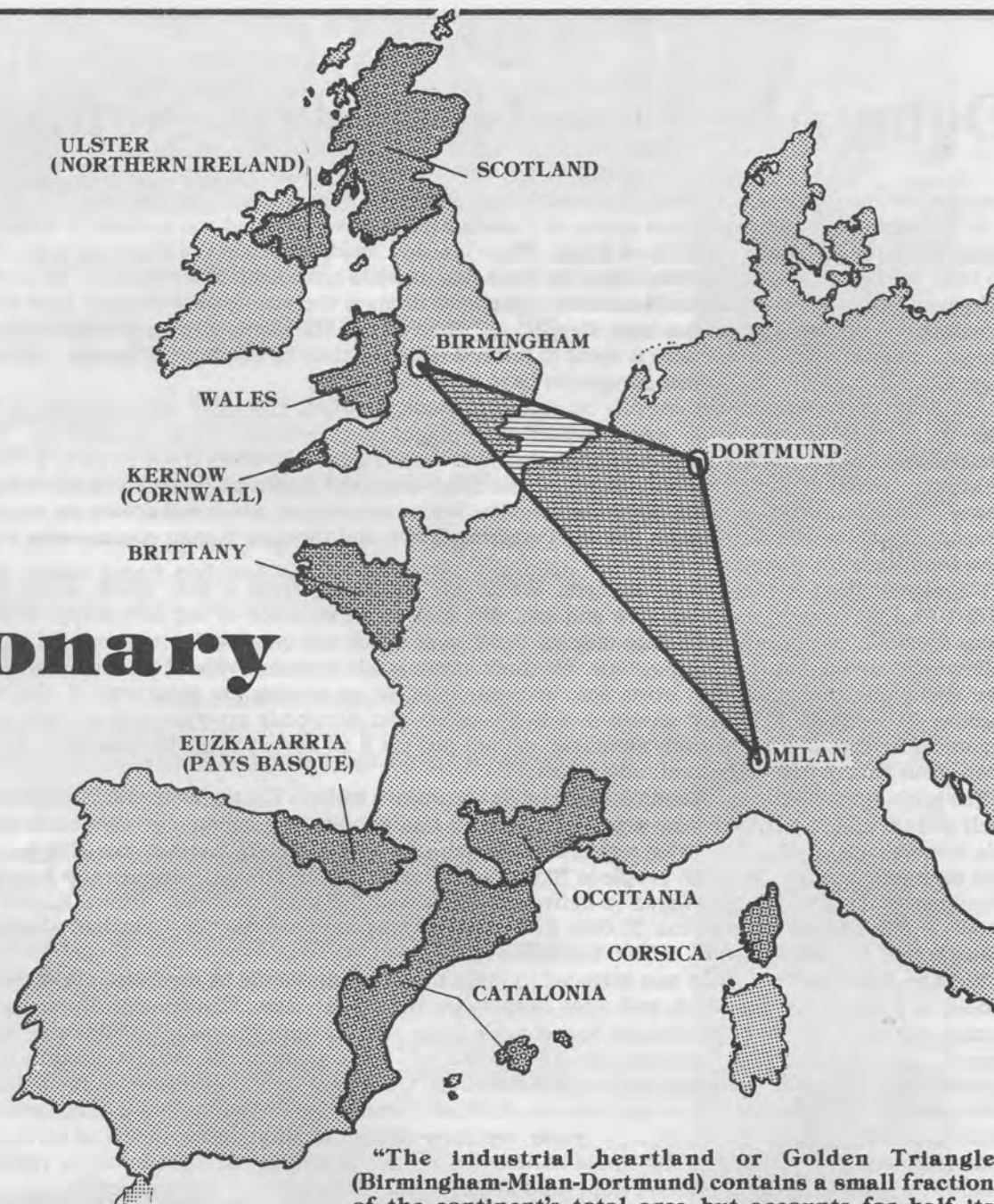




The foregoing is excerpted from Michael Zwerin's book, **Devolutionary Notes**, to be published by Planet Drum Books in 1979. Zwerin documents first-hand observations of the "nationalist" movements in Brittany, Lappland, Wales, Basque Country, and elsewhere.

