

## The Power to Destroy, The Power to Create

The power of this society to destroy has reached a scale unprecedented in the history of humanity—and this power is being used, almost systematically, to work an insensate havoc upon the entire world of life and its material bases.

In nearly every region, air is being befouled, waterways polluted, soil washed away, the land desiccated, and wildlife destroyed. Coastal areas and even the depths of the sea are not immune to widespread pollution. More significantly in the long run, basic biological cycles such as the carbon cycle and nitrogen cycle, upon which all living things (including humans) depend for the maintenance and renewal of life, are being distorted to the point of irreversible damage. The proliferation of nuclear reactors in the United States and throughout the world have exposed countless millions of people to some of the most carcinogenic and mutagenic agents known to life. This terrifying menace to the very integrity of life may be with us for hundreds of thousands of years. To these radioactive wastes we should add long-lived pesticides, lead residues, and thousands of toxic or potentially toxic chemicals in food, water, and air; the expansion of cities into vast urban belts, with dense concentrations of populations comparable in size to entire nations; the rising din

of background noise; the stresses created by congestion, mass living, and mass manipulation; the immense accumulations of garbage, refuse, sewage, and industrial wastes; the congestion of highways and city streets with vehicular traffic; the profligate destruction of precious raw materials; the scarring of the earth by real-estate speculators, mining and lumbering barons, and highway construction bureaucrats. This ecological list of lethal insults to the biosphere has wreaked a degree of damage in a single generation that exceeds the damage inflicted by thousands of years of human habitation on this planet. If this tempo of destruction is borne in mind, it is terrifying to speculate about what lies ahead in the generations to come.

The essence of the ecological crisis in our time is that this society—more than any other in the past—is literally undoing the work of organic evolution. It is a truism to say that humanity is part of the fabric of life. It is perhaps more important at this late stage to emphasize that humanity depends critically upon the complexity and variety of life, that human well-being and survival rest upon a long evolution of organisms into increasingly complex and interdependent forms. The development of life into a complex web, the elaboration of primal animals and plants into highly varied forms, has been the precondition for the evolution and survival of humanity and nature.

### The Roots of the Ecological Crisis

If the past generation has witnessed a despoilation of the planet that exceeds all the damage inflicted by earlier generations, little more than a generation may remain before the destruction of the environment becomes irreversible. For this reason, we must look at the roots of the ecological crisis with ruthless honesty. Time is running out and the remaining decades of the twentieth century may well be the last opportunity we will have to restore the balance between humanity and nature.

Do the roots of the ecological crisis lie in the development

of technology? Technology has become a convenient target for bypassing the deep-seated social conditions that make machines and technical processes harmful.

How convenient it is to forget that technology has served not only to subvert the environment but also to improve it. The Neolithic Revolution, which produced the most harmonious period between nature and post-paleolithic humanity, was above all a technological revolution. It was this period that brought to humanity the arts of agriculture, weaving, pottery, the domestication of animals, the discovery of the wheel, and many other key advances. True, there are techniques and technological attitudes that are entirely destructive of the balance between humanity and nature. Our responsibilities are to separate the promise of technology—its creative potential—from the capacity of technology to destroy. Indeed, there is no such word as "Technology" that presides over all social conditions and relations; there are different technologies and attitudes toward technology, some of which are indispensable to restoring the balance, others of which have contributed profoundly to its destruction. What humanity needs is not a wholesale discarding of advanced technologies, but a sifting, indeed a further development of technology along ecological principles that will contribute to a new harmonization of society and the natural world.

Do the roots of the ecological crisis lie in population growth? This thesis is the most disquieting, and in many ways the most sinister, to be advanced by ecology action movements in the United States. Here, an effect called "population growth," juggled around on the basis of superficial statistics and projections, is turned into a *cause*. A problem of secondary proportions at the present time is given primacy, thus obscuring the fundamental reasons for the ecological crisis. True, if present economic, political, and social conditions prevail, humanity will in time overpopulate the planet and by sheer weight of numbers turn into a pest in its own global habitat. There is something obscene, however, about the fact that an effect, "population growth," is being given primacy in the ecological crisis by a nation that has

little more than 7 percent of the world's population and wastefully devours more than 50 percent of the world's resources.

