

# RAISE THE STAKES

WINTER, 1982 \$2 **The Planet Drum Review**

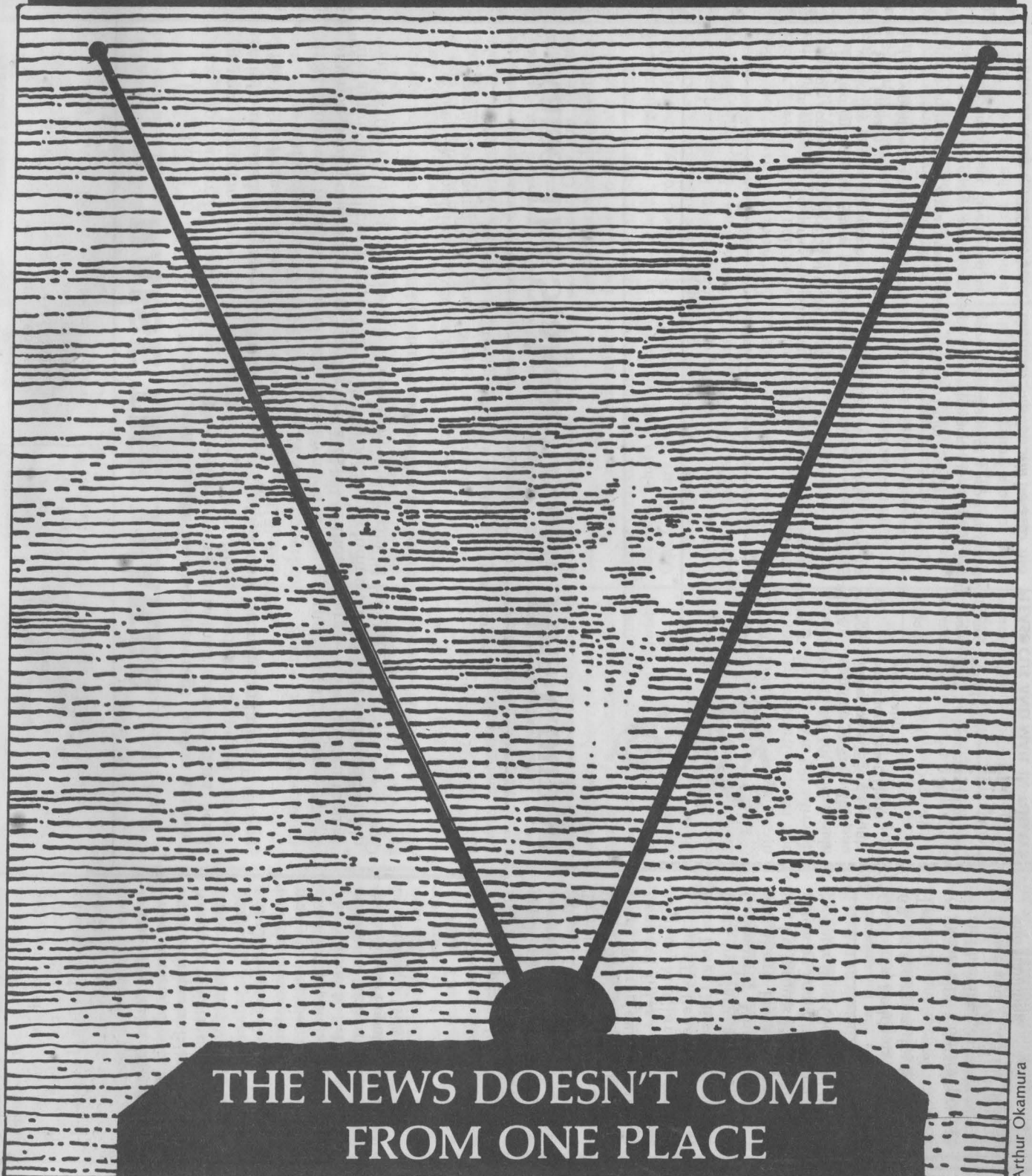
Number 4

NEW YORK

FOURTH WORLD

OZARKIA

AGRI-FOLLIES: Seed Patenting & Urban Spraying



THE NEWS DOESN'T COME  
FROM ONE PLACE

Arthur Okamura

# CIRCLES OF CORRESPONDENCE

## REGIONAL COMMENTARY

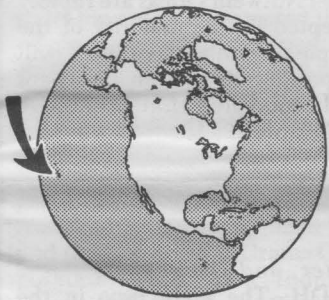
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## HAWAII NEI REPORT

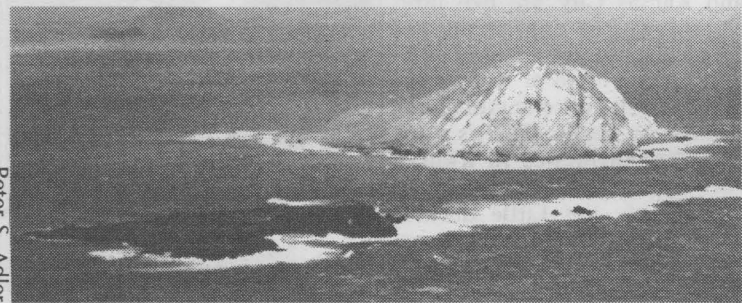
Peter Adler

*What is Hawaii? Certainly not just "the flash-cadillac tourist insomnia of places like Waikiki." Hawaii Nei is a real place with a long and unique history aided—until recently—by the advantages of relative geographic isolation. In what follows Planet/Drum correspondent and Oahu inhabitant, Peter Adler, describes a journey through time characterized by cycles of devastation and survival. As you'll see, things are looking up. Like a sleepy volcano Hawaii Nei is re-emerging from within the tailings of industrial age tourism. With the approaching end to cheap air travel, local people and traditions are reasserting themselves.*



Ua mau ke ea o ka aina i ka pono! This being an old saying more recently incorporated as a slogan under the 50th State seal. "The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness." We are the northern tip of the Polynesian triangle, called in pre-metal times and again today Hawaii Nei. It means "Hawaii, this place." There are here 132 islands stretching 1,500 miles across the central Pacific basin. Such small, fragile islands when you think of them in planetary terms, isolated and protected by 2,000 miles of ocean in any direction, the very last island chain on Earth to be discovered.

Until the Western "discovery" of these islands by Captain James Cook in 1778, the momentum of changes was slow. Think of a peculiar hot spot under the Pacific plate and a flume of molten material reaching up to the surface of the ocean. Think of 35 million years of volcanic eruptions that are still going on. Think



Peter S. Adler

of air and water-borne bits of biota surviving the vagaries of the Pacific. Think of chance encounters with land. Think of long-term biological dispersal and isolated growth away from continental influences. Think of failed experiments and successful adaptations leading to widespread speciation and high levels of endemism. "To account for the composition of Hawaii's terres-

trial life at the time of human discovery only 1,200 years ago, scientists have postulated one successful colonization by a plant or animal once every few tens of thousands of years."

Think of a range of habitats and niches, from steaming lava vents at sea level to a tundra at 14,000 feet, from deserts in the lee of the mountains to fog shrouded windward jungles. Think of corals, fish, molluscs and seaweeds multiplying offshore. Think of the finch-like honeycreeper family with forty-five species or subspecies. And the *alala* (Hawaiian crow), the *nene* (Hawaiian goose) and the *io* (Hawaiian hawk). And the hoary bat, the monk seal and the thousands of insects, ground plants and trees all found no place else. Think of these islands, alone and undiscovered until very late in history, accumulating their genetic treasures, achieving a biological uniqueness unparalleled but for a few other places like Madagascar or the Galapagos.

In retrospect, the two recurring themes of Hawaii Nei have always been devastation and survival, death and rebirth. Envision, if you can, the first people to come here, a tall and handsome race traveling up from the south about 500 A.D. in open canoes. Epic voyages these were, 5,000 miles round-trip following a visible division of the waters called the "Kane-Kanaloa" line. Sailing north from the Marquesas they labeled every star seen by the naked eye. Then, cast into uncharted waters north of the equator, they discovered an archipelago where nobody knew one existed. At a time when most Europeans were afraid of falling off the edge of the Earth, these people were traversing the Pacific. Able to harvest the sustenance of the sea and land, they settled these islands with an eye towards common sense elegance and long-term potential. That potential still exists as does the simple grace of many of the old ways.

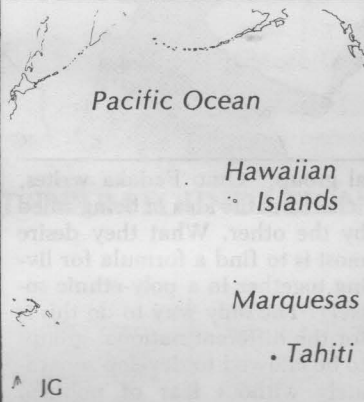
When you see the remains of their irrigation systems, you be-

gin to understand the care and craft that went into the land. When you plant the life-giving taro, you can see how it came to be viewed as man's mythic brother. When you touch their stone and wooden images and feel the taper of their canoes, when you try their pharmaceuticals and note the intricacy of their featherwork, when you listen to their music and hear their

legends, you can begin to understand the ecological balance that was necessary for such prosperous people. Learning about Hawaii Nei one comes to understand the 'ohana,' the totally mutual family and its inherent economy. Carving a fish hook, eating the pounded corn of the taro, catching an octopus or chewing the root of awa, one begins to gather inside a sense of this place.

During the 19th century, three powers recognized the Hawaiian Kingdom as an independent nation: England, France and the United States. American interests began with the fur trade, whaling, and the rapid development of a sugar monopoly. The military acknowledged Hawaii's strategic location very early. When American missionaries came, they wielded a hard and difficult religious doctrine aimed at the conscious destruction of local values and practices. Geography is destiny. What the Hawaiians feared most came to pass. Abetted by diplomatic and military maneuvering, American businessmen overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy and arranged for the Islands to be annexed to the United States.

Crossing the continent by rail in the 1880s, Queen Liliuokalani, the last of a line of chiefs dating back to the voyages of 1000 A.D.,



could not understand it. Why, she wondered, would an American government want to add her own small islands to an already rich and powerful country. The gentle Queen yielded and, in her sadness, took great joy that not a drop of blood was spilled for the sake of her pride. With her died Hawaii Nei's independence. In her place came the dominion of the carpetbaggers and missionaries, the "founding fathers" of the dynastic plantations that are today multinational trading corporations.

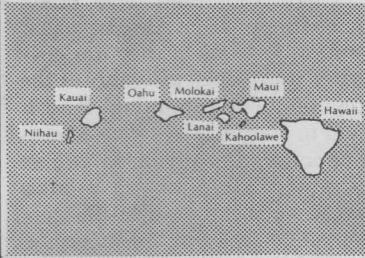
In retrospect, one recalls mostly the devastation: how the oral historical record stretching back through the centuries was discarded as irrelevant; how the sacred *Hula* was desecrated by pious foreigners and further humiliated by honky tonk tourism; how smallpox and syphilis came to kill thousands; how lands were bartered away for whiskey and silk; how an entire culture was nearly converted to something that is not understandable. One must remember that once the people of this place numbered 350,000 and more, a carrying capacity that is no longer possible without the false assurances and temporary supports of a global economy.

Devastation and survival. In the meanest of times, the land and the people have persisted, evolving, changing, adapting, and carrying forward into the future. The fallen flowers of one generation have always been the seeds and roots of the next. There is unanimous agreement that not everything ancient is of value today: slavery, ritual murder, an arbitrary and powerful caste system benefiting a few priests and chiefs, a taboo relegating women to the status of baggage. And yet the core values remain. "We continue to insist on a spirited pursuit for justice and for the right to preserve our Hawaiian verities—the truths of our culture that are still very much relevant today."

In the 1980s, the battle lines become clearer and clearer. Ho-

tels, airports, time-sharing condominiums and the flash-cadillac insomnia of places like Waikiki are, in effect, the new plantations, a monoculture that distracts us from the real business at hand. Tourism is millions of dollars a year, a big money investment requiring massive doses of investment and a spiraling speculation in land. Carried with it like a tidal wave is a culture of junk: reef runways, parking lots, hotels, T-shirt factories, fleets of buses, and endless numbers of fast food-hamburger asylums. Crushed underneath (even as they are glamorized for public relations) are local people. They become the maids, the drivers, the cooks, the janitors, and the groundskeepers. Covered over are once productive taro lands and sweet potato patches, fresh water streams, beaches and fringing reefs, upland forests, and the last remnants of a landscape that served so many so well for so long.

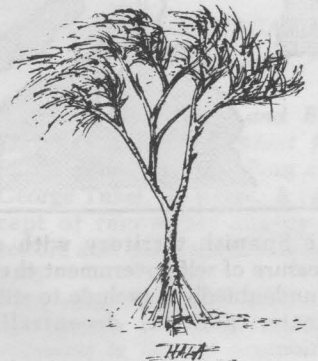
Like other regions, the conflicts reflect the needs and problems of specific communities. On Molokai, old and young Hawaiians have banded together to regain access to traditional foraging and fishing lands now closed off by developers. In remote Wailau Valley on that Island, a dozen young Hawaiians have isolated themselves in order to homestead



and raise families in more land-sensitive ways. On Kahoolawe, control of the entire Island is being wrestled away from the U.S. Navy which has controlled the Island and bombed and shelled it continuously since 1941. On the Big Island, people from the Puna District are staving off state-backed industrialists who want to build a manganese nodule processing plant. On Kauai, local people—Polynesians, Caucasians and Orientals—are working in concert to stop a monster condominium complex that threatens to radically alter the character of that island's south shore.

The skirmishes also go beyond being simple political squabbles. For the last few years a quiet but determined cultural revitalization has been taking place involving people of all races. People call it the "Hawaiian Renaissance." Long distance voyages in hand made double-hulled canoes have started again with several round trips between Hawaii and Tahiti already completed. Small schools

dedicated to reviving ancient medical arts and other Hawaiian life sciences are springing up in the cities. Canoe racing is now more popular than Little League baseball. Even the most rural town on the most isolated island has at least one studio and teacher capable of instructing both men and women in ancient *hula*. People are again weaving intricate flower leis and wearing them publicly. Young Hawaiians in high schools are collecting oral histories from their grandparents and recording those in their school newspapers. On the windward side of Oahu, juvenile delinquents are being "turned



Robert Watts

around" by learning how to plant, raise and sell their own taro plants.

No one in Hawaii Nei uses the word "rehabilitation" but the spirit of cultural renewal and ecological health is foremost in many minds. There seems to be a dawning realization that industrial tourism, monopoly agriculture and an enormous foreign military presence in the Islands are all forms of negation. They are being seen as a loss of power and self-control. New strategies along with new tactics are developing slowly although no group has consciously tried to think through how rehabilitation could take place on a region-wide scale.

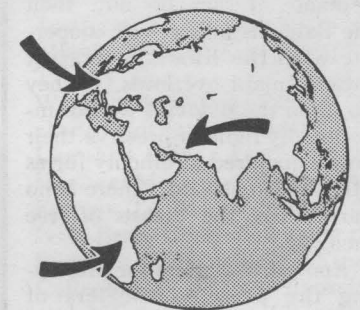
If there is a unifying theme to these efforts, it is this: take what is best from the old ways, combine them with what is best from the new, try them as experiments, and carry on from there. There is, for sure, a renewed delight in the subtleties of living on an island. There is a growing respect for the boundaries. In Hawaii Nei people are just starting to understand that the tourists will eventually go home and that when they do, it is local people who will still be here to clean up the tailings. And lest we all become too self-righteous or puffed up with our own importance, we will try to remember that we are all visitors anyway. We are here on these Islands for the length of our days, touching the land for a time and holding it in trust for our children, *na pua*, the flowers of the next generation. □

## REGIONALISM IN EUROPE AND AFRICA

Edward Goldsmith

*While American mass media emphasizes Cold War politics and nationalism, exciting devolutionary events are transpiring in Europe and Africa. More and more peoples there are reclaiming their ethnic identities and seeing the assertion of their political autonomy as the necessary basis for a lasting peace. Raise The Stakes is pleased to reprint Edward Goldsmith's essay which recently appeared in the Cornish magazine, An Baner Kernewek.*

Practically all the European states of today are artificial creations made up of nations whose separate identity is largely ignored. For a long time European people, preoccupied as they have been with purely economic considerations, have been willing to

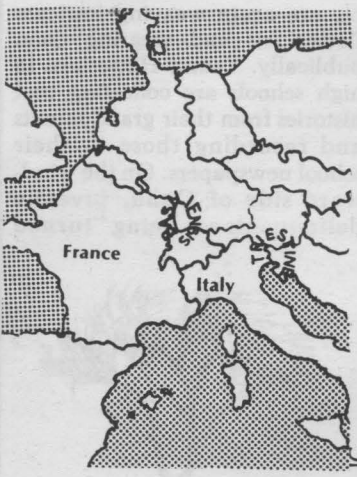


see their ethnic identity submerged in a vast anonymous mass society and to be little more than "faces in the crowd." Increasingly, today, they want to be part of a real society in whose cultural life and in whose government they can actively participate. Not surprisingly, autonomist movements are gaining strength in almost every European state.

Continued On Page 2

REGIONALISM, continued

In Spain, Catalan nationalists have been active for decades and today the Basques are even more so. Their action has recently forced the central government to provide the nations that inhabit



the Spanish territory with a measure of self government that is undoubtedly a prelude to still greater political decentralization.

In France, autonomist movements are increasingly active among the Corsicans and the Bretons and in Britain, we are witnessing the development of powerful nationalist movements in Scotland and Wales and even in Cornwall.

In Northern Ireland, the hostility between two different ethnic groups, the indigenous Irish on the one hand and the descendants of the 17th century Scots immigrants on the other, has already led to the deaths of thousands of people. The ethnic basis of this crisis is never even mentioned—instead it is passed off as a purely religious dispute between Catholics and Protestants. Indeed, the reason is that in the present ideological climate it is not politically expedient that these differences be accommodated so instead, they are ignored, and it is on the altar of this political expediency that young English soldiers and innocent Irish civilians are sacrificed almost daily.

National unity we persuade ourselves must everywhere be preserved at all costs. Breaking up countries into smaller areas we regard as totally impractical. To begin with these areas would not be able to defend themselves against an external aggressor. This of course is not necessarily true. They could associate themselves to form a confederation as did the Swiss communes who thereby succeeded in preserving their independence for centuries far more successfully than did many of their larger neighbors. Today, if Pakistan is to defend itself against the new Russian threat from Afghanistan, its most sensible course is to grant the Baluchis, whose territory the Russians quite clearly covet since it borders the Indian Ocean, that measure of autonomy that they demand. If they do not, then the Baluchis might well cooperate with the Russians against their Punjabi overlords. If they do, then the Baluchis would undoubtedly fight to preserve their newly acquired autonomy for as Mr. Gladstone said, "there is no barrier like the breasts of free men."

Another argument for preserving the present frontiers of Europe is that the natural regions of Europe would not constitute viable economic units. This argument is totally without foundation. There is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of China, America or the Soviet Union are better off than those of Iceland, Switzerland, Denmark or Luxembourg. Indeed, the opposite seems to be true, and the argument for breaking Europe down into its natural regions as Leopold Kohr pointed out so convincingly in his classic: *The*

*Breakdown of Nations* are overwhelming.

Significantly enough Federal Germany was divided up by the allies into eleven "Lande" each with a high degree of local autonomy, with the avowed intention of weakening her. Needless to say this measure had the opposite effect, indeed as Denis de Rougemont, the eminent Swiss writer and advocate of Federalism points out, "its federal and regional form of government goes a long way towards explaining the political, economic and social recovery of Germany."

This is even truer of Switzerland, which, again as Denis de Rougemont notes, has "for six or seven centuries provided the image of an exemplary federation of historic regions which find in their union—strictly limited to certain public functions—the guarantee of their autonomy."

Switzerland is indeed socially and politically the most successful country in Europe. It is a loose association of communes or "Germeinde," that during the Middle Ages, joined together voluntarily in order to better protect themselves against feudal domination.

These communes have much in common with African tribal groups. Like them they are governed by an open assembly of the menfolk. The communal land is held in common by its members. The communes are social not just administrative units, a man remains a member of his *Bürgergemeinde* regardless of where he decides to settle, and it is to the *Bürgergemeinde* and not to any State bureaucracy that he must turn when in need. What is more, to become a Swiss citizen he must first be accepted as a citizen of a commune and of a can-

ton, which means that the Swiss state is not composed of an anonymous mass of isolated individuals as are most industrial countries today but of semi-autonomous cantons themselves made up of semi-autonomous communes, themselves composed of families and individuals.

One cannot stress too strongly the fact that these communes and cantons joined together voluntarily to form the Swiss Confederation. They participate actively in this federation on an equal footing. They are not dominated by any one group and if, in certain instances, they feel they are, then they can break away and form their own canton just as the French speaking people of the Jura recently did so as to avoid being dominated by the German speaking people of the canton of Berne.

It is only on these conditions that larger, stable political units can be built up. "No one nation-



al group," Omo Fadaka writes, "cherishes the idea of being ruled by the other. What they desire most is to find a formula for living together in a poly-ethnic society. The only way to do this is for the different national groups to be allowed to develop separately without fear of political domination of one section by the other. There is no way of removing this fear other than by granting them complete political

autonomy. Once this fear is removed, full economic, social and cultural cooperation could well lead to that unity which has eluded the country so far."

In Europe people are now slowly beginning to see the light. In Belgium for instance, a new project is being studied to divide the country into four regions, one Walloon, one Flemish, one German and one composed of the ethnically mixed population of Brussels. Much of the power, what is more, would be delegated to sub-regions made up of associated communes.

The Council of Europe too is beginning to show greater interest in the concept of federalism. Recently a meeting was held under its auspices to study the natural regions that cut across present state boundaries. A typical one is the "Regio Basiliensis" which includes Alsace, Baden and the Swiss Canton of Basle. The inhabitants of these areas are ethnically related, being descended from the Germanic tribe of the Allemanni, and speak a similar German dialect. They have recently been made aware of their common identity by the threat to their biological survival posed by the nuclear industry that proposes to put up no fewer than sixteen nuclear power stations in their midst, six in the French section of this region, five in the Swiss and five in the German—a nation is indeed made by its enemies rather than by its friends.

