

A TRIP TO INDIA

ABOUT a year and four months ago, a young man who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Craig Simpson, being a conscientious objector and worker for peace, and a member of the WRI (War Resisters International) decided to attend the War Resisters' Triennial Conference that was held in India at the turn of the year (December 29, 1985 to January 4, 1986), at a Gandhian ashram in the village of Veduchhi near Surat, about 200 miles north of Bombay. Some three hundred people came to the Conference from many parts of the world—from thirty-two countries, although the few from Eastern Europe were denied permission from their governments to make the trip.

The meeting lasted for five days, involving speeches, particular commissions, workshops, and tours. Feeling obligated to those who helped him raise the money for this journey, Simpson wrote a complete report of the events of his trip—sixty-one typed pages in all. What he says should be of general interest so we draw on his report to convey his impressions of an experience that those of us who stay at home can hardly imagine, and may find instructive. The Conference was called into being by a number of people determined to do what they can to put an end to war, and who give much of their lives to this undertaking. They exercise some influence throughout the world—who knows how much?—and are at least successful in spreading their ideas around. Simpson's report brings home something of the quality of their example. He says in one place:

The setting was a 60-year-old Gandhian community. They were well staffed and organized—cleaning, cooking, and keeping us happy. Their morning prayers, their cultural events and their cultural work style gave us an image of ashram life. It was quite a contrast to the devastation and hopelessness in the outside world.

Each morning the conference met in plenary, listened to a talk, then split into Commissions. One commission was chosen for five days of work. I

attended the Commission on "Children and Educational System."

Our work was to share ideas, define similarities and differences, find agreeable and reachable goals, and recommend courses of action for WRI in its future work. I have reports on most every Commission and would gladly send conclusions and recommendations to those interested. [Simpson's address is 1123 Silver SW, Albuquerque, N.M. 87102.] WRI will release a full report later.

Simpson describes the Commission he chose:

The Commission on Children and Educational System was one of the most well attended. Participants included youth organizers from Bihar (the poorest state in India), teachers and students from Summerhill in England, a community organizer from Danilo Dolci's nonviolent training school in Sicily among poor children, a teacher from the Gandhian basic education system in India, and many more interesting and dynamic personalities. About 50 people in all attended this Commission.

"Education for peace," Simpson says, is informal and seeks ways in which children and the adults that work with them learn ways to develop peace at home, in the community, and the world.

We shared personal experiences in dealing with children. This discussion centered on emotional development, social development and curriculum development. We divided up into pre-school and primary, secondary and college level so that more concrete discussions could occur.

I, of course, stayed in the pre-school group and helped contribute an "American" perspective on working with nonviolence and children. . . . *Pep Talk*, a magazine on Peace Education published by Peace Pledge Union (PPU) in Britain will try to coordinate articles on working on Peace Education and sharing ideas on how to relate it to children's work. I agreed to draw up an international bibliography on work on children, nonviolence and peace. Someone else wanted to write personal stories and experiences of people working with children in this light. WRI members will help print this up and make it available to WRI members interested in such things. It was a

fairly standard discussion with some modest proposals, but it was well worth several days' discussion of the topic. Some members visited the ashram schools and observed classes. On the final meeting about 100 children visiting the conference surrounded us! We sang them songs from our own cultures.

There were workshops on about 30 to 50 different topics; each afternoon we gathered in buildings or under the shade trees on the warm days and in cooler buildings, to educate ourselves on international strategies. I attended three: "South Africa and the End Conscription Campaign," "Demilitarization of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean," and "Nonviolent Struggle in Central and Latin America."

Simpson attended a workshop on Central and Latin America, hearing about "the growing organization and effective nonviolent struggle going on in Latin America which many of us in the United States know little or nothing about." He heard Erna Castro of Costa Rica tell about that country's move to abolish the army in the 1940s and the present U.S. administration's effort to militarize the government and provide a haven for contras fighting the Nicaraguan government. Erna Castro works with a Quaker Center which promotes nonviolence and educates people on nonviolent civilian defense in Costa Rica.

Cecilia Moretti, of Panama, spoke on the work of Servicio Justicia y Paz (SEPA—Service, Peace, and Justice) in Panama, including a Peace Ship to Nicaragua and support of the Contadora process.

Finally, she talked about Panama and American involvement there. There are fourteen American bases used for training right wing groups and counter guerilla activities in the region. It is a primary take-off point for those hoping to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. She felt that Costa Rica was being militarized so that the base of support could be laid before Panama claims the canal zone in the year 2000.

