

Capitalism Nature Socialism

A Journal of
Socialist Ecology

HOUSE ORGAN

ESSAY

The Commodity that is Eating
the World: The Automobile,
the Environment, and Capitalism
Peter Freund and George Martin

STREET ECOLOGY

NASA's Manna from Heaven
Mike Davis

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Ecological Legitimacy and
Cultural Essentialism:
Hispano Grazing
in the Southwest
Laura Pulido

THINKERS

Frederick Soddy: Scientist,
Economist and Environmentalist
— An Examination of his Politics
Linda Merricks

URBAN ECOLOGY

Of Cars, Sustainability and Equity: A
Canadian Case Study
Ted Schrecker

RIPPLES IN CLIO'S POND

Now That the Big Trees Are Down
J. Donald Hughes

NATURE PROSPECTS

Bike Dreams
Kate Soper

BRIEFS

Capitalism and Reproduction
Mariasola Dalla Costa

Myth, Politics, and
the Global/Local Debate
Ernest García

TEACHING POLITICAL ECOLOGY

Pulp Mills, Fish Contamination,
and Fish Eaters: A Participatory
Workshop on the Politics of
Expert Knowledge
Michael Gismondi
and Joan Sherran

REVIEW ESSAY

Buffalo Commons:
A Range of Possibilities
Douglas Bevington

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOKC

Volume 7 (4)
Issue
Twenty Eight
December
1996



Comune di Padova
Sistema Bibliotecario

ALF - SLD

Sez. 4

Sottosez. 1

Serie 7

Sottos. 1

Unità 157

PUV 55

CONTRIBUTORS

Douglas Bevington is a CNS associate and graduate student in sociology, University of Oregon (Eugene).

Marsha J. Brofka is a graduate student in sociology, University of Illinois (Urbana).

Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Professor of Political Sociology at the Political Science Faculty of Padua University, is well-known for her activity in the feminist movement known as "Wages for Housework."

Peter Freund is a Professor in the Sociology Department, Montclair State College, Upper Montclair, New Jersey.

Ernest García is Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology, University of Valencia (Spain).

Michael Gismondi is a sociologist and adult educator, Athabasca University (Alberta, Canada).

Colin Hay is a post-doctoral fellow, Department of Political Science, University of Birmingham and a visiting fellow at the Center of European Studies, Harvard University. He is a member of both the UK and Boston CNS editorial groups and author of *Re-Stating Social and Political Change* (Open University).

George Martin is a Professor in the Sociology Department, Montclair State College, Upper Montclair, New Jersey.

Linda Merricks authored *The World Made New: Frederick Soddy, Science, Politics, and Environment* (Oxford, 1996) and is Lecturer in History in the School of English and American Studies at the University of Sussex.

Laura Pulido is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Southern California (Los Angeles). Her new book is *Environmentalism and Economic Justice: Two Chicano Struggles in the Southwest* (University of Arizona Press, 1996).

Trevor Purvis is a research student, Department of Sociology, Lancaster University (UK).

Joan Sherman monitors politicians, the government, and industrial policy at Athabasca University (Alberta, Canada).

Ted Schrecker is a political scientist with more than 15 years experience in the environmental policy field, as legislative researcher, consultant, and academic. He served as Associate Director (Environmental Ethics) of the Westminster Institute of Ethics and Human Values (London, Canada) from 1991-1996.

Tim Stroshane is a writer and housing planner who works on housing and homeless issues for the City of Berkeley, California.