Another such region at present being studied by the Institut Universitaire d'Etudes Europeennes in Geneva is the Lemano-Alpine region made up of much of French speaking Switzerland, the Franche Comte, Savoy, the Val d'Aosta and parts of the French departments of the Isere and of the Ain. Another is the Triestine region made up of the Friuli, Carinthia and Slovenia. In all, fifteen such regions have been identified, and it is hoped

that they will slowly be allowed to become effective units for certain social and economic purposes at least. It is only by encouraging such developments and by generally decentralizing power from the governments running the artificial countries of Europe, to those of the real nations that compose them that stability and peace can be assured. In the meantime it is very irresponsible to set up political structures in Africa and elsewhere in what was once our Colonial Empire, that do not reflect social realities and whose eventual dismemberment into their natural regions is inevitable and, what is more, at the cost of a great deal of unnecessary human misery.

In Africa some people are beginning to see the light. In Zimbabwe-Rhodesia Chief Kaisa Ndiweni has founded the United National Federal Party which did unexpectedly well in the May 1979 elections. Chief Ndiweni has emphasized the totally artificial nature of the newly independent African countries and he fully realizes that Rhodesia is no exception to the rule. His party is committed to dividing Rhodesia into two semi-autonomous regions, one for the Shona and the other for the Ndebele. The regions would be but loosely associated to form a federation, the federal government being responsible for defense and other functions that are best fulfilled at that level. Chief Ndiweni has obtained considerable support for this scheme from among the Ndebele people, but predictably the majority of the Shona are against it. However, it is only if Chief Ndiweni's ideas are rapidly accepted by the majority of the people of Zimbabwe that it will be possible to prevent the chaos and bloodshed that otherwise lie in store.

## OZARKIA REPORT

An Interview With David Haenke



*The Ozarks encompass roughly 55,000 square miles of land extending from the Southern forests of Missouri through Northern Arkansas and out to the plains near Tulsa, Oklahoma.*

*On October 9-12, the second Ozark Area Community Congress (OACC II) convened just outside Eminence, Missouri to represent the collective attitudes of various concerns, organizations, communities, watersheds, forests, and animals of the bioregion using bioregional political ecology as the guiding principle. Many committees and representatives discussed issues of concern to the Ozarks bioregion and a platform of action-directed measures were formulated. The Congress is considered a continuous event that works all year and comes together to share, learn, and map directions for the following year.*

*David Haenke is one of the directional forces behind OACC and Planet/Drum asked him to describe the area and give an overview of the people, the issues, and how OACC, as a bioregional Congress, will chart a reinhabitory future.*

*Judy Goldhaft: Could we start with a physical description of where Ozarkia is. What's special about it, what are the physical characteristics of it that make it unique?*

David Haenke: Ozarkia is an

extensive elevated area between the Appalachians and Rockies bounded by easily identifiable river systems. On the north we have the Missouri River, on the northeast the Mississippi, and on the southeast border the Black River. Our southern border is the White River system, and our southwestern boundary is the Arkansas River, which separates the Ozark Mountains from the Washataw Mountains and the Neosha River. Then when you move up to the northwest border, you have the Osage River named after the predominant Indian tribe that was in the Ozarks.

What's very distinguishing about Ozarkia is the quantity of oak trees. That's why we named OACC (Ozark Area Community Congress) after the oak tree. The oaks are incredibly hardy, even though they're sprayed, gassed, burned, and decimated. There's a continuous pogrom going on to get rid of them, yet they come back. I don't know how they do it. But it's the amazing resiliency of the land—even though it has been basically raped two or three times. Another distinguishing characteristic of it is that it's second and third growth forest and they keep trying to skin it off, and put cows on it, convert it into a grass monoculture. It used to be a prairie, a lot of it, but the soil structure was much stronger, and the topsoil was

much deeper, and the mat was much tougher, with the native grass, the bluestem prairie grass seven feet high here. . . . There are some areas not far from here, near Alley Springs, . . . a little north of here that were in native prairie, plus areas up around Springfield, which is northwest of here, which were native prairie, and then between here and there were isolated places where there was a lot of open space . . . climax forest . . . down in the river valleys. Oak, pine, hickory.

JG: *Would you consider that Springfield is the city of the Ozarks? Or are there other cities that feel like they're part of the Ozarks?*

DH: If the Ozarks had a capital city based on population and the economic predominance, it would probably be Springfield. It's about 150,000. Fayetteville, in Arkansas, is also in the Ozarks. But it isn't as big.

JG: *Is there much of a relationship between St. Louis or Little Rock and the Ozarks?*

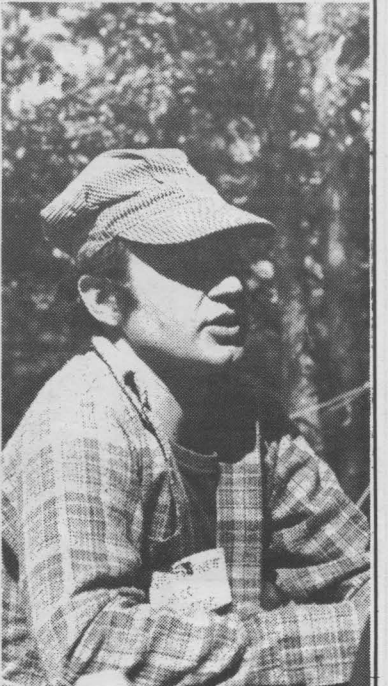
DH: I often say that St. Louis and Kansas City are like little city-states, they don't really belong either to the State of Missouri or the State of Kansas, or to the Ozarks, or to anything but themselves, really. There's a lot of Ozark influence in Kansas City and St. Louis, and also in Little Rock. But Little Rock is out in the prairie, kind of, across the Arkansas River. So those cities don't really have a whole lot of impingement on the Ozarks. Jefferson City, the capital of Missouri, is in the Ozarks. Most definitely. On the Ozark side of the Missouri River. So, the relationship of cities to the Ozarks, basically, is pretty minimal. The impact on the Ozarks of cities is great, but the influence on the culture, and the mindset of the cities, I don't think is very great.

JG: *Can you talk about the*

*water, and the geology . . . ?*

DH: The main issue in the Ozarks, if you want to get down to it, is water. The most critical environmental, ecological problem in the Ozarks is water. And the reason for that is that under the Ozarks there are literally thousands and thousands of caves. Basically it's a limestone sponge. And the amount of water stored there is stupendous. But one problem with it is that there is no filtration from groundwater by any sand strata. It's what's called fractured topography or k-a-r-s-t, which means that any rainfall or any effluent of any kind on the surface goes right down into the

Robert Watts



underground river system, this incredible inner link sponge system, and comes up somewhere else. . . .

*Peter Berg: What happened in West Plains. Could you describe that?*

DH: West Plains is a terrible, or a good, example of what's

wrong and what's critical about the situation in the Ozarks. It's more than a footnote to say that water in the Ozarks, which 10 or 15 years ago was drinkable out of the rivers and springs and wells is no longer potable. You cannot assume that anymore. Because in that span of time the limited amount of influx, immigration, and industry that's come here has just rendered the water suspect, in any given place. Wells that are anything less than two to three thousand feet deep are suspect. For instance, the water on my farm. We just don't drink it anymore, straight out of the well, because we can't trust it, because we have dairy farms around us, and we were near West Plains. I don't know whether the West Plains sewage disaster, which occurred in 1978, was one of the agents which did in our water, but it could very well have been. The effects of a 40-acre lagoon of sewage water going down a 27-foot-wide sinkhole into the underground water system and then spreading for literally thousands of square miles through that system—much of it coming up 30 miles away in Mammoth Springs, which is one of the largest spring systems in the world—there's no telling how that has affected us. We're only 20 miles from West Plains. West Plains like many Ozark cities was sold a bill of goods on sewage treatment, told that lagoons were a good way of dealing with treatment of sewage. We have a number of cities, Alton, West Plains, Willow Springs, Mountaingrove, which have lagoons, for primary treatment of sewage. Basically, they just put it in these lagoons, which leak down into the fractured topography, then discharge into streams which go right down into the water table and then come up in a spring somewhere.

PB: How fast did that leak occur in West Plains?

DH: Over a period of about two days. There were pictures in the West Plains paper of one of the city sewage engineers standing on the bank of the lagoon and this gigantic hole funneling down like you'd pulled the plug on a tub or flushed the toilet. It was unbelievable. They have these pictures.

JG: Is the sewage in the lagoons treated at all?

DH: Well, it wasn't. That was the primary treatment. They removed the solids, but basically they assumed that the aeration and the sun in the lagoon would render it basically fit for discharge. To have a green stream running out of these lagoons, incredibly, they figured was not too bad.

JG: What kind of sewage treatment is usable by cities like West Plains? What are they doing now?

DH: If they don't go to decentralized and lower cost methods of sewage treatment, they have to go into tertiary treatment, which involves terrific amounts of energy and therefore costs a terrific amount of money. It's a subtle way of encouraging development. Because, in order to build these huge plants, it becomes an engineering contract boondoggle to get huge projects in which they write in these big overruns. They have these big plants which will accommodate unlimited growth for 20-year periods.

So the whole sewage question, and the whole water question, is a very powerful political issue which is mixed up with the future of unlimited and unwise development. It makes for a very immediately critical situation in the Ozarks, in regard to water and sewage.

The alternatives are very basic. Compost toilets. They are really the answer for the Ozarks. You can also use septic tanks, if you had some sort of contained septic field, where you have filtra-

tion through a bed of sand, or some method of detoxifying or taking the pathogenic organisms out and also getting an appreciable part of the nitrogen com-

Judy Goldhaft



pounds. You've gotta do something to it beyond just an ordinary leach field. But unfortunately where you don't have lagoons most septic tanks are totally unacceptable because they, too, go right down into the water table. The same thing's true of outhouses, which are a terrible solution also. In Eureka Springs, they're attempting to get people to do what they call clustered systems. Cluster systems of septic tanks, and the septic tank does a primary treatment with the anaerobic bacteria on the gray water and black water, and then the overflow goes out through a secondary treatment plant which then will deal with some of that gray-black water. So we hope to have a decentralized system, with a smaller scale plant there instead of a huge one.

This is the alternative plan that went through Eureka Springs, as an innovative plan coming under 98 percent EPA funding for innovative plans that was started by people in Eureka Springs. It will cost a lot less, use less energy than a huge, centralized sewage plant. It was an initiative that came up through work that people in OACC had initiated in Missouri in connection with the West Plains sewage disaster, and which initiated a project called "Why Flush?" which produced a lot of information. This is a New Life Farm Incorporated appropriate technology research organization, which includes OACC people, that went down from West Plains into Eureka Springs. They came to some of the public hearings, presented information about alternatives, and found a receptive climate there among the citizenry, who then in turn informed a concerned citizens committee which impacted on the EPA and the city council. They now have a national water center there, an alternative system funded 97 percent by EPA on the boards, and they also have two consultants of the citizens committee operating right directly with the city council, paid by the city council. This whole nexus of events has generated a very strong voice for clean water, alternative sewage treatment scenarios in the Ozarks. So there has been positive outfall as a result of this West Plains disaster. This all happened within the last four years. 1978 was the West Plains disaster.

JG: The people that are living in the Ozarks now, what kind of a mix of people would you say that they are? Is there a big distinction between the people that have moved in within say the last 10 years, and the people before that?

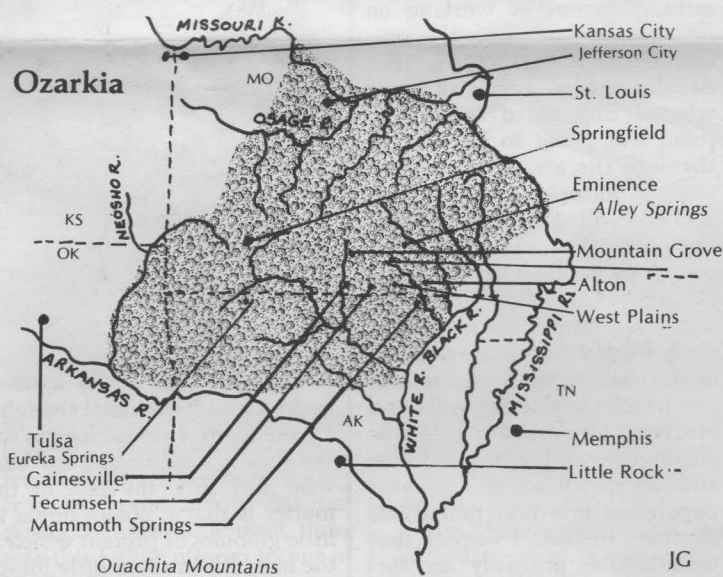
DH: The Ozarks is almost all white. There are a few black people in Ozark towns, but they're very very few and far between. You see them in northern Missouri and southern Arkansas. But very few. There's been virtually no immigration of blacks, in fact if anything they're becoming even less visible. I know some of the historical antecedents of that. It's a long story, but that's the way it is.

Over the last ten years there

has been an influx of people coming in from the cities. I call them urban refugees. They've come from all over. Principally, I would say from Michigan, California, Illinois, and Ohio. People who are part of the so-called back-to-the-land movement. People who couldn't handle urban conditions. They came for a number of reasons. One, land was and remains relatively inexpensive. Two, the taxes are very low. Average taxes for say 40 acres are \$40/\$45 a year. There are very few services. Very little road maintenance. You don't pay much, and you don't get much. Adequate rainfall. Soil is very poor, very rocky, very clayey. Basically a forest soil that's been eroded away. But you can grow a garden, there's a long growing season, you can grow almost anything you want to. You can subsist, and you can even raise a little extra. You can live cheaply. It's easy to survive in the Ozarks. I don't know of anybody that's ever starved to death or come close to it. However, it also depends on how much you can stand. Because, as I have said to many people, it's a poor people's paradise. I mean, there's no money, there's very few jobs, seasonal jobs in the forest which is rapidly being ruined. The ticks and chiggers are ferocious. In the summer the heat is very very strong, it averages 90/95 degrees every day in the summer with high humidity. Winters can be very cold. I've seen 30 below. Many days are at zero. And the extremes in fluctuation are very high. Your average difference in temperature between any given day in the Ozarks is about 80 degrees.

JG: The average temperature?

DH: The fluctuation. Like difference between the high and low, especially during the winter



can be 70/80 degrees. It's a measure of how hot and cold it can be.

JG: Have the people that have come in, these new settlers or urban refugees, made a change here in the Ozarks? Changed the culture very much? Is OACC primarily aimed at them?

DH: The people that have come in have made a change. Not necessarily much in the economic structure, because they live very marginally, and practice very much the economic disintermediation.

JG: What is disintermediation?

DH: Well, according to the *CoEvolution Quarterly*, it's that particular part of the economy which is not accounted for, in terms of mainstream economics. It includes bartering, business which operates on the fringes which deal with cash, and basically do not contribute a whole lot to the tax structure. That's how I understand it. And so, economically there's been very little impact. Except in some cases.

For instance, Eastwind community in Tecumseh, Missouri—which is a cooperative community, an intentional community—has become one of the major

industries in Ozark County. Ozark County, of course, has a very small population, maybe only four or five thousand people. So the impact of a 50- or 60-person community which buys a great deal in the local city of Gainesville and also has an industry producing hammers and nut butters—peanut butter, tahini, and almond butter—they create a strong cash flow in Ozark County. That's an exception, but generally economic impact is low. Socially, there's been a strong bond in many cases, between these new settlers, these urban refugees from the cities, and older people. The older people here are very traditional and can relate, on certain levels, to the simple self-sufficient type of attitudes that've come in. Like self-reliance attitudes, doing more with less, and that sort of thing. But relating to people in the middle range of age, who are kind of success oriented and going for more money and working in the money economy, there has been less contact there. So there are interesting alliances between younger people who've come in and older people. One very strong thing I'd like to say is that almost every person who's come in from the cities to homestead has been befriended, taken under the wing of some local neighbor, who's welcomed them, brought them things for free, helped them get started, been incredibly friendly to them, and basically made them at home. The Ozarks people are the friendliest people I've ever known and ever met. Almost every person or group that's come in has had an angel to guide them and make them welcome and at home, and just pour forth this basic, this open and

mental base. So I see that OACC will be a vehicle for the expression of many people outside this present base that it has now. That remains to be seen, but there's certainly the possibility. However, yes, OACC does presently represent the collective attitudes of the immigrants predominantly. But it isn't restricted to that I don't believe.

JG: How about an overview of what OACC is, how it works?

DH: This is kind of hard. I wrote an overview of OACC, a little four-page pamphlet. It took me four years to formulate what that was, because OACC synthesizes many different elements. But basically OACC comes out of the spirit that it shares with the oak trees, and with the oak forests, and the bioregion of the Ozarks. OACC is the spirit of the oaks. Its relationship with people? Well the thing is, I personally believe that it's not really a human form. It's politics, but it's political ecology. It's based on bio-regional political ecology. Beyond that it's a congress. Ozark Area Community Congress is a *representational* body. It represents many things including human agencies, organizations, philosophies, beliefs. It also represents non-human entities. It represents watersheds, rivers, forests, animals, the whole bioregion. I would say it's a trans-human type of politics, a trans-human organization. It takes its organizational principles out of the bootprints that are the patterns, the same patterns that run the ecology. And it's an extrapolation of environmental principles, ecological principles, into politics. We have a very strong non-human-chauvanist policy. We take great heart from works like that of Christopher Stone, who asked "Do Trees Have Standing?" The equal rights of the non-human. There was a legal precedent established. That's very much in the line of OACC. Trees have legal rights. Environmental entities have legal rights. We intend to represent them. We do not represent only human populations . . . and we take our mandate from the ecology and not from simply human concerns. So, I guess that's maybe a nutshell definition of OACC.

JG: This is the second OACC Congress?

DH: This is the second congress, but the thing about OACC is that it's a *continuous* event. It's been in existence since 1977, it was sort of conceptualized in 1976. It took us quite a while to kind of precipitate our principles out of the collective reality. We finally wrote it down, and then in 1980 we had the first congress. In some ways the first congress is still going on. That event sort of continued and flowed into OACC II. We're now in the process of having the Second Ozark Congress, and it will flow into OACC III. OACC keeps working all year—but on a more diffuse level, through its committees and through the people who are its representatives. Every year we pull together, share what we've learned. We put our tools together. We gather and share our spirit, and then we formulate what we're gonna do for the next year and for the next hundred years. And then we go out and do our work and we come back together. So it's simultaneously an ad hoc event and a continuous event.

One of the things that came up in the resolutions of OACC in 1980 was the idea that in 1982 we would call together a congress of congresses, in 1982. At that point it seemed rather strange that we would be talking about that. It doesn't seem so strange anymore. Especially

Continued On Page 4

OZARKIA, continued

since *Planet Drum* has shown up and identified several other bio-regional groups, operating within North America. I gave a talk at the consumer cooperative alliance in Northfield, Minnesota in July about how to do this. First of all it doesn't have to be a bio-regional conference, there could be sub-congresses in each watershed. The first thing is to define a region. It can be a whole bio-region, it can be a watershed area, it could be an entire nation-state, it doesn't matter. Just define the region. Where do you want to work? Secondly, think of everything (using the model of political ecology as a basis) within that region that has some form of ecological or environmental affinity. Identify those things, and list them. Finally, think of everything good that's being done to benefit that region—either inside or outside of the so-called system. There's something about OACC that makes it unique. It's not over-ground and it's not under-ground. You can bring in a lot of good people who are toiling away inside of ridiculous government structures and have no access to good energy. When you've found them inside their government agencies and all kinds of organizations—energy groups, organic gardening organizations, etc.—invite them. Invite them to come, and ask them to come as representatives. They're representing something larger, a whole movement and a whole idea that's not being adequately represented anywhere else. That's what has happened with OACC so far. Then at the congress, basically the flow is just giving a synopsis of what we've done. And again it can change at any time. But it's a very organic reality that came up through all the people last year. And we're basically running through the pattern again this year—brainstorming the needs and concerns of the group, taking these concerns and needs and having them put under some form of a committee, or areas of concern to be dealt with. Peter Berg suggested a very good way of doing that, maybe in the future. You do it in a way of forums. Limiting the committee or the group to three to seven people. To identify that group of people may be the most effective way to actually do things. Again, maybe we could think about the size of committees in the future. We can tackle more issues head-on using smaller committees or subcommittees. Too many people past the number eight seems not to work.

The committees can form by affinity and then convene for strategy under the idea of the ecopolitical ethic. More toward the formation of resolutions. Then the committees report, resolutions are brought out, reported in committee, passed or dealt with by the whole plenary session. This then becomes your congressional law. We have been making a lot of this bioregion, and it's very powerful what we're doing.

When it was suggested I wrote up a resolution which I would like to bring before the congress tomorrow. First I have to talk with *Planet Drum* and see if they would agree with it. But this resolution is what I came up with: That OACC in combination with *Planet Drum* Foundation call together representatives of all other identifiable North American bioregional groups, for a bioregional conference, in 1982, to be held in the Ozarks or somewhere central in North America. I see no reason why we can't do it.

PB: I don't see any reason why *Planet Drum* wouldn't go along with it. It sounds great. Let's do it!

## OAKLAND REPORT: A Voice From Corridor 17

Rufus Daimant, Talking

*For the past three months over 500,000 urban Northern Californians have been malathion sprayed at night by helicopters. This indiscriminate, surreal spraying program has been "justified" as necessary in order to save Agri-business from the pesty Medfly. Since the Secretary of Agriculture now has virtually unlimited preemptive authority to spray anywhere in the United States, the graphic description that follows may well be a prequel to what many other Americans can expect. Rufus Daimant is an organic gardener and inhabitant of East Oakland's Corridor 17.*



I live in East Oakland near the corner of East 27th and Fruitvale. This is the Fruitvale District. Naturally this would be the place that the Mediterranean Fruit Fly would choose to come and make its home. We have it and I think she's here to stay, frankly. I think the Right-to-Lifers should take notice of this eradication program and speak directly to this whole sterilization project.

We could be considered urban homesteaders because we choose to produce some of our own food. I think that it's important, not only to eat pure food, but to have contact with the earth in order to appreciate Mother Nature and the gifts that come to us every day from sun, sky, sea and land. I like to dig my hands in the earth and get a sense of her helping us grow and evolve. I get a lot of satisfaction out of working on my garden, enriching the soil, and being a part of the life/death process. I was shocked when I first heard that malathion was going to be sprayed through the air onto people's private persons and properties and everything else that was in the immediate area, that this was all being done in the name of some half-cocked emergency which smacked of swine flu and every other kind of newsmaking device that has been used to subject people to ulterior wills and motives. Once again this was government and repressive forces coming down on the general population in a very militaristic manner. In fact, I suspect that malathion is probably an outdated chemical that's being dumped, literally, by the industry on all of us.

