

GEO

Grassroots Economic Organizing Newsletter



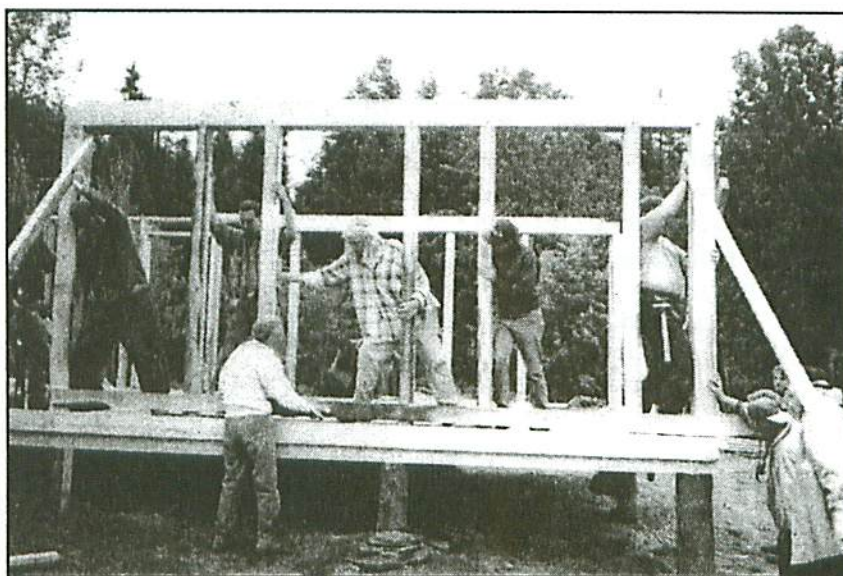
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Education: A Missing, but Emerging Link?

If we are to build a road that lasts and fans out in all directions, if we are to build in ways that others can join and then continue for seven or more generations, if we are really in for the long haul—education cannot be neglected: *How can we learn to create, maintain, and spread a powerful culture of democratic initiative?* This sort of question, we think, has been largely ignored by grassroots economic activists—it cries out for urgent consideration.

In this issue, the first of two in which *GEO* starts to fill our own education gap, we encounter straight off a wide variety of contrasting *types* of education. Can this part of our road be fashioned within mainstream universities? **Deb Goldberg Gray** has a positive answer, based on her ongoing and breakthrough “**Education for Ownership**” course at UC Berkeley. Quite a different response emerges from **The Institute for Social Ecology** in Vermont, which for 25+ years has steadfastly maintained a rebellious distance from anything and everything mainstream. Some programs we highlight are for those already

participating in union-based ESOPs, others for those considering a worker-owned start-up, still others for community organizers wanting to develop technical assistance skills to support democratic initiatives. (See



“Hands on” education at the Institute for Social Ecology, Plainfield, VT. See article on page 10.

Inside this Issue

Education for Cooperative Ownership	
by Deb Goldberg Gray	Page 2
Book Reviews: Educational Tools for	
Workers and Organizers	Page 6
Education for Grassroots Economic	
Activists and Cooperatives	Page 9
The Institute for Social Ecology	Page 10
Resources List	Page 12
Calendar	Page 15
News and Notes	Page 15

here **Frank Lindenfeld’s** *Review* of educational materials for worker ownership, and our abbreviated **Directory of Educational Programs**).

And our sequel issue, #37, will feature yet more sorts of educational innovation. Many concentrate, in divergent ways, on “*education for democratic citizenship*”: by creating democratic learning environments, they help kindle enthusiasm, impart skills, and build confidence for active and full-hearted citizenship. In #37, we’ll also ask where our own growing movement can best focus its educational energies.

NOTE: *It’s not yet too late to tell us about any educational programs—in a school or university, run by a union or a community group, etc.—that you think we should list in our expanded **Directory of Educational Democracy Programs**. Get the information to us by May 1, so we can include it in issue #37.* □

The Institute for Social Ecology: Education to Build a Democratic Culture and a Sustainable Planet

by Beth Raps

The problems confronting us are so monumental that they require a thorough examination of the social dynamics that have produced these crises. Clearly, we must develop a critical approach which allows us to rethink the crucial relationship between ecology and society. We must explore creative alternatives to this growing destruction and renew the damaged ecosystems of our planet. We need to articulate a coherent social perspective that makes possible a new, ecologically sound society, a perspective which understands the global nature of the ecological crisis, and yet empowers us to act locally in oppositional, reconstructive and transformative ways to repair the damage and reverse the engines of destruction...Social ecology suggests that the solutions to the ecological crisis will require a new approach to social life, one which is based in humanly scaled, decentralized, democratic communities.