We must pause to look more carefully into the population problem, touted so widely by the white races of North America and Europe—races that have wantonly exploited the peoples of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the South Pacific. The exploited have delicately advised their exploiters that, what they need are not contraceptive devices, armed "liberators," and Prof. Paul R. Ehrlich to resolve their population problems; rather, what they need is a fair return on the immense resources that were plundered from their lands by North America and Europe. To balance these accounts is more of a pressing need at the present time than to balance birth rates and death rates. The peoples of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the South Pacific can justly point out that their American "advisers" have shown the world how to despoil a virgin continent in less than a century and have added the words "built-in obsolescence" to the vocabulary of humanity.

This much is clear: when large labor reserves were needed during the Industrial Revolution of the early nineteenth century to man factories and depress wages, population growth was greeted enthusiastically by the new industrial bourgeoisie. And the growth of population occurred despite the fact that, owing to long working hours and grossly overcrowded cities, tuberculosis, cholera, and other diseases were pandemic in Europe and the United States. If birth rates exceeded death rates at this time, it was not because advances in medical care and sanitation had produced any dramatic decline in human mortality; rather, the excess of birth rates over death rates can be explained by the destruction of pre-industrial family farms, village institutions, mutual aid, and stable, traditional patterns of life at the hands of capitalist "enterprise." The decline in social morale ushered in by the horrors of the factory system, the degradation of traditional agrarian peoples into grossly exploited proletarians and urban dwellers, produced a concomitantly irresponsible attitude toward the family and the begetting of children. Sexuality

became a refuge from a life of toil on the same order as the consumption of cheap gin; the new proletariat reproduced children, many of whom were never destined to survive into adulthood, as mindlessly as it drifted into alcoholism. Much the same process occurred when the villages of Asia, Africa, and Latin America were sacrificed on the holy altar of imperialism.

Today, the bourgeoisie "sees" things differently. The roseate years of "free enterprise" and "free labor" are waning before an era of monopoly, cartels, state-controlled economies, institutionalized forms of labor mobilization (trade unions), and automatic or cybernetic machinery. Large reserves of unemployed labor are no longer needed to meet the needs of capital expansion, and wages are largely negotiated rather than left to the free play of the labor market. From a need, idle labor reserves have now turned into a threat to the stability of a managed bourgeois economy. The logic of this new "perspective" found its most terrifying expression in German fascism. To the Nazis, Europe was already "overpopulated" in the thirties and the "population problem" was "solved" in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. The same logic is implicit in many of the neo-Malthusian arguments that masquerade as ecology today. Let there be no mistake about this conclusion.

Sooner or later the mindless proliferation of human beings will have to be arrested, but population control will either be initiated by "social controls" (authoritarian or racist methods and eventually by systematic genocide) or by a libertarian, ecologically oriented society—a society that develops a new balance with nature out of a reverence for life. Modern society stands before these mutually exclusive alternatives and a choice must be made without dissimulation. Ecological action is fundamentally social action. Either we will go directly to the social roots of the ecological crisis, or we will be deceived into an era of totalitarianism.

Finally, do the roots of the ecological crisis lie in the mindless consumption of goods by Americans and by peoples of European origin generally? Here a half-truth is used to create a whole lie.

Like the "population issue," "affluence" and the inability of a "grow-or-die" economy to impose limits to growth is used to anchor the ecological problem in the ordinary and powerless peoples of the world. A notion of "original sin" is created that deflects the causes of the ecological problem to the bedroom, where people reproduce, or to the dinner table, where they eat, or to the vehicles, home furnishings, and clothing that in large part have become indispensable to ordinary living—indeed, mere survival of the average person as seen in the context of the present society.

Can we blame working people for using cars when the logistics of American society were deliberately structured by General Motors and the energy industry around highways? Can we blame middle-class people for purchasing suburban homes when cities were permitted to deteriorate and real-estate hucksters merchandised an "American Dream" of subdivisions, ranch-type dwellings, and a two-car garage? Can we blame Black, Hispanic peoples, and other minority groups for reaching out to own television sets, appliances, and clothing when all the basic material means of life were denied to them for generations?