The malathion spraying has been going on for six weeks. My anger really got going last week when we got buzzed by a new message from the Authorities, those big capital A's who come dumping malathion and sending helicopters down over our heads, but who don't identify themselves very clearly. It's never been real clear about who's doing this. I guess the federal government is doing this. Even Jerry Brown can't hold against the government agencies that require it to be done a certain way. For once I actually supported Brown on one of his stands because, regardless of the fact that he might switch later on, he was indeed trying to do something which seemed to me sensible. He was trying to fight this Medfly—if it was a true enemy—with biological methods rather than chemical ones. The dangers of herbicides and pesticides and all the crap that's in the environment are just enormous. Instead of dealing with that reality, we just compound the problem by constantly dumping outdated and over-produced and unsafe and profit-intensive materials all over the goddammed biosphere.

People don't realize what it's physically like to be inundated with malathion. Let me describe what happens on Wednesday nights.

The first thing I have to do is cover the garden. I usually come home—right now I'm working doing some carpentry—real tired and wish I sure as hell didn't have to go out and do another hour's worth of work, which involves going and getting all the various plastic sheets that I have folded up in a box and unfolding them, spreading them all over the garden. Because I'll be damned if I'm going to let that garden get polluted at this point after all the work I've put into it to get it productive. The next step is to go inside and keep track of the time. Of course we cover up the plants as late as possible because the lack of air gets to them. The next morning we don't want to take the plastic off too soon because I'm afraid the malathion is supertoxic right after it comes out of the helicopter.

The malathion doesn't do anything to the plastic when it falls on it, that I've noticed, but it does something to my car—which is that it makes little pockmarks in the paint. That blew my mind. The first night it pock-



marked my car. I was kind of cocky about it because I thought, I'll sue them. I would love to sue the state for repainting my car, why not? But, the fact of the matter is that it comes down in little globules of protein which is the bait. It's in these little lumps that land anywhere from two to six inches apart. If you look at a piece of plastic or the top of your car you see little dots of fluid and they're filled, I think, 18% with malathion or something like that. A huge amount of malathion in those little drops. If there was a little mistake, somebody could get a big glob of it in one place. If you happened to sit on it, or wipe your hand on it or something, you could get a lot of malathion in a concentrated dose. I'm sure there are a lot of people that are having real negative effects from it.

Let me describe the actual aerial spraying in terms of what's involved. I get really hyper. I'm buzzed around doing things, and just getting kind of excited about getting the thing covered up in time and making sure the dogs get their run. I want to let them out as late as possible so they can go out and take their pee before spraying. If Wimpy doesn't come back in time, I'm in trouble, because he might get sprayed.

Then we have to make sure all the windows are closed because we don't want the malathion to come in directly to the house, right? So by this time I'm really in a tizzy, and that just feeds my psychological fears. Next, we're looking up in the sky. We're look-

ing out of different windows, where are they, how many helicopters are there tonight? At first, we had no idea how they would come over, but sure enough, they came over at tree top level in formation. The first night there were like three or four of them. One would come and then another and then another in a military formation. I was shocked to find out that I was in Corridor 17. We're zoned into military corridors. The idea is that this is like a military foray. It's a search and destroy the Medfly operation. And if a helicopter crashes or we lose a few old people on the way, who's to notice? This is like . . . the Vietnam syndrome. We've got some people up there, that are in control. The military mind is definitely imposing its rationale on us. We've probably got a lot of helicopters left over from Vietnam and it wouldn't hurt the military mind to bring them out and get them a little exercise.

What I am really getting at is the psychological effect that it has on me personally. And it's a little hard for me to say some of these things because in a sense it means I have to face certain things in myself that bear observation. There's a real powerful psychological effect that goes down deep into me and I'm fairly informed about what's going on. What about the people that don't read the papers regularly, don't completely understand what this is all about? They may not just be completely aware of what's happening and all of a sudden these helicopters come swooping down on their houses.

The first thing that happens is the windows all start to shake, you hear this buzzing. The fucking lights come right in your windows; they're shining these spotlights on the ground that go into your house and then out the other side. It's a real invasion of privacy and I'm sure it's not good for the house. The fucking beams are shaking right down to the foundation and they presume to do this in the public interest when in fact what they're doing is a real disservice to the citizens of this neighborhood. We're rather like the peasants in Vietnam that were being sprayed. I think of the Vietnam vets who are going back in their heads, their whole combat experience, when they see the helicopters swoop down. We know that that's a big problem because of what the vets have said. The government just last week admitted that Agent Orange was being used in sufficient quantities and being ingested by enough GIs in Vietnam that it's now a real severe physical and psychological problem on those vets. We have thousands of vets that are being pushed back in the same way by the use of these horrible chemicals and horrible devices by which they are delivered.

There's an older couple who live right next door here and those folks get real freaked out by this. The guy was telling me that he became nauseous and felt ill and was wondering if it was a result of the malathion. He told me this the day after we were sprayed. Maybe he tends to be a little sick but does that make it any less real when it happens and hits him?

Last week six helicopters came over in formation and they gave us a dousing, because we're only six blocks from where the Medfly was found. The one medfly—in all of Oakland—and who knows where else in the immediate area is being sprayed. Probably half a million people are being sprayed. In Santa Clara, Alameda and San Mateo Counties. That's an enormous quantity. And where else is it floating down and who else

is getting it in the water. They're spraying it in all the goddammed water. It will go right back out into the Bay and kill marine life. A whole bunch of fish just died in a local creek because of the spraying. If it's killing them, what's it doing to us?

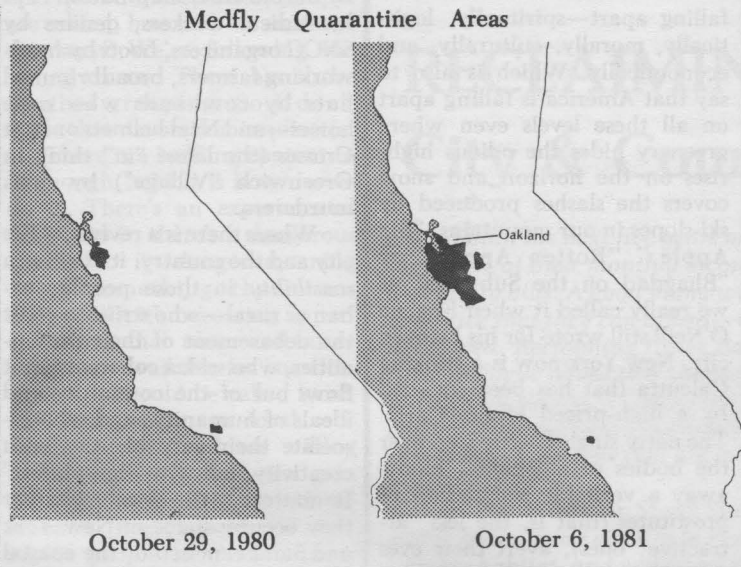
They say that all this is justified because the billion dollar agribusiness is going to suffer. I don't know about them, but I sure know about me, I'm suffering. So is everybody on this block. Agriculture is just going to have to learn to live with the Medflies. We're all going to have to learn to live with it, because it is here to stay no matter how much they spray. Where it's at is where the environment is at. And if the environment is hospitable to the Medfly, we're going to have the Medfly. In fact, the use of this chemical is going to make the environment much more hospitable to the Medfly because we're breeding whole new generations of malathion resistant Medflies. And, of course, that will justify the next step in the process which will be to spray us with Dialgrin, or some other horrible chemical ten times as bad that they're waiting to get rid of next . . .

The morning after the spraying has taken place the first thing I do is wipe off the handles to our cars and wash off the cars. I also look to see what quantity has come down around the house. I can see the spots, the droplets there on the cars and on the plastic on the garden. The drops are kind of a brownish, clear liquid. Almost like tiny raindrops. It's ironic because the morning after is always so gorgeous. You go out there early and there's condensation and maybe a few birds. It seems more quiet after they've sprayed. The animals, everybody seems a little subdued. I remember seeing a bumblebee dying on the sidewalk in front of my house the first morning. It was a real shock when I realized how many other living beings were being killed through this blanket process. It's the same way they kill trees. They just go and cut them all down. There's this scream that goes through the biosphere. It's hard, it's hard to deal with. You just have to shut it off and go to work. And there's another repressed anger that's going to burst out in some negative manner later on.

Then there's the notification procedure, which right now is pretty perfunctory. We get a form letter. Last week they changed the spraying day and didn't notify us until the day after. There was a lot of reporting of the spraying in the paper the first few weeks. But that's changed. There was a week there that I looked for information and I had the damnest time finding anything out. Because that particular week, I wanted to know what the damn fly looked like. I have never yet seen a photograph of the Medfly produced in the papers. I think I've seen some graphics of it, but there's been very little to really help people. I mean, if they wanted the cooperation of people about this thing, people would know what it looked like and some of the habits of the Medfly. I know there were a lot of flies, fruitflies around this year, much more than I've noticed ever before. I'm sure that has something to do with all the sterile flies that were let free. But what about the 50,000 fertile flies that were accidentally let free?

The costs of this whole program are significant to me. The cost of peace of mind. The damn copters come over shaking me and my house to my roots. I do

get to the roots. I start thinking about my child. I want to know what's happening to him. Who knows what the long-term effects on children, on unborn-children especially, are. It's an incredible disservice to the people of this country to throw a pesticide on top of them without the proper studies. Where's the FDA when we need them? A more direct cost on a day-to-day level is my insecurity about the organic nature of my food which I prefer to eat. This is my choice, to grow food on my property that is healthy for me. When the government, which is supposed to protect me, comes in and destroys my sense of well-being and poisons my food, what can I say? Eighty percent of our produce, my family's produce, comes out of our garden. For us to have to go buy food in the supermarket, which also has the same kind of poisons on it, is a real loss in our well-being. It perpetuates a dependency. I thought that independence was supposed



to be one of the cornerstones of the ethics of this country. Now I'm being made dependent on agribusiness, on supermarkets. I'm being told to rip down the fruits of my labor and there's something wrong there.

The way this thing has been communicated to people is a real sleight of hand. What's really happening is that a precedent is being set for people to accept this type of action. The spraying of poisons through the air on

people's property and their persons. There's a precedent now for doing that and it can be on any level. Right now, they just announced open ended "preventive spraying" on other parts of the East Bay. There's no time limit on ending this thing.

Somebody may decide to eradicate the coyotes in Sonoma County next year. Maybe they'll drop some poison food there, or something, & that'll be okay. Air space is not private anymore. For that matter it probably hasn't been for a long time. We have police helicopters that go over Oakland all the time. And now I wonder whether somebody's spying on me or whether they're going to bomb me with poisons. But, I think, people are accepting it. I think it's very important for people to realize that the place to take a stand against this kind of stuff is right now. Because otherwise it just is going to be an accepted part of the system

that we will be sprayed from time to time "in our own interests."

There's a whole fear thing that's happening here and this gets back to the way the military operates. There's a military idea and people play into it of course. You know, we love good horror movies and crazy sensationalistic grisly front page gore. But there's a certain fear thing that is struck into people and I think it's intended to make us heel in the same way that a dog might be browbeaten into obeying its master. The way the helicopters come flying over in formation, the whole brusqueness of the operation, the lack of real concrete information and the real possibilities of long-term ecological and human disaster that could come from this whole thing, all of this plays on us in a way that ultimately subjects us to the will of the authorities. □

## NOTES AND REFLECTIONS OF AN OLD NEW YORKER

Murray Bookchin

*Of late there has been much talk about "Urban Die-Back" and "Rural Revival" on the East Coast—particularly in New York and Vermont. Raise The Stakes asked noted critic and long-time New Yorker, Murray Bookchin, to interpret this phenomena for us. In what follows Murray explores the dissolution of the distinction between city and country, as a result of urbanization, and suggests what kind of transformation is necessary in order to restore a genuinely diverse culture. Murray Bookchin is currently a professor of social ecology at Ramapo College of New Jersey and director emeritus of the Institute for Social Ecology, Plainfield, VT. He has two new books coming out in 1982: The Ecology of Freedom (Cheshire Books, Palo Alto) and Urbanization Without Cities (Sierra Club Books, San Francisco).*



October 27, 1981

It would be very hard, these days, to define what we mean by "urban" and "rural" in the United States. These words, so meaningful culturally and geographically a mere generation ago, have lost their tangibility and scope. We have not only pushed back the wilderness into small pockets and turned it into a mere symbol of a spontaneous, self-forming nature, but even "rural" in the narrowest sense of the word—as a world in which people grow food—has become absorbed culturally and technologically by a synthetic industrial world that manufactures our foodstuffs with chemicals and giant machines rather than cultivates them. The rich sense of growth, of process, of participating in the genesis of life that, in turn, nourishes life, has been debased to an industrial routine that is as impersonal and insensitive as it is anti-ecological and inorganic.

What we have lost in this debasement of the rural is more than our metabolism with nature; we have lost the cultural wealth, the sensibilities, and the self-recognition of our roots in the natural world. We live a lie with our own bodies, our biological rhythms, and the voice of our own animality—a schizophrenia

that divides our rationality from its physical place in evolution and its spiritual place in the larger subjectivity of nature. Our loss of "rurality" constitutes a loss of the selfhood that makes us uniquely human as part of the natural world—not as a computerized machine above or beyond it.

"Urbanity" as we know it today has not redeemed this loss. To the contrary: it has added to the deception that "civilization" has played upon us in the literal sense that the *civitas*—the city which, as myth would have it, implodes us culturally and provides us with a new, ostensibly "man-made" synthesis and coherence—has also disappeared, a fact we hardly even know today, much less confront with candor. The truth is that we have not only despiritized the organic nature that once surrounded us and gave us a sense of place in the flow of life; we have even despiritized the city, which fostered human proximity, cultural variety, and individual autonomy. We have turned both the countryside and the city into caricatures of their highest cultural achievements by dissolving the entire human condition into a formless "urbanity" that digests both country and town, farm and square, nature and society, leaving behind the debris of a culture and landscape that no longer has coherence or a sense of meaning.

The ironies that now afflict us—in a world that has lost both its rural and civic roots to urbanization without cities—are tormentingly concrete. Enough has been written about the loss of human scale, the deadening effects of mass culture, the impersonality of what passes for socializing today, the jaded sense of indifference to the minute-by-minute insults to which the individual is subjected, the empty sense of powerlessness that invades human selfhood—enough of this and more has been said to require emphasis here. What I am concerned with is a bit more complex, notably, my view that "urban" and "rural" have become *states of mind* rather than strictly physical environments. The "city dweller" and "rural dweller" can rarely be defined in terms of the locale in which she or he resides and the work she or he performs. It would be a platitude to dwell upon the fact that media like television which move through space rather than over land, that are not carried like oldtime periodicals but are "projected" like a sovereign elemental force in the cosmos,



Community gardens based on French-intensive beds and cultivated by Puerto Rican residents in New York's Lower Eastside.

that are seen rather than studied, become the solvent for cultural heterogeneity—regional, ethnic and historic—and dissolve all experience into entertainment. With such a "cosmic" force around us, no space is left for personal uniqueness, much less "rurality." As long as everything has become urbanized, including the city conceived as an arena for a sophisticated community, to speak of urban "die-back" is to literally define urbanism itself. What I am saying is that urbanism *as such* has become the corrosive acid for dissolving both the city and the countryside as a source of cultural innovation and personal development. If it comes down to the clothing we wear, the jobs we hold, the "pleasures" that are foisted upon us, the food we eat, and the routines of everyday life, there is a real sense in which we are all urbanized, quite aside from the places in which we live and how we occupy our hands and minds. I think we should be honest about this condition because, to acknowledge it, is the first step in overcoming it—or, at least, resisting it.

Characteristically, urban "die-back" expresses itself by cannibalizing our once-vital city culture. Mozart concerts, Eugene O'Neill plays, the arthritic performance of our aging virtuoso, are all sold out months in advance and the performances filled to overflowing. Perhaps never has so little new been produced that has been buttressed by a traditional, long-past culture hallowed by the centuries. I find it sickening to note that a very commonplace musical of my youth, "Forty-Second Street," more than a half century after its debut has now become the hottest and most widely praised number in that rotten "apple" called New York—although most of its original performers like

Dick Powell have filled their graves for years. Even the street which gave the musical its name, indeed, an area which once symbolized the theatre center of New York and one of the most creative dramatic nuclei in the world, has become a sleazy, X-rated garbage heap so that the haunting music, singers, actors and actresses sound like echoes in a huge vault for the dead.

Yet the whole show must go on despite the macabre lie. And the well-heeled ticket-holders—elbowing their way through the dense crowds of prostitutes, pimps, conmen, and alcoholics who really *live* on the 42nd Street of 1981—finally collapse into their shoddy, worn theater seats to witness the ghostly surrogates for the area's vibrant life of a half century earlier. I find this single fact about that rotten "apple," New York City—or, for that matter, *any* "city" in the United States—a searing metaphor for the equivalence of urbanization with "die-back." Admittedly, the "rural" areas of America may be more tolerable logistically, perhaps even psychologically, but they are no less insincere about themselves. The rice fields of California, like the wheat fields of Kansas, are as synthetic culturally and canibalize their own traditions as ruthlessly as Times Square and Fisherman's Wharf. What has been done to square dancing, general stores, farmers markets, and local crafts is not decisively different in principle from what has been done to "Forty-Second Street." All of them have been scrubbed of their rust, repainted, and worse, rendered more slick than the authentic article. But like the settings in "The Sting" (contrary to most critics, I view it as the most deli-

cious evocation of the 1930s I knew so well), they still look artificial because the entertainers (Newman aside) and the entertained are inherently different from the people of that time. It is almost a relief to hear the fade-ins and fade-outs in recent recordings of "oldtime" radio such as Orson Welles's "War of the Worlds" and the tinny acoustics of the amplifiers of 1938. I regret that they have not seen fit to do a repeat of Welles's "Heart of Darkness" which so entranced us in those "oldtime" days. More innovation could be found in Welles's radio rendition of the great Conrad story nearly fifty years ago than Copolla's light-show version of it—so slick, so thin, so lacking in *personality*—in "Apocalypse Now." Logically, given our time, the making of a Copolla movie provided more of a story than the movie itself. Thus does mere technique triumph over the moral, social, and artistic ends it is meant to serve.

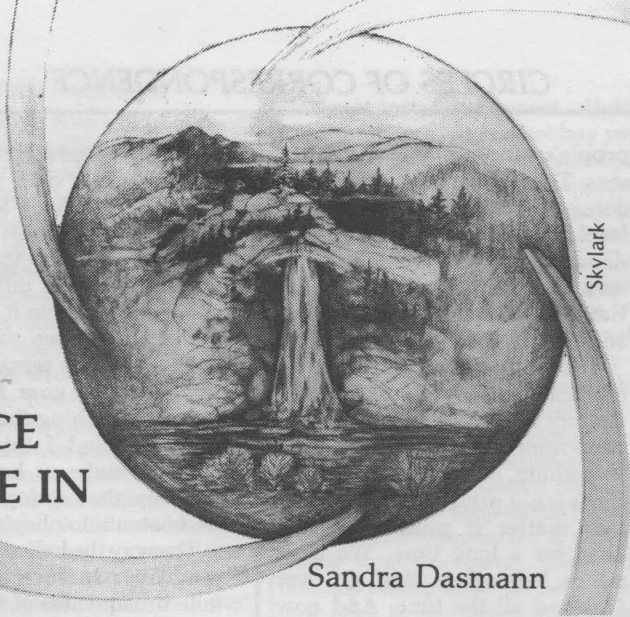
One of my deepest concerns about urban "die-back" lies here: that cultural cannibalism has replaced cultural innovation, a synthetic rendition of life has replaced its organic creation, a sense for media-orchestrated fashion and trendiness has replaced a burning desire for personal development and radical commitment. The very word "idealism" seems archaic, even to the nostalgia buffs, because trendiness requires that a "tad" of contempt for innocence be cultivated as a matter of stylish behavior. I could complain for pages about the extent to which the market—indeed, the supermarket and the shopping mall—have invaded every private sphere of life to which we could once retreat: the neighborhoods that gave us support in forming our personalities, the innocence of true friendship, the high social beliefs spawned by what Ernest Bloch called the "principle of hope." Above all, however, we could nourish ourselves on community—the real civicism we have lost—without which individuality is inconceivable, for nothing is more lacking in substance than the ego which floats "freely" in a corporate void, rootless and buffeted by the media, the marketplace, and the fragile relationships that unite alienated beings in a world of self-interest, unfeeling sexuality, and sexless feelings.

An explosive case can be made for the fact that urban America is

Continued On Page 6

## THE PLACE I LIVE IN

Sandra Dasmann



To talk of great love is to talk of great anguish. Survival is learning to love deeply and let go in the same moment. The place that I live in is beautiful and it is not enough to list these specific beauties.

Right now: a constellation of little lights dances above the path. A meteoric streak of light zooms through them. The points of light are flies and one hornet. Right now: the ground is dry and the blackberries are ripe. The yerba santa leaves take on a strong sheen in the heat. There are always these specific beauties here and it is not enough to list them. What I have learned again and again is that we cannot seem to avoid creating ugliness in the midst of it all.

It is also not enough to list the ways in which this place is being destroyed, to wallow in the romantic angst of destroyed beauty. Men who complain about ravished land, too many people, beer cans in the river often remind me of men who will not sleep with a woman who is not a virgin.

The place I live in is fenced, owned, guarded and walked on, patrolled by greed and fear. People here struggle to take, use their share and more than their share. They have gone mad over gold, over land use, over easy money. In madness they wound each other and cut themselves off from their roots. The place that I live in is like other places.

I did not go to the road meeting. I could not take sides between a dirt road full of ruts and potholes and a road paved with speed and the blood of animals. It is not a question of roads but of how we use our lives. We are a civilization of vandals, a global failed patriarchy, constantly fouling its nest, afraid of the dark.

