

## Introduction

**H**ERE ARE ESSAYS, WRITTEN over nearly a twenty-five year span, that attempt to explore the deeper, buried dimensions of Green politics, or, more importantly, Green culture.

If we ask a simple question—namely, what is it about the modern world that has given rise to the international Green phenomenon—we are led not only to a contemporary environmental critique, but to a quest for the roots of those forces that constitute the ecological assault. These essays consist of such an exploration.

I make no claim to be comprehensive, much less exhaustive, in this analysis. These are Green forays into difficult, but critically important, terrain. These forays include the meaning of utopia, the conventional conception of socialist agriculture, the dynamics of “backwardness” versus “progress,” our saturation with the prevailing secular religion called Civilization—and a ragged, organic bouquet of other relevant topics.

My core conviction can be stated quite simply: such apocalyptic global realities as weapons of mass destruction and global warming/climate change tell us that we face transformation or disaster—either caring and sharing or hatred and destruction. The accrued lethality of the (largely male) enterprise of civilization, both economically and militarily, now threatens all mammalian life on Earth. This is not hyperbole. This is not hysterical exaggeration. This is the simple and terrifying truth.

In my estimation, there are only two “tools” that point, not merely toward survival, but toward a restored Earth with a humane culture and ecological economy, such as can be achieved, given extinctions, climate change, and accrued toxicity. The first tool is the *ethical* core of all true spiritual traditions: compassion, forgiveness, sharing, moderation, simplicity, modesty, selflessness, and love. The second tool is the slow, somewhat bumbling, but steady congealing of the Green political vision, a vision that, of necessity, engages in politics, but has its heart and soul invested in the yearning for and creation of Green culture.

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These essays are not a how-to manual for being political. They won't tell you how to organize a local Green chapter or how to get Green candidates elected to your city council or county board. Before many Greens *do* get elected, we had better come to grips with some potent underlying issues or Green politics will be just another drifting ship without a rudder. A major change in the direction of Green culture requires a strong political will, and that will had better be deeply immersed in transformative spiritual ethics.

While it is our obligation and our responsibility to hope for an elegant, ecological future, such hope requires not only committed action, but also deeply ethical understanding. I pray that in these essays I am leading no one in a false direction.

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