While these "workshops" involved no planning but were primarily informing, the information, Simpson says, was good and needed. The report of George Willoughby, general secretary of Peace Brigades International, described the work of PBI in

Guatemala, in support of "Relatives of the Disappeared" (GAM).

On October 31, four days before the national elections in Guatemala, 150 members of GAM occupied the largest cathedral in Guatemala City. Eighty-five per cent were Indians who had lost relatives through massive disappearances and murders. Their primary demand was that the military give truthful answers about the whereabouts of family members. George explained how PBI got involved in Guatemala. When the first team arrived in 1983 they became a "neutral support group" for the women organizers of the GAM. Two members of the group disappeared and two left in fear but PBI stuck with the activists, acting as escorts for them night and day. In the past eight months no members have been killed or disappeared. The Guatemalan president accused PBI of stirring up trouble and some team members left. But right away new volunteers came to replace old ones and the project continues. It was an inspiring story of bravery and solidarity.

Craig Simpson contributed to this workshop by telling about the Sanctuary Movement in the United States, involving middle class religious people. He was surprised to find the extreme interest of the South African resisters in what he said. They said they might be obliged to do something similar in South Africa and wanted all the information they could get about the Sanctuary activity.

The delegates who took part in the session on *Demilitarization of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean* heard Joy Balazo of Manila describe the various U.S. military installations in the Philippines, occupying a vast total area. More than 15,000 U.S. military personnel live in the islands, of which nine thousand are sailors and marines. The installation at Subic Bay occupies 62,000 acres and is the largest naval base west of Hawaii. It has four floating dry docks, stores a 100 million gallons of oil and stocks 3.8 million cubic feet of ammunition. It is large enough to handle 100 aircraft at once. Clark Air Field is, Simpson says, one of the largest U.S. air bases outside the United States. It is a key base for the Rapid Defense Force which prepares regularly for immediate response into tense areas around the world. All these facilities, Simpson says, throw light on the way the U.S. is gravely concerned about the

crisis in Philippine politics and would like to maintain firm control.

There were a number of other sessions on which Simpson reported, but our space is limited, so we go to another section of his report:

For four days of my trip to India I attended a Consultation on Nonviolent Peacekeeping sponsored by Peace Brigades International. The Consultation was held just a half mile up the road from Swajha Ashram (where the Triennial was held) at the Institute for Total Revolution. The Institute is an area containing about six buildings on the grounds of the Gandhi Vidyapith (agricultural college) and surrounded by fields of corn and flowers. Meals were secured outdoors in a burlap-wrapped picnic area. The meeting lasted from Sunday through Thursday with little letup or free time.

About 35 people involved in nonviolent training gathered at the Institute. They came from Australia, Belgium, Canada (Quebec), Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, India, Israel, Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the United States. The experience was quite unusual and included people with long experience in nonviolent action and training. Peace Brigades was an important organization to draw this experienced and vital group together. Many of the attendees had worked together on international actions in the past and helped form the leadership of PBI. The idea of unarmed peace patrols or brigades was proposed as early as 1913 while Gandhi was fanning the flames in South Africa. But the idea was never formally launched until 1962 when the World Peace Brigade was organized. This organization sent international teams into conflict areas like Zambia, India, Nagaland, and Cyprus to intervene with a nonviolent presence. The organization was inactive by the mid 1970s until it was reconstituted in 1981 to become Peace Brigades International. Business has picked up since then with a mission in Nicaragua and Guatemala. The Guatemalan project is by far the most important in recent years.

Simpson names a number of those who attended the conference. One was Narayan Desai, whose father was Gandhi's secretary, Mahadev Desai. He was a co-founder of the Institute for Total Revolution. He is now a leader in the Indian nonviolent movement and is on the Council of the WRI. Simpson's roommate at the PBI gathering was Radhakrishna, the general secretary of the Gandhi Peace Foundation and an editor of *Gandhi Marg*, a

scholarly journal. (He was also the contributor to MANAS of a Letter from India in years past, we might add.) One other Simpson mentions is Shubhamoorty, an activist from Bihar, India's poorest state. He was one of J. P. Narayan's most important student organizers and was jailed during the emergency in 1975. Simpson comments: "These are some of the people that attended the PBI meeting. This is the type of quality and experience I was exposed to."

India is a country of many sides for all its visitors. For Craig Simpson there seemed to be two perspectives that became unforgettable. There was the poverty and hunger and there was the extraordinary devotion to Gandhi among common folk. He speaks of arriving at the airport, then says:

On the ride from the airport to the Bombay Triennial checkpoint (a primary school in Bombay) we pass miles of slums. God! I have never seen such endless poverty—people living in streets, in burlap houses, unused sewer pipes. Small fires for heat and cooking everywhere. Pollution and bad air is everywhere. There is so much noise. Rickshaws honking, people carrying everything. Camels, Bicycles. People, so many people! Sanitation is horrible, no toilets anywhere.