Table of Contents

<i>House Organ</i>	1
<i>Essay</i>	
The Commodity that is Eating the World: The Automobile, the Environment, and Capitalism By Peter Freund and George Martin	3
<i>Street Ecology</i>	
NASA's Manna from Heaven By Mike Davis	31
<i>Environmental Justice</i>	
Ecological Legitimacy and Cultural Essentialism: Hispano Grazing in the Southwest By Laura Pulido	37
<i>Thinkers</i>	
Frederick Soddy: Scientist, Economist and Environmentalist — An Examination of his Politics By Linda Merricks	59
<i>Urban Ecology</i>	
Of Cars, Sustainability and Equity: A Canadian Case Study By Ted Schrecker	79
<i>Ripples In Clio's Pond</i>	
Now That the Big Trees Are Down By J. Donald Hughes	99
<i>Nature Prospects</i>	
Bike Dreams By Kate Soper	105
<i>Briefs</i>	
Capitalism and Reproduction By Mariarosa Dalla Costa	111
Myth, Politics, and the Global/Local Debate By Ernest Garcia	121
<i>Teaching Political Ecology</i>	
Pulp Mills, Fish Contamination, and Fish Eaters: A Participatory Workshop on the Politics of Expert Knowledge By Michael Gismondi and Joan Sherman	127

Review Essay

Buffalo Commons: A Range of Possibilities
By Douglas Bevington138

Book Reviews

Gary Paul Nabban and Stephen Trumble: *The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places*
By Tim Shroshane.....146

Laura Westra and Peter S. Wenz, ed.: *Faces of Environmental Racism: Confronting Issues of Global Justice*
By Marsha J. Brofka148

John Gray: *Beyond the New Right: Markets, Government and the Common Environment*
By Trevor Purvis.....149

Darrow Schechter: *Radical Theories: Paths Beyond Marxism and Social Democracy*
By Colin Hay152

Book Note.....154

Ecologia Politica, the Italian edition of CNS is published by Datanews in Rome. For business and subscription information: Corrado Perna, Datanews, via di S. Erasmo, 15, 00184 Roma, Italy, (tel. 39-6-70450319; fax 39-6-70450320). For editorial information: Giovanna Ricoveri, piazza San Francesco d'Assisi 91, 00153 Roma, Italy (tel. 39-6-5806240).

Ecología Política, the Spanish edition of CNS, is published by FUHEM/Icaria Editorial, S.A. For business and subscription information: Anna Monjo Omedes, Icaria Editorial, Ausias Marc 16, Barcelona 08010, Spain (tel. 34-3 301-17-23 or 301-17-26 or Fax 34-3 317-82-42). For editorial information: Joan Martínez Alier, Apartado Postal 82, UAB, Bellaterra, 08193 Barcelona, Spain.

Écologie Politique, sibling journal of CNS in France, is published by ECOPRESSE — Gérant: Henri Leblanc. For information: Jean Paul Deleage, ECOPRESSE, 9 bis rue Abel-Hovelacque, 75013 Paris, France (tél 44-08-83-74; fax 44-08-83-75).



We at CNS are grateful for the support of the Division of Social Sciences, University of California, Santa Cruz; the financial assistance of the Center for Political Ecology, Sustainers and Members, and Guilford Publications; and the labors of our dedicated volunteers.

Letter from Rome. After five years of publication our sister journal in Rome has changed its name to *Ecologia Politica*. "'CNS' is retained as a sub-title," editor Giovanna Ricoveri writes in the introduction of the current issue of *EP*, "to indicate continuity with the past [which means that] we reject the slogan 'ecology is neither left nor right but up front.' Instead we think that both *EP* and *CNS* are points of reference for a red-green-feminist alliance.

"The change of title reflects an underlying change over time with regard to the cultural roots of the journal. At the beginning, our roots were in the socialist tradition generally, and the themes of 'eco-Marxism,' 'second contradiction of capitalism,' and 'conditions of production' in particular. With each subsequent issue, the journal broadened its perspective to include themes such as 'anti-utilitarianism' (e.g., the critique of development by Serge Latouche and others) and the conclusions of radical environmentalism (such as the 'monocultures of the mind' of Vandana Shiva and the ecofeminism of Mary Mellor).

"The title change also reflects a break with the premise we adopted when we launched the journal in March, 1991. We said at the time that we wanted to privilege translations from *CNS* (U.S.) and our sister journals. We justified this position in terms of the political situation at the time: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of 'real' socialism, and the resulting need to rethink socio-economic and political analysis on the left. We now think that translations and original material from Italy should get equal emphasis. We believe that to recategorize social analysis requires us to probe and lay bear the social contradictions created by present crisis of the planet, by which we mean the crisis of resources (of nature and conditions of production) and the social crisis (mass unemployment and social exclusion).