# Devolutionary Notes

by  
**Michael Zwerin**



"The industrial heartland or Golden Triangle (Birmingham-Milan-Dortmund) contains a small fraction of the continent's total area but accounts for half its population and more than two-thirds of its industrial production . . . the peripheries will gain a substantial measure of devolution . . . Thus Europe 2000 may well be a mosaic of smaller states."

Peter Hall, *Europe 2000*

History is running backwards. "Progressive" Indians (who live like Whites) are now "reactionary," while "Traditionals" (who return to tribal ways) are "Progressive." Du Guesclin, centralist hero of France, turns out to be in fact a Breton traitor. English victories have come to be viewed as Welsh defeats. Industrial "progress" turns out to be an ecological disaster. Mounting Gross National Product gives birth to a lower quality of life. The "Spanish Miracle" is a debacle for the Basques. Massacres turn into glorious victories, glorious victories massacres. Nationalism, once the vehicle of greedy scoundrels, has become — as we shall see — the good fight.



Shortly before his death, Andre Malraux asked: "What is this country (France) where the right is not on the right and the left is not on the left and the middle is no longer in the middle? The left is the Socialist and the Communist but we were told some time ago that the Communists are now the right. Then there is the right with Giscard d'Estaing. But Giscard says that he is not with the right but on the left. At least in the 19th century we knew where the reactionaries were and where the left was. No longer."

Balkanization, until recently an unqualified pejorative meaning the proliferation of many small, uncontrollable States hostile to each other, has become whether we know or like it or not, the tide of our times. The United Nations more than doubled its number in a generation as colonies broke away from empires. Now, nations which consider themselves **internal** colonies are exercising increasing pressure to escalate the Balkanization process still further.

Documents . . . I am flooded with documents. I have in front of me documents claiming that the Peoples Republic of China oppresses its Tibetan minority, Yugoslavia its Croatian minority, Ceylon its Tamils. Soviet Russia is accused of suppressing its Georgian minority. These are all Socialist States.

Then there are documents of outrage against the Spanish occupation of the Basque Country, Norwegian occupation of Lappland, French occupation of Corsica. There is one document praising Greenland for having voted to end Danish occupation. ("Greenlandic" will become the principle language of Greenland.) A northern California back-country press is printing "Alta Libre" posters, calling for autonomy from southern California. There are groups advocating a State of "Superior" to be cut loose from



northern Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin; an "Ozarkia" independent of Missouri and Arkansas; a state of "Cascade" free of Oregonian occupation. Welsh and Scottish autonomists call for an end to English occupation. People in power in Quebec want to secede from Canadian occupation. Indian nations call for an end to American occupation. These are not Socialist States.

Why then, do all these documents shout the same message?

Occupation. Occupation is the imposition of rule by aliens. Occupation can take political, sociological or cultural form. States occupy nations.

Nations should not be confused with States. A Nation is an organic social, economic and geographical unit with common history, language and mores . . . a clan or a collection of clans. States are artificial political assemblages, constructed, as Charles de Gaulle said of France, "by strokes of the sword." States have been superimposed over nations. Nationalism's triumph was once considered "progress." However, nationalism is now a reactionary word in disrepute. We should find another word to describe the new progressive struggle of nations.

What about "Nationism?"

Look at Europe. There's a Nationist map under the map of European States. Not too far under, covered but not quite buried. It is not an official map. It has no legal boundaries. On English maps Wales is only twelve English counties, thirteen if you include Monmouthshire which some do and some don't. Catalonia exists only as a vaguely defined district of Spain. There is no Basque postal system. There is in legal fact no Basque Country. Brittany is a nation with a proud history, beautiful language and a culture of its own. There is no Breton Minister of Cultural Affairs. Brittany does not exist. Brittany is only five French Departments. The Lapps do not elect their own parliament. Lappland does not show up on maps of Scandinavia. Corsica exists merely as two French Departments. None of these Nations exists. And yet they do exist? How is this possible?

Dylan Thomas, Welsh poet famous for his English poetry, wrote to a friend in 1933: "It's impossible for me to tell you how much I want to get out of it all. Out of the narrowness and the dirtiness, out of the eternal ugliness of the Welsh people. I am sick. This bloody country is killing me."