The all-engulfing inflation engineered by the energy industry, multinational corporations, banks, and agribusiness has already made a mockery of the meaning of "limits to growth" and "voluntary simplicity." The savings accounts, earnings, and credit of working, middle-class and minority peoples have already reached *their* "limits" and "simplicity" of living is no longer a choice—it has become a necessity. What has grown in size and complexity beyond all decency have been the incredible profits, the interlocking directorates and the corporate structure in the United States and throughout the world. Viewed in terms of this structure, we can no longer speak of "limits to growth," "voluntary simplicity," and "conservation" but rather in terms of unlimited expansion, unlimited accumulation of capital and wealth, and unlimited waste of raw materials for useless, even toxic, commodities and of a formidable, ever-growing arsenal of weaponry.

If we are to find the roots of the present ecological crisis, we must turn not to technics, demographics, growth, and a diseased affluence alone; we must turn to the underlying institutional, moral, and spiritual changes in human society that produced hierarchy and domination—not only in bourgeois, feudal, and ancient society, nor in class societies generally but at the very dawn of civilization.

### Ecology and Society

The basic conception that humanity must dominate and exploit nature stems from the domination and exploitation of man by man. Indeed, this conception goes back earlier to a time when men began to dominate and exploit women in the patriarchal family. From that point onward, human beings were increasingly regarded as mere resources, as objects instead of subjects. The hierarchies, classes, propertied forms, and statist institutions that emerged with social domination were carried over conceptually into humanity's relationship with nature. Nature too became increasingly regarded as a mere resource, an object, a raw material to be exploited as ruthlessly as slaves on a latifundium. This "worldview" permeated not only the official culture of hierarchical society; it became the way in which slaves, serfs, industrial workers and women of all social classes began to view themselves. As embodied in the "work ethic," in a morality based on denial and renunciation, in a mode of behavior based on the sublimation of erotic desires, and in other worldly outlooks (be they European or Asian), the slaves, serfs, workers, and female half of humanity were taught to police themselves, to fashion their own chains, to close the doors on their own prison cells.

If the "worldview" of hierarchical society is beginning to wane today, this is mainly because the enormous productivity of modern technology has opened a new vision: the possibility of material abundance, an end to scarcity, and an era of free time (so-called leisure time) with minimal toil.

By "material abundance" we do not mean the wasteful, mindless "affluence" based on false needs, the subtle coercion of advertising, and the substitution of mere objects—commodities—for genuine human relations, self-reflection, and self-development. We refer to a sufficiency in food, shelter, clothing, and basic comforts of life with a minimum of toil that will permit everyone in society—not a specialized elite—to directly manage social affairs.

★ Society is becoming permeated by a tension between "what is" and "what could be," a tension exacerbated by the irrational, inhuman exploitation and destruction of the earth and its inhabitants. The greatest impediment that obstructs a resolution of this tension is the extent to which hierarchical society still fashions our outlook and actions. It is easier to take refuge in critiques of technology and population growth; to deal with an archaic, destructive social system on its own terms and within its own framework. Almost from birth, we have been socialized by the family, religious institutions, schools, and by the work process itself into accepting hierarchy, renunciation, and state systems as the premises on which all thinking must rest. Without shedding these premises, all discussions of ecological balance must remain palliative and self-defeating.

By virtue of its unique cultural baggage, modern society—our profit-oriented bourgeois society—tends to exacerbate our profit-oriented bourgeois society—in a more critical fashion than humanity's conflict with nature in a more critical fashion than pre-industrial societies of the past. In bourgeois society, humans are not only turned into objects; they are turned into commodities—into objects explicitly designed for sale on the marketplace. Competition between human beings, qua commodities, becomes an end in itself, together with the production of utterly useless goods. Quality is turned into quantity, individual culture into mass culture, personal communication into mass communication. The natural environment is turned into a gigantic factory, the city into an immense marketplace; everything from a redwood forest to a woman's body has "a price." Everything is reduced to dollars-and-cents, be it a hallowed cathedral or individual honor. Technology ceases to be an extension of humanity;



humanity becomes an extension of technology. The machine does not expand the power of the worker; the worker expands the power of the machine; indeed, she or he becomes a mere part of the machine.