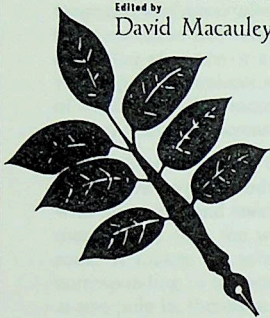
"The new Italian center-left government, the economics of which coincides with that of the Bank of Italy and the Maastricht Treat, offers us the chance to take a step forward. The environmental politics of this government is necessarily 'greenwashing' (not true environmentalism at all), despite the fact that the Greens are in the government. We, the critical left, believe that the new political situation holds out new opportunities as well as new responsibilities, at least at the level of analysis, if not yet of organizing (which may in fact be impossible for

NEW FROM GUILFORD

Minding Nature

The Philosophers of Ecology

Edited by
David Macauley



David Macauley teaches philosophy and literature classes in New York City. He has published numerous articles on ecology and political theory and is completing his doctorate at SUNY Stony Brook.

Contributors: Frank Coleman, Joan Roelofs, Michael Zimmerman, David Abram, David Macauley, John Ely, Laurence Vogel, Henry Blanke, Ramachandra Guha, Yaakov Garb, Andrew Feenberg, Joel Whitebook, Alan Rudy, Andrew Light

ISBN: 1-57230-059-0

Format: Paperback

Pub. Date: 1996

Pages: 355

Price: \$18.95

Minding Nature

The Philosophers of Ecology
Edited by David Macauley

"It is good to have these great philosophers cast, as they so rarely are, in a clear ecological light. It helps not only to understand their work in a fresh new way but to realize how in a sense all important philosophy in this age can best be seen as a branch of the study of nature itself."

—Kirkpatrick Sale,
author of *The Green Revolution*

"Macauley has done a great service by bringing together a wide range of critical commentary on the most developed modern philosophical positions concerning the relations between humanity and nature. The collection is unique and of great scholarly value."

—Joel Kovel,
Bard College

Shedding light on the connection between philosophy and ecology, this thought-provoking collection introduces the works of some of the most influential Western philosophers of ecology. Leading authorities thoroughly examine, critique, and build on the insights of such important thinkers as Thomas Hobbes, Martin Heidegger, Ernst Bloch, Hans Jonas, Lewis Mumford, Paul Ehrlich, and Murray Bookchin.

Complete Table of Contents and Contributors List available upon request (via fax, mail, or e-mail).

GUILFORD PUBLICATIONS, INC.
Dept. 3T, 72 Spring Street, New York, NY 10012

☎ CALL TOLL-FREE 1-800-365-7006

Fax: 212-966-6708

E-mail: info@guilford.com

Capitalism and Reproduction*

By Mariarosa Dalla Costa

The sphere of reproduction today reveals all the original sins of the capitalist mode of production. Reproduction must be viewed, of course, from a planetary perspective, with special attention paid to the changes that are taking place in the lower social strata in advanced capitalism, as well as to the increasing proportion of the Third World population. We live in a planetary economy, and capitalist accumulation still draws its life blood for its continuous valorization from waged and unwaged labor, the latter consisting first of all of the labor involved in social reproduction in the advanced as well as the Third World countries.¹

We find that social "misery" or "unhappiness," which Marx considered to be the "goal of the political economy,"² has largely been realized everywhere. How incredible it now seems, Marxist analysis apart, to claim that capitalist development in some way brings a generalized well-being to the planet.

Social reproduction today is more beset and overwhelmed than ever by the laws of capitalist accumulation: the continual and progressive expropriation (from the "primitive" expropriation of the land as a means

*Paper presented at a seminar on Women's Unpaid Labor and the World System, organized by the Japan Foundation, April 8, 1994, Tokyo, as part of the Foundation's "European Women's Study for Environmental Issues." Translated from Italian by Julian Bees.

¹M. Dalla Costa, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (London: Falling Wall Press, 1972).

