



Do Your Ideas Contribute to *Green Social Thought?*

The editors of *Green Social Thought* (GST) invite your letters and emails on the five points (below) which we adopted during our September 2012 meeting in St. Louis. *Green Social Thought: A Magazine of Synthesis and Regeneration* is a continuation of *Synthesis/Regeneration: A Magazine of Green Social Thought*. But there is an important difference. GST focuses on a set of ideas that are summarized below. We believe that they are shared by many environmentalists as well as social justice, peace and labor activists.

First, GST believes that there are ecological limits to economic growth that make it imperative to challenge growth now. Growth encroaches on biodiversity, exhausts finite resources, hastens the tipping point of climate change, and spews toxins into the air, land and seas. Increases in extraction and energy production are required for increasing industrial production.

The thousands of struggles against mining, nuclear power, logging, and water contamination are inherently (even if unconsciously) anti-growth. GST sees itself as part of an effort to pull together these scattered efforts around a common theme of “less of what we don’t need.” GST does not believe that we can put off campaigns against economic growth until some unspecified time in the future.

Second, GST believes that ecological sanity requires social equality. Poverty forces people to clutch at whatever resources they can get in order to survive. Inequality means holding up the pathological acquisition of objects as a virtue.

Thus, building an ecologically minded society requires guaranteeing essentials at the same time as the overall quantity of production and time spent working decrease. This in-

cludes universal health care; quality, affordable education; employment opportunities that guarantee a living wage; and a social security system that provides for the disabled and the elderly. Equality goes beyond equal access to goods and services – it includes equality in political power and equal participation in deciding what society produces and how. It also includes equal opportunity to work, so that some aren't working more than they want while others face the destitution of unemployment.

Third, it has become increasingly clear regarding the US, and spread throughout the rest of the world with globalization, that the major driving force behind both environmental and societal problems is a corporate/capitalist system characterized by vast waste of resources, excessive production of low intrinsic value goods, a pathological focus on materialism, and neglect of negative externalities, all redounding to the benefit of a narrow segment of wealth holders. While interpretations of causal channels may differ, GST finds compelling the conclusion that a broad, structural solution is called for.

Fourth, individual actions are insufficient for attaining social goals. Personal lifestyle changes are important in generating the public mindset and political will required for change in a democracy, but these efforts by (cont. p. 20) themselves cannot accomplish the transformation that will be needed for human survival. For example, individual actions will not halt the horrific spending on the military and global arms trade. Decreasing production should start with the manufacture of weapons, whose reduction is vital for improving the quality of human life and preserving nature.

Fifth, the most critical changes must be made during the stage of production rather than consumption. It makes no sense to expect that greenhouse gases will decrease as a result of some people driving fewer miles if more automobiles will be produced next year than this year. Since corporations throughout the world have shown themselves incapable of making positive, long-term changes, it is the responsibility of the rest of us to design an economy that allows the Earth to survive while satisfying human needs.

GST is dedicated to putting these ideas on the table for discussion. If you would like to participate in preparing for a deep green society, please get in touch with us via our web site (greens.org/s-r/) or postal address (WD Press, P.O. Box 300275, St. Louis MO 63130 USA).

Synthesis/Regeneration is indexed in the *Alternative Press Index*, which is available from the Alternative Press Center, P.O. Box 33109, Baltimore MD 21218. S/R is also noted in *Enviroline*, *Environment Abstracts (EA)*, *Public Affairs Information Services (PAIS)*, *PAIS International in Print*, *Sociological Abstracts (SA)* and *National Information Service Corporation (NISC) Left Index*. Microfilm available from UMI Research Collection–The Alternative Press Collection (800-521-0600). Selected articles are available on CDROM and microfiche from Congressional Information Services, Inc.