Is it surprising, then, that this exploitative, degrading, quantified society pits humanity against itself and against nature on a more awesome scale than any other in the past?

Yes, we need change, but change so fundamental and far-reaching that even the concept of revolution and freedom must be expanded beyond all earlier horizons. No longer is it enough to speak of new techniques for conserving and fostering the natural environment; we must deal with the earth communally, as a human collectivity, without those trammels of private property that have distorted humanity's vision of life and nature since the break-up of tribal society. We must eliminate not only bourgeois hierarchy but hierarchy as such; not only the patriarchal family but *all* modes of sexual and parental domination; not only the bourgeois class and propertied system but *all* social classes and property. Humanity must come into possession of itself, individually and collectively, so that all human beings attain control of their everyday lives. Our cities must be decentralized into communities, or ecocommunities, exquisitely and artfully tailored to the carrying capacity of the ecosystems in which they are located. Our technologies must be readapted and advanced into ecotechnologies, exquisitely and artfully adapted to make use of local energy sources and materials, with minimal or no pollution of the environment. We must recover a new sense of our needs—needs that foster a healthful life and express our individual proclivities, not “needs” dictated by the mass media. We must restore the human scale in our environment and in our social relations, replacing mediated by direct personal relations in the management of society. Finally, all modes of domination—social or personal—must be banished from our conceptions of ourselves, our communities, and nature. The administration of humans must be replaced by the administration of things. The revolution we seek must encompass

not only political institutions and economic relations, but consciousness, lifestyle, erotic desires, and our interpretation of the meaning of life.

What is in the balance, here, is the age-long spirit and systems of domination and repression that have not only pitted human against human, but humanity against nature. The conflict between humanity and nature is an extension of the conflict between human and human. Unless the ecology movement encompasses the problem of domination in all its aspects, it will contribute *nothing* toward eliminating the root causes of the ecological crisis of our time. If the ecology movement stops at mere reforms in pollution and conservation control—at mere “environmentalism”—without dealing radically with the need for an expanded concept of revolution, it will merely serve as a safety valve for the existing system of natural and human exploitation.

### Goals

In some respects, the ecology movement today is waging a delaying action against the rampant destruction of the environment. In other respects, its most conscious elements are involved in a creative movement to totally revolutionize the social relations of humans to each other and of humanity to nature.

Although they closely interpenetrate, the two efforts should be distinguished from each other. Ecology Action East supports every effort to conserve the environment: to eliminate nuclear power plants and weapons, to preserve clean air and water, to limit the use of pesticides and food additives, to reduce vehicular traffic in streets and on highways, to make cities more wholesome physically, to prevent radioactive wastes from seeping into the environment, to guard and expand wilderness areas and domains for wildlife, to defend animal species from human depredation.<sup>1</sup>

But Ecology Action East does not deceive itself that such

delaying actions constitute a definitive solution to the fundamental conflict that exists between the present social order and the natural world. Nor can such delaying actions arrest the overwhelming momentum of the existing society for destruction.

This social order plays games with us. It grants long-delayed, piecemeal, and woefully inadequate reforms to deflect our energies and attention from larger acts of destruction. In a sense, we are "offered" a patch of redwood forest in exchange for the Cascades, a nuclear power site in exchange for a neutron bomb. Viewed in a larger perspective, this attempt to reduce ecology to a barter relationship does not rescue anything; it is a cheap modus operandi for trading away the greater part of the planet for a few islands of wilderness, for pocket parks in a devastated world of concrete. It is the sick strategy of "benefits versus risks" of "trade-offs" that has reduced ethics to the pursuit of "lesser evils" rather than greater good.

Ecology Action East has two primary aims: one is to increase in the revolutionary movement the awareness that the most destructive and pressing consequences of our alienating, exploitative society is the ecological crisis, and that any truly revolutionary society must be built upon ecological precepts; the other is to create, in the minds of the millions of Americans who are concerned with the destruction of our environment, the consciousness that the principles of ecology, carried to their logical end, demand radical changes in our society and our way of looking at the world.