²K. Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844)" in *Early Writings* (London: Penguin, 1975), p. 286.

of production, which dates from the 16th century in England, to the expropriation, then as now, of all the individual and collective rights that ensure subsistence); the continual *division* of society into *conflictual hierarchies* (of class, sex, race, and nationality, which pit the free waged worker against the unfree unwaged worker, against the unemployed worker, and the slave laborer); the constant production of *inequality and uncertainty* (with the woman as reproducer facing an even more uncertain fate compared with the waged worker and, if she is also a member of a race or nation that is discriminated against, who suffers yet deeper discrimination); the continual *polarization* of the production of *wealth* (which is more and more concentrated) and the production of *poverty* (which is increasingly widespread).

As Marx writes in *Capital*: "Finally, the law which always holds the relative surplus production or industrial reserve army in equilibrium with the extent and energy of accumulation rivets the worker to capital more firmly than the wedges of Hephaestus held Prometheus to the rock. It makes an accumulation of misery a necessary condition, corresponding to the accumulation of wealth. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, the torment of labor, slavery, ignorance, brutalization and moral degradation at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product as capital."³ This is true, not only for the population overwhelmed by the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. It is even more accurate today, now that capital accumulation passes through factory, plantation, dam, mine, and even carpet weaving workshops where it is by no means rare for children to be working in conditions of slavery.

Indeed, capitalist accumulation spreads through the world by extracting labor for production and reproduction in conditions of stratification which end in the re-establishment of slavery. According to a recent estimate, over 200 million people are working in conditions of slavery in the world today.⁴

Those economic forces, supported by political power, unfolded during the period of primitive accumulation in Europe with the aim of destroying the individual's value in relationship to his/her community, in order to turn him/her into an isolated and valueless individual, a mere container for laborpower which s/he is obliged to sell to survive, continue to mark human reproduction on a planetary scale. The

³K. Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One* (London: Penguin, 1976), p. 799.

⁴*The Economist*, January 6, 1990.

indifference shown by capital towards the reproduction of laborpower in the first phase of its history was only very partially, and today increasingly precariously, redeemed centuries later by the creation of the Welfare State. Currently, the task being set by the directives of the major financial agencies, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, is to re-draw the boundaries of welfare and economic policies as a whole in both the advanced and the developing countries.⁵ (The economic, social welfare and social insurance measures recently introduced in Italy correspond precisely to the various "structural adjustment" plans being applied in many Third World countries.) The result is that increasingly large sectors of world population are destined to extinction because they are believed to be redundant or inappropriate to the valorization requirements of capital.

Just as at the end of the 1400s, when the bloody legislation against the expropriated led to the mass hanging, torturing, branding, and chaining of the poor,⁶ so today the surplus or inadequately disciplined population of the planet is exterminated through death by cold and hunger in eastern Europe and various countries of the advanced West ("more coffins less cradles in Russia");⁷ death by hunger and epidemic in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere; death caused by formally declared war, by genocide authorized directly or indirectly, by military and police repression. The other variant of extinction is an individual or collective decision for suicide because there is no possibility to survive. (It is significant that, according to the Italian press reports in 1993-94, many cases of suicide in Italy are due to unemployment or to the fact that the only work available is to join a criminal gang, while, in India, the "tribal people" in the Narmada valley have declared a readiness to die by drowning if work continues on dam which will destroy their habitat and, hence, the basis of their survival and cultural identity).⁸

The most recent and monstrous twist to this campaign of extinction comes from the extreme example of resistance offered by those who sell parts of their body, useless container for a laborpower that is no longer salable. (In Italy, where the sale of organs is banned,

⁵M. Dalla Costa and G.P. Dalla Costa, eds., *Donne e politiche del debito. Condizione e lavoro femminile nella crisi del debito internazionale* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1993 [English edition in preparation with Zed Books]).

⁶Karl Marx, 1976, *op. cit.*, Chapter 28.

⁷*La Repubblica*, February 16, 1994.

