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Ecology and the Semblance of an Illusion

Limassol Antiauthoritarians

1985

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This is a translation from the original Greek, of an antiauthoritarian ecological text written in 1985 in the city of Limassol in Cyprus. The original text was not published, but was hand-delivered at the Chrysallida social space then active in the city. It consisted of 9.5 pages. The translation originates from the Cyprus Movements Archive (movementsarchive.org).

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“As long as world history follows its logical course,
it fails to fulfill its human destination.”

MAX HORKHEIMER “The authoritarian state”

Since man ceased to function as an integral part of nature, self-proclaimed as it's conqueror and it's sovereign, life on the planet is driven into a mess that has its ecological and biological disaster for its sole end. This of course is done in the name of “development”, “progress” and “prosperity”. In other words, in the name of development and reproduction of world capitalism (whether it is the ‘classic’ western or the ‘socialist’ Eastern. On the other hand, the various worldviews, including Marxism, have never been able to see the real importance of restoring and maintaining a balanced relationship between human and nature, thereby sacrificing everything in the name of science. To remember the words of a Czech: “... If socialism was a science, it would be first tested on mice ...”). The Marxian narrative is well known: “... the story evolves from the domination of nature over human, transforming to the human domination

over human and ultimately results in the human dominating nature (!!!) ...". Of course, this narrative only emerges as a result of the idea of progress, of non-critical technological optimism, of belief in centralisation, and at the core of Marxist thought. In fact, the perception that humankind must dominate and exploit nature stems from the power and exploitation of human by human.

Today the most visible global threat is that of a nuclear holocaust. However, there are other risks, less spectacular, but with equal devastating effects, either on the environment in the broadest sense or on the nature and character of human-therefore, on both. In almost every country, air is being polluted, water springs are poisoned, soil is drying out, and wildlife is destroyed. If the current use of chemical fertilisers continues, in less than 30 years, 1/3 of the fertile surface of the earth will become so toxic that land will become barren. This of course means nothing less than hunger. Coastal areas, even the depths of the sea, are not immune to the widespread infection. The cycles of carbon dioxide and nitrogen, on which the retention and renewal of all living beings depend on, are disturbed in the long run to a point of irreparable damage. The most obvious result of this is disruption and the deterioration of climatic conditions ("greenhouse" effect). In spite of this, it is the unbridled spread of radioactive waste, long-lived insecticides, lead residues and thousands of toxic or "potentially" toxic substances to food, water and air, the "aerosols" that destroy the ozone layer surrounding the earth's atmosphere- which protects humans (and earth) from ultraviolet rays considered highly carcinogenic; the expansion of cities in enormous urban areas, the increasing noise pollution, tensions and anxiety caused by overcrowding; the huge accumulation of rubbish, dirt and industrial waste; the congestion of roads and streets from vehicles; the irresponsible destruction of valuable raw materials and mineral wealth; the carving of the planet by speculators of real estate

and road manufacturing bureaucrats; the criminal destruction of important habitats (such as Akamas) and the “acid” rain that destroys past forest areas (to show how important the life cycle is, it is enough to say that only the Amazon forests in Latin America produce 1/3 of the oxygen on earth).

All this and more, have caused within only one generation, more damage than that of thousands of years of human existence on this planet. If this catastrophic rhythm is realised, speculation about what the next generation will experience brings about feelings of terror.

“The ecological risks to humankind, which we can now predict, stems directly from the nature of production in a consumerist society. On the one hand, there is the systematic production of irresponsible technology, and on the other hand, the systematically entrenched behaviour that violates any reasonable limit.”

ALAN ROBERT “consumerism and ecological crisis”

Here in Cyprus, as a geographical area, we still don’t face serious ecological problems. This does not mean that we should wait for the problems to be created in order to take them into account. Of course, we can not deal with the problem of, for example, nuclear waste or housing and overcrowding (this is our advantage over other countries), but the pollution of some sea areas, cement ridden, and untasteful constructions that have become an integral part of the Cypriot landscape (in some cases it has come to create the monstrosities of Limassol, Nicosia and Ayia Napa), the quality of food has considerably deteriorated over the last decade, entire areas have been turned into waste sites, beaches have been turned into “ghettos of bathers” with the well-known ugly shacks, (for example the Governors and Saint George Alamanos beaches), parks and green areas have

been totally destroyed (for example the Limassol forests). On the other hand, there is the eternal problem of water, the pollution of underground water in Limassol, the fencing of beaches by hoteliers, the crumbing of residential apartment buildings, the increasing congestion, the pollution of mass media that became a substitute to human relations, and the daily noise-pollution. Here, we want to clarify that we are not exclusively talking about the noise of “young kamikazi” motorcycles. We do not have any mood to become the heavens of the state, the police and the parties, reproducing the spectacle of “evil” elsewhere, and participating in this all-round hysterical attack against this part of the youth that has took on all the negatives of our tourist showcase. And all because it happened to have the motorcycle – and its subsequent noise – as a scapegoat of the everyday schizophrenia and boredom of the city. We refer to the noise of the vehicles in general, the buildings and the compressors, the noise that is the result of living in apartments – cages that are so close to each other that you can not even cough without being heard. Noise is the product of the city itself as a living space and the problem is not solved by policing and repression. Thus, we stand against the state and the police’s attempts to monitor us, knowing what their role is in the maintenance and reproduction of the current status quo.

