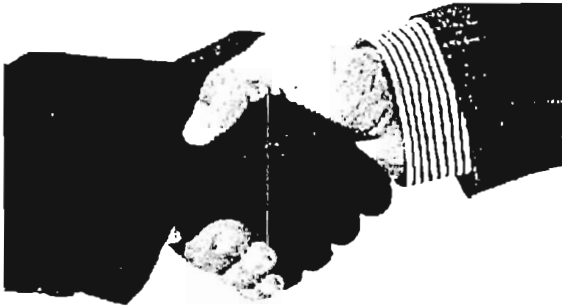


Enviromentalism:

**Lack of
Racial Diversity**



**Interview with New Afrikan Anarchist
POW Ojore N. Lutalo.**

Questions posed by Tim Lapietra.

Friday - June 25th, 1999

"Go to the people/Live among them/Learn from them/Love them/Serve them/Plan with them/Start with what they know/Build on what they have..."

- *The Late Kwame Nkurmah*

Question:

What are your thoughts on the environmental movement as you see it today?

Answer:

I see today's environmental movement as a predominantly white self-serving movement of privilege; so my first question to the environmentalist movement is: Whose environment are they trying to preserve? If the movement is based on "Amerikan" ideals, I am against it! I don't agree with anything that would work to destroy individual ethnic identities in order to create a one-minded people. To serve and be helots to a draconian government and/or religion that I feel strip away any sense of self, and manipulate the people to make judgements based on color and class. If the movement is geared towards preserving an environment that is based on an un-oppressive and non-materialistic frames of reference that values and takes pride in family values as well as the qualities of life, and promotes becoming educated in one's individual ethnic background and respecting other cultures, I'm supportive of their endeavors. I also support what Green Peace is trying to achieve around the world.

Question:

How do you feel that white environmentalists (who make up the majority of the Earth First! (EF) Movement) could better reach out to people of color?

Answer:

First, the predominantly white movement must come to terms with the realization of their own oppression as it's being articulated by Julius Lester in the enclosures entitled "The Oppression of Whites," and "Look Out, Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Mama." The vast majority of white people in Amerika do not see, or consider themselves to be oppressed, and dispossessed. Most whites reject this reality out of white arrogance. They are blinded by their supposed white skin privilege that the government promotes, and they reject the fact that they are being manipulated by the government who benefit from racial rancor, and that "racism is not an emotion: It is an intentional political construct, backed by the government and institutions." - *Helen Parilla*. People of color are not anti-environment. Most people of color are not even aware that an environmental movement exists. People of color cannot afford the privilege of worrying about a tree, and being able to worry about a tree is a privilege; and this fact is something that white environmentalists must come to terms with in their dealings with people of color who are truly oppressed and disenfranchised; and often have to

"Racism is not an emotion: It is an intentional political construct, backed by the government and institutions"

- *Helen Parilla*

spend their every waking hour dealing with the onus of finding ways to feed themselves; clothe themselves, pay their exorbitant rent; deal with the everyday racism in their lives and the high cost of medical care while contending with police brutality and the very real prospect of becoming victims of crime by other dispossessed people of color in quest of money that they need to pay their bills and feed their various drug "addictions."

White environmentalists must be willing to do what the Late Kwame Nkurmah is suggesting here: "Go the people/Live among them, Learn from them/Love them/Serve them/Plan with them/Start with what they know/Build on what they have." Also, if white environmentalists take heed to Kwame Nkurmah's sound advice, they must struggle hard against the tendencies of going into communities of color and start acting as saviors of the down trodden like so many other have done in the past. Some whites view themselves as saviors, and they only feel comfortable if they are working with people of color with a **victim-focused identity!**

White environmentalists must be willing to get into the "trenches" with people of color in order to combat the mistrust that some people of color harbor towards white people... If they are not ready to get into the trenches, there will always be a lack of trust and understanding of each others motives; and the driving forces in their struggles...

Question:

How do you see ecology as it pertains to the urban black community?

Answer:

As I see it, black communities are the dumping ground for big business pollutants, and black urban communities are set-up and designed for failure, economically and socially. The best one word description would be decadence!

Question:

To what degree do you feel that privileges (such as white privilege and class privilege) play a role in shaping the environmental movement?

Answer:

The roles of white skin privilege and class privilege are paramount in shaping the environmental movement because white people who predominate the environmental movement do not have to contend with ills that the downtrodden have to contend with in their everyday lives! If they are left alone to shape the movement, it will only become another tool of an oppressive and capitalistic government! At first, it might appeal to many people, but if it is left alone to develop on its own, it would only serve the interest and concerns of the few; like the

"Some whites view themselves as saviors. They only feel comfortable if they are working with people of color with a 'Victim-Focused Identity'."

Excerpt from an article entitled "Being White" by Dr. Barbara Reynolds...Daily Challenge (The City's Only Black Daily) Newspaper-June 16th, 1999.

"neo-racists" of the Anti-Racist Action (ARA) groups who set agendas to resist racism without the voices or significant input from those who are affected by the oppression the most – people of color.

Question:

What would you say to an environmentalist who is a misanthropic and consequently neglects social issues?

Answer:

I would ask her or him to question their humanity. I would ask her or him to question the nature of their own oppression and their racism because in order to be a true environmentalist, you must first address the concerns of social issues. Considering we as human beings are the superior members within our environments, any issues we have will carry over and reflect on our surroundings; and effect it...

Question:

Any final comments?

Answer:

I would suggest to white environmentalists that they read the below listed literature because "tragically, many radical whites who had been allies in the Black Liberation Struggle began to question whether the struggle to end racism was really that significant," or to suggest that the struggle was over, as they moved into their new liberal positions, for the most part, this behavior has always been the practice of whites who have involved themselves in the issues of people of color, and I do not see it being any different with some segments of the now, predominantly the white environmentalist movement here in North America...

- (1) The Oppression of Whites – Excerpts from Julius Lester's Book Revolutionary Notes
- (2) Look Out, Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Mama – Excerpts from Julius Lester's Book Look Out, Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Mama.
- (3) Being White – Excerpt From an Article Entitled "Being White" by Barbara Reynolds – Daily Challenge, June 16th, 1999

"Tragically, many radical whites who had been allies in the Black Liberation Struggle began to question whether the struggle to end racism was really that significant, or to suggest that the struggle was over, as they moved into their new liberal positions..."

Excerpt from the book "Killing Rage" by Bell Hooks – Page 190 from the Chapter Overcoming White Supremacy