



Around the Campfire

A good rule for ecological success is to find an unoccupied niche and fill it. So too it goes with publications, I believe. Here at *Earth First!* we have been casting our eyes around the environmental movement and find that there are three publication niches open and free for the taking.

The first, of course, is that of radical, militant, no-compromise environmentalism. This is the idea of filling out the eco-spectrum and it is what we have been trying to do these last two years. We will continue along this route. (I amplify on this idea in my article in this issue "An Environmental Strategy for the 80s.") We will report on the activities and plans of the *Earth First!* movement nationally (oops, internationally) and locally. We will present a forum for the discussion of issues, tactics, and strategy. We will continue the Ned Ludd column as part of this forum. (See this issue's *Dear Ned Ludd* for the roadspiking idea that caused the flapdoodle leading to the change in editors of *EF!*).

Secondly, there has been no place for analysis, criticism, and debate over strategy and tactics of the environmental cause. Without self-examination it is difficult to grow. *EF!* hopes to provide the forum for that critical analysis—from both the militant and moderate viewpoints (we welcome criticism of *EF!* as well as of the Jackson Hole Committee for Irresponsible Sellouts). Let's discuss our movement and its direction. Had *EF!* been around during the Carter years, a good topic to chew over would have been RARE II and "to sue or not to sue."

Finally: philosophy. Wilderness preservation and love of the Earth began as philosophy but we have become so bogged down with the day-to-day brushfires confronting us that we have neglected the philosophical foundations of our cause as well as the modern intellectual challenges to it. During my years with The Wilderness Society, I read only environmental impact statements. I fear that that is all too prevalent among those leading us. Stephen Fox's study of John Muir and his legacy to the environmental movement is the most important conservation book of our time. How many of us have read it? Privatization is not some flimflam scam hatched by Marl-

boro men in the sagebrush of Nevada. It is a serious thrust launched by neo-conservative intellectuals and free-market economists. Who on the boards or staffs of the national conservation groups have read the basic documents? Deep Ecology is the most important philosophical current of our time. How many of us are even aware of it?

We have neglected the battle of the mind to the extent that, as Professor Bill Devall points out, conservation publications will not touch anything philosophical with a ten foot pole. Quite simply, we have not just lost the intellectual battle for conservation in recent years, we have not even fought it. The neo-conservatives with their economic views of the Earth and life have won by default. Environmentalists have not even shown up at the arena.

That must change. *Earth First!* will present a forum for provocative and challenging material on Deep Ecology and reviews of the other intellectual currents with which we must deal. We will discuss the history of our ideas and past battles we have fought. We can learn much from those before us. Closely allied to the philosophical is the religious. All of us are religious, even atheists like Howie Wolke who defies grizzly bears and hopes to become one (probably by having his elements assimilated into one up on the Mirror Plateau). *EF!* will provide space for the discussion of Earth religion in whatever guise—neo-pagan, pantheistic, Christian, Buddhist, agnostic. . . (See Mama Rue's discussion of the symbolism of dragons in this issue.)

There you have it. It's a tall order but we'll accomplish little by aiming low. We hope to make *EF!* required reading for anyone interested in the environmental cause, regardless of whether they're radical, moderate, or enemy. We hope to be provocative and exciting. Mixed in with all of this will be large doses of the humor, passion, and irreverence for which we're known. (Our investigative piece on the sexual habits of Jim Watt will have to wait until next issue pending approval by our attorney.)

On behalf of all of us involved in *EF!*, I'd like to encourage contributions on the above themes: book reviews, critical analyses, "think" pieces, letters, poetry, essays, news reports, clippings, art, cartoons, graphics, photos, etc. Naturally we can't print everything we receive and we will be demanding of quality. We will, however, acknowledge your contributions. The only pay we can offer at this time is our thanks and extra copies of the issue in which your contribution appears. Oh yes, it will make my job a hell of a lot easier if you double space type whatever you send in.

—DF