Ecology Action East takes its stand with the lifestyle revolution that, at its best, seeks an expanded consciousness of experience and human freedom. We seek the liberation of women, of children, of gay people, of Black people and colonial peoples, and of working people in all occupations as part of a growing social struggle against the age-old traditions and institutions of domination—traditions and institutions that have so destructively shaped humanity's attitude toward the natural world. We support libertarian communities and struggles for freedom wherever they arise; we take our stand with every effort

to promote the spontaneous self-development of the young; we oppose every attempt to repress human sexuality, to deny humanity the eroticization of experience in all its forms. We join in all endeavors to foster a joyous artfulness in life and work: the promotion of crafts and quality production, the design of new ecocommunities and ecotechnologies, the right to experience on a daily basis the beauty of the natural world, the open, unmediated, sensuous pleasure that humans can give to each other, the growing reverence for the world of life.

In short, we hope for a revolution that will produce politically independent communities whose boundaries and populations will be defined by a new ecological consciousness; communities whose inhabitants will determine for themselves within the framework of this new consciousness the nature and level of their technologies, the forms taken by their social structures, worldviews, lifestyles, expressive arts, and all the other aspects of their daily lives.

But we do not delude ourselves that this life-oriented world can be fully developed or even partially achieved in a death-oriented society. American society, as it is constituted today, is riddled with racism and sits astride the entire world, not only as a consumer of its wealth and resources, but as an obstacle to all attempts at self-determination at home and abroad. Its inherent aims are production for the sake of production, the preservation of hierarchy and toil on a world scale, mass manipulation and control by centralized, state institutions. This kind of society is unalterably counterposed to a life-oriented world. If the ecology movement does not direct its main efforts toward a revolution in all areas of life—social as well as natural, political as well as personal, economic as well as cultural—then the movement will gradually become the safety valve of the established order.

It is our hope that groups like our own will spring up throughout the country, organized like ourselves on a humanistic, libertarian basis, engaged in mutual action and a spirit of cooperation based on mutual aid. It is our hope that they will try to foster a

new ecological attitude not only toward nature but also toward humans: a conception of spontaneous, variegated relations within groups and between groups, within society and between individuals.

We hope that ecology groups will eschew all appeals to the "heads of government" and to international or national state institutions, the very criminals and political bodies that have materially contributed to the ecological crisis of our time. We believe the appeals must be made to the people and to their capacity for *direct action* that can get them to take control of their own lives and destinies. For only in this way can a society emerge without hierarchy and domination, a society in which each individual is the master of his or her own fate.

The great splits that divided human from human, humanity from nature, individual from society, town from country, mental from physical activity, reason from emotion, and generation from generation must now be transcended. The fulfillment of the age-old quest for survival and material security in a world of scarcity was once regarded as the precondition for freedom and a fully human life. To live we had to survive. As Brecht put it: "First feed the face, then give the moral." The situation has now begun to change. The ecological crisis of our time has increasingly reversed this traditional maxim. Today, if we are to survive, we must begin to live. Our solutions must be commensurable with the scope of the problem, or else nature will take a terrifying revenge on humanity.

### The Meaning of Direct Action and Affinity Groups

Today, all ecological movements stand at a crossroad. They are faced with basically conflicting alternatives of policy and process: whether to work within the existing institutions or to use direct action, whether to form centralistic, bureaucratic, and conventional forms of organization or decentralized affinity groups. These problems have reached their most acute form in

the great antinuke alliances like Clamshell, Shad, Abalone, and Catfish, to cite only a few. And it is the destiny of these alliances that now concerns us most profoundly.

At their inception, the marvelous genius of the antinuke alliances is that they intuitively sensed the need to break away from the "system," that they began to function outside it and *directly* enter into social life—pushing aside the prevailing institutions, its bureaucrats, "experts," and leaders—and thereby pave the way for *extra-legal, moral, and personal* action. To a large extent, they adopted direct action because earlier attempts to stop nuclear power plants by operating within the "system" had failed. Endless months or years of litigation, hearings, the adoption of local ordinances, petition and letter-writing campaigns to congressmen, and the like—all had essentially failed to stop the construction of nukes. Clamshell, the earliest of the great regional alliances, was literally born from the futility of trying to prevent the construction of the Seabrook nuke by "working within the system." Its very *identity* as an alliance was literally defined by the need to directly occupy the Seabrook site, to invoke moral principles over statutory laws. For any of the alliances to ever surrender their commitment to direct action for working within the system is to destroy their personality as socially innovative movements. It is to dissolve back into the hopeless morass of "mass organizations" that seek respectability rather than change.