That was before ethnics were "in," as a cover of **Time Magazine** proclaimed a few years ago, before cities ceased being unqualified lights of our culture, before they began to choke on their effluents and numbers, before the quality of life we are losing became impossible to ignore. We can imagine Thomas today, writing in Welsh perhaps, certainly re-examining his Welshness. History is running backwards. We search for what we once discarded.

The Croatian Liberation Front is right wing. ETA in the Basque Country is Marxist. Catalanian autonomists tend to be anarchists. American Indian autonomists look like hippies. Very confusing. Why do all their documents read the same? The Ethiopian monarchy repressed the Eritrean Liberation Front as being dangerous left wing "Separatists." (States take the position: "If you want to **separate** from us there must be something wrong with **you**.") The succeeding Ethiopian left wing revolutionary government only stepped up the battle against the Eritreans. The reactionary Shah told the Kurds they should become good Iranians and forget about Kurdistan. The revolutionary Ayatollah Khomeini is trying to tell them exactly the same thing.

The Kurds conducted a war against Iraq in the mid-seventies. The Iraqis, supported by the socialist Soviet Union, said that the Kurds were an outpost of American imperialism supported by the CIA through the reactionary Shah of Iran. The Shah said that the Kurds represented progressive nationalism in their valiant struggle against the imperialist Soviet Union and **their** reactionary outpost, Iraq. The Kurds, ducking, said it was all the same to them.

"That's right," we used to say: "and that's left." It used to be so — easy.

The North American Indians occupying Wounded Knee some years ago appealed to Finland's Lapp community for aid. "The Lapp nation will do all it can," replied a spokesman: "But our situation is so bad that the possibilities for action are limited."

On the Larzac Plateau in southern France (known as "Occitania" on the map of nations) 100 farmers have been resisting French occupation by refusing to sell their land to the French army, which says it needs more room for maneuvers. Little Feather and a delegation of North American Indians visited the Plateau. A member of the Pit River tribe reacted to the militant atmosphere he found there: "The situation of the Pit River Tribe is identical to that of the people of Larzac, and we ought to be part of the same struggle." Janet Mat Cloud of the Nisqually tribe said: "I didn't think that I would find people in France with the same problems as we have, and who want the same things as we do for our children. Our struggle is for our children. It is for them that we fight to get our land back, just like the people of Larzac are fighting to keep their land for their children. Our children are not made for factories."



Nations should not  
be confused  
with States.





## RAISE THE STAKES!

What is it worth to polish off condors, Amazonia, the Bretons, the Pacific.....our own great grandchildren?

What are we asking for it? When airfield-long Japanese lumber barges shovel Amazon forests into dust? When machine-gunning helicopters find the last unknown native tribes?

(Even though those trees put out plenty already. Oxygen. A lung of the planet-body. And the natives are the only people who know how to live there.)

Nothing is worth it. Natives, Narita Airport diehards, oilspill-drenched Bretons, the pregnant women of Three Mile Island — are us. We do know each other: nobody's childhood place looks the same anymore.

Raise the stakes. We are the same species. We don't come from.....where? We come from everywhere.

Raise the stakes to, WE'RE SPECIES-KIND. WE COME FROM EVERYWHERE.

We come from everywhere and we all live some place. National interest? Multi-national interest? They move around too much. Never close to home. They don't really have a place.

The planet is alive and places are alive. Places are multi-species ground and people are a part. Raise the stakes to, PLACES ARE ALIVE. That's planet interest.

Raise the stakes. Higher pay isn't enough. Shorter jail sentences aren't enough. The government might fix your teeth? It isn't enough. We're killing too much to be able to live.

Raise the stakes. We have the right to defend ourselves as a species. Planet-local and planet-wide. We have the right to be culturally diverse; as different as the places where we live. We have the right to govern our planet-places. We have the right to agree on our role as a species sharing life on this planet with other species.

How do we secure those rights? How do we make that agreement?

Let's raise the stakes and find out.