—1999 Catalog, *Institute for Social Ecology*, p. 2.

ISE: Education That Nourishes a Culture of Democratic Grassroots Activism

This issue of *GEO* and this article in particular build on issues raised, in *GEO* #34, by Frank Lindenfeld's and Len Krimerman's thinking about the need for education, "i.e., the process by which new, and particularly younger, people are brought into this movement" for democratically-run, community-based and ecologically sustainable enterprises, joined together regionally, transregionally and globally by what *GEO* has often called "inter-cooperation" and in what Lindenfeld called a "cooperative commonwealth."

At a crucial point in his interview, Krimerman cited George Benello's perception that one reason for the success and strength of the Mondragon cooperative movement is that its people "learn, work, shop, and live within a cooperative environment." In this cultural environment just as in consumerism-obsessed market capitalism, "each part of a person's life reinforces the others." In this issue, we explore how to create such a supportive environment, what Krimerman calls a "culture of mutuality and democratic control." For this article, I talked with Dan Chodorkoff, ISE's co-founder, director, and one of its faculty, about ISE's contribution to such a culture.

The Institute for Social Ecology, according to Chodorkoff, is part school, part demonstration project, and part nerve center and clearinghouse for social and ecological revolution. At ISE, revolution is both critical and creative, deconstructive and reconstructive. In this and in several other ways, *GEO* readers will find themselves on common ground with ISE. ISE is steeped in the social anarchist philosophy of Murray Bookchin, which, like the cooperative thinking of many cited in the pages of *GEO*, focuses on a comprehensive social philosophy "which understands the global nature of the ecological crisis, and yet empowers us to act locally in oppositional, reconstructive and transformative ways to repair the damage and reverse the engines of destruction" (ISE 1999 Catalog, page 2).

Importantly, the kinds of solutions ISE promotes are those come to by many *GEO* reader-activists, armchair and otherwise: "humanly scaled, decentralized, democratic communities." In addition to providing formal and informal classes and degree programs, demonstration projects in ecological building, permaculture, and community planning, and promoting the movement and philosophy of social ecology, ISE has on many occasions provided "technical assistance and program planning assistance in the development of alternative cooperative structures such as community supported agriculture projects, community currency projects, food coops, low income housing cooperatives, and community gardens" (*Social Ecology News*, Autumn 1998, p. 2). These are of course the kinds of projects many *GEO* readers give their hearts and souls to.



"At the Institute"

Education that "Walks the Talk"

Chodorkoff emphasized that ISE "both teaches about these ideas and practices them in its organizational structure. We understand that education occurs not only in the classroom, but also through interaction in ways that reflect these democratic and cooperative beliefs. We try to ensure that there's a unity between the form of the education, the content of the education, the intent of the education, and the larger institutional context in which the education occurs."

ISE may be the only educational institution described in this issue which is actually run coopera-

tively. Although its bylaws and structure as a non-profit require it to have a board of directors, the directors are "completely accountable to a democratic assembly made up of faculty, staff, students and alumni." This assembly meets during ISE's summer programs, when its community is gathered at its fullest (see below for more on summer programs). Here, "face-to-face participatory democratic forums" bring together the representatives from each of the four constituencies of the assembly and all who participate have a voice.

Another way ISE contributes to building the movement is through its sponsorship of activism in libertarian municipalism. This is a movement developing in the US and at least the 16 other countries whose members participated in a recent International/Interpolis Conference on Libertarian Municipalism held in Lisbon, Portugal in August 1998. A major theme of libertarian municipalist thinking is how to "reverse the ongoing depoliticization of social life and create a vital political sphere in which citizens actively manage their own community affairs in face-to-face democratic assemblies" not unlike the one which manages the affairs of ISE itself. (*Social Ecology News*, Autumn 1998, p. 1) Clearly, in the movement for economic democracy and community development "of an authentic type" as Chodorkoff puts it, there is a need to look at the political big picture. Like *GEO*, ISE looks at it from the angle of vital local communities interconnected in sane, healthy ways that respect both people's need for local democratic control and for connection across the globe.