What is even more important about direct action is that it forms a decisive step toward recovering the personal power over social life that the centralized, overbearing bureaucracies have usurped from the people. By action *directly*, we not only gain a sense that we can control the course of social events again, we recover a new sense of selfhood and personality without which a truly free society, based on self-activity and self-management, is utterly impossible. We often speak of self-management and self-activity as our ideals for a future society without recognizing often enough that it is not only the "management" and "activity" that has to be democratized; it is

also the "self" of each individual—as a unique, creative, and competent being—that has to be fully developed. Mass society, the real basis for hierarchy, domination, command and obedience, like class society, is the spawning ground for a society of homogenized spectators whose lives are guided by elites, "stars," and "vanguards," be they in the bureaucratic society of the United States or the totalitarian societies of the socialist world. A truly free society does not deny selfhood but rather supports it, liberates it, and actualizes it in the belief that everyone is competent to manage society, not merely an "elect" of experts and self-styled men of genius. Direct action is merely the free town meeting writ large. It is the means whereby each individual awakens to the hidden powers within herself and himself, to a new sense of self-confidence and self-competence; it is the means whereby individuals take control of society directly, without "representatives" who tend to usurp not only the power but the very personality of a passive, spectatorial "electorate" that lives in the shadows of an "elect." Direct action, in short, is not a "tactic" that can be adopted or discarded in terms of its "effectiveness" or "popularity"; it is a moral principle, an ideal, indeed, a sensibility. It should imbue every aspect of our lives and behavior and outlook.

Similarly, the affinity group—a term devised by the Spanish Anarchists (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica* or FAI) in the 1920s—is not merely a "task force" that can be flippantly collected and disbanded for short-lived occupations. It is a permanent, intimate, decentralized community of a dozen or so sisters and brothers, a family or commune as it were, who are drawn together not only by common actions and goals but by a need to develop new libertarian social relations between themselves, to mutually educate each other, share each other's problems, and develop new, nonsexist, nonhierarchical ties as well as activities. The affinity group should form the real cellular tissue from which the alliance evolves, the very protoplasm that turns it into an organic being. In contrast to the party-type of organization, with its centralized, bureaucratic skeleton to which all parts of

the structure are mechanically appended in a system of command and obedience, the affinity group is linked together by proliferation and combination in its authentic locality as a truly ecological entity. It always remains part of its local community, sensitive to its needs and unique requirements, yet it can coordinate locally and regionally into clusters and coordinating committees whose *delegates* (as distinguished from "representatives") can always be recalled, rotated, and strictly mandated to reflect the views of the various groups in every detail. Thus, within the affinity groups structure of an alliance, power actually diminishes rather than increases at each ascending level of coordination, this in sharp contrast to party-type or "league"—type or chapter-types of organization so rooted in the existing systems of "representation" and politics. Thus, the affinity group, like direct action, is not merely an organizational device, a "task force," a "tool" for implementing nuke occupations; it too is based on a moral principle, an ideal, and a sensibility that goes beyond the issue of nuclear power to that of spiritual power, new, humanly scaled, decentralized, ecological forms of human association as well as human action.

### Between Two Choices

With the Three Mile Island meltdown in 1979 and even earlier, in the summer of 1978, when the Seabrook occupation was arbitrarily turned into a star-studded "legal" festival by the Clamshell leadership, there has been growing evidence in many alliances of attempts to convert the antinuke movement as a whole into a political and media event. It is doubtful if many of the self-styled "founders" of Clamshell clearly understood the idea that direct action and affinity groups were more than mere "tactics" and "task forces." Doubtless the terms sounded attractive—so they were widely used. By the same token, many of the Clamshell "founders" viewed "No Nukes!" as an effective rallying point for mass, media-oriented actions, for large