At the end of his report Simpson attempts a summary of the Gandhian Movement in recent years, a difficult undertaking. He describes the work of Vinoba, the collaboration, for a time, with him by J. P. Narayan, the scandals of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's regime (she was Nehru's daughter), her displacement and then restoration after a couple of years, and what seemed the decline of the nonviolent movement. Then he says:

Today the nonviolent movement is re-emerging in various ways. First, is Gandhi's influence. Streets are named after him, there are museums everywhere. Quotations on placards in banks honor his name. Everyone uses Gandhi as a platform for what they do. His houses are historic and religious sites. People flock to them like American revolutionary war sites. Statues of Gandhi appear in most every city. So Gandhi's ideas are widely known and widely distorted. Bookhouses, periodicals, Gandhi's sandals and glasses, on and on. At times it was a bit much.

But I was surprised at the amount of institutions which Gandhi either started or influenced at their

beginnings. During our four-day tour of Gandhian institutions we visited several. In Ahmedabad we visited the Gujarat Vidyapith or college. It was founded by Gandhi in 1920 during the noncooperation movement to promote alternatives to the British colonial system. Today they study economics, sociology and politics with a national perspective. They have a Gandhian studies program and since 1970 a Peace Research Institute. In Veduchhi the Gandhian Vidyapith emphasizes rural technologies and appropriate technology. They also tried new ways of locally based small farming for villages.

We visited a rural agricultural college founded in the 1950s by Gandhian disciples. One thousand people live on the campus. They attempt to teach Gandhian thought in their agricultural ideas. They learn cattle breeding, irrigation, plant cultivation, and more. This is all balanced with a humanities perspective. Students return to their home villages to promote agriculture with Gandhian ideas.

We also visited a rural based hospital known as SEWA Rural which recently won a World Health Organization award for their work in health care for the villages. They maintain a large size hospital (for India), concentrating most of their work in the field of preventive medicine and education. This too was based on many Gandhian ideas of health and rural sanitation. The hospital itself was named after Gandhi's wife Kasturba. . . .

The ashrams were the best examples of Gandhi's ideas. Apparently they are everywhere in India. They are oases in the sea of poverty, hunger and disease. The gwaraj ashram has 300 full-time residents. They have schools, fields, a decent water supply and a khadi cloth industry (still widespread in the country). In its 45-year existence gwaraj ashram has had a major impact on the 2,000 tribal people in the area, in education and health primarily. Ashrams maintain Gandhian thought, study and discipline. They emphasize constructive work and reconstruction of villages.

There are also, Simpson says, Gandhian "think tanks"! This may not be the high praise he seems to intend, since Gandhi never wrote a line of academese in his life, but now and then there are thoughtful articles in *Gandhi Marg* and clear evidence of the renewal of the Gandhian spirit.

As to Vinoba's work in Bhoojan and Gramdan (gift of land and gift of village), these movements,

Simpson says, are still alive but not expanding. "Important development work is being done in the states of Bihar, Rajasthan, Tamil Nad, and Uttar Pradesh," where farming practice is improving. "Many have visions of improving the land they have until all the present ones are self-sufficient." Simpson says:

I visited two Gramdan areas and found spectacular results. In one village along the Narmada River we visited a Bhoojan village donated to Vinoba in the 1950s. It was a tiny village of perhaps 300 people. The Bhoojan workers have set up an appropriate technology center where they are experimenting with biogas for fuel, wind power, and new tools for agriculture. They held a meeting of the villagers and we met the leaders and they explained their work. They are learning to farm without chemicals and fertilizers. They are making their own bricks. They have discovered smokeless stoves which minimize burning and pollution. The uplift of this area was excellent. . . .

So, in pockets of Indian rural life the nonviolent revolution is quietly and without view of the outside world improving the lot of thousands of impoverished people.

In Rangpur, the founder of an ashram, Haribhai Parik, has devised a system of People's Courts to settle disputes.

The idea is catching on throughout the country. In the Rangpur area there were many problems: shootings, thefts, drunkenness, family fights. There was no way to deal with these conflicts. The courts, police, and civil governments were apparently helpless. Parik decided to set up people's courts in each village. I observed one gathering for several hours. Each side was allowed to give its side of the conflict. Then relatives and friends of each side got together and worked out a solution. Parik facilitated discussion.