ISE—A Resource for *GEO* Readers

There are a number of opportunities ISE offers readers of *GEO*. The more "armchair" options range from subscribing to the newsletter *Social Ecology News* or the journal *Democracy and Nature: The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, to purchasing books on both the theoretical and practical sides of social ecology written by those who teach at ISE.

Secondly, ISE continues to provide technical assistance on request. Some areas of expertise are alternative technologies, community gardens, organic agriculture, developing cooperatives, and fundraising/capital-raising. Chodorkoff noted that ISE had helped members of a low-income housing cooperative raise trout in their building basement and had helped design a community center, for two additional examples of innovative projects.

For those who want a more hands-on experience, and live in driving distance of Plainfield, Vermont, regular events throughout the year include workshops on libertarian municipalism and social ecology, wilderness workskills and forest restoration, the changing face of communities, household homeopathy, organizing against biotechnology, and making poems—along with political actions to close down the U.S. School of the Americas which trains members of Latin American death squads, and to support the call for a new trial of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

For those who want an immersion experience,



Problem solving at ISE: can this old vehicle be usefully recycled?

the Institute offers two summer programs: Planning, Design and Construction for Sustainable Communities, a studio and practicum which runs from May 29-June 18 of this year, and Ecology and Community, a four-week-long program of seminars, practica, workshops and lectures which runs from June 24-July 23. The Institute recently moved onto its own land which is a laboratory for many of its teachings. There are ample opportunities for hands-on work in a variety of forms of sustainable design and building, organic agriculture, and solar technology, among others.

Finally, for those who would like to get really good at this stuff, the Institute offers both a *Bachelor of Arts* and a *Masters of Arts* in conjunction with Goddard College in Plainfield. The MA program kicks off with the *Ecology and Community* four-week session.

For more information on any or all of the above, contact: Institute for Social Ecology, Box 89, Plainfield, VT 05667 USA; (802) 454-8493; ise@igc.org. □

RESOURCES

Books and Articles

Starred books and articles are available at a discount directly from GEO Books. 1-800-240-9721. RR1, Box 124A, Stillwater, PA 17878.

Frank T. Adams and Gary B. Hansen, 1992, *Putting Democracy to Work: A Practical Guide for Starting and Managing Worker-Owned Businesses* (San Francisco: Berrett Koehler Publishers).

Joseph R. Blasi & Douglas L. Kruse, 1991. *The New Owners: The Mass Emergence of Employee Ownership in Public Companies and What it Means to American Business* (New York: Harper Collins).

*Elizabeth Bowman and Bob Stone, 1996. "Worker Ownership on the Mondragon Model" Available from GEO.

Richard Douthwaite, 1996, *Short Circuit: Sustaining Local Economies for Security in an Unstable World* (Green Books, England. Available in the U.S. from Chelsea Green Publishing, 1-800-732-7685).

John Earle, 1987. *The Italian Cooperative Movement: A Portrait of the Lega Nazionale delle Co-operative e Mutue* (Winchester, MA: Unwin Hyman).

David Ellerman, 1990. *The Democratic Worker-Owned Firm: A New Model for the East and West* (Winchester, MA: Unwin Hyman).

Thomas H. Greco, Jr., 1994. *New Money for Healthy Communities* Available from the author: P.O.Box 42663, Tucson, AZ 85733.

Christopher Gunn, 1984. *Workers Self Management in the U.S.* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U. Press).

Gary B. Hansen, E. Kim Coontz & Audrey Malan, 1997. *Steps to Starting A Worker Co-op* (Davis, CA: Center for Cooperatives) 44pp

Peter J. Honigsberg, Bernard Kamoroff & Jim Beatty, 1991. *We Own It* (Laytonville, CA: Bell Springs Publishing)

*Len Krimerman & Frank Lindenfeld (eds) 1992 *When Workers Decide: Workplace Democracy Takes Root in North America* (Philadelphia: New Society). Available from GEO.

