



Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology: A Challenge for the Ecology Movement



(http://libcom.org/files/images/library/4bookchin_in_venice.jpg)

**Murray Bookchin's
'mystical' deep ecology
contribution to the
pro-working class en**

by Murray Bookchin

The environmental movement traveled a long way since Earth Day festivals with school kids were ritual to clean up streets, with Godfrey, Barry Commoner and a bouquet of Marxist legislators scolded the littering the landscape newspapers, and bott

The movement has grown a naive belief that patchwork reforms and solemn vows by EPA bureaucrats to act more resolutely will seriously arrest the insane process are tearing down the planet. This shopworn Earth Day approach to engineering nature so that we can ravage the Earth with minuscule ourselves---an approach that I called environmentalism in the late 1960s, in contrast to social ecology---has shown signs of giving searching and radical mentality. Today the new word in vogue is ecology---be it deep ecology, human ecology, biocentric ecology ecology, or to use a term that is uniquely rich in meaning, social ecology.

Happily, the new relevance of ecology reveals a growing dissatisfaction among thinking people with attempts to use our vast ecological cheaply spectacular and politically manipulative ends. As our forests disappear due to mindless cutting and increasing acid rain, as thins out because of the widespread use of fluorocarbons, as toxic dumps multiply all over the planet, as highly dangerous, often pollutants enter into our air, water, and food chains---all, and innumerable other hazards that threaten the integrity of life itself, raises issues than any that can be resolved by Earth Day clean-ups and faint-hearted changes in existing environmental laws.

For good reason, more and more people are trying to go beyond the vapid environmentalism of the early 1970s and develop a more indeed a more radical, approach to the ecological crises that beleaguer us. They are looking for an ecological approach, one that ecological philosophy, ethics, sensibility, and image of nature, and ultimately for an ecological movement that will transform our society into a nonhierarchical cooperative society---a society that will live in harmony with nature because its members live in harmony with another.

They are beginning to sense that there is a tie-in between the way people deal with one another, the way they behave as social beings, women, old with young, rich with poor, whites with people of color, First World with Third, elites with "masses"---and the way they

The question that now faces us is: What do we really mean by an ecological approach? What are a coherent ecological philosophy movement? How can the answers to these questions and many others fit together so that they form a meaningful and creative whole?

Just as the earlier environmental movement was filled with well-meaning spokesmen like Arthur Godfrey who sold detergents over driving "environmentally" sound electric cars, so today the newly emerging ecological movement is filled with well-meaning people by a new kind of "spokesmen," individuals who are selling their own wares---usually academic and personal careers.

If we are not to repeat the mistakes of the early 1970s with their hoopla about "population control," their latent antifeminism, their arrogance, and their ugly authoritarian tendencies, we must honestly and seriously appraise the new tendencies that today are given the name of one or another form of ecology.