We consider all this, and much more, as environmental problems that have been created mainly by the concentration and compaction of populations in cities, which are directly linked to the structure of the social system of waged work and its subsequent alienated human relations. We believe that capitalism and its technology have created these monstrosities. Its next target is precisely the few ‘virgin’ areas left on the island as well as the enormous habitats of Akamas and the salt lake of Limassol. What do we propose?

“Our first task is to expose, through an analysis of society, its characteristic tendencies at a given

The issue of Akamas should not become an end in itself (though it remains today the pinnacle of the problem) but should be the beginning of a debate and practice towards an anti-authoritarian ecology, aimed at a society without slaves and masters.

- Let each one take their responsibilities.
- We should not allow Akamas to become a new Limassol or Ayia Napa, nor for it to remain as a training field for Great Britain's troops.
- IF WE DO NOT REALISE THE IMPOSSIBLE WE WILL BE FACED WITH THE UNTHINKABLE..

Limassol Antiauthoritarians
the true descendants of the exterminated
wild boars of Akamas.

moment of the evolution and to present it clearly: then act accordingly to these trends in our relations with all those like minded people. And finally, from now on, we will work to destroy these institutions, as well as towards the preventive measures blocking the development of these trends”

PETER KROPOTKIN

A society led by the extreme petty bourgeois proletarianism and extreme consumerism encourages apathy and resignation from any form of social struggle (even from this so-called “national liberation”). Capitalist accumulation has dismantled the old labor movement and its ideological coordination, rapidly commercialised every social relationship, bureaucratised public life and fragmented every facet of human activity, creating the ‘worship’ of specialisation. This process has come at a particularly intense pace after the end of all antagonistic ideologies in 1974 in an attempt of the Cypriot state to survive. This resulted in individuals accepting the phenomenality of objects and mirroring this constant transformative process in all the distorted images that the spectacle of capitalist production produces, transforming themselves from active agents of historical change to passive viewers.

Nonetheless, even though some of us have thought about these things, we sometimes feel we are too weak to change them. Our view is that only by going into action, individually or collectively (certainly not through a political party nor a bureaucratic processes) we can secure the future of this place and ultimately the whole planet. The state, or any kind of power, does not intend to do anything and allowing the land to slowly be destroyed in the name of tourist “development”, the “national” problem and the post-war economic “miracle”. That is why we cannot distinguish ecology (the “return to nature” etc.) from the rest of the social issues. That is why we believe that Akamas has been placed on the wrong side. For us the prob-

lem is not whether the area will be proclaimed “National Park” or “reservoir” but that every catastrophic intervention upon nature should stop- especially in important habitats- whether this comes from the British military who have been training for years in the area, or from the different so-called ‘genuine Cypriot patriots’.

At a “utopian” level of course what we generally want is to live – and not simply to survive in the wards of wage labor and boredom – but to live in harmony with ourselves, others and nature, in conditions of respect of individual singularity, mutual understanding and humanity, into a decentralised and self-directed society, where property, state and armies will not have a place. Where no form of power, hierarchy, sovereignty, and exploitation of human by human will exist. Where technology will act as a means of liberation, not as a means of subjugation. Where people will decide through community, neighborhood, work, culture, etc. general assemblies with direct democracy will decide their fate. As flamboyant and crazy as it sounds, this is what we define as the only truth for us. However, these beliefs will not transform into stagnant, unchanging and dogmatic ideological positions. In fact, they are not even an ideology, as ‘ideology’ produces the false consciousness of human (“Kill Ideology instead of putting it on a hat”). These values construct our desires today, and from them we direct our lives.

“At a time of such instability, every decade shortens a generation of change under steady conditions. We should look even farther, in the coming century. We can not be sparing in the liberation of the human imagination”

MURRAY BOOKCHIN “Observations on ‘classical’ anarchism and modern ecology”

To ground ourselves back to reality from the science fiction trip we just took, we all know very well that Cyprus has begun

to lose its tourist ‘attractions’ that is, its natural beauty and that in fact no one is enthusiastic about this idea anymore. Capital and its State have much more to lose than the poor landowner who waits for and how to get water and electricity to the field in order to build a bungalow. There is no doubt that the State and Capital, after doing what they did, will then go on to act – to whatever extent in their favour – in the direction of prevention and repression (for example, policing). A method very different from ours and which runs counter to what we libertarians believe. The phenomenon of prevention has taken a global character, and it is here where the words of Ivan Illich, one of the best sociological thinkers, speak truth:

“There are two possible scenarios for the future of humankind: a society run by ecologists and technocrats, controlled by hierarchically centralised organisations, what is referred to as the techno-fascist road, or autonomous groups that will control their own life to preserve the ecological antipode that is necessary in life: a society of the co-workers.”

We believe that we are already on the road to techno-fascism, at a time when society based on oil is slowing dying and where technological advancements, genetics, electronics and nuclear technology are at their first stages. We do not hope for any legislation of the style “the earth will anyway become red”, nor have we ended the evolution of the world in the three volumes of Capital. We do not expect any revolution to emerge like God, nor to live in the vague ‘tomorrow’. The only solution for us is to reclaim our fates and take them into our control without transferring our decision making power, or agency, to anyone else- whether that may be the state, businesses, the church, the school, parties etc.

Taking into consideration these facts, and overcoming the illusion that the state can (and in fact does not want) to give any meaningful solution to this pressing problem of our time: to maintain the balance in nature, we believe the necessity of redirecting responsibility is more vital than ever.