

CAT TRACKS

by Chim Blea

(Ed. Note: Chim Blea is the name given by the Indians of Baja California to the mountain lion on whose kills they fed. They found such carrion by following the circling buzzards. With this issue of the EF! Newsletter, we introduce this wide-ranging column which is certain to be controversial and provocative. Neither the Newsletter nor EARTH FIRST! necessarily endorses the point of view presented here.)

THE HERITAGE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Why is it that every great and justified revolution from the United States to Nicaragua has become corrupted, with the people's heroes replacing the old tyranny with an equal terror? Why is it that in spite of the "green revolution," modern medicine, socially conscious engineering projects, and efficient organizational techniques there is more suffering, disease, and starvation in the world than at any time in the past? Why is it that in this glorious age of television, international sports spectacles, video games, impossibly ravishing Hollywood queens, jumbo jets, and fun drugs there is a greater sense of despair, of hopelessness than ever before? Why is it that in spite of every world leader's cry for peace and thirty-five years of the United Nations there are more wars and the greatest threat of the final conflict than this planet has ever known? Why is it that in spite of science we are destroying the very foundations of life on Earth?

Where is Progress?

Why has the great god Apollo, god of rationality, god of the scientists, humanists, Christians, capitalists, and communists not straightened things out and ushered in the golden age promised by high technology?

To answer these questions we must take a radical journey back four thousand, five thousand years ago to the beginnings of that prized artifact we call Western Civilization. The Western Civilization developed where it did or when it did was chance. That it did develop was no accident. The seeds of this marvelous genesis were contained in the enlarged brain, opposable thumb, and upright posture of the earliest hominids. Western Civilization is an idea, a process—a paradigm, or worldview. It today encompasses the whole world from Peking to Timbuktu, from Kiev to Alice Springs, from Managua to Boston.

It began on the eastern end of the Mediterranean. In the semi-arid hills of Mesopotamia, nomads settled down to grow the wild grasses they found there. Dependence on uncertain rains gave way to simple irrigation to

more ambitious projects for the control of water. Village was replaced by town, town by city, city by empire. As hunter-gatherers became farmers and then urbanites, an administrative class developed and became the officers of empire. Nearby on the Nile the strong men who had scrambled to the top of their agricultural anthill realized that they were the gods of Earth and called themselves Pharaohs. In the harsh herding lands of Canaan, tough-minded Pharaohs conceived a single war god supremely masculine. And on the rocky peninsula and islands of Greece, Diana and the other Earth goddesses were replaced by the macho Olympians who were in turn replaced by Apollo, god of reason. Indeed, the wise men of Athens became so enamored of reason (the civilized, male, modern way of thinking) and opposed to intuition (the natural, female, old-fashioned way of thinking) that they decided that the only rational form of love was man for man and they became homosexuals—not because they liked boys so much as they hated the ancient Earth wisdom women represented.

These ideals coalesced and became one worldview—Western Civilization. Empire from Babylon. God-like rulers from Egypt. Male hierarchy from Israel. Rationality from Greece. Western civilization came on horseback in opposition to the ancient Earth goddesses, to living in harmony with the flow of the seasons, to cooperative egalitarian small tribes and communities, to seeking wisdom intuitively from the Earth. By definition, Western Civilization was anti-Earth, anti-woman, anti-equality, anti-peace.

During the last two thousand years nothing of importance has occurred in the worldview of Western Civilization. Newton, Descartes, Marx, Ford, Einstein, have merely carried it further down its ordained path. Christianity, Capitalism, Communism, Industrialism, Humanism, Scientism are merely sects debating the number of demons dancing on warheads. Computer chips and the MX Missile are the natural children of the first irrigation project and the overseer's whip. That is why the world is in a mess. Because of the worldview of Western Civilization.

There will be no change for the better until the paradigm of Western Civilization is replaced by another worldview. Until Apollo is dethroned and Diana is again paramount. Until greater wisdom is seen in the Lakota than in the New Yorker. Until the stone point is more fascinating than Pac-Man. Until children seek wisdom alone on a mountain rather than in books alone.