⁸The protest over the Narmada dam has received extensive coverage in international publications and the international media. For a critical interpretation of the proliferation of dams in the world, see Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival In India* (London: Zed, 1990).

press and TV reports in 1993-94 mentioned instances in which people said explicitly that they were willing to break the ban in exchange for money or a job.) For those impoverished and expropriated by capitalist expansion in the Third World, however, this is already a common way for obtaining money. Press reports mention criminal organizations which traffic in organs and supply perfectly legal terminals such as clinics. This trade flourishes thanks to kidnapping, often of women and children, and false adoption. An inquiry was recently opened at the European Parliament on the issue,⁹ and various women's networks are trying to throw light on and block these crimes. But this is where capitalist development, founded on the negation of the individual's value, celebrates its triumph; the individual owner of redundant or, in any case, superfluous laborpower is literally cut to pieces in order to rebuild the bodies of those who can pay for the right to live to the criminal or non-criminal sectors of capital which profit from it.

During the era of primitive accumulation, when the free waged worker was being shaped in England, the law still authorized slavery,¹⁰ treating the vagabonds, created by the feudal lords' violent and illegal expropriation of the land, as "voluntary" perpetrators of the crime of vagabondage and ordaining that, if anyone should refuse to work, he would be "condemned as a slave to the person who denounced him as an idler."¹¹ But, if this reduction of the poor to slavery remained on a relatively limited scale in England, not that much later, capital launched slavery on a much vaster scale, emptying Africa of the equivalent of Europe's population at that time through the slave trade to the Americas and the Caribbean.

But slavery, far from disappearing, has remained as one of capitalism's unmentioned, concealed constants. The poverty imposed on a large part of the planet by the major financial agencies chains entire families to work in conditions of slavery so that they can pay their creditors. Workers are made to work in conditions of slavery in livestock farms, plantations and mines; children are made to work in conditions of slavery in carpet workshops; women are kidnapped or fooled into working in the sex industry. But these are only some examples. It is significant that the problem of slavery was raised by the Non-Government Organizations at their Forum in Vienna on June 10-12 that preceded the UN's World Conference on Human Rights on June 14-25, 1993.

⁹*La Republica*, September 16, 1993.

¹⁰Karl Marx, 1976, Book 1, *op. cit.*, Chapter 28.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 897.

Again, in the period of primitive accumulation, with the birth of free waged labor after the great expropriations, there was the greatest case of sexual genocide in history, the great witch hunts, which, with a series of other measures directed expressly against women, contributed in a fundamental way to forging the unfree, non-waged woman worker in the production and reproduction of laborpower.¹² Deprived of the trades and means of production and subsistence typical of the earlier economy, and largely excluded from craftwork or access to the new jobs that manufacturing was offering, the woman was essentially faced with two options for survival: marriage or prostitution. Even for women who had found some form of work external to the home, prostitution at that time was also a way of supplementing low family income or the low wages paid to women. Over and above the various regimes and meanings it has gone through in different eras and social contexts, it is interesting that, in that period prostitution first became a trade exercised by women at the mass level, one can say that during the manufacturing period the individual proletarian woman was born fundamentally to be a prostitute.¹³

From this insoluble contradiction in the woman's condition as an unwaged worker in a wage economy¹⁴ sprouted the conditions for mass prostitution in that period — and also the conditions on which the same phenomenon is based today, but on a vaster scale, in order to generate profits for one of the most flourishing industries at the world level, the sex industry. This led the World Coalitions against Trafficking in Women to present the first World Convention against Sexual Exploitation in Brussels (May 1993). The women in the Coalition also agreed to work for the UN's adoption of the convention and its ratification by the national governments.

Internationally, the sexual exploitation of women by organized crime is increasingly alarming. In Italy, these organizations have already brought many women from Africa and eastern Europe to work as prostitutes. The tricks used to cover up exploitation by prostitution — for example, wife sales by catalogue or "sexual tourism" in exotic destinations — are legion and well-known. According to the Coalition's charges, various countries already accept forms of "sexual tourism" as a

¹²S. Federici, "The Great Witch-Hunt," *The Maine Scholar* 1, 1, 1988.

¹³L. Fortunati, *L'arcano della riproduzione. Casalinghe, prostitute, operai e capitale* (Venice: Marsilio, 1981) and L. Fonunati, *Sesso come valore d'uso per il valore* in L. Fortunati and S. Federici, *Il grande Calibano. Storia del corpe sociale ribelle nella prima fase del capitale* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1984) p. 209.