spectacles in which people with basically conflicting social views could unite, whether they believed in "free enterprise" or no property, for huge audiences before which they could display their oratorical talents and abilities. To go beyond "No Nukes!"—even as an educational responsibility—was taboo. At various alliance conferences and congresses, even at local clusters in which Coordinating Committee "regional travelers" (so reminiscent of the old SDS "regional travelers" of the sixties) surfaced, thoughtful antinuke activists were urged to keep the antinuke issue "clear." They were called upon to limit their educational activities to the growing public interest in nuclear reactors, not to develop a richer, more searching public consciousness of the social roots of nuclear power. In trying to find a low common denominator that would "mobilize" virtually everyone, the new "antinuke establishment" really educated no one. It was Three Mile Island that did much of the education, and often public understanding of the issue goes no further than problems of technology rather than problems of society. Respectability was stressed over principles, popularity over dissidence, mass mobilizations in Washington D.C. and New York's Battery Park over occupations, and more insidiously, politics over direct action.

Yes, the fact is that there is now an "antinuclear establishment" that resembles in many structural, manipulatory, tactical, and perhaps even financial respects the very nuclear establishment it professes to oppose. It is not a very holy alliance, this career-oriented, star-studded, and politically ambitious establishment that often stands in harsh opposition or contradiction to the libertarian principles of major alliances like Clamshell, Shad, Abalone, and Catfish. Its elite membership has been recruited in some cases from the self-styled "founders" of the libertarian alliances themselves. Others, like Tom Hayden, the Alexander Cockburn-James Ridgeway axis, Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) luminaries, and Barry Commoner openly shunned the alliances or their equivalent—Hayden and Cockburn-Ridgeway, by denouncing all environmental groups at one time or another

as white, middle-class, self-indulgent movements; Commoner, by disdainfully refusing to even take cognizance of Clamshell's requests for verbal support of its 1977 Seabrook occupation, that is, until the occupation received massive press reportage. Today, this new flower in the antinuke bouquet is the prize orator of recent antinuke rallies and, according to some reports, a potential presidential candidate for the recently concocted "Citizens Party." The Tom and Jerry sideshow from California, as the Washington rally revealed, seems to have a distinct political odor of its own.

Finally, Musicians United for Safe Energy (MUSE) and similar "fundraising" groups, reportedly orchestrated in part by Messrs. Sam Lovejoy and Harvey Wasserman, have added the tint of grassroots activism to what is a jet-set organization. The drift toward mass constituencies, personal careerism, political power, party-type structures, bureaucratic manipulation—in short, toward "effective" means for operating within the system with the excuse that the antinuke movement can use the system against itself—is now unmistakable. The huge crowd that assembled at Battery Park to hear the antinuke establishment and its rock stars were passive people, often depersonalized and homogenized like any television audience. This may have well been the case for many people who attended the Washington mobilization. The antinuclear establishment has brought to what was once a consistently populist and libertarian movement an alien taste for politics, high finance (where possible), mass followings, public "spokesmen," and institutional recognition.

The danger of this elitist alliance to the nonhierarchical alliance that have emerged throughout the United States is a grave one. Were the antinuclear establishment easily defined with a clear identity of its own, it could easily be resisted. But this establishment emerges in our very midst—as one of us. By dissolving many real and far-reaching differences that should be explored and resolved with the simplistic slogan, "No Nukes!"; by staking out claims as "stars" with media appeal, or "power brokers" with financial appeal, or "legislators" with political appeal,

or "scientists" with technical appeal, or "just plain folks" who helped found the alliances, the antinuclear establishment incubates in our midst like pathogenic spores that periodically break out in acute illnesses. To speak bluntly, it cultivates our worst vices. It appeals to our desire for "effectiveness" and our hope of achieving "mass support" without revealing the immoral, in fact, demoralizing implications of the methods it employs. It conceals the fact that its methods are borrowed from the very social structures, indeed, the very advertising agencies, that reduce people to "masses," media-orchestrated spectators, "groupies" of the "stars" who seem larger than life because their appetites for power are often larger than their egos.

We have emphasized the problems created by the antinuclear establishment not from any desire for divisiveness or any sense of personal malice. There is a deeper sense of tragedy that runs through my remarks rather than anger. A few members of this establishment are doubtless naive; others are frankly opportunists whose careers and ambitions by far outweigh their commitment to a humanistic, ecological society. My emphasis stems basically from a need not only to acknowledge that serious differences exist within the antinuclear movement and should not be concealed by specious demands for "unity"; my main concern is that we recover and advance *our own identity* in the years that lie ahead—our commitment to direct action, to affinity groups, decentralization, regionalism, and libertarian forms of coordination.