The place that I live in is beautiful. We came here like pioneers who would escape the dense insanity of our culture, looking for clear streams, groves of trees, the company of wild animals. We found this vibrating, shimmering peace laid over everything, a fabric of everyday life that is a curtain of beauty drawn across the mysteries. We found a way of living could be simple, close to our real needs, animal needs for simple food and shelter, angel hunger for beauty and mystery. Like pioneers each family carves its own estate out of the prima materia of the land. Like pioneers we take and use the trees as lumber, the earth as soil. And like pioneers we live grating on each other, in our clutter of broken cars and machinery, in disagreement about how to take and use.

Meanwhile our children grow like an afterthought their spirits foundering in the values of patriarchy. Boys learn to compete, take, and use. Girls will preen themselves and get raped and over long and bitter years they will get even.

The fabric of wildness on the land tears apart under the strain of roads, buildings, dogs, chainsaws, fences.

I came here to stay, to be home, to sink roots and live in place, to create something for my children. I found that I have balled roots that sink where they can and let go again, that I have always lived in place, that home is wherever I am, that my heart aches for my children. The fierce love of place that I feel moves me and tortures me in every place I go and wherever I stay.

Survival is loving and letting go in the same moment.

NEW YORK, continued

falling apart—spiritually, logistically, morally, culturally, and economically. Which is also to say that America is falling apart on all these levels even where greenery hides the odious high-rises on the horizon and snow covers the slashes produced by ski-slopes in our mountains. "Big Apple," "Rotten Apple," or "Bhagdad on the Subways" as we really called it when Eugene O'Neill still wrote for his beloved city, New York now is a stinking Calcutta that has been invaded by a high-priced Monte Carlo. The natty singles deftly step over the bodies of alcoholics, elbow away a veritable population of prostitutes (that is, the less "attractive" ones), avert their eyes when they encounter beggars, jog in costly sneakers and tasteful shorts past heaps of street garbage, patronize black and Hispanic *artistes*, and devour endless quantities of Mozart concerts, Rubenstein performances, O'Neill plays, and thirties musicals. Rumor has it that Ed Koch regards himself as the reincarnation of Fiorella LaGuardia with the brassiness of Robert Moses—so that even the political hacks of the past and their power brokers are being disinterred in this macabre death-dance of sleazy nostalgia. Pitiful as LaGuardia probably was and odious as Moses surely was, Koch seems like little more than a vulgar parvenu who apes everything he can never hope to be. The worst part of this self-pretension is its pretension to selfhood—to character, personality, and purpose. Like the Berliners of the Weimar Republic, the Parisians of the interwar decades era, the New Yorkers of the flapper era had their own heady sense of creativity, a toughness of mind and self-assurance that made for great theater, not cheese-cake fashion. Nothing testifies to this psychic vacuity more than the emphasis New York and all our cities place on fashion over personality: the accountants in leather coats who dress like pimps, the secretaries in high-heeled boots who dress like prostitutes. Clothing has become the casket for pathetic individuals who are only alive in a strictly physiological sense. Starved of all sources that make for community—from neighborhoods and human scale to mutual aid and active citizenship—they have in a strange sense flirted with Moral Majority's credo of commitment, belief, and the re-legitimation of the past by making the past itself a fashion. Time will tell whether the snapped caps workers wore for generations in the pre-World War II era will be replaced by shawls, vests by courtly lace, and sneakers by hippie sandals.

The eclecticism of this pursuit for uniqueness at the expense of individuality, for appearances at the expense of character, for a shock effect at the expense of personality is the most expressive evidence of a more terrifying fact: The garishness of the clothing, its sick medley of utterly different time periods in which vests are made of leather, boots are structured around six-inch heels, cowboy hats are combined with tuxedos, and jeans, which the New Left introduced in the early sixties to ease their contact with black southern share-croppers, tailored to Gloria Vanderbilt's buttocks—all testify to an *ahistoricism*, an *indifference to a meaningful structuring of culture*, to an *incoherence of time that dissolves past and future into an eternal present*. Tradition, which the late Zero Mostel so ebulliently evoked in "Fiddler on the Roof" as the inspiration for his own sense of coherence as a Jew, has now become a potluck-kind of boutique. One does not evaluate the contents of this boutique; one simply grabs at anything that will make one noticeable amidst the drab crowd without even faintly understanding

that trench coats were first worn by the old IRA, snap-button caps by radical workers, denims by SNCC organizers, boots by hard-working farmers, broadbrimmed hats by cowhands who rode horses—and Nazi helmets or Iron Crosses (the latest "in" thing in Greenwich "Village") by mass murderers.

Where there is a revival of the city and the country, it exists as a *sensibility* in those people—urban or rural—who strive to resist the debasement of their personalities, who seek a coherence that flows out of the continuity and ideals of humanity, and who associate their very identity with creativity, not with "happiness." It matters little to me whether they occupy space in New York and San Francisco or the coastal mountains of California and the Green Mountains of Vermont. This sensibility and creative identity begins, I think, with an honest recognition of the insincerity of urbanism today and above all with its myths of culture, heterogeneity, "stimulation," and sophistication. It begins with an attempt to *interpret* the art of the past, to understand its *communal and social roots*, not appropriating it as a substitute for a lack of a contemporary culture and sense of community. What troubles me—almost as a spiritual ache—is the fact that cultural events are performed so well with such *technical* perfection. Duke Elling-



ton's music was never played as deftly by his own band as it is today by his overly trained, slick surrogates. Dick Powell never sang so purely nor Ruby Keeler so expertly as their counterparts fifty years later. Orson Welles seemed more wondrously flawed over a tinny amplifier in 1938 than Marlon Brando over a stereo in 1978. Ellington, Powell, Keeler, Welles, and most assuredly Mozart, O'Neill, and Rubenstein, were breaking new ground in their own ways. Hence, they wavered here and there with ends and visions that had yet to be matured. It's a sign of disease rather than achievement that contemporary string quartets, bands, movies, actors and actresses, singers and dancers are so tastelessly perfect precisely because they are so lacking in creativity. The lighting is impeccable, the color "richer" than life (as though this should even be desirable!), the timing so flawless that it can be quantified by a computer, because all that is being stated by the experience is the power of technique, not at the exuberance creativity. I'll know that something new has emerged when a film is grainy (a criticism which a MUSE huckster voiced against a superb film on the Three-Mile Island disaster), the lighting shadowy, the sound crackly, the music uneven, the color as washed out as life itself.

To know how synthetic urbanity is today—as well as to smoke out the pretensions of "rurality"—is the first step in *demystifying* the "excitement" of urban life and the "tranquility" of rural life. It would be a breath of honesty in an ever-thickening odium of hypocrisy. I think I would also ask for *conscience*, not merely fear, with respect to the horror that swirls through the streets of our "cities"—a decent sense of shame for the obscene luxury that the trim, urbane singles and working couples enjoy amidst the gothic poverty that surrounds them. The "condo" set of New York and San Francisco, the gentrification of the ghetto areas, the swingers' clubs and boutiques that replace the barrio's

social clubs, the health "spas" that are designed to give perfect bodies to empty minds, and the eclectic plundering of the past which so justifiably affronts the elders who lived it—all, stink of vulgarity, not of a Latin decadence that brought down an empire nearly two millennia ago. The various "Caesar's" whatever-you-call-them clubs or the topless bottomless bars are designed for sleazy accountants and slimmed-down prudents who want to be treated like whores, not Roman emperors who sat on the classical world and their women who were consumed by cosmic ambitions. Let us not mistake the leprous rot of decay for the perverse grandeur of historic decadence.

And I would ask for *idealism*—or, at least, the "cynical innocence" that Nietzsche called for in *The Will to Power*. Personally, as an old New Yorker, I am weary of seemingly sophisticated people and small talk that sounds bright because it is cutting rather than feeling. Or worse: the "laid-back" low-decibel lip-movements that pass for conversation today. The most horrendous effect the present society has had on people is to *trivialize* them: their lives, their talk, their reading matter, their fleeting emotions. If language provides the means for symbolizing thought, then the use of terms like "input," "output," "feedback," not to speak of "brain-storming" and "think-tanking," as substitutes for "dialogue," "discussion," and "reason" brutally reveal how much the inorganic worlds of cybernetics and engineering have invaded and replaced civilization's gift of personality and metaphor. Idealism demands passion, expression, spontaneity, and openness of belief. It will not abide a world of human circuits and clones who discharge ideas like print-outs rather than engage in the dialectic of intellectual creation.

Lack of space makes it impossible for me to itemize my own view of recovery. The cities are dying from urbanization, not simply from logistical breakdowns, crime waves, and lack of funds. This, too, is slowly happening to the countryside. By urbanization I mean a deadening of sensibility, a sense of powerlessness, a lack of creativity and individuality that was nourished by community—not merely sprawl or suburbs or poor "management." Whatever life I have found in the cities I know of (and lost) has appeared in its ghettos and authentic subcultures, not its chic, boutique-infested or gentrified "condo" areas. I have found it in places where people are trying to perpetuate a beleaguered culture like the Hispanic Lower Eastside, not the swinging Upper Eastside. There, people laugh with their bellies rather than giggle from their larynx; they orate, not chatter; they are bellicose, not laid-back; they have callings, not professions; they are political, not gossipy; and they are giving, not grasping.

They have opened gardens on debris-strewn lots, put windmills and solar collectors on reconstructed, formerly gutted tenements, opened recycling centers and cultural plazas. They have their own poetry in an Anglo-Spanish patois, their own festivals to rebels from their homelands, a mural art that addresses itself to militant struggle and engagement, and they hold community meetings, not stags. But let us face some hard facts: they are being pushed out of their barrios and neighborhoods at an appalling rate by an eviscerated "gentry" that is turning their tenements into "condos" and paying scandalous rents for railroad apartments with bathtubs in their kitchens. It may well be that these authentic barrio people will soon be gone—elbowed out by swingers, singles, working couples, hippie capitalists, and

palaces for office "Caesars."

If there is any meaning to the idea of rural "revival," it emerges from what is still a feasible vision. The small-towns, for all their parochialism, are still scaled to human dimensions and, mythic as it may be, foster an ideal of self-reliance and self-management. If myth they be, they are more *real* in the minds of the people who hold them than the realities that tend to subvert them. To believe that one has power over one's life is the first step toward acquiring it. Indeed, what we often call "myths" are the ideals that make for social consciousness. Hence, the myth that New England town meetings are "real" may very well turn the myth into a reality in periods of social crises, just as the myth of a revolutionary working class may one day produce general strikes.

I earnestly believe nothing redemptive will come from the cities today—even though I knew of no other life for nearly half a century. It demoralizes me to see them, to go back to my gutted birthplace in New York, to know that I will be a mere statistic if I'm mugged, to feel powerless wherever I walk in once-familiar neighborhoods, and to see the kind of egocentric, albeit depersonalized, clones that now infest them. In Vermont, where I expect to live out the rest of my life, I have a sense that networks can be built between people, based on ideals and mutual aid which are almost totally lacking in my native city. It is not accidental, in my view, that Germany's contemporary youth revolt began in small towns like Freiburg and Nuremberg, not Frankfurt, Hamburg, or, for that matter, Berlin. Zurich, for all its cosmopolitan airs, is still a small city; so, too, Berne. The huge demonstrations occur in the cities, but they are well-managed, organized, and easily disbanded by centralized "Mobe-type" coalitions and top-heavy leaderships. The upsurge from below occurs in more humanly scaled communities, almost unabashedly rural, and which still preserve the values of self-activity and self-organization.

So I'll leave the New York metropolitan area—more because of its moral ugliness, cynicism, self-debasement, and social powerlessness than for its physical ugliness, filth, and culturally cannibalistic population. I take comfort in the fact that thousands are following much the same path I am taking—but I wonder if their motives, guided by the need for social change and the need for a personal coherence are similar? That we are faced with urban "die-back" is beyond question in my mind. But will we have rural "revival"? I am not impressed by technocratic achievements in solar energy, wind-power, organic gardening, and holistic health that is so often associated with the migration to the countryside. If Amory Lovins and his ilk can place their "AT" know-how in the service of the Pentagon—as I feared years ago—then the environmentalist "movement," particularly its technocratic branch, might just as well incorporate and sell itself to Exxon. Nor am I interested in a "survivalist" refuge in the hinterlands of America, be it a remote commune in Oregon that is fleeing the Apocalypse, or a sand-bagged family fortress where the kids pack 45-calibre automatics. I am concerned with the sensibilities, idealism, practice, and social commitments that motivate these thousands who are leaving the urbanized areas, not their techniques and personal intentions. Hence we have yet to see if rural "revival" is merely another version of urban "die-back"—or something new that will offer a hope to cities, perhaps stir them back to a new life and idealism, and give them a sense of power. □

## LETTERS

8 August 1981

Dear Raise the Stakes,

I am writing in regard to your article in issue #3, "Klamath-Trinity Watershed: An Irish View" with Vincent Corrigan. While the article contained many valuable perceptions, there were some aspects of it either flat-out inaccurate or showing a rather limited understanding of the place under discussion.

First off, Orleans is not and never has been "the traditional home of the Yurok Indians." As far as can be ascertained, the Yurok people never lived further up the Klamath River than Bluff Creek, a point some 10 miles downstream of Orleans. From Bluff Creek upstream to Orleans, and for miles past it along both the Klamath and Salmon Rivers, was and is the home of the Karuk, or "upstream" people. The Karuk are quite different from the Yurok, or "downstream" people. They speak an entirely different language, have their own ceremonies, legends, and sacred places, and consider themselves a distinct people. The two peoples *did* intermarry, attend each other's ceremonies, and engage in trade. The Karuk Tribal Council has its headquarters in Orleans, though the traditional world center of the Karuk lies several miles upstream at what is now called Sugarloaf Mountain, by the confluence of the Klamath and Salmon rivers.

Mr. Corrigan's expertise seems to be in the areas of mining and agriculture, so it is natural for him to look at the economic vitality of an area in those terms. However, his discussion of the lands around Orleans completely neglects to mention the activity which has been the area's economic lifeblood for the last several decades—logging.

As one who has spent the previous two summers working in the woods surrounding Orleans, I can testify to the tremendous greed and waste of the industry as it has been practiced, particularly in the past. I can also testify to the tremendous regenerative power of the land there. In an area receiving 60 inches of rainfall annually in the river valleys and much more on some west-facing hillsides, the healing process begins immediately following logging, provided the slope is not overly extreme and the slash and other logging waste is properly disposed of. This slash disposal is often accomplished by burning, which clears the land, releases certain nutrients, and also produces the "blackened stumps" Mr. Corrigan saw. In less than a year following logging, the annuals-shrubs-hardwoods-conifers cycle will have begun, culminating in a healthy, diverse, predominantly coniferous forest in less than 80 years. This is the rate *without* resorting to any of the dubious methods of "forest management" so beloved by the Forest Service, such as applications of herbicides to slow the growth of hardwoods, etc.

To suggest that this land be "reclaimed" as farmland seems to be a fundamental misunderstanding of the land itself. This is mountainous country we're talking about, where slopes in excess of 30% are commonplace. It has been growing some of the most diverse coniferous forests in the world for millennia. Properly treated, it will continue to do so. I know of no one in whose life wood and wood products do not play a part. There is nothing immoral or rapacious about logging when the scale is small and the greed factor is controlled. Small-scale logging can be like small-scale agriculture—a nurturing, husbanding process as opposed to the slaughter it becomes on a larger, "capital-

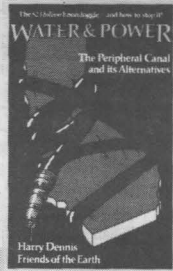
intensive" scale. The country around Orleans has a natural inclination to grow trees. It does it quite well. If we are to learn to live in harmony with it, it should be allowed to continue to do so.

Mr. Corrigan's other ideas concerning the creation of farmland along the river valleys through "re-inhabitory mining" are intriguing. There are already some beautiful farms along the alluvial benches of the Klamath south of Orleans. It would be great to have more.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Miles  
Luffenholtz Creek (coastal)  
watershed, Westhaven,  
Humboldt County, California

## REVIEWS



With the sponsorship of Friends of the Earth, Harry Dennis has given us a good description of how the Water & Power game works—of who are the players and who holds the stakes in California's proposed \$23 billion Peripheral Canal project. Because an initiative has put the canal issue to a vote next June, this is primarily a campaign book and voter-education tool. Well-organized, with frequent maps and summaries, it contains the text of SB 200 as well as Proposition 8 (the "safeguards" voters attached to the original legislation out of Sacramento, which unfortunately take effect only if the canal is approved). The book reads like a Who's Who in Water & Power, naming names of the seven institutions responsible for water policy, the organizations for and against the Canal, the 31 corporate interests whose "contracts" are the reason for the project. Wherever possible, the state's interests are distinguished from the feds' interests. Along the way we get careful explanation of the hydrological and economic catch-words that disguise the actual stakes and issues. What is "entitlement water," and how is it different from "surplus water"? Who is Clifton Court Forebay?

Dennis summarizes a century or so of legislation and litigation, devotes the second half of his book to a critique of the results, and presents well-argued suggestions for reform. The primary argument amounts to this: instead of rewarding waste, money needs to flow in such a way as to encourage efficiency and a true accounting of costs. Moreover, and in the long term most urgent, the status of water rights must be clarified for all users:

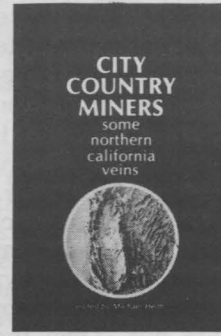
*"When people are uncertain about the strength of their claim to water, their tendency can be to divert as much water as possible, thus strengthening their position in any litigation. Uncertainty also leads people to advocate a rigid water distribution system, for fear that they might lose rights in a more flexible system. Water may continue to be used where it has less than maximum economic value, simply to protect the right to that water."*

This is an important insight, not only into water rights, but into the psychological warp that allows voters to be regularly stampeded into approving what their corporate water managers tell them they need.

*Water & Power* lacks an index and notes, which in addition to its bibliography would make it a better tool for argument. But its main lack, which it shares with

the prestigious *California Water Atlas*, is simply that it isn't yet what's needed for the long-term survival of our watersheds. That is, for people to come to an understanding of where they live—of the quality of life that flows through place—of water itself, and of watersheds—of what a river is, or a lake or an estuary, in all the myriad, non-quantifiable webs of relation that make the difference between a living organism and dirt with a pipe stuck through it. Until this quality is recognized, people are going to vote again and again to defeat their own and the planet's best interest. And continually fail to understand why other people chain themselves to rivers and blow up aqueducts and dams.

**WATER & POWER: THE PERIPHERAL CANAL AND ITS ALTERNATIVES** • Harry Dennis • Friends of the Earth • 124 Spear Street • San Francisco, CA 94103 • 168 pages • \$4.95. *Jerry Martien*



From 1976 - 1980 there was a publication called *City Miner Magazine* that presented some of the "wildest" imaginations in Northern California which in turn represented the region as an original distinct place on the planet. This year sees the publication of *CITY/COUNTRY MINERS: Some Northern California Veins*, edited by *Raise The Stakes* editor Michael Helm. This volume once again explores the diverse elements of Northern California culture through some of its saltiest and most "finely attuned minds." The book is organized around the four themes of *relationships, work, places, and politics* with an emphasis on first person delivery through a collection of urban and rural stories, poems, articles, letters, journals, oral histories and graphic work.

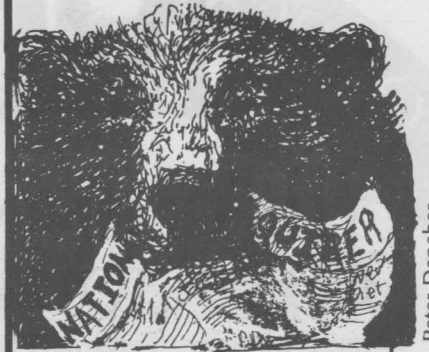
*CITY/COUNTRY MINERS* helps establish a Northern California identity that we can share with other regions in an effort to extend the connection between "wildness," culture and rootedness to a specific place. It reads like an estuary of information and gives "a renewed sense of the possibilities for living in a convivial environment."

**CITY/COUNTRY MINERS: Some Northern California Veins.** Edited by Michael Helm • Published by City Miner Books • P.O. Box 176 • Berkeley, CA • 256 pages • \$7.95

## OZARKIA

As we determine the paths to a sustainable future it is the small bioregional publications that will communicate and facilitate that transition. *Ozarkia* is a perfect example of a small, proud, plainspoken newsletter that provides a good balance of inventive ideas and theory with pragmatic action-directed information. As witnessed at the recent OACC II (Ozark Area Community Congress), there are people who have confirmed their belief in a bioregional identity who are prepared to design and enact a program of priorities that will deal with biospheric concerns. *Ozarkia* is the new handbook of the Ozarks bioregion and represents a wide variety of voices from that community. Look here first for new approaches to old problems.

**OZARKIA** • 730 West Maple • Fayetteville, AK • 10 issues • \$5.00/yr.



Peter Danaher

## HIGH QUALITY INFORMATION

Jim Dodge

In Communication Theory (one of the flashier new industrial arts) information is defined as "that property of a signal or message whereby it conveys something unpredictable yet meaningful to the recipient, usually measured in bits."

Unpredictable, yet meaningful bits. A bombardment, a merciless crossfire, a veritable fusillade of bits: from the long, gray columns of type, the soft electronic hum of the radio, the ashen light of TV: news, data, facts, claims, tips, assertions, hints, advice, suggestions, pieces, bits. We are living an ingravescient glut of information, information that is quickly rendering its definition obsolete—for while the bits remain unpredictable, they are becoming increasingly meaningless. "Unpredictable meaninglessness" is a fair definition of the absurd, and while absurdity is essential to refresh the spirit, prolonged exposure will turn the senses to mush and make it impossible to sustain a mood.

The signals lately seem desperate in their rationality, as if everything was being thrown from a sinking boat. It seems to me the only way to survive the current paralyzing mash of information, to escape the frozen circuits of its bogus factuality, is to seek and insist upon high-quality information. What constitutes "quality" is, undoubtedly, subjective, but it seems to me that high-quality information generally shares three characteristics: it is direct; it is deep; and it is durable.

Direct sensual apprehension is information's clearest route. The hoot owls calling in the pepperwood trees. The first drop of rain on your forehead. The taste of your lover's mouth. The axiom here is simple: accuracy increases as you move toward the source. The hoot owls calling in the pepperwood trees are *clearer*—both audibly and emotionally—when you hear them from your back porch than when you hear them on a record.

High-quality information strikes deeply in the psyche. There is a cellular thrill of recognition, a loop of delight, a sense of both completeness and opening. The recognition resonates in the subjective contours of our being, exciting the imagination.