¹⁴M. Dalla Costa, 1972, *op. cit.*

planned component in national income. Thanks to individual women and NGOs, studies of the direct government responsibility in forcing women to serve as prostitutes for soldiers during World War II have also begun.

Woman's condition in capitalism is born with violence (just as the free worker is born with violence); it is forged on the witches' pyres, and it is maintained with violence.¹⁵ Within the current context of the population's reproduction, the woman continues to suffer violence as the subject of poverty at the world level (since her unpaid responsibility for the home makes her the weak contracting party in the external labor market), but because of her lack of economic resources, she also suffers a further violence of being sucked increasingly into organized prostitution. The warlike visage that development increasingly assumes simply worsens woman's condition still further and magnifies the practice and mentality of violence against women.¹⁶ A paradigmatic case is the war rape exercised as ethnic rape in the war in ex-Yugoslavia.

I have mentioned only some of the social macro-operations which allowed the capitalist system to "take off" during the period of primitive accumulation. But just as important were a series of other operations left unmentioned here for the sake of brevity,¹⁷ but which could also be illustrated today as aspects of the continual reproduction on a world scale of the class relationship on which capitalist development rests: the perpetuation of the stratification of workers in society based on their separation and imposed through the sexual division of labor.

The above considerations are designed to lead to one fundamental thesis: capitalist development *has always been unsustainable because of its human impact*. To understand this point, all one needs to do is to take the viewpoint of those who have been and continue to be killed by it. A presupposition of capitalism's birth was the sacrifice of a large part of humanity, mass exterminations, the production of hunger and misery, slavery, violence and terror. Its continuation requires the same presuppositions. Particularly from the *woman's* viewpoint, capitalist development has always been unsustainable because it places her in an

¹⁵G.F. Dalla Costa, *Un lavoro d'amore La violenza fisica componente essenziale del "trattamento" maschile nei confronti delle donne* (Milan: Angeli, 1978 [English edition in preparation with Zed Books]).

¹⁶Currently, there is a wide-ranging debate on the issue. See, A. Michel's, "La donna a repentaglio nel sistema di guerra," *Bozze* 2, April-March, 1987, for a good reference point.

¹⁷K. Marx, 1976, Book I, *op. cit.*, Chapters 26-33.

unsustainable contradiction, by being an unwaged worker in a wage economy and, hence, for that reason, denied the right to an autonomous existence. And if we look at the subsistence economies — continually besieged, undermined and overwhelmed by capitalist development — we see that development continually deprives women of the land and water which for them are fundamental means of production and subsistence in sustaining the entire community.

The expropriation of land leaped to the world's attention in January, 1994, with the revolt of the indigenous people in Chiapas, Mexico. The media could hardly avoid reporting this revolt because of the role played by Mexico's alignment with the Western powers through the agreement for the North American Free Trade Agreement. The perversity of producing wealth by expropriation and the production of misery was there for all to see. But it is also significant that the dramatic consequences of expropriation of the land led those involved to draw up the *Women's Action Agenda 21*, in Miami in November, 1991, to make a forceful appeal for women to be guaranteed land and access to food.¹⁸ At the same time, the process of capitalist expansion — in this case, with the Green Revolution — led many people to practice the selective abortion of female fetuses and girl-child infanticide in some areas of the Third World — from sexual genocide to preventive annihilation.¹⁹

The question of unsustainable development has become topical fairly recently with the emergence of evidence of various environmental disasters and forms of harm inflicted on the ecosystem. The Earth, the water running in its veins, and the air surrounding it have come to be seen as an ecosystem, a living organism of which humans are a part, the same humans whose lives depend on the life and equilibrium of the ecosystem, compared to the idea of Nature as the "other" of Humanity — a nature to be dominated and whose elements are to be appropriated as though they were potential commodities waiting in a warehouse. After five centuries of expropriation and domination, the Earth is returning to the limelight. In the past it was sectioned, fenced in, and denied to the free producers. Now, the Earth is itself being expropriated of its reproductive powers — tuned topsy-turvy, vivisectioned, and made a commodity. But these extreme operations (like the "banking" and patenting of the genetic codes of living species) belong to a single

¹⁸"Women's Action Agenda 21," in *World Women' Congress for a Healthy Planet* (Official Report, 812, November 1991, Miami, Florida, United Nations, New York, N.Y).