The future of the antinuke movement, particularly of its great alliances, depends not only upon what we reject but what we accept—and the *reasons* why we accept certain principles, organizational forms, and methods. If we limit ourselves to "No Nukes! is enough," we will remain simplistic, naive, and tragically innocent people whom careerists can cynically and shrewdly manipulate. If we see direct action and affinity groups merely as "tactics" or "task forces," we will foreclose any real contact with those millions of restive Americans who are looking for an alternative to a system that denies them any power over their lives. If

our alternative energy fairs extol solar or wind energy as such without warning people that huge, space-age solar collectors and windmills are on the drawing boards of power utilities and multinational corporations, we will help the powers-that-be meter the sun and the wind in much the same way that Con Edison meters electrical energy. We should educate people not simply into an alternate, "appropriate" (for what?), or "soft" technology. We should raise the vision of a *people's* technology—the passive, simple, decentralized solar, wind, and food-producing technologies that the individual can understand, control, maintain, and even build.

By the same token, to call for "decentralization" and to plead for "voluntary simplicity" are completely meaningless if their functions are simply logistical or conservation oriented. We can easily have a "decentralized" society that is little more than a huge suburbia, managed by the same political bureaucrats, fed by the same agribusiness plantations and shopping malls, policed by the same Kojaks, united by the same corporate directors, interlaced by the same highways, and sedated by the same mass media that manages our existing centralized society. To demand "decentralization" without self-management, in which every person freely participates in decision-making processes in every aspect of life and all the material means of life are communally owned, produced, and shared according to need, is pure obscurantism. To delude Americans into the belief that a mere change in design necessarily yields a real change in social life and spiritual sensibility is sheer hypocrisy. To leave questions like "who owns what" and "who runs what" unanswered while celebrating the virtues or beauties of "smallness" verges on demagoguery. Decentralization and human scale, yes!—but in a society whose property, produce, and environment are shared communally and managed in a nonhierarchical manner.

To call for "voluntary simplicity," yes!—but only when the means of life are really simple and available to all. Gloria Vanderbilt jeans and fringed suede jackets do not "voluntary simplicity" make. The Stanford Research Institute's plea

for "voluntary simplicity" and "limits to growth" as the fastest growth industry on the commercial horizon parallels Exxon's and Mobil's claims to energy conservation. That a multimillion dollar "think-tank" for big business advances "voluntary simplicity" as a new growth industry for future capital investment; that agribusiness may well turn to organic food cultivation to meet the growing market for "natural foods"; that the Club of Rome can advance a gospel of "limits to growth"; reveal how utterly superficial these demands can become when they do not challenge the basic corporate, property, bureaucratic, and profit-oriented social structure at its most fundamental level of ownership and control.

The most effective steps we can take at our congresses and conferences to assure a meaningful future for the antinuke movement and environmental movement more broadly is to unrelentingly foster the development of affinity groups as the bases of our alliances and direct action as the bases of our activities. Direct action does not merely mean nuclear site occupations; it means learning how to manage every aspect of our lives, from producing to organizing, from educating to printing. The New England town meetings, during their more revolutionary periods around the 1760s, were near models of direct action as carried into the social world. So, too, for direct action—of which our affinity groups and congresses can be models no less than Seabrook or Shoreham or Rocky Flats. Direct action, however, decidedly does not mean reducing oneself to a passive spectator of a "star's" performance, whether it be at a speakers rostrum, a rock band's stage, or on the portico of the State House in Sacramento or the White House in Washington.

On the other hand, if we are afraid to remain in a minority by speaking out openly and honestly—even at the risk of being "ineffective" or insolvent for a time—we deserve the fate that awaits us—respectability at the price of surrender, "influence" at the price of demoralization, power at the price of cynicism, "success" at the expense of corruption. The choice lies in either direction, and there is no "in-between" terrain on which to

compromise. In any case, for once, the choice we make will be the future we will create.

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