It is durable because it integrates other informations, thus complementing their powers (in the shaman's sense of the word "power," not the politician's). High-quality information is also durable because it invariably proves useful, whether it be in splitting posts, analytical hair-splitting, or splitting town. It is durable, moreover, because high-quality information tends to be shared when possible; it, like joy, seeks expression. Whether it takes the form of gossip, book, or kiss, high-quality information moves through, not to. Like a bell-note traveling through the air, or a wave through water. □

From *Reinhabiting a Separate Country—Planet Drum Books*



## THE CLONING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Jerry Mander, Talking \*

I want to talk about some perspectives on television that arrived late in the process of doing my book. Particularly, the concept of monoculture—the creation of a worldwide monoculture that's emerging now and the media's roll in that. My book was really about a process, well underway already, which on the one hand is turning the physical world into freeways, or highrises or suburbs or one-crop technofarms, and which on the other hand is remaking human beings to match these one dimensional forms. At present television is the major instrument for unifying the human conceptual framework and human experience itself, as if humans themselves, or our nervous systems were just another crop being sown.

The average person in this country is watching television for four hours and twenty minutes per day, meaning that *half* of the population is watching for more time than that. That's a terrifying statistic—because it means that Americans watch more television than we do anything else aside from sleeping and working. If you were a Martian anthropologist come to view this culture you'd have to report back that the main thing these Americans do is watch television. Television has effectively replaced the prior environment; we literally live within it, and it within us. Millions of people, night after night, sit in darkened rooms, separated from each other, separated from their communities, with eyes fixed staring at a light which flickers on and off 60 times per second, like the hypnotist's candle. People are sitting there identically gathering information from someplace far away where they are not. Then they walk around the world carrying identical images in their mind, day after day. The images themselves produce people like the images. We are what we see. People talk like television, behave like television, imitate television (I'm sure you have seen your child behave bionically).

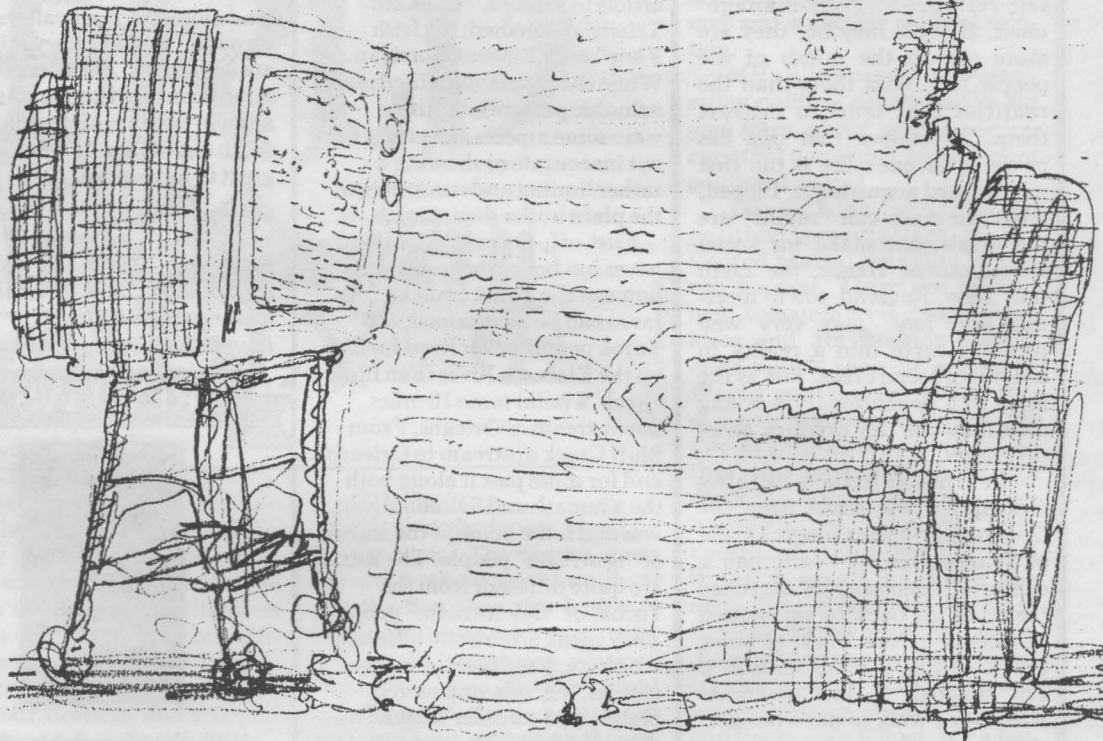
A good way of thinking about television is as a cloning instrument, except one which is directed at the already born. It predicts genetic engineering in a way. It's a way of changing the nervous system of human beings to match each other by making identical human experience. It's happening worldwide in the same way the natural environment is being simplified. I've been trying to speak to the point of monoculturalization because I've begun to see television as *the* instrument which is able to make a kind of "final solution," by doing what was done to the external landscape *inside* humans. Even without conscious conspiracy. I'm one of those who thinks of conspiracy as an affective phenomenon, rather than a deliberate phenomenon. In other words, once you have all the other processes going on then of course monoculturalization is also going to happen inside people. My book was originally to be called *Suburbanization of the mind*. Then I wanted to call it *Freewayization of the Mind*, but I decided that it was more important to make the political statement of T.V.'s elimination. I was trying to get across in some way that this juggernaut is now *in* us. We carry it in us and there's no way of avoiding that. If you are going to have a mass scale instrument like television, then like other mass scale technologies, it's going to unify whatever it is dealing with. If it's a mass scale agricultural instrument it will unify production processes, it will unify food. If it's mass scale transportation systems it will unify landscape, it will unify experience. Television as a mass media simplifies and unifies our minds.

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I've recently begun to think about *down time*, particularly as it relates to children. I'm one of the pre-TV generation who can remember when there was no television. I think the moment I decided to write the book was when I spotted my kids in front of a TV and said, they don't know that there was once a world without television. They don't know that something's real different now than before. And that it's seriously different. When I used to get home from school there was this moment, it happened almost every day, when there was nothing to do and you had to find some activity. You'd get home, do the icebox, play with the dog, and then there was nothing to do. So you would sink into this moment of "What am I going to do?" An anxious moment took place there. And then you had to take charge of your life, to say "Now, I am going to do something, I am going to read, I am going to call somebody, I'm going to go out, I'm going to pile these things on top of each other." *That* moment, I think, is like the gene pool of creative and complex activity. It's the root of it.

Now what happens is kids come home from school and at the onset of that down-time the television goes on. There's a blotting out. They're not where they are, they are now removed to other planets, other locales. The mind is not their mind. Their mind is now the mind of the television and they never sink into down-time. They never step into this empty place from which something personal, creative and active evolves. What this amounts to basically is drug training. It's a way to avoid falling into the empty place by using an instrument outside yourself to blot out this impending anxiety. Television also makes it impossible for people to experience themselves, it makes them more capable of being influenced by others. They lose a sense of personal identity by never doing anything on their own. Adults, of course, have been doing this for some time with alcohol and other kinds of drugs. Television is just an advance on that process. We're raising a generation of kids now who are unable to deal with down-time, with their boredom and creativity. You could look at what's happening with TV as wiping

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Arthur Okamura

Most criticism of mass media, especially of television, centers on the dismal level of the content. Jerry Mander, ex-advertising executive and author of *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*, thinks the problem goes much deeper. Along with Marshall McLuhan, he would argue that "The medium is the message." When the medium, however, is the most powerful instrument of technological society, as television has become, the consequences—biologically, politically, and environmentally—are likely to become, in Mander's opinion, catastrophic. In what follows, Jerry Mander talks about the disturbing loss in human creativity and diversity that is happening as a result of mass media and suggests what kind of information process is worth experiencing.

## An Interview With Jerry Mander

*Michael Helm: Marshall McLuhan talked about the creation of a kind of electronic global village in which everybody gets the same basic message and therefore has the same kind of consciousness. Do you basically agree with McLuhan in terms of his analysis?*

**Jerry Mander:** I agree with McLuhan to the extent that he said that the world is increasingly beating to the same beat, that people in disparate cultures are now beating to the same beat. He called that tribal, and he called that a global village. I think those words are really wrong, because tribal implies a scale in which a community is unified in its *experience* as well as its information, in terms of its everyday life. It's an integrated life. The tribal village concept is that people live where they are, engaged in activities that are relevant to the place where they are. That they can affect the circumstances of their lives and know all the people in their own community. There's a sense of solidarity around that.

Now, with electronic media, we get everybody vibrating with the same information beat and the same rhythm, but it's based upon information that comes from someplace where people are not. The rhythm is a rhythm which people don't relate to in their immediate existence.

I think the problem with McLuhan is that he didn't have a political perspective to apply. He never made a judgment about any of the things that he was saying. I think that, if you're going to talk about the medium being the message, then you've got to start talking about the *consequence* of that. About what that actually means in terms of people's experience with their lives.

*MH: McLuhan talked about print as being "linear" and television being "multi-dimensional." Somehow linear was bad and multi-dimensional was good for him.*

**JM:** That's a confusion again. Because print is linear in the sense that it organizes information, one thought behind the other, that's the way print has to go. You can only do one word at a time, so it's one thought behind the other, so it's linear. Television is non-linear because the information is visual, that is to say you get the information subjectively and you don't have to get the thought to get the information. You get the picture and therefore you've got the information. You get the information even if you disagree with the words or even if the words are foolish and silly. You get hit with information in a subjective realm when it goes into your lower brain. It's experienced as dream information practically. So McLuhan was right to define one as linear and the other as non-linear. But it's not better. Media which is linear just creates a certain mode of understanding; media which is non-linear basically amounts to an implantation system. The images go in, they then remain in permanently, they become your image pool and you slowly turn into the images that you're given. What I'm saying is that McLuhan described the non-linear implantation as if it was creating people who could act in a more flexible creative way. That's what made him say it was good. But he failed to carry that definition all the way out. Because, in fact, the non-linear implantation creates passivity and flaked-out-ness. It creates non-involvement in the world, or a willingness to accept. It doesn't help the ability to *think* about the information that's just moved into you. So I think it's a negative when a mass medium has that quality operating rather than the linear which at least has cognition connected up with it.

*MH: We have the sense of linear as being simple, and the non-linear, collage, visual image of television as being complex.*

**JM:** It's complex to the *maker* of the image. It doesn't produce

complex people is what I'm saying. The reception of television images has the effect of pacifying and deadening the minds of the receiver. The person who gets the information that way and uses television in that way, becomes a less alive, less creative, less complex person. Because, even though the information is complex from the point of view of the producer of the information, it goes in whole. Viewers don't go through any process at all to connect up that thing. It just goes in onto the tape, onto the mental tape. So, I think, it produces simpler, duller, coarser people. Even the so-called information is linear. It's only non-linear from the producer's point of view. It's actually linear in the reception when you think about it. It is a series of images that come as a stream. The stream has a chronology to it. One image comes before the next image. So, in a way, there's a certain linearity to the reception of the images. There's not, however, a lot of linearity in the fact of the images themselves.

*MH: I think McLuhan was using non-linear in the sense that both place and time could be taken out of context.*

**JM:** See that's good conditioning for autocracy. That's what happened in 1984, which was the readjustment of place and time, which makes it possible to completely readjust reality. When people live in the world of television, they are living in a world in which there's an incredible intermix of time and place. The camera is indoors and then it's outdoors. It's forward in time, then backwards in time. There's fictional images, so-called real images, recreated dramas, and fantasy images. All of those being mixed in together and cut interactively. The actual natural time sequence is altered, with viewers living in basically a fictional world for an average of 4 hours a day. There is a complete arbitrariness of information, all the information is arbitrary and up for grabs. Whoever creates that information, you have no way of verifying, of verifying whether anything actually happened, or didn't happen. Since it all has happened someplace else, has been recreated, readjusted. So you're living in an abstract manipulated world. That aspect of non-linearity is a political problem, because it's making people crazy. "Sanity" becomes the ability to accept the readjustment of images in a way that couldn't be done in real life. And you're also in the hands of the creator, the recreator, of all those images. Real life isn't like

# MONOCULTURE

TECHNOLOGY  
& CULTURE

television. You're here in the room, it doesn't whirl around, you don't get intercut to outdoors, or you don't disappear and change your clothes, come back in the next frame. People are "asked" by television to live in an absolutely arbitrary world that has been completely re-adjusted and created. And the degree to which they are able to do that is the degree to which personal control over one's own experience and existence is diminished.

*MH: What would you pose as a kind of alternative media that wouldn't be monocultural in its implications? What kinds of media would be genuinely tribal, in the sense of being based on experience that people themselves participated in and generated rather than consumed, the way it is now?*

*JM: That's a question of scale. Appropriate technologists and other people who deal with scale as a problem, are quick to point out that in a world which is more democratic, in which people have more control over their lives, there will be inefficiencies if you try to organize things along smaller scale units. You may not want jet aircraft in a world where people are living in decentralized ways. You won't necessarily want people to efficiently move from here to there. That won't be the value that people will make the most important value. And the same goes for media. The media that will matter in a decentralized world with local control and sovereignty and so on, will be the media that keep you where you are and enhance your knowledge of the conditions where you are, which will probably be very little media indeed. People will get their information in a much more direct kind of way. Society would be scaled, in my ideal world, to a level in which people are involved in most of the important facts that relate to them. The only other fact that could really be important to them is if some other society is attacking them, perhaps. That information would be communicated very quickly among all the people in a small scale system. But mass media, which tends to act like an airplane, moving very fast from one part of the world to another part of the world, would be less valuable, less important, less significant. It would be discouraged in a system in which local control is what was really important.*

*You could still have exchange of information of whatever is valuable. But that probably ought to be done on a much slower, small scale, direct way. By people actually going other places in time to share whatever information is valuable. I wouldn't think, in any kind of ideal world, there would be any need for mass media at all. The concept of mass would be one which would be itself suspect.*

*MH: What relationship do you think exists between language and media?*

*JM: I haven't explored that, but there certainly is a relationship between the concepts that go with certain language choices. Language is a medium in the sense that it's a way of communicating that you're given, that comes from a system of concepts that a prior generation decided are valid for consideration. The words that are in the language are the words that are appropriate for the culture at that time.*

*MH: What about the relationship between the syntax of various kinds of languages and technology? Do Indo-European de-*

*vised and English languages lend themselves more easily to say television as a medium than what the Hopis speak?*

*JM: That sounds like something you ought to talk about, rather than me, because it's not something I've really investigated. But I do know that the kind of concepts that native people think are important are not the kind of concepts that you can translate through media very well.*

*MH: Can you give me some examples?*

*JM: Well, I can give examples from my own research having to do with interviews that I've done for this new book about native people and technological society that I'm working on now. I interviewed one young traditional Indian, a very important sort of activist leader in the east, for several days. I tape recorded the interviews for many many hours in which he talks about the problems of native people and the circumstances that they are having to fight with. He finally said, "Well, if you really want a deeper understanding of where we're really at, I have to go into some spiritual matters that we operate out of, that I operate out of. But to do that, you'll have to turn off your tape recorder." And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "Well because you can't get it that way. When I start talking about that stuff, you're going to have to get it some other way. You're going to have to get it with your whole body and you'll just have to sit and listen to me, and whatever you get out of that is what you get. The tape recorder will miss it all." And I think there are many categories of information that are like that. Part of my television book was largely about what's lost by processing information through a machine in that way. The fundamental matters that are important to Indians are not translatable through media. So they and we are caught in the need to create a society in which media is not the main communication form. In other words, in order for their culture to remain alive, then it's absolutely required that we not have mass media. Otherwise, they're dead. So the relationship between mass media and them is a failed relationship.*

*MH: That raises an interesting question about social movements and social change. There are people who are of the opinion that the minute the media touts something, it destroys it.*

*JM: No. Some movements can be purveyed well on television, other movements cannot be.*

*MH: Well I'm thinking about movements that are basically incompatible with the way that society's organized right now. Everything from religious communities, Native American communities, "hippies," countercultural type movements, and so forth. Where the conditions for their existence are such that they can't function in the context of mass media publicity, the glare, the observation, and the voyeurism. They become a kind of consumer item for other people to play with and exploit. On the basis of your thought and your experience, could you talk about social change and how it does or doesn't relate to media?*

*JM: A lot of the television book is devoted to that, to an explication of which movements work on television, which movements don't work on television. Unfortunately, the movements that I care the most about are the most difficult to convey on television, except the civil rights movement. The civil rights*

*movement is an example of a movement that did work well on television because it had a lot of violence, a lot of action, a lot of very specific kind of activity which was content-oriented and sort of objective. Certain kinds of war and military activities can also be reported well on television, because they are good visual information and their content is clear and objective. But when you get down, for example, to the environmental movement, it's my position that the environmental movement has in many ways been destroyed by television. Because, even though more information about environmental problems is conveyed on television now than used to be, the kind of environmental information that is conveyable on television is a more gross sort. It's all about pollution, about death, about environmental catastrophe, and breakdowns in ecosystems. I'm not saying that that kind of information is not useful to convey. But what it doesn't convey is the kind of experiential feeling and understanding that the environment itself conveys to people—which would develop caring in the heart of people, which would develop feelings of relatedness to the environment. When people see Borneo forests on television, they think they're seeing Borneo forests. Actually what they're seeing is television. If the mass of people in this country were stimulated to love and experience the environment, then they'd have an emotional reaction to the death of species, or the death of marshes, or the death of tidepools, the places where life starts. People don't care about those very much on a mass scale because the environmental information presented on television is of the gross sort, that they think is solvable by laws. When actually the real environmental problem today is that people have lost attunement to nature and therefore are not in opposition to many of the things that are coming down. Conveying subtle environmental information on television is very very difficult to do.*

*MH: Apart from direct experience is there any form of the media that you think is effective that way?*

*JM: Well, all media is difficult for the translation of that kind of material. But I think the print media is the best for subtlety, for complexity, and much better than television. But basically you've got to have direct experience, you've got to be there, to know what it's about. You've got to have the aura of the place to experience it as a feeling.*

*MH: It seems to me that part of the problem is that we've all been colonized by mass media into believing that doing something on a small, intimate scale is ineffective.*

*JM: I think that's true. It seems to me that people interested in bioregionalism, in the breakdown of the large scale system, have got to deal with the breakdown at every moment of crux. That is to say, that at any moment where you're up against dealing with the large scale form, you've got to choose not to deal with the large scale form. If possible you've got to break it down into something smaller, to something with which you can deal. For a bioregional concept to be disseminated effectively people must be changed by their experience of the difference. I don't think that people will get the experience of the difference through a medium that turns everything into artificial tomatoes. □*

CLONING, continued

out of a creative gene pool in the same way that gene pools have been wiped out of nature. The amount of species that are being reduced every year by the spread of technological society, concrete, and the style of farming that's going on is staggering. Nobody knows at what stage it's fatal when that takes place, but, in any event, it's going on. And I think it's going on in the human spirit now, too. It's going on inside human people by instruments such as television and other elements in society. We're going to raise less diverse human beings than we've had before; less diverse mentally, spiritually, intellectually, experientially, perceptually, maybe even biologically. That's terribly scary.

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I have problems with all media. But, as with all technology, I think it's a question of scale. There's no question that every medium changes the information that moves through it. It also has a degree of control over the people who are on the receiving end of it, even if it's a book. I mean, when I write I definitely control where the reader's mind goes. On purpose. I even use techniques that most writers don't because I was in the advertising business. So I know how to keep a reader's mind on what I want it to be on. So all media does that and all media are autocratic because it's always a small number speaking to a large number. In my case, my book was one person speaking to whomever read it, which is 100,00 so far. In the case of television it's a handful of people, who are virtually clones of each other, speaking to 250 million people, attempting to clone them as well. Invasion of the Body Snatchers. So the scale of it is very, very different. Radio is somewhere between television and a book, or a newspaper. If we were sitting in a circle doing this completely equally, then we'd have some kind of communication which was not as autocratic, unless there was a very charismatic person.

But there are differences between media, not only in terms of scale but in terms of effect. Radio, which was used as a fabulous propaganda instrument by Hitler is very capable of unifying concepts and feelings. Roosevelt used it as a very effective instrument too. Nonetheless, radio is inherently a less centralized medium. It's a less expensive medium, is easier to use. It doesn't cost as much to create programs, it doesn't cost as much to own the equipment. Television is celebrated for its mobility. But actually for simultaneity and mobility radio is better. If something is happening in Uganda right now that we've got to know about, radio is actually more likely to get it faster than television is, because it's simpler to use. Also, radio doesn't have the same kind of deadening effects as television. Radio actually encourages human imagery. I'll bet not 5% of television news really needs the picture to get the story. In fact, most of the news on television comes in the words. It doesn't come in the images. It looks like the information is coming in images, but the real content is coming in words in television news.

Film is a much better image medium than television. A much more high resolution medium, much more refined imagery, larger screen requiring lots of eye movement, which is associated with thinking. It also takes a conscious act to go to a movie. You usually call somebody up. You go with somebody else, it's a public event, other humans are around. When the film is over you leave. It doesn't go on to the next thing. It's not quite as limited by time as television is. There are time limits in film, too, but they're not 30 minutes. It's not as coarse a medium. On the other hand, film is mighty powerful and really capable of impressing people with a unified concept. Everybody in my age group, when I was a kid, knew a lot of John Wayne lines real well. You could hear us speaking them over and over again, very, very powerful images. If people watched as much film as they watched television, I'd be more worried about film.

Print, of course, is much freer in allowing you to create your own images. It's capable of much more creative complexity and detail. It's not limited by time. It's the only good medium for real explanations of things. It's not as inherently centralized as large scale high tech instruments are, although newspapers are plenty centralized. But it doesn't have to be that way, inherently. It's not in the nature of print that it be that way, quite as much as it is with television. Also with the process of reading, your mind is very active. You can't be in alpha and read. You have to use fast wave activity in order to read. You have to think in order to read. You also control the process. You control the speed at which you read. You can go over material, underline, all acts which bring the material more easily into consciousness. When you take all of these things into account, you see that television is not a progressive instrument. Basically, it doesn't do anything that other media can't do, except reach everybody in the country at the same time. That's what it can do. The things it can do that other media can't do are in the interests of the people who get it at the other end. All media has its interests of the people who get it at the other end. All media has its inherent dangers, but I'm not prepared to make the case against radio or against books or against magazines that I do against television, at least not at this time. All media have centralizing, monocultural effects or politically unifying effects and are all inherently dangerous, but I think it's a question of when it crosses over some invisible line of acceptability in a democratic society. It's hard to know exactly where that line is where technology advances too far. But, I think it is possible to know when you're over the line. Now, I'd say television is over the line. Satellite communication is over the line. Genetic engineering is over the line. Space travel is over the line. But many other things probably aren't. In a way all decentralization movements are trying to define that line.