¹⁹ V. Shiva, *op. cit.*

process whose logic of exploitation and domination has brought the planet to such devastation in human and environmental terms as to provoke disquieting questions as to the future possibilities and modalities of human reproduction.

But environmental destruction is united with the destruction wreaked on an increasingly large proportion of humanity. The destruction wreaked on the human groups is necessary for the perpetuation of capitalist development today, just as it was at its origins. To stop subscribing to this general destruction, and hence to approach the problem of "sustainable development," means, above all, to take into account the struggles that are moving against capitalist development in the metropolises and the rural areas. It also means defying hegemonic practices, so as to set capitalist development behind us by elaborating a different approach to knowledge.

In interpreting various anti-capitalist struggles and movements, a global vision must be maintained of the many different parts of society rebelling in various forms and contexts throughout the planet. To give priority to some and ignore others would mean adopting the same logic of separation and counterposition which is the soul of capitalist development. The cancellation and annihilation of a part of humanity cannot be given as a foregone conclusion. In the metropolises and the advanced capitalist countries in general, many no longer have the waged job which, in their own context, is the source of subsistence. At the same time, the welfare measures representing the complex of individual and collective rights that contribute to ensuring survival are being cut back. Human reproduction has already reached its limits: the woman's reproductive energy is increasingly dried out like a spring whose water has been spread over too much land.²⁰

Reproduction is crushed by the general intensification of labor, by the over-extension of the working day, amid cuts in resources whereby the lack of waged work, too, becomes a stress-laden search for work and/or illegal employment, added to the laborious work of reproduction. I have no space to give a more extensive description of the complex phenomena that have led to the drastic reduction in the birthrate in the advanced countries, particularly in Italy (where the index of fertility rate is 1.26, and where the population shows zero growth). But it should also be remembered that women's refusal to function as machines for reproducing laborpower, demanding instead to reproduce themselves and others as *social* individuals, has represented a major moment of

²⁰*Ibid.*

women's resistance and struggle.²¹ The contradiction in women's condition — whereby women are at a disadvantage in searching for financial autonomy through waged work outside the home, since they also remain primarily responsible for the production and reproduction of laborpower — has exploded in all its unsustainability. Women in the advanced countries have fewer and fewer children. In general, humanity in the advanced countries is less and less desirous of reproducing itself.

But women's great refusal in countries like Italy at the same time demands an answer to the overall question we are discussing: it demands a *new type of development* in which human reproduction is not built on an *unsustainable sacrifice by women* as part of a conception and structure of life, which is nothing but labor time within an *intolerable sexual hierarchy*. The "wage" struggle, in both its direct and indirect aspects, does not concern solely "advanced" areas as something distinct from "rural" ones, for there are very few situations in which survival rests solely on the land. To sustain the community, the wage economy is most often interwoven with resources typical of a subsistence economy, whose overall conditions are continually under pressure from the political and economic decisions of the major financial agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank.²² Today, it would thus be a fatal error not to defend the wage level and guarantees for the income — in money, goods and services — that it is working humanity's right to demand, since the wealth and power of capitalist society has been accumulated on the basis of five centuries of its labor. At the same time, land, water and forests must remain available for those whose subsistence depends on them, and to whom capitalist expropriation offers only extinction. As different sectors of humankind seek and demand a different kind of development, the strength to sustain this demand grows to the extent that everyone refuses their own extinction and the extinction of others.