Peter Berg

LET'S RAISE THE STAKES



## LETTER

...I gave a talk to the annual meeting of the Friends of the Earth where I was asked to be on the Board of Directors. I accepted; and then spoke for twenty minutes on the necessity of centralist conservationists recognizing the need for decentralist organizations, networks, and people; making the point that environmental legislation from the top down, as useful as it is sometimes, will never work unless there are real live people who live in a place who give a sense to the implementation of that legislation. And, eventually, who take complete charge of land management as the central authority withers away. I also made the point that in the case of China what righteous land management policies there were, were those designed by the village level people — the local people — and it was the central government that with force overrode common-sense local wisdom about forestry and hunting, and forced people to extract ("tribute") more than they should have and more than they knew they should have from their local ecosystem to feed greed! More on this later I think...

Gary Snyder



# From ECOREGIONS

Maurice Girodias

*Ecoregions is an essay of introduction to a new project by ever-bold publisher Maurice Girodias. "My plan is gradually assuming the form of a monthly magazine... every issue of which will be a special issue to be conceived as a 'blueprint for the future' applying to the most critical cases — such as Ireland, South Africa, Europe, Palestine, Kurdistan, Canada — always stressing a federal solution based on regional autonomy of the component parts. The idea is less to restore old ecoregions so much as it is to help new ones come alive. I see ecoregions not as a revival of the past but, on the contrary, as brand new ethnic-cultural realities, even when they start from the old ones."*

*Copies of the full manuscript are available from  
86 Mount Vernon St.  
Boston MASS 02108.*

...The Third World War with which we have been threatened so long is indeed already upon us — as the War of the Third World, the War of the Minorities.

It is already being fought openly, with savage brutality, in twenty spots or more: Northern Ireland, Rhodesia, Palestine, Nicaragua, Basque country, Chad, Indochina, Iran, Turkey, Cyprus, Lebanon, Pakistan, Afganistan, Namibia, Kurdistan...

Elsewhere, it is still in the smoldering stage. The Western world has its own repressed or suppressed minorities — Bretons, Corsicans, Scots, Welsh, Gypsies, Eskimos, Blacks, Indians of North and South America — and millions of illegal immigrants in its festering ghettos. And on the other side, in the Soviet Union, we see the dominant Russian republic waging a gigantic campaign of racist infiltration and assimilation, with the help of the Party and of the Secret Police, against the Ukrainians, Tatars, Balts, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Armenians, Georgians, Belorussians: in all more than one hundred smaller groups or nations.

...behind the legal facade of the nation the ethnic reality is still very much alive although it had been certified dead long ago. Such a finding comes into brutal collision with the concept of national unity, and even with the accepted definitions of the nation; it appears suddenly that nearly all of the world's populations are divided and sub-divided in accordance with ethnic, linguistic and cultural factors, and that the political structures of the nation-state are mostly artificial additions.

...the general thesis we are presenting here is that the nation-state is not an advanced form of social structure, and that it does not serve the general interest but only the selfish concerns of the political class, of the military, the bureaucracy and the owners. Whether we consider the nation-state in its totalitarian version, or in the form of a presidential republic, it is obviously never at the service of "the people," despite its claims, but only of the power hierarchy. By contrast, the ethnic group in harmony with its natural environment forms the basic unit of a potentially ideal society: and that unit we call here the ecoregion.

...These new formations are not seen as alternatives to the nation-state; the role of the state will not be eliminated, but transformed from centralist power to central organ of ecofederal planning, prospective and arbitration...Which, incidentally, gives a chance to the political class itself to find a new definition, and fulfill many useful functions in the service of a rehabilitated, renovated national structure.

The human horizon, then, will no longer be limited to a few giant ghetto cities and some 175 nation-states; it will open onto three thousand ecoregions, each one a live, thriving center of new culture. War and violence will be disarmed, since the misdirected energies which caused them will be put to a better use. The cult of growth which dominates our society will be redirected from horizontal to vertical, from acquisition to education; it will be replaced by a dedication to self-development which will give a new value to the successive ages of life. The very nature of the economy will change with its context; a life of genuine, convivial luxury will be accessible to all, for one tenth of the cost in work and time it takes today to live badly. The economy of waste and obsolescence, founded on such multipliers as credit, national and international marketing, advertising, storage and transportation of energy and goods, taxation, bureaucracy and useless war industries — all this will be replaced by small-scale, local industries, and high-level craftsmanship, thanks to which not only the environment can be restored, but our taste for life as well.

## SONORAN DESERT DIALOGUE

Here's a glimpse at how a Planet Drum bundle shapes itself.