# 4th World Assembly

An Interview With Peter Berg

Coni Tarquini

This past summer saw the historic convening of the first Fourth World Assembly in London. Planet/Drum was represented there by Peter Berg and Judy Goldhaft. The Assembly was called forth—in the context of Super-power sabre rattling—in order to exchange information and plant the seeds for a devolutionary, ecologically-oriented, alliance among peoples who aren't recognized by any of the established power groupings. In the interview that follows, Peter Berg shares his impressions of the most significant developments to come out of the Assembly, as well as some interesting news about what is happening in Great Britain, West Germany, and France.

**Michael Helm:** Peter, who was at the 4th World Conference?

**Peter Berg:** Approximately 400 people attended. The keynote speakers included Leopold Kohr, who is the author of *The Breakdown of Nations* and Gwynfor Evans, who is the chairman of Plaid cymru, which is the Welsh Nationalist Party. Also Mildred Loomis, Ivan Illich, and Kirkpatrick Sales. That gives an indication of who was there for the first function of the conference which was to present and pass a declaration on the 4th world. It describes a wide range of interests. Everything from new social groupings, to oppressed traditional ethnic groups, to unrepresented people everywhere on the planet.

**MH:** Where did the term 4th World come from, what does it signify?

**PB:** That's interesting. Here we go. "Fourth World" has been in the title of a book by two Canadian Indians about Native American culture. It's been used by Ray Dasmann to describe wildness, wilderness and wild people, or one could say, first people. At the conference it came to mean unrepresented groups that didn't belong to any of the established geo-political power groupings. First World usually means the so-called "free world;" Second World, generally is the "communist world;" and Third World means groups of people that aren't included in those two; unaligned countries. There's a need to more fully describe first peoples, ethnic groups, new social groupings and communities, local movements for regional autonomy, and reinhabitory people. Fourth World fits the definition or meets the requirements of that description sufficiently to title a first international assembly of people representing those interests.

**MH:** Was there any common denominator with respect to attitudes towards high technology and industrialization among the participants?

**PB:** If there was a single common beginning position of the conference, it was with Leopold Kohr's "breakdown of nations," anti-giantism, decentralist frame

of reference. For example, anti-nuclear people at this conference were more pro-regional or enthusiastic about local self-determination than they were patently anti-nuclear. There was very strong agreement about the need for decentralization.

**MH:** The conference took place in Great Britain. How did that affect the general perception of the people that were there that weren't Western or weren't Anglo?

**PB:** You're going for the stickiest issue first, aren't you? Why don't you save that one for later? I'd rather start with this: all through the 20th century there has been an active, committed movement toward peace and disarmament, against nuclear weaponry, against war. There were active peace groups in the United War, for example, and it's been a feature of 20th Century politics that peace movements have usually lacked a forum. What was most interesting at this conference, which included a number of older peace movement people, from England and other countries, was that it's very clear that the peace movement, including the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), now sees decentralism as a necessary accompaniment to their goals.

It's a long-standing popular political sentiment that war is disastrous, that it's mostly women and children and uninvolved people that get hurt and only power brokers that gain from wars, and that war is an arcane and futile method of solving human problems. What's significant about this conference is that by calling it the Fourth World rather than an International Peace Conference, world peace is now thoroughly identified with the notion of decentralism and that's important. Now the issue of war and what war is about, resources, access, hegemony, those issues have been moved into the realm of solution through decentralist politics. That is very significant, to establish this in a London international forum at this time.

**MH:** What are the political implications of that in terms of strategies for implementing a kind of decentralist approach to the question of peace?

**PB:** Are you asking what recommendations came out of the conference?

**MH:** Right. Or what sentiments were expressed that there seemed to be some consensus around? Or wasn't there consensus?

**PB:** I can speak for what an ad hoc group of us did. There were up to 500 representatives of various movements or interested people there and over the 4-day period there were various kinds of forums. I joined a caucus with Thomas Banyaca, Jr., Winona LaDuke, and other people that were aware of American Indian situations and problems, especially relative to uranium mining in the western part of North America. Our caucus

managed to pass an action resolve that the Fourth World Assembly should establish an office, begin compiling a directory of groups who were identifiable as Fourth World groups, immediately move to support the Big Mountain protest taking place near Four Corners, and establish the notion of a Fourth World Alert as a way of informing people through established media when there is an emergency problem for people who can be identified as fourth world people: first people, ethnic groups, and reinhabitants.

**MH:** Was there a sentiment, or an apprehension at the conference that some kind of major conflagration or war is eminent? I mean—the escalation of the arms race that seems to be taking place, largely sponsored by the Reagan administration. Cold War politics generally. What was the feeling, what connection between peace sentiments and that question?

**PB:** That was a very clear reason for the conference. The people that were there, representatives or interested people, generally shared a feeling that First, Second, and even Third World politics were so megalithic and so out of control. That there should be an attempt to formulate the basis for relationships between unrepresented groups that could be called Fourth World. The immediate machinations of the United States and the Soviet Union were not the dominant concern. I thought that was hopeful. People weren't acting as though they were oblivious to this, but they were acting as though it was so far out of the question that the solutions could come from within industrially-oriented, nuclear armed power blocs that the discussions concerned other possibilities. For example, the necessity of liberating national groups, ethnic groups within the British Isles, Bretons, Flemings, and other European national and ethnic groups.

**MH:** What kind of tactics were people talking? Take for instance, the whole question of nuclear energy and deployment of tactical nuclear weapons like the neutron bomb?

**PB:** It was too early to form a political party to operate on the level you're suggesting. For now it's most important to identify Fourth World groups, to issue a declaration that could be approved by all of them and begin making action resolves from that declaration that would build alliances between the groups.

**MH:** The conference did take place in Great Britain and it took place at a time when there was a lot of social unrest. I'd be really interested in knowing how the participants from the Fourth World assessed what was going on within England, within Great Britain.

**PB:** You're referring to the riots in Brixton, Merseyside, Leeds, and other cities?

**MH:** Right.

**PB:** Everybody was keyed up by the riots. The British press reported them as though it was the first time this had ever happened there. It's not true, but it was nevertheless reported that way. People felt great empathy with the demonstrators who had been protesting the unavailability of jobs, high prices and rent, and police violence. Most of the large cities in England were affected: Manchester, Liverpool, London. So it did add to the urgency of the conference. Generally people felt that it was indicative of the breakdown of the nation-state. In other words, that Great Britain was no longer capable of administering its own problems and coming up with solutions. The most revealing comment I heard came from a working class guy from Manchester who said the kids aren't rioting because they want the things they were supposed to get—they're rioting because they're infuriated at the government for telling them that they can still get those things.

**MH:** The hypocrisy.

**PB:** The hypocrisy of it. The people at the conference gener-



Aaron Rosenberg

ally favored scaled-down social expectations. They wanted localized solutions to energy and resource questions. Most of them felt that they were working toward solutions of the problems that caused the riots. They felt that decentralization and localization of concerns were primary solutions.

**MH:** What other resolutions were passed by the Assembly, what other things were dealt with besides decentralism and essentially a networking kind of process between the Fourth World peoples?

**PB:** The Assembly was inclined toward steady-state economics and ecological priorities. You know, the head of the Welsh nationalist movement is not a marginal political person, and he spoke of the necessity of ecological harmony, developing environmentally and culturally consistent political goals. What are usually called environmental concerns were seen as central to society's focus.

**MH:** So there was an explicit connection made between the

ecological framework within which the cultures existed and perpetuation of the cultures themselves?

**PB:** Right, the overt political substance of the Fourth World Assembly was to give credence to the idea of decentralization and smallness of scale as a necessary and workable political solution.

**MH:** What particularly interesting political developments did you learn about at the conference that you didn't know before you went there?

**PB:** Outside the restricted political expectations in the United States, amazing things can happen. There are hopeful new concordances. People have ideas and are working toward ends which seen in a Fourth World context are indicative of a new planetwide movement. For example, it was resolved that the next Fourth World Assembly would be in a factory building that's occupied by a Berlin commune that has been illegally surviving since the early 70's, it includes 40 or so families, mostly employed as ordinary workers, meaning painters, carpenters, plumbers, and auto mechanics, as well as artists and has its own school. It's a factory building that's been reinhabited in the heart of West Berlin. These people were active in a recent protest against Alexander Haig's visit to Germany and they've been active in the squatters' protests. They sent a number of serious delegates to the conference and want to host the next one.

Welsh nationalists, Scottish nationalists, Fleming nationalists, Native Americans and bio-regionalists have all as a result of this meeting met each other in non-hierarchical, non-sexist groups and hashed it out.

The conference wasn't without anomalies. There were some things that became immediately apparent to everyone as oppressive and problematic that have to be dealt with and maybe now we can go back to your first question about this meeting in Anglo Great Britain. Judy Goldhaft,

presented an action resolve to account for the varieties of English spoken, that this would be dealt with more sympathetically at the next World Assembly. The reason this is necessary is that there is a British upper-class elitist way of addressing a subject; to simply indicate that you have concern with a problem is as though you have solved the problem.

**MH:** Not only that but, if that particular class and sensibility chooses to ignore a problem, then the problem doesn't exist.

**PB:** Exactly. It's as though if the person speaking could speak better English or more proper English than the problem would be solved.

**MH:** How did the people of that Anglo sensibility react to the antagonism expressed?

**PB:** Well, I did an interview with John Papworth, a conference organizer, and it took some time to simply explain the problem to him. As Judy Goldhaft pointed out, there were at least six varieties of English being

# RECLAIMING HOME BASE: City & Country

*Within the next five years most Americans are likely to see more than 50% of their monthly income go towards rents, mortgages, and utility bills. A good many will be lucky to find any housing at a price that they can afford—unless creative alternatives are developed. Reclaiming Home Base presents a grassroots urban and rural dialogue about two alternatives that are currently being pursued by Northern California people whose definition of home encompasses not only affordability but also environmental and community processes that are individually and collectively nourishing.*

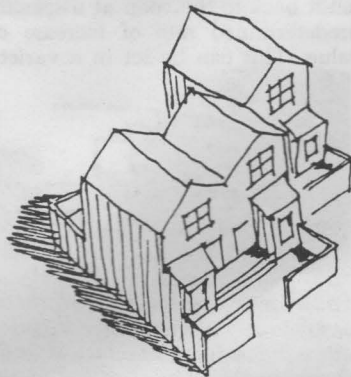
*In The Wisconsin Street Site local resident Fred Stout talks about an on-going eight year process to insure equitable housing, wildlife habitat, and neighborhood integrity within San Francisco's multi-cultural Potrero Hill area. Clearly, if cities are to reclaim their promise, some kind of decentralized, neighborhood-controlled process like Fred Stout describes will have to be at the heart of it.*

*In Homesteading On the Mattole watershed activist David Simpson talks about his family's experiences in evolving a rural home along California's North Coast over the past ten years. As you'll see, self-reliance, mutual aid, and restoration of the Mattole Watershed all go hand in hand.*

## THE WISCONSIN STREET SITE

Fred Stout, Talking

Potrero Hill is a neighborhood like many neighborhoods in San Francisco that's been undergoing dramatic change over the last five years. When I first moved onto the hill about seven years ago it was one of the last low rent, integrated neighborhoods in the city. At the time of the earthquake in 1906 there was practically nothing here, just a few farmhouses. After the earthquake in the 20's and 30's, it became a largely ethnic neighborhood. The ethnicity being Slavic peoples. There's still some Balkan churches around, some of the old people are still here. It subsequently became a mixed income neighborhood for a variety of reasons. At the top of the hill there are magnificent views and there have been for the last 30 years some relatively rich people living up there. But it was basically a working-class neighborhood for a long period of time. It also attracted a certain number of intellectuals, writers, and artists. My first impression of the hill was sort of Bohemian. But there were also these very large public housing projects that have continued to be primarily black. There's also some Chicanos who live here, some Polynesians, and some whites. But I'd say the projects, called Potrero Terrace and Potrero Annex, are 90%



Van der Ry, Calthorpe & Partners

black. They're over on this side of the hill, the south side of the hill. There is kind of a "north/south" division on Potrero Hill. The north side of the hill has views of downtown and it tends to be more middle-class and upper-class. The south side of the hill, where I live, has views of the Bay, the Mission, and the industrial area and is generally lower income.

In the last five or six years, throughout neighborhoods in San Francisco—there has been a tremendous wave of real estate speculation. Housing values have doubled and tripled in a very short period of time. Rents went up accordingly. Three years ago, there was a tremendous amount of activity in the city as a whole, around questions like rent control and anti-speculation ordin-

information even about American Indians isn't very high. They have a mostly romantic idea of American Indians and they have a view of America as being some sort of unified monolith because of its international presence. The foreign policy of the U.S. is what they see, really. And the foreign policy tends to incorporate everything from the Grand Canyon to San Francisco Bay to Manhattan. It's all the same to them. It wasn't hard for people to understand regional imperatives, once explained, but it had to be explained.

*MH: But was there enthusiasm once they understood the potential connection between the bioregion as a cultural idea and nationalist sympathies?*

PB: Michael, it was mostly wonderful to see the way the Thames estuary, as a viable ecological prospect, would come across the mind of someone who lived in the East End—to see it develop and slowly catch hold. Their first reaction was that natural systems had nothing to do with them. You know, ecology, environment, the biosphere, all that's out in Cornwall, not in London. And it was amazing, it was like climbing up a mountain, to see, to work with someone, talk to them and point things out, and have them suddenly see the East End as being somehow part of the Thames estuary.

Guinea, he describes them as leading into the future. According to him the model government of the future exists in Papua-New Guinea. You can't put in a housing development, or any new technological structure unless it's first cleared through the eco-development minister. As Jimoh points out, in the east of Africa and throughout all the islands, the people are directly dependent on natural resources. There are Pacific Islands, for example, where ocean-caught fish are the primary source of protein. So in those places anything that would disrupt the environment directly affects the condition of the people. In Papua-New Guinea people that are aware of this relationship control the government. So Jimoh would say the Fourth World government to look at is Papua-New Guinea.

*MH: What kind of response did the bioregional point of view that Planet Drum has been working with and helping to develop receive at this conference?*

PB: Frankly, some people were amazed when they heard about it. There were people there who had no idea how bioregional thinking fit in with ethnic nationalist thinking. For example, that Wales was a bioregion. Most of the English were amazed that there was any kind of local self-determination or regionist movement going on in the U.S. But then you've got to understand that their level of

World cannot avoid war. So the real question becomes, people are asking, how can we continue this way? We're following the wrong course. There has to be another grouping. So I don't agree that devolution is quixotic.

There is a baffling content to it, though, which is how do we do it. There's an experimental quality to it, there's a dangerous quality to it—danger meaning doing something that's unknown. But it's becoming apparent to me that more and more people are available for constituencies that could be called local, self-management, or local self-determination, and are willing to forego what they can gain through various supranational alliances. For example, the feeling of people in Great Britain about the European Economic Community.

This phrase Fourth World may not be the best way of describing the kinds of people that feel disaffiliated from the current power blocs. But, in the long term, more and more people will be grouping outside of the First, Second, and Third World. Whether it should be called the Fourth World or the planetariat or the biospheric reinhabitants or bioanarchy, whatever it might be called, more and more people are being thrown in this direction by the inability of the current power blocs to be able to manage themselves and to solve their own problems. War seems to be the only solution those blocs offer and what kind of solution is that?

*MH: You said that people in Europe are actively expecting a third world war at this point, is that prefaced on the assumption that what exists now continues or is inevitable?*

PB: The governments of at least three countries, Germany, France, and England, are agreeable to the idea of stationing intermediate range missiles on their soil. Considering that Germany has had a moderately liberal government, France has a socialist government, and Thatcher's government is conservative, a twin of Reagan's actually, that this range exists and that they all come to the same conclusion or feel similarly—most of the ordinary people are feeling that the decision has already been made. That there will be "limited" nuclear war. They are not, however, agreeable to it. In fact, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has been revitalized in Great Britain, and they've just made an inspired political move by allying in France with the Larzac farmers who turned back the French military move to establish a missile testing range in Larzac...

*MH: How many people were involved in that resistance?*

PB: Counting local farmers and their families actively involved, probably only 20,000, but possibly up to a quarter of a million people in France have actively supported their protest against the missile bases. A sufficient number for Mitterand to decide to close down the base.

*MH: So the campaign was successful.*

PB: The Larzac campaign was successful and now the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has allied with that group in France to oppose armaments in general.

*MH: We've focused on Europe, Britain, and not talked too much about representatives from other regions of the planet. What kind of representation was there from Africa, from Oceania...?*

PB: Jimoh Omo-Fadaka from Nigeria was there and he sees a Fourth World constituency; actually, he would say, an eco-development constituency, stretching from Africa through the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Islands. Jimoh has been in these places, and when he talks about Madagascar, Ceylon, Papua-New

spoken as a first language at the Assembly, and anyone who wasn't speaking one of the six varieties was speaking English as a second language.

I may not be able to convey how important that is, but you'd be surprised how strongly people react, especially lower-class English people when they're confronted with that upper-class accent. Or how upper-class speakers tend to misunderstand or ignore what people are saying when English is someone's second language.

*MH: So anybody that doesn't speak, doesn't express, that upper-class sensibility is by that definition an undeveloped person.*

PB: It's more obvious with them because English as it's spoken by the upper-class British is a more credible global monocultural language than even American.

*MH: You've suggested that what is happening in England under the Thatcher regime is perhaps an indication, two to four years down the line, of what will be happening in the U.S. What's happening in Thatcher England?*

PB: Great Britain currently is undergoing an economic bind that is practically unbelievable from the standpoint of what a person can expect to earn. The prices of ordinary things, tea, utility rates, cigarettes, gasoline, liquor, telephone calls, bus fares, are two to three times what they are in the U.S. and salaries are not commensurate with that.

*MH: Could this mean that Great Britain is becoming or has become a fourth world country?*

PB: Well, as someone pointed out at the conference, Great Britain is currently a Third World country propped up by a First World country. In other words, if Great Britain didn't have its relationship to the United States, it would be totally ruined. Membership in the European Common Market is an unresolved question for most people in England, who feel short-changed by it. And the English feel that way, less than the Welsh and some other regional groups. The Labour Party's latest manifesto appreciates the problem, which is that Great Britain may have been effectively eliminated as a First World country by its membership in the EEC.

*MH: That suggests that a future political and economic realignment of a devolutionary nature may well be in the cards for Great Britain...*

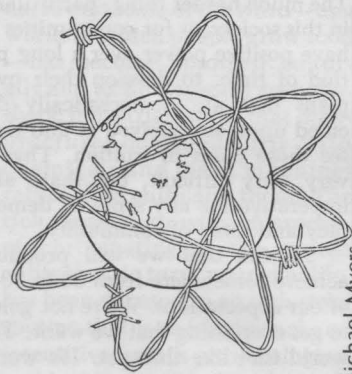
PB: Inevitable.

*MH: Away from the EEC.*

PB: Probably inevitable.

*MH: Well, what strikes me is that decentralism, political devolution, still seems to many people to be somewhat quixotic and romantic given the monolithic nature of superpower politics.*

PB: I think more and more people are giving indications that they don't believe in the viability of the superpowers to solve even their own problems. For example, the military budgets of both



Michael Myers

the Soviet Union and the U.S. and the increased military awareness that's going on in Europe (where, by the way, many people expect a third world war) is seen by more and more people as being built into the structures of present political entities. The First and Second Worlds, and even the Third

ances. We started an organization on the hill called The Potrero Hill Tenant's Alliance. We were involved in Proposition R, one of the rent control ordinances, as well as a number of other projects such as supporting people who were being evicted and looking into the possibility of building affordable new housing on some of the available open spaces on the hill, the principle one being the Wisconsin Street site, 11 acres right across the street from here.

When these ideas were first being floated in the first meetings we had, they coincided with a project of the San Francisco Department of City Planning to develop a comprehensive Neighborhood Improvement Plan for Potrero Hill. City Planning spent about 9 months setting up a number of community-wide meetings in schools and churches that were very well attended and that comprehensively looked at all the different problems of Potrero Hill. We came up with a unified plan that later became adopted by the City Planning Commission. The section of the plan that probably got the most debate and controversy around it was what to do about the Wisconsin Street site, because it is very strategically located on the hill. It lies between the housing projects on the one side and single-family, privately-owned homes on the other side.

The Neighborhood Improvement Plan also began as a struggle between those who wanted all of the site developed as market-rate housing, and those who wanted all of the site left undeveloped as open space. There were good arguments on both sides. The arguments on the housing side were, of course, that there was a tremendous housing shortage in San Francisco, particularly for low and moderate income families. The argument on the open space side was that although Potrero Hill is rather rich in open space as neighborhoods go in San Francisco, nonetheless this was the largest remaining undeveloped single chunk. Hawks use it as a hunting ground, and people who live immediately around the site use it to repair cars, and for storage of lumber, that sort of thing.

What resulted from those initial meetings around the Neighborhood Improvement Plan was a compromise. The compromise that was reached was that the lower half of the site should be developed as housing, the upper portion should be developed as a permanent open space park. The lower half of the site is particularly good for solar housing because it's on the south facing slope and is on a rather steep incline. We realized we could build houses, all of which would have southern exposures for solar application. The top of the hill, the northern portion of the site, was particularly good as a park because it has some of the most magnificent views in the city. From that site you can see the Golden Gate Bridge and the Marin Headlands. It's also windy, and wind generation of electricity has been talked a lot about in the development of this site.

When we reached that compromise, between housing and open space, it was important to write that by housing we meant something rather specific. Over the years several private developers had approached the city with the idea of building high-priced, luxury housing developments on the site. In general these plans were supported by the City. The City desperately wanted to have more housing on its tax rolls. But the local neighborhood people definitely did not approve of the plans that were put forward. These were all market-rate units—like a development on the other side of the hill called Victorian Mews which took up an entire square block. When Victorian Mews was first marketed, it had one bedroom condominium apartments going for something like \$135,000, and up. Definitely high-income and contributing to this transformation of the hill from a mixed-income, low-rent neighbor-

WISCONSIN, continued

hood to a place where normal people could no longer afford to live. So, as a part of the compromise that we reached in the community, we wrote into the Neighborhood Improvement Plan that any new housing should follow a guideline of being approximately one-third low-income, approximately one-third moderate income, and then one-third market rate. We also wrote in that as much as possible the housing should be for families rather than for single people—since there was a tendency in that period of housing development and speculation in San Francisco to almost exclusively build one-bedroom, efficiency apartments in new developments. We also wrote in that the new development should be a cooperative.