The question of human reproduction posed by women's rejection of procreation is now turning into the demand for another type of development. This demand seeks completely new horizons. The concept of welfare is not enough. The demand is now for happiness, for a formulation of development that opens up the satisfaction of the basic needs on whose suppression capitalism was born and has grown. One of those needs is for *time*, as against a life consisting solely of labor; another is the needs for physical life/sexuality (above all, with one's own and other people's bodies, with the body as a whole, not just the

²¹M. Dalla Costa, 1972, *op. cit.*

²²M. Dalla Costa and G.F. Dalla Costa, eds., *op. cit.*

functions that make it more productive), as against the body as a mere container for laborpower or a machine for reproducing laborpower. Yet another need is the need for sociality/collectivity (not just with other men and women, but with the various living beings with which can now only be encountered after a laborious journey out of the city), as against the separation/isolation of individuals in the body of society and living nature as a whole. And still another need is for public space (not just the public parks and squares or the few other areas permitted to the collectivity), as against the enclosure, privatization, and continual restriction of available space. Then there is the desire to find a relationship with the totality of the Earth as a public space as well as the need for play, indeterminacy, discovery, amazement, contemplation, emotion.....

Obviously, I am not trying to "define" fundamental needs, only to register some needs systematically frustrated by this mode of production, which therefore has certainly not served human happiness. But I think one must have the courage to pose happiness as a problem. This requires the reanalysis of the notion of development, in order to think again "in the grand manner," and to reject the fear that raising the question of happiness may appear as too daring or as something too subjective. Rigoberta Menchu tells how the mothers in her community teach their girls from the start that the life facing them will be a life of immense toil and suffering.²³ But she also wondered why, and the why reflects very precise, capitalist reasons: "We started to reflect on the roots of the problem, and we came to the conclusion that its roots lay in possession of the land. We did not have the best land, the landowners did. And every time we clear new land, they try to take it from us or to steal it in some way."²⁴ Rigoberta has raised the problem of how to change this state of affairs; she has not cultivated the myth of human unhappiness. And the Christian teaching she has used alongside the Mayan traditions, has offered various lessons, including that of the Old Testament's Judith.

In my view, it is no coincidence that, in these last 20 years, the woman's question, the question of the indigenous populations,²⁵ and

²³E. Burgos, *Mi chiamo Rigoberta Menchu* (Florence: Giunti, 1990).

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 144.

²⁵As was stressed by the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples at the NGO Forum in Vienna (June 10-12, 1993), these peoples have worked especially hard during the last two decades to get their voice heard, to make progress on questions concerning them (the question of land, above all), to obtain greater respect for and a formalization of their rights in written form. Significant stages in the process have been the Kari Oca Declaration, the

the question of the Earth have assumed growing importance, for they are linked by an especially close synergy. The path toward a different kind of development cannot ignore them. There is much knowledge still lodged in civilizations which have not died but have managed to conceal themselves, and their secrets have been maintained thanks to their resistance to the will to annihilate them. The Earth encloses so many powers, especially its power to reproduce itself and humanity as one of its parts. These powers have been discovered, preserved and enhanced more by women's knowledge than male science. It is crucial, then, that this other knowledge — of women, of indigenous populations, and of the Earth, whose "passiveness" is capable of regenerating life²⁶ — should find a way of emerging and being heard. This knowledge appears now as a decisive force that can lift the increasingly deadly siege capitalist development imposes on human reproduction.

Myth, Politics, and the Global/Local Debate

By Ernest García

Spanish sociologist Jesús Ibáñez distinguishes two dimensions of the social insertion of knowledge. One is a technical operation, denoted and visible, pertaining to the mastery of nature or of human beings. The second is a mythical operation, connoted and largely invisible, pertaining to explanation, through which knowledge is self-justified and justifies the social order producing it and which knowledge serves.¹ This distinction is very relevant when we think about the relationship between society and nature. In Western culture, nature is not only a subject of science and ethics, it also possesses a pre-scientific and pre-

Land Charter of the Indigenous Peoples, and the Convention of the International Labour Organization on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ILO Conv. No 169). This growing liaison and promotion of their demands was a major factor in the speedy expressions of solidarity from the North American indigenous populations during the rebellion of the indigenous people of Chiapas.

²⁶V. Shiva, *op. cit.*

¹J. Ibáñez, *Del algoritmo al sujeto: Perspectivas de la investigación social* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1985).