

In the last 10 to 20 years, ecology and its analysis have formed the basis of a number of political movements. Within the last few years, several of these movements have grown to such an extent that the American left-liberal "Mother Jones" magazine felt duty-bound to give them a name: "The New Ecologists".

Ecology, a frequently misused word, is not synonymous with the environment or its problems. Rather, it refers to a specific branch of science concerned with the interrelations of plant and animal systems to their environment.

New interest in ecology has been spurred by growing splits within the environmental movement — between the radicals who want to use direct action to change government policy and the moderates who favour gradual reform through lobbying efforts.



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The New Ecology, as a political movement, has its roots in the late '60s and early '70s says James Tully, a professor of Political Science at McGill University in Montreal. Tully, who devotes much of his course on "Radical Political Thought" to environmentalism, sees aspects of the New Ecology having evolved out of dissatisfaction with Marxism and its centralism.

"We have to go back to the early '70s to find the roots of this sort of thing. A funny thing happened in the '70s — there was a great dissatisfaction with the traditional Marxism as the alternative in Western Europe," says Tully.

"People began to search for an alternative to Marxism and they traditionally turned to anarchism because of its theories of decentralization."

But the McGill professor says some North American New Ecologists claim it isn't necessary to use solely European traditions. Kirkpatrick Sale, author of *Dwelling in the Land: The Bioregional Vision* and a key spokesperson for bioregionalism, "distinguishes himself from someone like (environmentalism and anarchist author) Murray Bookchin because he says you don't have to turn to the anarchist tradition for examples of decentralization — you can find it in the American radical traditions like the New England town councils," says Tully. (Bioregions are "a way of thinking about the sensible size for a political unit," says Tully.)

When the decentralist movements of the late '60s and '70s intersected with the environmental movement, a new type of politics was born — a politics rejecting the ruthless exploitation of the environment and human beings ironically created by capitalism and Marxism. It was the dawn of what some have called 'Green Politics,' says Tully.

The '70s saw the evolution of two different strains of the environmental movement. While the short-term goals were often the same, tactics and long-term strategy differed in the extreme. Groups like the Sierra Club put their energy into lobbying and gradual reform, while other groups and individuals were working on more radical analysis, based on ecological principles, in an attempt to completely transform society.

"In West Germany, you have ecologist Rudolf Bahro, whose book *From Red to Green* is very important as it shows how Bahro went from marxism to Green politics. In the same vein in France is Andre Gortz, who wrote *Farewell to the Working Class*," says Tully.

Green philosophy demands an end to anthropocentrism — the belief that human beings have the right to exploit the earth for their own gain. This is replaced with

KEEPING THE PLANET

GREEN

BY J. PETER NIXON

Tully makes the distinction between 'deep' ecology and 'thin' ecology: "The Sierra Club is a classic case of 'thin' ecology because it is an attempt to bring ecological principles to bear on our late capitalist system. 'Deep' ecology calls into question our whole industrialization — our direction since the 17th century. I think 'deep' ecology as a movement, calls

into question something both marxism and capitalism share, which is that industrial progress as a whole can mend its ecological excesses," says Tully.

what Sale calls ecocentrism, the view that human beings are merely one more creature in the complex interactions that make up our world.

A number of new movements have taken their cue from the resurgence of ecological politics. The most successful, at least in terms of achieving political power, is Die Grunen in West Germany, commonly known as the Green Party. Die Grunen in last week's election won 41 seats in the German parliament, capturing 8.3 per cent of the vote. That is up from 5.6 per cent of the vote and 27 seats in the preceding Ger-