Growing out of the Plan, a new organization of people who lived immediately around the Wisconsin Site generated itself. We called ourselves the Wisconsin Site Project Area Committee. We work very closely with the Potrero Hill Community Development Corporation which is a city funded, non-profit organization that relates particularly to the needs of the people who live in the projects and other low-income people on the hill.

We're also supported by the Potrero League of Active Neighbors, which is kind of a middle-class homeowners organization, by the Lower Potrero Hill Development Corporation, which relates primarily to a low-income area of the hill, and by the Citizens' Improvement Association, which is the tenants' organization of the people who live in the projects.

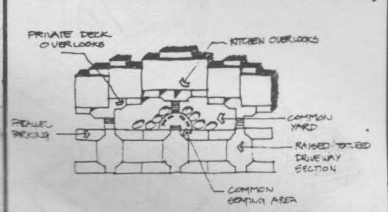
The plans that were developed and were written into the guidelines by City Planning were opposed from the beginning by the Potrero Hill Boosters and Merchants Association, which is an organization that is very closely related to real estate and business interests. They wanted any development on the Wisconsin Site to be market-rate exclusively. Very much like Victorian Mews. And if Victorian Mews came in at \$135,000+ four years ago, then you can imagine what we would be looking at now. We've been in a situation on the hill of seeing the rents going up, seeing land values going up. As a homeowner it's been very nice to see a house you bought for \$40,000 suddenly be worth \$120,000. You feel you're kind of rich. Except if you sell you have to buy somewhere else at those same rates and it really doesn't mean very much. But from a rental point of view, when houses are changing hands the rents go way up. The social character of the entire hill quickly changes. The process is called "gentrification." One of the minor provisions that was written into the Neighborhood Improvement Plan in 1977 was that the social mix of new housing should reflect the conditions, the income distribution, that existed on the hill as of the 1970 census. We didn't want to use the 1980 census, when it came out, because it would reflect the negative changes that had already taken place, so we insisted on the 1970 census being used.

It's important to realize our plan is not standard public housing, because it's a cooperative where people own shares. This is one of the things that the Boosters and Merchants have always tried to mystify people about. They've argued, "No more subsidized housing on Potrero Hill, we already have too much subsidized housing on the hill," referring to the public housing projects. But what we're proposing is partially subsidized housing, not public housing. No one wants to build new public housing projects. Public housing is an obvious failure. It creates instant ghettos. What we're talking about is using existing and available subsidies for private development so that a certain proportion of the people who come into this new housing can be poor families who have either their rent payments or their mortgage payments partially subsidized.

The idea of a coop was originally put forward because we wanted to put a brake on housing speculation. Housing coops are not a new idea at all. They've been used a lot in the United States, even more widely in Europe, and they work very well. The way it works is this: you have let's say 100 units developed in a

planned unit development. Unlike a condominium, you do not buy your individual housing unit. Instead you buy a share of the whole thing. And so a hundred families will buy 100 shares of the coop and collectively they will then govern the coop. They will form an organization, decide on bylaws, and then elect officers. All of the policy decisions that get made will be made by that community of owners. So it is a home ownership mode, but it is a mode that is very different from the individual freeholding that most real estate is organized around in the United States.

We wanted a coop partly because the idea of a cooperation is an idea whose time has come. Given the housing reality a lot of people are now open to the idea. In cities such as San Francisco we have been faced with the problem of housing speculation, and individual freeholding lends itself to housing speculation very easily. A speculator buys a house, holds onto it for a couple of months, then sells it. The next speculator who buys it holds onto it for a few more months, sells it again, and each time the value goes up with the market. In a coop arrangement you can buy in cheaper. When, for whatever reason, you want to move out you sell your share, not on the open market but back to the coop. You sell it back to the coop at a specific predetermined rate of increase of value. This can be set in a variety



of different ways. It can be set at the level of inflation, consumer price index, or whatever, but it will inevitably be below the level of increase that the highly speculative housing market will involve. So there are two things: one, to keep down the incredible rise in housing price that speculation involves, and the other is the sense that the cooperators are a kind of self-government unto themselves in terms of being in control of their neighborhood.



There are also other kinds of extensions possible out of the fact that a housing cooperative exists. For instance, at one point the City Planning Department insisted that any development of 100 units would have to include some kind of grocery store. Their idea of a grocery store was a 7-11. They specifically said 7-11 and included a place in the Plan for that, which of course got the neighborhood completely up in arms. This is the last neighborhood on earth that wants a 7-11. What we came back to them with was, Okay, we can see the need for a local grocery store in this kind of development, but on the other side of the hill we have Good Life Groceries. Good Life Groceries is a very successful, cooperative, non-profit grocery store that grew from a very modest sort of tiny storefront beginning, to a place that now is competitive with almost any grocery store in the immediate area. So, what we said was that if such a store was going to be included in the project, our first notion would be to go to the people at Good Life and ask them to contribute their expertise so that the people on this side of the hill—working out of the housing coop—could develop their own retail coop as well. The cooperative idea could also be applied directly to various community enterprises that the Potrero Hill Community Development Corporation is trying to build. Among the poor people on Potrero Hill, particularly in the housing projects, we have a tremendous problem with unemployment. Unemployment figures for teenage blacks is something like 65 or 75% now. The private sector, although it constantly promises to hire people and to work on this problem, seems never to catch up with the magnitude of the problem. Our

Community Development Corporation has suggested that we ought to look into ways of developing community enterprises that would hire the people who live here and use this manpower in a productive way.

There is very little abandoned housing in San Francisco, given the fact that San Francisco is a central paperwork headquarters city on a very limited piece of land. But cities on the East Coast, and even Oakland up until a few years ago, have tremendous areas of abandoned housing. In Oakland the city sold houses for \$1 apiece to anybody who would move in, promise to live there for five years and to do improvements on them. This was a tremendous deal for a number of people who took that up. I would like to see in the future, instead of doing that on a free market basis, that two or three square blocks of such housing be offered as a cooperative. I think that if you had a coop of 100 people or 50 people, all developing their housing, all rehabilitating a single neighborhood as a coop rather than as individual freeholders, that you could really see a kind of renaissance in some of these blighted areas.

The subsidizing money for our project comes partly from the City, because the City as a public steward is providing the land on a long-term lease basis for a dollar a year. This lowers development costs, because we don't have to pay for land acquisition. State money is also underwriting forty of the low-income units. Now, what happens is you take the entire development costs and share the costs of the housing in such a way that the market-rate people will be paying a little more in order to subsidize the people who are paying under market rate in the subsidized process. But since the land is free, essentially, to the developer, the market-rate, two-bedroom houses will come in at \$75,000, which is considerably under what is regarded as market rate housing in the city as a whole. So this looks like it's going to be a very good deal, for everyone.

Another provision of the Neighborhood Improvement Plan is that architecturally the housing should look like the existing housing on the hill. And that's single family houses or duplexes. And so, although this is a planned unit development and will be built with party-wall construction, the general appearance will be that of single family houses. There will be setbacks along all of the housing that faces the streets for solar access that will give a kind of indented and relieved look to the street fronts rather than a large massive apartment kind of block look to it. The housing is also built in such a way that the family units, the three and four bedroom units, face around mini-courtyards within the project. Some 40% of the housing area is going to be reserved for open space of one sort or another. Each of the units will have both a balcony and a private yard and the housing component will connect to the open



space component in a very fluid way. The solar applications will be passive hot-water heating and space heating.

The open space component of the Plan has given us a little problem. There's a provision in the charter of the City of San Francisco that if land is taken by the Recreation and Park Department at any time, it will forever be open space. One of the things the community wants very much out of this project is a guarantee that the open space component will forever be open space. We do not want to be in the position of reserving half the land for open space and then five to ten years down the road have the City or someone else come along and say, "Now we want to build housing on the other half of the site." So we want Recreation and Park to take title to the land, to make use of that provision in the charter which would completely wrap it up. Our

RECLAIMING HOME BASE

HOMESTEADING ON THE MATTOLE

An Interview With David Simpson

Michael Helm: What's happening in the Mattole Watershed? How are people creating home bases?

David Simpson: A number of people have moved onto the land—bought small parcels—and begun to work on it. To give you an example: there are three or four adjoining parcels near here where folks have been living for a few years now. They're filling in their gulleys. There's a couple of enormous gulleys that started from bad grazing management, too many sheep on the slopes above them, and they're just filling in these gulleys. What that's doing is not only reclaiming that little bit of land, but it's also

keeping the sediment that was being cut out of these gulleys from moving downstream to the river. So on that level, on the level of an army of ants, as it were, there is a slow cumulative environmental effect, in terms of healing the land.

I've heard time and again people lament the fact that all these big ranches are going out of productivity. Yet the market crops that these ranches used to produce might in the long run be worth far less than the kind of varied, intensive productivity that's going on on a hundred different parcels on what might have once been a 5,000 acre ranch.

first response from the Mayor is that that's not possible because there have been some three or four hundred maintenance positions in Rec and Park that have been eliminated over the last few years. The Mayor finds herself in the position of constantly being on the back of the Director of Park and Rec for not maintaining existing parks to the degree that she would like to see them maintained. This puts her in a very difficult position to then turn around and tell Park and Rec to take on another responsibility when she's already complaining about the fact that they can't maintain their existing land. So their original response to our asking that this be taken over by Park and Rec was a "no" combined with, look, we'll write stuff into the zoning, we will pass a resolution to the Board of Supervisors to provide you with the guarantees that are necessary. Our response at this point is that those really aren't guarantees. If you can change the zoning you can change it back. If you can make a resolution in the Board of Supervisors, you can make another resolution in the Board of Supervisors.

We do not want Golden Gate Park up here. What we want, what we find beautiful about this open space, is the natural grasses that grow here already. In the winter, the hill is green and lush and beautiful and waves in the sun and it turns yellow in the summer and hawks hunt in it. You can see the rock base and then the meadow turfing on the top with just natural grasses growing. We find that very beautiful and we find the bird life that it attracts very beautiful and we don't want to see some clipped lawns and little walkways and beds of flowers. In general we want an extremely

to do. Still, that creates a lot of problems for us. If you're interested in community empowerment as well as getting some housing and open space developed, then you really do have to constantly go back to your constituency. You have to go to the community meeting and thrash out all of these ideas as they go along. Otherwise you wind up with a project and no community.

From my point of view the key thing is the whole question of community empowerment. Whether this community, which really has a wonderful sense of friendliness and identity, can in any way determine what goes into this piece of land. Now we don't own it in the real estate sense of the term. But neither does anyone else. It's owned by the City. Now, it seems to me that the City is two things: an economy and an interdependent and diverse community. City government in that situation constantly needs to make compromises, be a good agent between the forces of economic developers on the one hand, and communities on the other. One of the problems that we have found in pushing this through over the years was that over and over again we have had to remind the bureaucrats from the city that they are our representatives. They don't just work for some out-of-town development corporation. They have to be reminded over and over again that we are the people. And sometimes they need to be told that we are the voters, it gets down to that in a political sense. If you raise enough hell you can get the attention of the city government and go about this process of telling them that they do have political responsibilities to the people. That's what community empowerment is about and only in that way can you protect your neighborhood and get something good done rather than bad.

One of the things about community politics that I've discovered over the years is that it's very easy for communities to have negative power. We can go out there and parade up and down and lie in front of bulldozers and stop projects. The much harder thing, particularly in this society, is for communities to have positive power over a long period of time, to develop their own plans that are democratically decided upon and arrived at and then see those plans to fruition. That is very, very difficult, but that's also imperative for any sense of democracy and sense of community.

I think that we will probably achieve somewhere from 30 to 70% of our expectations. We're not going to get everything that we want. The world isn't like that yet. It's worth doing for the 70%. Whether it's worth doing for the 30%, I don't know. But we are responding to a felt need on the hill, both for open space and for housing, and if we go into the struggle upfront with a totally cynical, it can't be done attitude, then it won't be done. In a way you have to put that cynicism aside and say you're going to take a swing at it anyway and see what happens.

MH: So subdivision per se is not an evil?

DS: It's a mixed blessing. There are some aspects of it that drive me nuts. Most of us share a little taste of that western myth of lots of land and open country and being able to roam as you please. And when suddenly you're surrounded by a small intensely developed, intimately loved parcel of land, there's a circumscription of your freedom to a certain degree. You've got to respect your neighbor's rights, as you expect them to respect yours.

Most of the land right around here is still held in large ranches. I have a tremendous empathy for some of the ranchers in their desire to not see it overrun. There's only so many people, so many of these developments in the area that the larger area culturally can handle without losing its basic integrity. That has not happened here yet, and I hope it doesn't. I feel myself perfectly torn on that subdivision issue. On the one hand I'm frustrated by people who denigrate the effectiveness, the productivity of the small country homestead. On the other hand, I empathize with the ranchers and their desire to keep their holdings large, the desire to keep certain land open. They do have their own culture and it is a healthy one. There are aspects of it I admire, there are aspects of it I don't. But from the ultimate criteria of what's good for the land, what's good for the watershed, the answers are not simple in either direction. But the possibilities of small rural homesteads being beneficial from a watershed point of view are very distinct. More than that I can't say, but it's important to have that said.

A number of people that we know, including ourselves in some ways, are trying to develop the have your cake and eat it too syndrome, whereby you both have the privacy, the beauty, the unmarred natural surroundings around your life and on the other hand have a variety of comforts and conveniences. There are people who want electric power, who want telephones. Up to a point, it's hard to argue with somebody who wants that. Once you're here, once you've gone through some of the backbreaking work, once you've done without for so long, once you haven't had a hot shower for months or you haven't been able to make a critical telephone call, once you've seen opportunities dissolve because you're out of touch, you have a lot of empathy with people who want these things. On the other hand, most of the people who want these things want to preserve the pristine qualities, the wild qualities, in their immediate surroundings, and oftentimes they run into stark contradiction. Often this can only be resolved, at some point or other, by saying, "Well there's nothing I can do about it, this is what I'm doing and this is what I'm going to keep on trying to do. I'm going to try to have all the comforts that I can and that I feel I need and deserve, and I'm also going to try to keep people out of here. I'm going to get a telephone but I'm going to hope that some computer salesman who needs a telephone to be able to live up here and make his living doesn't move in next door, because now there's a telephone line. There are different aspects of development that people want individually and don't want to see happen on a broader scale.

MH: You've got a house here, and you've got some property. But it was done from a point of view that didn't have large cash resources. How are you and your neighbors doing it?

DS: Everybody's got a different answer for that one. We personally have not profited very largely from marijuana. It hasn't really played a significant factor in our lives. There are others around here for whom

maybe it's played more of a role. But it's not that much in this particular area. Here, as almost anywhere, there's been a lot of sheer hustling for jobs. Most of those jobs have to do with either building, or ranch work, or some form of farming. And these are few and far between. You might work intensively for two weeks, two months. Building jobs can be longer and pay fairly well depending on what you're doing. A hurricane wind in 1977, for example, blew down a lot of old insured barns in Ferndale. The dairy farmers out there suddenly had 20 or 30 thousand dollars to build a new barn. So a designer friend put together a crew, of which I was a part from time to time, and we threw together barns in two or three weeks at a fairly high wage for us at the time. It was hard work, that was good, that felt good. There have also been a few jobs building second homes for city people that I have strong reservations about.

MH: That raises the question of what a home is. What does that mean for you?

DS: Well, what was critical in our experience was that, with few exceptions, we lived in very small spaces. We were a fairly large family living in very small spaces. It just was what turned out to be available to us. The second set of circumstances was that we were almost always moved on by one situation or another. Usually it was a landlord who was either selling out or didn't like the way we lived. We were forced to move a lot. We had not been able to stay in any one place for very long and the places we did live in were usually small. So we were already accustomed to living in what most people would find intolerably cramped circumstances. And yet we were probably better off than 75-90% of the people in the world. When we're feeling particularly poor or feeling particularly bereft of resources, we remind ourselves of the fact that we're probably better off than three-quarters of the people in the world. Though we are more than likely close to the bottom, or significantly below, what's considered decent income by Americans.

MH: What would you say your annual cash income is?

DS: There have been years where it is under \$5,000.

MH: For a family of how many?

DS: Six of us. Last year I think we probably lived on \$6,000 cash income. I don't think we've ever had more than \$8,000 or \$9,000. There are two things relative to that that are important to note. One is that we have other income that's just not cash income. We almost never buy meat, for instance.

MH: That's not because you're a vegetarian?

DS: No. We don't eat meat. But a form of this country's natural provision is meat. We buy fewer and fewer vegetables at the store. We buy less and less food at the store. Our food bills are probably half of what they used to be. Or less. We buy very little, or if we do buy lumber, we buy it locally from people we know, who mill it. Their prices are significantly lower. The quality is significantly higher. Clothing, at least for the kids, often comes on a hand-me-down basis from slightly bigger friends. There's a lot of trade and barter. Some of the things we get, we get without cash transactions.

MH: Can you give some examples of that?

DS: Apple cider, somebody gave us a car. Friends of ours who had a couple of vehicles and were going away. They said we could have their car. So all of a sudden we had a car. Unfortunately, the engine blew up about three weeks later. So now we have a car bill.

MH: What about labor trades?

DS: All kinds of labor trades. Many more in the beginning

when there were a lot of people here building at the same time. Sometimes they were tit for tat, a day's work for you, a day's work for me. Sometimes they were much looser than that. Somebody was doing something that would be a lot of fun and you felt like going up there and working with them. You'd do it. Then they'd come down for you and the same thing would happen. There was, for instance, a certain kind of collective spirit about cement pours. For most of the homes around here, the cement was poured with small mixers, hand crews working cooperatively on a volunteer basis. That was a lot of fun. We had great parties.

MH: Why don't you chronologically develop what you did here?

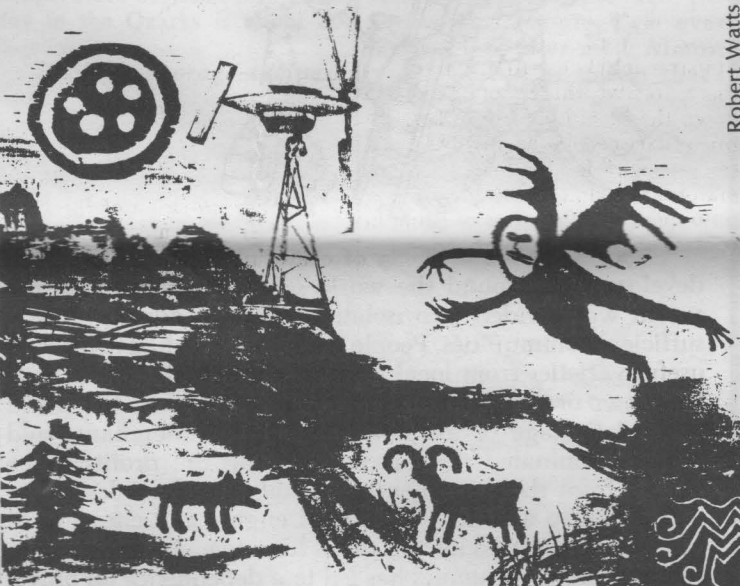
DS: We lived here for two years before we started building. When we arrived here, we were living in two school buses and a house truck. The first winter here we had five kids. We had two early teenage boys who were living with us and going to school here and our three kids. That was before our youngest daughter was born. For better or for worse, things moved slow. There wasn't a lot of work. I worked a few odd jobs. I worked for a rancher for awhile.

MH: Were you living on your own land at that point?

DS: Yeah, we pulled the vehicles right on here.

MH: How did you get it together to buy the land?

DS: We worked the winter before. My wife taught dance classes and I did construction jobs



Robert Watts

in the Rockies, actually. We saved a little money. Our daughter also had a little bit of money from her grandparents. But, basically the most important thing was this fellow offered to put us on this 50 acre place for a very low down payment. We had to come up with just a little over two grand. It took us about a year to get that together. We travelled around in a house truck and worked. Besides the low down payment, the interest is very good, the monthly payments pretty easy.

We came to Humboldt County in the Spring of 1970, but we didn't buy land up here till '73. We lived in various places in Humboldt County. It wasn't until one of our landlords, once again, said, "Gee, I just sold the place and you have to move out 30 days from the day before yesterday," that we resolved to get our own land. I think we had a dozen landlord situations where for one reason or another, not by our choice, we had to move. So we were forced here.

When it became apparent that we should do whatever we had to do to buy land, we were just fortunate enough to find this place. This ranch here came up for sale. At the time this was the first ranch in the lower end of this valley that had been sold out of ranching. It had been subdivided and most of the people in the area were set up against us. Those who lived here were definitely piqued by the fact that this land had gone out of ranching.

They were troubled by it, culturally threatened. Most of the land here was, with the exception of some small holdings, still in the hands of the people who descended from the original pioneers. So we represented a cultural break in the chain. We might have seemed a threat to their way of life. Ironically, the return of the coyotes was almost concomitant with our moving up here. The western Humboldt County sheep ranchers started to incur coyote losses at the same time.

So suddenly, there were a lot of things confronting people and we were part of it. I don't think we were fully cognizant of this when we moved in. We were cognizant of aspects of it. I was not culturally naive beyond a certain point. But, it was very important for our survival here that we be aware. Not just because we were somewhat isolated but also because we were somewhat ignorant of what the actual physical terms of survival were here. There are cultural terms and there are physical terms and usually the cultural terms are relatively created by the physical terms, at least in part.

There was a tradition of farming and gardening; everybody grew things, everybody took care of themselves. There was a tradition of that kind of independence worthy of respect and emulation, so it was important that these people become our friends and neighbors and teachers. On the other hand, something had gone haywire somewhere and out of that same tradition had

come heavy logging and perhaps overgrazing, that had resulted in one thing, the decline of the salmon.

Anyhow, we were here and we really didn't know these things yet. We came with a song and a prayer, I think we had \$15 in our pockets when we arrived here. In a totally new community in which we knew nobody. I don't know what we were thinking, golly. We were helped in a way because we knew we had a base of support provided by the familial collective scene that we had moved out of to come here.