Early last year, after discovering that half of the kindergarten kids in Los Angeles claimed Spanish as their first language, it became apparent that the international boundary between the U.S. and Mexico which vivisections the Sonoran, Cordilleran and Chihuahuan biotic provinces might well become one of bitterest political issues in North America. It is more than likely that what seems good to the Quebecois might seem even better to Mexamerica.

A little earlier, startled Bureau of Land Management statisticians had discovered that the precious fossil waters which support Phoenix and Tucson were running out at a much greater rate than they could be replenished. The North American desert was on it's way to becoming yet another ecological victim of imported attitudes.

Historically, the Sonoran bioregion has given rise to a healthy diversity of adaptive cultures, many of which survive, (though they are not apparent if you stick to the monocultural highways). All the problems of living in the desert have been solved over and over again by peoples who have made it their home. These cultures are tough and long lived like the giant saguaro; they are weeds in the pavement of territorial politics and wrong-headed technology. They resist homogenization because they are part of the desert.

It was a good time to document the emergent bi-lingual and bioregional consciousness in Sonora. We headed right out for Gary Nabhan's place in Tucson.

Over the years, Gary had proved an invaluable correspondent and informant. His

skills as a plant biologist, ethnobotanist and poet have provided many people with new insight into the singular Sonoran region.

Gary and Karen hosted us in fine bioregional style. We were fed meals of native foods, treated to conversations with ecologist Dick Felger, historian Ned Spicer and Kathleen Dannreuther and Susan Goldberg of Sonoran Heritage. Attended a meeting of the Tepary Burrito Society, the local bioregional study group made up of self-proclaimed desert rats. Tasted bootleg bacanora, the best mescal in my experience. Saw rare winter floods. Spent a day and a night at Ventana cave, site of continuous inhabitation for 30,000 years.

The Sonoran bundle took on a life of it's own under the guidance of Gary Nabhan and we hope to have it ready in the spring of 1980. Gary and I kept notes of our conversations and later, through the mail, put them into the rough form which follows. Anyone with gifts of mind, muscle or money should contact Gary Nabhan, 510 W. Pelaar Dr., Tucson AZ 85705.

Linn House

### ADAPTATIONS

(GN) Arid climates are more than just a lot of hot air. Through evolutionary time, they have shaped life coming within their power not only because of the sometimes extreme heat but because of the paucity and unpredictability of rainfall. There are so many behavioral and structural adaptations to the desert climates in the myriad lifeforms still coexisting, that we have a wealth of clues to follow. Deserts and their cultures haven't been destroyed to the extent that we can only lamely attempt to reconstruct long gone lifeways. Instead, we can take heed of what has persisted, what we are in the midst of.

(LH) I can imagine a collaborative piece of writing and drawing which begins with the amazing plant adaptations; which becomes a discussion of the many ways in which native cultures have and have not survived the three historic attempts at conquest; which becomes a discussion of human adaptive techniques that the survivors have in common.

After reading Spicer's *Cycles of Conquest*, it's apparent that a very broad spectrum of social organization existed at the time of Spanish invasion, from loosely defined bands of hunter / gatherers, to the most elaborate post-Neolithic civilizations replete with religious hierarchies and hydraulic engineering / irrigation canal systems. It strikes me that the cultures surviving to the greatest extent came from either end of the spectrum and rarely from the middle. In the case of nomads, the conquests ran through them like a sieve, leaving residue but not really sticking. In the case of highly organized people, they saw it coming in time and

went underground; they were transformed only at a superficial level. What lessons are there for us?

(GN) Water, not light nor (arable) land nor heat (nor technology!) is the limiting factor here in the desert. In order to continue, desert life must work to resist and avoid water loss. We must eventually accept existing surface water resources as the key factor determining carrying capacity — importing icebergs from Antarctica or mining groundwater set down in the Pleistocene will not bail us out in the long run.

(LH) This could be shown graphically by relating specific figures on recent population growth rates to the drop in water table levels. Such a graph would show the impossibility of long term existence of cities such as Tucson, the largest city in the U.S. totally dependent on groundwater resources. Howard Odum suggests that the only way Arizona's economy has developed this century is by retired people bringing cash (and energy) made off other regions to the Sunbelt in order to pay the ever-increasing cost of pumping water and running air conditioners. Perhaps strategies for reinhabitation could be illustrated on the other side of the groundwater graphics.