Other ashram leaders also facilitate courts there and elsewhere. The crime rate has decreased dramatically. . . . Parik's influence has spread the use of people's courts to 500 villages in his district. Fourteen thousand cases have already been settled.

Craig Simpson's visit to India became for him an ideal way to learn about another country.

REVIEW RETURNING TO PLATO

A BOOK first published almost thirty years ago, by the University of North Carolina Press at Chapel Hill, *Therapeia—Plato's Conception of Philosophy*, by Robert E. Cushman, and now available from Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., at \$25.00, is a study of Plato that we have been making use of ever since we first reviewed it back in 1967. Formal justification of such use is found in Whitehead's measured conclusion: "The safest general characterization of the European Philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato," but the personal justification is stronger. The book compels thought and raises questions that are almost but not quite unanswerable.

The title, *Therapeia*, is accurate. Plato's philosophy is therapy for both individuals and for the world. Plato's essential question, "Can virtue be taught?" is central to diagnosis of all human problems. There is no way it can be answered except through understanding of ourselves. Nor is there any grasp of the problems of the world without understanding of ourselves. Understanding ourselves turns out to be a project in moral psychology. The contribution of Socrates, through Plato, is that true knowledge cannot be taught, it must be sought. This was his rule, revealed by his practice, which often seemed to issue in no firm conclusion. He wished to provoke his friends and all who would listen to him to want to seek knowledge. If they lacked this desire he could do nothing for them. His own ignorance, of which he seemed to boast on occasion, and which sometimes seemed a pretense, was only partly a pretense, since he was sure that he could not inform anyone of anything important. Was he, then, opposed to education? Did he think schooling a waste of time? The answer must be both yes and no. Real education, he held, was the provision of circumstances under which the student is likely to be infected with the desire to know—a form of love. Without the

infection, what a man can acquire from another is only the conceit of what Plato called "double ignorance," which is mere opinion hardened into the supposition of knowledge. A teacher, if he is skillful, may be able to remove the layers of double ignorance by asking questions—which Plato calls *elenchos*, or cross-examination—and then may try to infect the one so reduced by perplexity with the germ of longing for truth, but he has no certainty in this. It must awaken in the student of itself before the teacher is able to fan the sparks of longing into a flame. Even so, Socrates held that the hunger for truth is the feeling that we know more than we can say—knowledge that has somehow been forgotten, acquired before we were born—and we feel the taste for it but seem unable to repossess it. How else, he might say, can we explain what we mean by "intuition," and what is the source of the admonitions of conscience? Ordinary ignorance, as distinguished from double ignorance, is easy to remedy. One has only to inform oneself by reading a book or going to school. Only the illusion of already having knowledge is difficult to overcome. Socrates understood this clearly, and hence proclaimed his ignorance, which caused the Oracle at Delphi to pronounce him the wisest man in all Athens.

Early in the *Phaedrus*, one of the richest of Plato's dialogues, Socrates and Phaedrus are conversing along the shores of the river Ilissus. Phaedrus recalls the story of Boreas seizing a maiden, Orithyia, and with a gust of wind throwing her out to sea, and he thinks they are close to where Boreas found her. He asked, "Do you, Socrates, believe that story is true?" Socrates replied

I should be quite in fashion if I disbelieved it, as men of science do. I might proceed to give a scientific account of how the maiden, while at play with Pharmacia, was blown by a gust of Boreas down from the rocks hard by, and having thus met her death was said to have been seized by Boreas, though it may have happened on the Areopagus, according to another version of the occurrence. For my part, Phaedrus, I regard such theories as no doubt

attractive, but as the invention of clever, industrious people who are not exactly to be envied, for the simple reason that they must then go on and tell us the real truth about the appearance of centaurs and the Chimera, not to mention a whole host of such creatures, Gorgons and Pegasuses and countless other remarkable monsters of legend flocking in on them. If our skeptic, with his somewhat crude science, means to reduce every one of them to the standard of probability, he'll need a deal of time for it. I myself have certainly no time for the business, and I'll tell you why, my friend. I can't yet "know myself," as the inscription at Delphi enjoins, and so long as that ignorance remains it seems ridiculous to me to inquire into extraneous matters. Consequently I don't bother about such things, but accept the current beliefs about them, and direct my inquiries, as I have just said, rather to myself, to discover whether I really am a more complex creature and more puffed up with pride than Typhon, or a simpler, gentler being whom heaven has blessed with a quiet, un-Typhonic nature.