MH: What was that?

DS: Friends in San Francisco, Marin County and further south in Humboldt County. We had lots of friends, people who were real supportive. We were loaned a school bus to live in. We had, I think, a guaranteed income of \$150 a month. We had food stamps at the time and that helped, although we only did that intermittently.

Anyhow, suddenly we were here. We were in these two school buses and house truck and slowly the reality of what we had done began to creep in. I mean, we realized we were going to have to have a house.

MH: How did you deal with building a house?

DS: There was a lightning fire. The state had to come in and cut twenty trees down, one green tree and a bunch of good snags. My neighbors and I decided to try to find out if we could use the lumber. The person who owned

the land, an old Indian man, wanted nothing to do with it. We asked him if he would want to get involved in doing this thing with us. He said, "You can have it." So we bucked the logs up, paid a guy to skid them out, up the knoll there, and then helped mill them up and it worked out to about 25,000 board feet of excellent to useful lumber, which was the basic thing that we used to start building our house. Then, by the second year here friends and other people started moving in. We were less isolated. A couple of them were good builders, architects and contractors, although without licenses. Building got to be going here. There was a little more juice flowing, but still insufficient.

Somewhere down the line we realized we had to start making a break towards something that wasn't here, you get what I'm saying? All the alternatives that were stacking up here were not enough. We were not going to survive here and we didn't have anyplace else to go. There was just no place else to go. We were here. That was apparent. It was also apparent that there was a job to be done here. Anybody could look around and see that the river was screwed up, the hills were sliding into the river. Even though I didn't know much about it at all, I knew that there were somethings that could be done. Time has borne out that there are things to be done. There are things that can be done, there are also things that ought not be done. But it was from that point that we began to develop the wherewithal to accomplish some of those things. And it relates back again to the fact that there are the salmon in the river and they're disappearing. And, even if you did become a rich hippie on your homestead, what would it be worth if the salmon were gone?

The basic desire here is to be building your house, building a barn, helping friends build their barns, putting in orchards, fencing, raising turkeys, a thousand and one agricultural and agriculturally-related scenes. It's just the kick of life here. But part of it is also the fishing, the hunting. Now, the fish were disappearing. After a while the relationship between the fish disappearing and what happened on the hills became apparent. So from a lot of points of view our future became tied to that—restoring the watershed. It became important to try to develop something here that wasn't here, economically, and yet met certain other criteria. One of which was that it wasn't bad for either the country or your way of life, that was central. People were trying to develop sustaining trips. One guy's brother even wanted to come up and build a robot factory! You know one that he could do as long as there was a good telephone system that he could tie into, that he could run his whole business from. He wanted a factory to make robot arms for mass production to provide income, employment for four or five people. But, who wants a robot factory in your front yard? Here's another one: there was a guy staying across the river who has an outfit that is constructing enormous windmills. They're emulating the classic corporate pattern. What they're doing is constructing windmills that they're going to put on the western edge of the Hawaiian Islands. They're going to provide vast amounts of energy and, even *CoEvolution Quarterly* has talked nicely about these things. But, I stopped and figured it out that if you put one of these windmills down there on the valley floor, which you can see down 500 feet below, that the top would be equal to one of my neighbors way up there above me. You would be looking up at

Continued on Page 14

the top of this thing and this blade would be going around, vibrating, it would be a hell of a change. So, the question was what could be done here that both ought to be done and could be done without changing things significantly?

MH: Did that tie in with marijuana growing?

DS: No, it didn't tie in with marijuana growing at all. It tied in with natural resource management. It's just a form of agriculture. Native agriculture. A fish project. What we found here that was good, was that there was an ongoing agricultural tradition here that dated back into history. The people that were here were descendents of people who had been here before there were automobiles, before there was anything like the civilization that now holds here.

One thing to be said about marijuana is that its impact on the land is tremendously small. Its influence on culture, though, is enormous. For instance, you can't just get on a horse and ride around during the growing season. You used to be able to, but not as much anymore. And in some areas of relatively wild land, not at all.

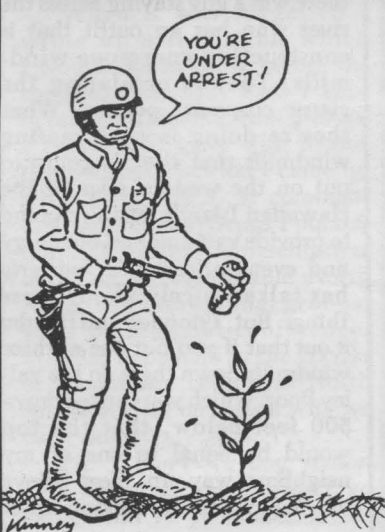
There is more paranoia and more guns, but there is also more material progress—for better or worse. People are using their grass incomes, in some instances, to get their scenes together, to install semi-permanent systems—solar, wind, etc., wise plumbing, conservative water systems. And well they should, as the vagaries of the future marijuana markets are many. There is too much of the boom-bust aspect to growing to overlook. For now, it is allowing some folks to dig in and survive. Others are getting downright comfortable.

My hope is that this great influx of cash, this unprecedented flow from city to country can be directed, in part, towards renewing the fisheries. For instance, wide scale erosion control, as is already happening on individual small plots. As an opportunity to play a positive and significant role, it is hard to know how much of this will happen otherwise.

MH: Let's conclude, for now, with how architecture relates to a homesteading scene.

DS: Architecture for folks like me is based on an efficient principle: what materials are available and how the land lays. Also, how much energy you have. Lots of folks push hard right away to get a house in and then find they haven't dealt with a whole slew of considerations; how the wind blows and when, the arc of the sun in winter, how many times it's possible to run up and down a hill to and from your house. Other considerations are as much cultural. How much is your house going to alter the skyline and change the space around you, how do your neighbors feel? Heat efficiency is another consideration and one that can be improved considerably by basic and cheap action.

Ideally, you'd live in a place for several years before you built a truly permanent structure. This, of course, is a luxury few can afford. □



## SEED PATENTING: Plant Varietal Rights

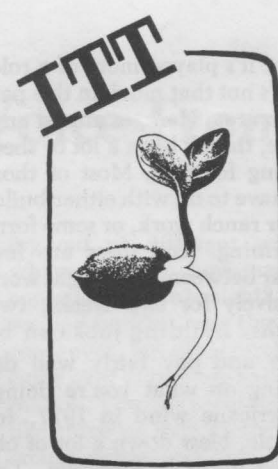
Daryl Sipos

*The highly publicized "Green Revolution"—characterized by heavy use of petro-chemical fertilizers and pesticides upon increasingly less diverse crops—is in trouble. Famine and hunger in Third World countries is but the leading manifestation of this. Australian Daryl Sipos argues below that everyone is going to be getting hungry if agriculture isn't diversified on a regional basis soon. Raise The Stakes is pleased to reprint his two articles from the Self Reliance Seed Catalogue (P.O. Box 96, Stanley, Tasmania, 7331).*

World agriculture is being revolutionized in a way which threatens the food security of many of the world's inhabitants. In the vanguard of this revolution are a handful of giant oil and chemical 'transnational' corporations whose aim is to control the production and sales of all the seeds used to grow the world's food. Compliant governments

are helping to ensure transnational control by passing legislation which gives plant breeders ownership rights over seeds through patenting schemes. Seeds become private property and users must pay royalties to the patent holders. Having no interest at all a few years back Shell Oil is now the world's largest plant breeder. Other agribusiness transnational corporations (TNC's) involved include Union Carbide, Ciba Geigy, Cargill, Pfizer, Ranks Hovis McDougall, Monsanto and Occidental Petroleum. At the same time as these TNC's move into plant breeding world agriculture is faced with a major threat to its future viability.

Throughout vast areas where mechanized chemical farming is practiced, only a few high-yielding varieties of a few major food species are grown. Areas where farmers still grow a multitude of hardy pest resistant



crops, varieties are rapidly being converted (largely by the green revolution) to the modern system. A diversity of varieties is the natural way of ensuring that there are always some survivors from diseases and other natural disasters. The old traditional varieties have always been essential as a genetic pool to draw on to infuse stronger qualities into modern varieties especially when pests and diseases have developed immunity to poisons. Most of these valuable resources developed by peasant farmers worldwide since the beginning of agriculture will soon be lost. The few varieties we depend on could soon be threatened by germ war-

fare attacks or a massive adaptation by natural pests and diseases which enables them to overcome any inherent resistance of our increasingly uniform crop varieties. Gene banks which have managed to store some of the old varieties will become vital to the survival of millions in the near future. With TNC ownership of plant breeding the control of this key to survival will give TNC's enormous power in any future bid they may make to establish an international corporate dictatorship.

Although plant varietal rights legislation (P.V.R.) is being presented in Australia as a harmless way to satisfy small time plant breeders who feel that they are not at present justly rewarded for their efforts, it should be realized that this law will give individuals a right to monopoly control through the patenting of a life form which then becomes private property despite the fact that the seeds of the earth have been developed over centuries as the common heritage of Humanity. It will mostly be large institutions and corporations that will be able to afford the expensive research and development costs involved in obtaining a new variety that would satisfy the proposed administrative require-



## REGIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN AGRICULTURE

Daryl Sipos

The enormous diversity of useful plants that have been developed all around the world came about because the world was divided into isolated regions made up of self-sufficient communities. People in each district had to develop useful varieties from local wild plants in order to survive. Some two or three hundred years ago, however, the world entered the age of a global civilization. Merchants and traders dominated this process, seeking the profits to be gained from the movement of goods needed or desired in one region to another. The petrol engine and cheap fossil fuels made business all the more lucrative. In agriculture, the religion of economics has led to a dependence on only a few crops that produce the quickest short-term profits. Once, people got 90% of their needs from their immediate district. Today, we take it for granted that we cannot live without goods from distant regions; yet every scientific breakthrough has made it all the more possible to meet most of our needs and desires locally.

The regional production of agricultural and other goods by means that are ecologically stable, is in the long term less wasteful, more economical, and more "profitable" to society as a whole. Regional self-sufficiency would develop the greater control and involvement over their own lives for which so many people presently feel the need. Such independence would make it very difficult for an enterprising individual to amass a fortune acting as an intermediary between people and their needs. In today's world it is no longer individuals but the trans-national corporations who would be made redundant by self-reliance.

It was the cheapness of fossil fuels and the over exploitation of other resources such as timber and minerals that led to people becoming completely dependent in a consumer society. It is now clear that we cannot use finite resources of fuel, fibre, and minerals indefinitely, and the alternative materials suggested only seem to become economical as the present ones rise in price. It is the system that needs to be examined if we are to maintain a reasonable quality of life. Our agriculture is our food and needs to be examined first.

Every region of Australia presently imports from elsewhere a wide range of foods and farm products that could easily be grown locally. Of course many desirable products have to come from different climates, but in all regions a wide range of delicious foods and other desirable products suited to the local climate are not grown. We continue to waste finite resources on transport, packaging, processing, advertising and marketing of foods that everyone agrees are second rate compared to farm fresh products. The planting of woodlots on the wasteland of farms and the edges of towns has always been economical. Today, growing fuel and fibre crops is becoming an economic necessity in every district. Surprisingly, it takes a very few acres to provide for people's needs. The fresh fruit and vegetable needs of most Australian cities could realistically be provided from

within commuting distance of the outer suburbs. Cities such as London and Paris were once surrounded by highly intensive market gardens which were largely dependent on horse manure from those cities' transport system. However the advent of the automobile led to the decline of this system, although people in London and the Dutch and German cities have since organized land buying cooperatives, and begun to grow some of their own food on their weekends at the edge of town.

The original design for Canberra included a "garden city concept" of a food belt for the city within a few miles' radius. Today, only some plantings of a few varieties of useful food trees along city streets remain from the old idea. Members of the Permaculture Association and some unemployed workers' groups are working on community gardens on disused land, planting useful species in parks, and hoping to buy land on a cooperative basis at the edge of Canberra. These sorts of strategies need to be expanded and taken to the level of local government politics. From a study of the disused land under council control, schemes for community gardens and food cooperatives to help solve unemployment, decrease wastage of resources, and improve the quality of life can be devised. If necessary these ideas would support an opposition policy in council elections. There is a need to study the recycling of sewerage and rubbish as part of an alternative policy. To change a system it is necessary to understand clearly how it works and to have alternative strategies clearly thought out. In Tasmania and the Hunter River valley near Newcastle, people opposed to the heavy investment of trans-national corporations in capital intensive industries have studied their local economies and produced some estimates on how the Government's share of investment in these profits on such things as dams and power stations could be better spent. They can show quite convincingly that money could provide more jobs if it was spent on housing, public transport, and tourism. More research needs to be done into alternative agricultural systems and the use of wasteland areas. A great deal of State and Federal Government funds is presently spent on research into improving the present system. This is good, especially in areas such as erosion control and farm forestry. Modern farming uses on average five times more energy on labour, machinery and fuel, than the energy value of the crop that is finally presented to the public. In fact, supermarket food has sometimes been described as packaged petrol. Traditional peasant farmers on the other hand produce about five times as much energy in food form as the energy put in by their labour. Modern methods of organic farming have improved this energy return yet again. Any government serious about the need to conserve fuel resources should be directing some of its agricultural research budget into studies of more energy efficient systems. The many groups and individuals working to establish such systems are at least as deserving of aid from the public purse as any normal farmer. It will only be possible to change completely to a sustainable system of agriculture in harmony with the environment if the change is thoroughly researched and publicly supported via government. To win the public support we need to work towards establishing as much of an alternative as we can in our local areas. By once again basing our survival on regionally self-sufficient communities we could reverse the trend towards uniformity in agriculture, as a wide diversity of varieties would be needed for all the different regions. □



WHAT IS PLANET/DRUM FOUNDATION

Since 1974 Planet/Drum Foundation has served a diverse circle of members and correspondents interested in developing, analyzing and communicating the concept of a bioregion through its regional bundles, books, and tri-annual review, RAISE THE STAKES. There are a growing number of individuals and groups that are exploring cultural, environmental, and economic forms appropriate to the places they live in. Planet/Drum Foundation is now developing network and support functions for existing bioregional groups and projects as well as for those that will evolve in the future. We invite you to join the Planet/Drum circle in furthering the ongoing exchange of place-related ideas and activities.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- 1 Become a member of Planet/Drum Foundation. Membership includes three issues of RAISE THE STAKES, at least one surprise publication, a 25% discount on all Planet/Drum books and bundles, and access to our networking and workshop facilities.
- 2 Help build a bioregional group in your area. We can help by sending you a list of Planet/Drum members in your area. You can send us the names and addresses of interested people who will in turn receive a complimentary issue of RAISE THE STAKES.
- 3 Send us a list of your cultural and cooperative outlets: bookstores, food co-ops, community and environmental centers.
- 4 Arrange a bioregional workshop in your area. For transportation, room and board, Planet/Drum will come to help you.
- 5 Send RAISE THE STAKES a report from your region.

WHAT PLANET/DRUM FOUNDATION HAS BEEN UP TO

Summer

The First Assembly of the Fourth World. Planet/Drum Foundation was present at the Fourth World Assembly in London, along with representatives from other small nations, communities, communes, ethnic minorities, religious and cultural groups. The Assembly was attended by those who share a similar stance in opposing giantism and who are working towards a non-centralized, multi-cellular, power-dispersed planet. (See the Peter Berg interview in this issue.)

Fall

The Second Ozark Community Congress (OACC II). We participated in OACC II helping clarify bioregional criteria and priorities for Ozarkia. OACC knows how to put together a

Bioregional Congress that is both fun and effective. Bob Watts, Judy Goldhaft, and Peter Berg had a great time there. (See the Ozarkia page in this issue.)

Winter

The Winter Issue of CoEvolution Quarterly. Peter Berg and Stephanie Mills are co-editing the Winter Issue of CoEvolution Quarterly. This special issue, with articles about North American Bioregionalism and the Fourth World, is being sent to all Planet/Drum members.

Other Planet/Drum activities have included presentations at San Francisco State University, the All Beings gathering at Golden Gate Park, the 20/20 Conference in Santa Cruz, the Master Builders Forum at Canessa Gallery, and one bioregional workshop with the Abaloné Alliance.

RAISE THE STAKES

... is published tri-annually by Planet Drum Foundation. We encourage readers to share vital information, both urban and rural, about what is going on in their native regions. Send us your bioregional reports, letters, interviews, poems, stories, and art. Inquiries, manuscripts, and tax-deductible contributions should be sent to Planet Drum Foundation, P.O. Box 31251, San Francisco, CA 94131 USA. Telephone (415) 285-6556.

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Editor—Michael Helm. Assistant Editors—Judy Goldhaft, Robert C. Watts, and Sheila Purcell. Graphic Design and Production—Nancy von Stoutenburg. Typesetting—Ampersand Typography. Berkeley. Printing—Warren's Waller Press, San Francisco.

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Here's \$10 for a year's subscription to *Raise The Stakes* plus 25% discount on other Planet/Drum publications.

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\*After January 1, 1982 the yearly membership fee will be \$15.

PLEASE CUT AND MAIL IN TODAY!

PLANET DRUM BOOKS

• *Reinhabiting a Separate Country: A Bioregional Anthology of Northern California*, edited by Peter Berg. 220 pages. Essays, natural history, biographies, poems and stories revealing Northern California as a distinct area of the planetary biosphere. \$7.00.\*\*

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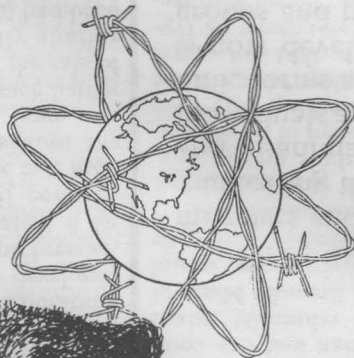
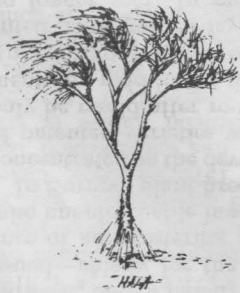
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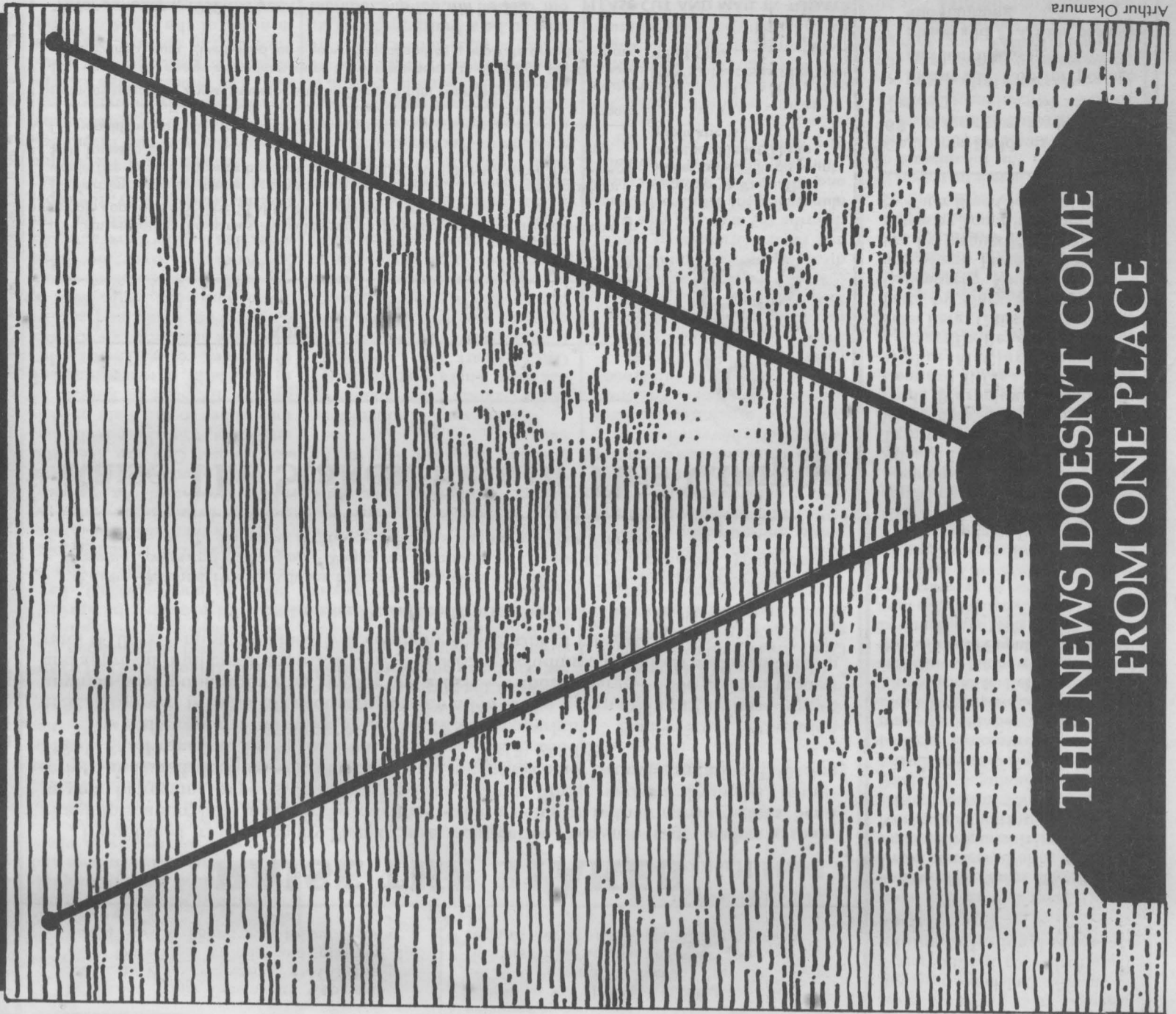
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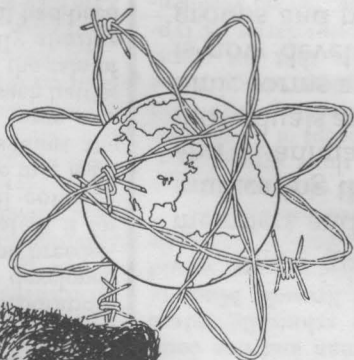
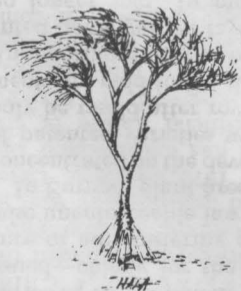


Arthur Okamura

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