### THE PERMEABLE U.S. / MEXICO BORDER

(GN) Watersheds, aquifers and cultural heritages flow across the U.S. / Mexico border. The Gadsden Purchase arbitrarily split up a large area of the Sonoran Desert known as Pimeria Alta into two political areas (Arizona and Sonora) that are poorly understood and managed by politicians from

more humid areas. Nevertheless, a pan-desert responsiveness continues. Papago and Yaqui people still flow freely between villages in both political states. Mestizos in Sonora and European-Americans in Arizona still feel a need when young to make a pilgrimage to the "other state," almost as a puberty rite, to make themselves "whole." The October 4 Fiesta de San Francisco in Magdalena, Sonora has become a major traditional event affirming the unity of Sonoran Desert peoples.

(LH) When Mexico attempts to assimilate Indians, the results are called *mestizo*. When the U.S. attempts to integrate Mexicans, the results are called *chicano*.

The important element in this equation is that at one end of the cultural spectrum, the native remains on the land, strong enough so that a pulse of nativeness runs through the everyday life of most Sonorans. Sonorans are desert people, by behavior. Contrast their behavior with that of the outsiders who impose global monoculture on the region, thinking that the only resources here are sunny days and cheap land....

(GN) Geographers say the largest migration in the history of humankind has been the influx of European-Americans to western North America since World War II. At what cost? As a corollary, the anti-wetback syndrome makes manifest shallow understandings of regional economies and histories. If the northern Mexican breadbasket of the Rios Yaqui, Mayo and Fuerte were to quit growing truckfarm vegetables for U.S. markets, and return to growing proteinaceous staples (maize, beans, etc.) for their region (or for Mexico altogether), Mexico would have no food shortages. Today

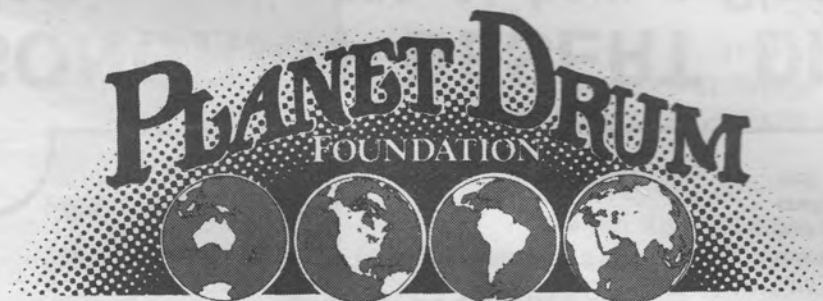
they are having their energy and food base usurped, and because of that, have had to export / displace people as "cheap labor" to the U.S.

### DESERT REINHABITATIONS

(GN) By early historic times, the greater Sonoran desert agriculturalists were growing hundreds of ecotypes of at least 15 New World crop species — perhaps the most distinctive crop repertoire anywhere in North America. Many of these crops had been selected for drought and heat tolerance, as well as for taste and nutritional quality, over hundreds of growing seasons. Though rare today, they are finely adapted resources which can be renovated to restore an agricultural economy coevolved with, rather than imposed upon, arid ecosystems.

(LH) Phenomena like Phoenix, Tucson, the Imperial Valley and the "Sun Belt" impose a thick layer of non-adaptive culture on the Sonoran region. These complex and highly visible constructs tend to hide the fact that there is a magnificent range of adaptive culture still surviving in the desert. There are several native presences which have not been absorbed the monoculture; mestizo agriculture, carefully evolved over 400 years; and a variety of experiments by new settlers over the last ten to fifteen years, experiments that tend to be communitarian and adaptive. People of the Sonora are immersed in a situation more culturally diverse than in any other comparable region in North America. The fact that many people use two and sometimes three languages daily only begins to describe the diverse realities which exist here.





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# **RAISE THE STAKES!**



# RAISE THE STAKES!

Fall 1979      The Planet Drum Review      Volume 1 Number 1

## SOFT BORDERS



*Humankind.  
Our identity as a  
species sharing life on  
this planet is emerging to  
break through the political concrete . . .*

*Continued on Page 1*



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