Having sought self-knowledge for most of his life—as a youth, as he explains in the *Phaedo*, Socrates gave up the mechanistic views he learned from Anaxagoras and adopted from his own conclusion, based on reflection, that he, that is, his soul, was an expression of mind, of awareness, that made the decisions of his life—he worked out the view that the soul is immortal and survives the body. He made this the foundation of his outlook and returned to it throughout the dialogues. The knowledge which we gain is a remembering of past experience in other lives, and the purification of the soul, the elimination of the illusions of earthly life, is the project of existence. He emphasizes this in the *Phaedo*, in the autobiographical section, saying:

Well, after this, said Socrates, when I was worn out with my physical investigations, it occurred to me that I must guard against the same sort of risk which people run when they watch and study an eclipse of the sun; they really do sometimes injure their eyes, unless they study its reflection in water or some other medium. I conceived of something like this happening to myself, and I was afraid that by observing objects with my eyes and trying to comprehend them with each of my other senses I might blind my soul altogether.

This is followed by a theoretical demonstration of the immortality of the soul, after which he says:

But there is a further point, gentlemen, said Socrates, which deserves your attention. If the soul is immortal, it demands our care not only for that part of time which we call life, but for all time. And indeed it would seem now that it will be extremely dangerous to neglect it. If death were a release from everything, it would be a boon for the wicked, because by dying they would be released not only from the body but also from their own wickedness together with the soul, but as it is, since the soul is clearly immortal, it can have no escape or security from evil except by becoming as good and as wise as it possibly can. For it takes nothing with it to the next world except its education and training, and these, we are told, are of some supreme importance in helping or harming the newly dead at the beginning of his journey there.

Then, as for what happens after the experiences of the states after death, we find in the allegory or myth of Er, at the end of the *Republic*, Plato's conception of how the soul or ego is drawn back to earth, by necessity, choice, or inclination, to another life.

The value of the book, *Therapeia*, which we spoke of at the beginning, is its systematic treatment of Plato's account of the human condition as a kind of imprisonment—as described in the allegory of the Cave—and Plato's remedy in the form of awakening from the illusion and delusions which afflict all the Cave's inhabitants. No one alive today who considers the multiple confusions and the measureless sufferings of so many people can escape the depression which is overtaking the modern world. We are no wiser than the men and women of Plato's times, and hardly more inclined than they were to accept his diagnosis and his therapy. Yet more and more people are beginning to consider taking him seriously. This means being able to regard Plato's metaphysical teachings as possibly true, and the best way to do this is to read and reread the Greek philosopher. Cushman, author of *Therapeia*, has done this, and offered the fruit of his study in a book which may be termed "Plato on Plato," by

drawing together materials from all his works in order to make obscure passages as clear as possible. In his conclusion, he stresses what is the heart of the matter for Plato:

To summarize, it is manifest that for Plato ignorance or false opinion signifies, not alone intellectual error, but an unethical condition of the whole soul whereby a man is self-deceived, beguiled through the over-persuasiveness of unrestrained appetitive urges. He is at cross-purposes with himself. As Plato recurrently states in the *Republic*, he is an "enemy to himself," choked with "inner faction" and a dreadful want of "self-agreement" (352a). Accordingly, at the cognitive level, he entertains contrary opinions about the same things at the same time and teems "with countless such self-contradictions" (603d). So he harbors the "involuntary lie" in the soul, wallowing in ignorance (535e). The "involuntary lie" is defined as "deception in the soul about realities."

The outcome is plain enough: In Plato's view the greatest form of ignorance is false opinion, and, while it manifests itself, on the one hand, as intellectual error, it is at the same time a condition of folly (*aphrosune*) and moral obliquity. Hence it is not surprising that we are reminded in the *Timaeus* that folly is of two sorts; the one is madness, and the other is ignorance (86b). The correlation of *amathia* and *aphrosune* in the dialogues is fairly commonplace. And in the *Protagoras* it is early suggested that folly is the direct opposite of wisdom. . .

In the extremity of man's plight, Plato offers a defined *therapeia*. It includes, as we undertook to show, *metastrophe* or "conversion" of the entire soul, involving the affections, by which *noes*, the organ of cognition, is reoriented rightly with respect to prime reality.

COMMENTARY UNDERSTANDING RECENT HISTORY

IN *Harper's* for April, some reflections by Christopher Lasch suggest a fundamental understanding of the power exercised by Martin Luther King. They deserve repetition. He introduces the subject:

In the 1950s and early 1960s the civil rights movement faced a racial division so deeply rooted in slavery and so powerfully reinforced by racist ideologies, by an elaborate structure of legal discrimination, and by popular prejudice that any peaceful solution appeared impossible, let alone a solution based on an appeal to morality. Yet it was precisely the movement's rejection of resentment that gave it a moral authority that proved irresistible. . . .

The movement's goal was justice, not cultural assimilation. But the nationalist tradition did not prevent Martin Luther King from understanding that Southern blacks were not only uprooted Africans but Americans as well, and finally even Southerners, whose history was intertwined with that of their oppressors. Indeed, it was blacks' self-identification as Southerners that made it possible for King and his followers to contest the prevailing definition of Southern regional identity.

It would have been impossible for King to mount any moral attack on segregation if he had taken the position that black people, by virtue of their special history, had developed a special set of moral principles that whites could not appreciate; or that moral principles are a delusion, just another way of advancing group interests; or that morality is anything those in authority choose to call it. . . . King's rejection of resentment, his refusal to claim a privileged moral position for blacks as victims of injustice, was the only thing that enabled the civil rights movement to deflate the "moral conceit" of Southern segregationists. . . .

It was not the rejection of violence as such but the rejection of resentment, the refusal to claim exemption from common moral standards on the grounds of victimization, that enabled the civil rights movements to speak from a position of overwhelming moral authority. On the other hand, it was the attempt to mobilize resentment in the name of black power that led to the rapid collapse of this authority in the late 1960s.

Where the civil rights movement condemned racism black power condemned "white racism," thus implying either that only whites were guilty of racism or that black racism could be excused because black people had been subjected to "four centuries of oppression." Those who lived through the political excitements of the 1960s can easily remember how quickly the obligatory invocation of "four centuries of oppression" lost its capacity to provoke indignation, pity, or guilt. But it is perhaps more to the point to observe that emotions like indignation, pity, or white liberal guilt are unlikely to generate constructive political action in the first place.

Unfortunately, the moral collapse of the civil rights movement has not prevented others, notably the women's movement, from repeating its mistakes; that is, from claiming that a special history of victimization entitles them to reparations or justifies the very methods they condemn when their enemies use them. . . .

Christopher Lasch concludes:

On the contrary, a politics based on fraternity is the only thing that makes a common life possible, because it creates a politics of trust. The circumstances of our collective insecurity in the world makes it necessary for us to trust those who cannot be subjected to our control, treated as instruments of our will, or brought into perfect agreement with our own views and purposes.

This seems a hard lesson, but a necessary one.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves NON-MILITARY JOBS

ON page one of the Fall 1986 issue of *CCCO News Notes*, published quarterly in Philadelphia on behalf of conscientious objectors, this story appeared:

On August 13, 1986, Federal District Court Judge Marvin Shoob ordered that the Atlantic Board of Education give the Atlantic Peace Alliance (APA) the "opportunity, substantially equal to that afforded military recruiters, to present peace-oriented educational and career opportunities to Atlanta public school students by placing literature on school bulletin boards and in the offices of school guidance counselors and by participating in Career Day programs."

"With this decision, high school students in Atlanta have come a step closer to securing their right to hear more than the slick promotional material of military recruiters as they think about whether to enlist," commented CCCO Staff Attorney James H. Feldman.

The APA, a coalition of the Atlantic Committee Against Registration and the Draft, the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia, the Atlantic Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, the Atlantic Chapter of the War Resisters League, and various individuals, was formed several years ago to make peace and military counseling information available to Atlanta public school students.

The APA filed suit when in the face of criticism by the *Atlanta Journal* the School Board suspended an APA agreement with Atlanta School Superintendent Dr. Alonzo Crim to distribute APA material through guidance counselor offices, allow the APA to participate at career days, and place APA advertisements in high school year books. CCCO Staff Attorney James Feldman, Jr., helped to prepare briefs and argue the case in District Court. . . .

The Court found that the School Board created a public forum when it allowed military recruiters and others access to students. The School Board does not dispute that it lets military recruiters and others outside organizations place literature in guidance counselor offices and on bulletin boards and address students at Career Days and Youth Motivation Days. It says that it opened these avenues of communication

solely for the dissemination of information about career and educational opportunities.

The APA seeks to distribute information about careers and educational opportunities related to peacemaking, but the School Board refuses to allow this because the APA has no "jobs in hand." The Court found this "jobs in hand" distinction "false," since undisputed evidence in the record showed that "at least some Career Day participants do not offer 'concrete jobs' and do not have 'jobs in hand'."

The Court's harshest words, however, were reserved for the School Board's lack of a written policy, noting that: "Defendants' (the School Board) failure to promulgate a written policy leaves defendants in a precarious position for trial."

The Court added that since the School Board lets outside groups address students on many topics, at trial it might be hard pressed not to require the School Board to allow the APA to talk to students about the military. The Court also said that it might interpret the lack of a written policy as "evidence that defendants have acted out of an intention to suppress the expression of the plaintiffs' views."

The School Board has decided to appeal rather than conform. In the meantime,

The APA is ready to take full advantage of their victory. They are preparing information packets on careers and educational opportunities in peacemaking for distribution through guidance counselor offices, posters for high school bulletin boards, and presentations for Career and Youth Motivation Days. "We're really excited by the decision," said APA member Brian Taylor. "With the school year ready to begin, it couldn't have come at a better time."

Another article, "Conscience Comes to the Classroom," by Diane Carol Bast, reprinted in the *CCCO News Notes* from the March 5, 1986 *Christian Century*, reports a similar victory in the Chicago courts, which now gives peace advocates and draft counselors access to public school students in that city. In 1983 a suit was filed by Metro Chicago Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC), an interfaith group, contending that the city's Board of Education spreads literature and conducts workshops counseling students to seek careers in the armed forces, while draft counselors have been turned away. The plaintiff, Father Andrew Skotnicki, who had been a draft resister

in the 1960s and became a draft counselor in the 80s, had himself been refused access to 66 suburban schools. The federal district found this practice by the School Board in violation of the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Since this ruling school board representatives and CALC people have joined in consultation to work out procedures giving equal access to the schools for military recruiters and draft counselors alike. To reassure parents, Skotnicki has said that "draft counselors don't advocate illegal acts or try to persuade students that war and military service are morally wrong. We only want to make people aware that alternatives exist. We want to walk the kids through a decision, and make sure it's their decision." CALC's brochure, *Thinking of Military Service?* which considers conscientious objection by question and answer, is now approved literature. Diane Bast says that "school officials who are comfortable with the quality of CALC's service may be among the group's best supporters." She also says:

Its pursuit of *equal* access and willingness to work side-by-side with military recruiters clearly show that CALC intends to offer students more than "anti-war proselytizing" or "political propaganda." Skotnicki freely admits that military service may be a profitable career opportunity for some, but he strongly believes students should make that choice for themselves. "The nonviolent alternative of conscientious objection and pacifism are not the only options in the war/peace debate," he wrote with Mardo Pardo in the *Chicago Tribune*, "but they are options. If eliminated from the educational process, there is no longer dialogue—only monologue, and a frightening one at that." These two writers concluded: "High school students will only grow to be free and principled persons if they are given the opportunity to think and choose for themselves."

Still another article in *CCCO News Notes* gives an account of the Campaign for Honest Military Recruitment now carried on by the War Resisters League West and the Veterans Speakers Alliance. The writer is Jim DuPont, a Vietnam veteran and peace activist. He speaks of the "sophisticated advertisements" by the armed forces to which teenagers are exposed, often

leading them to believe that "the military services will deliver on their promises of job training, educational opportunities and other benefits."

The campaign for Honest Military Recruitment involves the production of another kind of ads, as DuPont says:

The Campaign ads are designed to give teenagers messages which fall into four categories:

- the military can kill or maim;
- the promise of job training skill is a farce;
- sexism and racism are magnified in the military; and
- an enlistee may end up fighting in Central America.

Besides conveying a counter recruitment message, each ad is designed to help outreach efforts. A phone number and address appear in each ad, accompanied by the phrase "talk to a veteran before enlisting." In addition, military veterans and other war resisters have given presentations to classes as a followup to the ads.

The technical parts of producing the ads are fairly simple. Non-artists produced the first set of ads by cutting pictures out of magazines and by getting pacifist printer friends to do the typesetting. And presto, we had an ad—for free. The only cost was a few dollars to have camera-ready copies of the ads produced, so we'd have a stockpile of ads to send out. As we got more sophisticated, artists agreed to produce ads for us, again for free.

The address of the War Resisters League West is 85 Carl Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94117. The address of CCCO is 2208 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146.

FRONTIERS

Greens and Bioregionalists

IN a recent issue of *Green Revolution* (Vol. 43, No. 3, 1986), the paper founded by Mildred Loomis in 1962, Kirkpatrick Sale considers the meaning of Bioregionalism, of which he is a protagonist. Comparing the Bioregional movement with the Green Party in Germany, he finds the Greens confused about their objectives, so also the numerous offspring in this country—"as many as 40 different Green groups across the U.S.A."—then says:

Bioregionalism has its differences and confusions, too, but it is united at least in a central commitment to ecological values—that it is not "one" of anything, it is central to all. It is imbued with the principles of Deep Ecology and ecophilosophy and biospirituality and the like, all of which guide ideas and actions specifically in the direction of respect for, humility in the face of, the patterns and systems of nature. It takes all its positions on other social issues—education, culture, arts, food—from its basic understanding of what an ecological perspective would be.

There is indeed a vision implicit in the ecological outlook, some of which can be applied now by individuals acting freely in parts of the natural environment, while other aspects of the vision can only be realized after great changes in the way our habits of living are organized—the enormous cities in the industrial countries, for one thing, and their duplicates or imitations in the Third World which are worse in their conditions of poverty and malnourished masses. There is no way in which these vast urban areas can be removed rapidly. And we can barely imagine the means by which people can be legitimately attracted elsewhere—where self-sufficiency may be restored. Such changes will require much re-education of us all, and a transformed economy in response to the realities of human need. The bioregionalists, at least, have been thinking about such problems and goals. Kirkpatrick Sale goes on:

Here's the way that Peter Berg, one of the founders of the bioregional movement, has put the bioregionalists' case:

"They see their lives as intertwined with ongoing natural processes, part of the life of a place. From their biocentric viewpoint, human society is ultimately based on interdependence with other forms of life. They follow that conviction to make choices about which kinds of work to undertake and to oppose Late Industrial depredations."

Then he makes the distinction from the Greens: "It is not established that 'green politics' followers are similarly committed, and questionable as to whether they will become so. Theirs is a multiplicity of concerns . . . and among most 'greens' ecological awareness is limited to an older environmentalist perspective, attempting to reform industrialism instead of attempting to replace it."

That, in a way, is how we have tended to regard the Green movement, as described by Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra in their book, and from what Rudolph Bahro says in his. However, we saw the emergence of the Greens in Germany as a vastly encouraging event, whatever its practical political consequences. It was a sign of changing attitudes, of a spirit that would be far-reaching in its effects, perhaps in another fifty years, whatever the confusions and compromises in the meantime. Yet, as Bahro shows, there are Greens in Germany with much the same attitude as Peter Berg.

Sale regards the Greens as "attempting to reform industrialism instead of replacing it," as Berg has put it, and says:

That is the heart of the matter, and I am sorry to say that over these last two years I have not seen any lessening of that distinction or any serious efforts to close the gaps. The Greens that I have met—with only a few exceptions, mostly in the Northwest—have not been able to see the bioregional vision and are stuck in the old ruts of recycling and biking as demonstrations of environmental action. They do not understand that it is the very industrial civilization that must be confronted, and they do not seem to understand that conformism—"Bring your old newspapers down to the corner every Wednesday," "We demand more bikepaths!"—will not do the job.

Well, Mr. Sale would like to see more maturity, more recognition of the long-term objectives, and you can hardly blame him for that.

He goes on:

I have had arguments along these lines many times, particularly with various groups in New York City. For example, it has become a fairly common Green line that New York needs more and better mass transit—that's one of the things like motherhood and marijuana that everybody is supposed to be for and the Greens have adopted uncritically. But wait: why do we have mass transit, what does it say about our living and employment patterns, what is its environmental impact now and where would it be if it was expanded, how much energy is wasted in the manufacture, operation, and maintenance of mass transit systems, and why do we have mass agglomerations that need mass transit anyway? Those are the questions that must be asked, that any bioregionalist would ask. And the ultimate answer would be that, in short, mass transit is *wrong*, anti-environmental, anti-ecological, and serves only to prop up the present dangerous system of herding millions of people into cities that seriously overburden all parts of the environment and then shoving them back and forth at the whims of capitalist employers and real estate developers. But try to get the average liberal Green to understand that.

Sale thinks that the Greens in America should join with the bioregionalists, learn from them, and take part in their dream. He says:

In my own perspective, Green politics should really be bioregionalism's interface with the world of industrial nationalist politics. It should be the practice of bioregionalists as they go up against legislatures and town boards and water departments and elected officials, it should be the way to enter into local political races to try to get bioregional ideas on the public agenda and bioregional practices enacted on a regional scale I think of Green politics, in other words, as a part of bioregionalism, and a potentially important part. . . .

The Green movement still has a chance to change, to embrace a truly ecological politics, of which bioregionalism is a clear and developed example. It can still move from liberalism and reform to radicalism and wholesale change. . . . My only hope is that those who now call themselves

Greens will come to see the wisdom of that pathway and follow the bioregionalists along it.

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