*Len Krimerman, Frank Lindenfeld, Carol Korty & Julian Benello (eds) 1991. *From the Ground Up: Essays of C. George Benello* (Boston, South End Press) Available from GEO.

*Frank Lindenfeld & Pamela Wynn, 1997. "Success and Failure of Worker Co-ops: The Role of Internal and External Factors," *Humanity & Society*, 21, 2. Available from GEO.

*Frank Lindenfeld, 1997. "The Cooperative Commonwealth: An Alternative to Corporate Capitalism and State Socialism," *Humanity & Society*, 21, 1. Available from GEO.

John Logue et al, 1998. *Participatory Employee Ownership: How it Works. Best Practices in Employee Ownership*. Available from Worker Ownership Institute, USWA, 5 Gateway Center, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. (412) 562-2254.

Greg MacLeod, *From Mondragon to America: Experiments in Community Economic Development* (Sydney, Nova Scotia: University College of Cape Breton Press) 186 pp US

Jerry Mander & Edward Goldsmith (eds), 1996. *The Case Against the Global Economy* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books).

Roy Morrison, 1991. *We Build the Road as We Travel. Mondragon: A Cooperative Solution* (Philadelphia: New Society Press)

Stewart Perry, 1987. *Communities on the Way* (Albany: State University of New York Press)

Corey Rosen & Karen M. Young (eds), 1991, *Understanding Employee Ownership* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press)

Joyce Rothschild and J. Allen Whitt, 1986. *The Cooperative Workplace: Potential and Dilemmas of Organizational Democracy and Participation* (New York: Cambridge University Press)

Janet Saglio & J. Richard Hackman, 1982. "The Design of Governance Systems for Small Worker Cooperatives" Available from ICA Group, 20 Park Plaza, ste 1127, Boston, MA 02116

Michael Shuman, 1998. *Going Local: Self Reliant Communities in a Global Age* (New York: The Free Press) Available from the author at www.progressivepubs.org.

Dan Swinney, 1998. *Building Bridges to the High Road* Available from the author at www.mclr.com or MCLR, 3411 W. Diversey, ste 10, Chicago, IL 60647.

Jaroslav Vanek, 1971. *The Participatory Economy: An Evolutionary Hypothesis and a Strategy for Development* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

William F. Whyte and Kathleen K. Whyte, 1988. *Making Mondragon: The Growth and Dynamics of the Worker Cooperative Complex* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press).

Periodicals

Co-op America Quarterly 1612 K St, NW #600 Washington, DC 20006 (202) 872-5307

Making Waves, Centre for Community Enterprise 2905 31st St, ste 5 Vernon, BC V1T 5H6, Canada fax 250-542-7229

Atlantic Cooperator P.O.Box 1386 Antigonish, NS B2G 2L7 Canada

Shelterforce, PO Box 3000 Denville, NJ 0783d54-9385

Video Resources

"*The ABC's of Cooperative Child Care*" (English & Spanish) Explores cooperative models of child care and presents North American examples. Features interviews with professionals as well as parent-members of co-ops. 20 minutes 1997. Available from UC Davis Co-op Center.

"*Sharing the Vision: Cooperatives as a Model for Rural Economic Development*" Using examples from rural producer, housing, and consumer cooperatives, shows how and why co-ops are formed, how they respond to and affect the local economy, & keys to success. 28 minutes 1996. Available from UC Davis Co-op Center.

"*Taking Control: Tenant Operation and Ownership of Rental Housing*," Highlights five models of tenant control and ownership leading to long-term affordability and strong communities. A helpful tool for co-op or mutual housing conversions. 32 minutes 1998. Available from UC Davis Co-op Center.

UC Davis Center for Cooperatives, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616. Phone: 530-752-2408 FAX: 530-752-5451



Sustainable America Technical Assistance Bank

Sustainable America (SA) is in its second year of operating the SA Technical Assistance Bank (TA Bank). The TA Bank supports SA's 84 organizational members (that are geographically and racially diverse representing many social change traditions) in their local work and in building the movement for sustainable economic development by encouraging shared learning among members. What is a TA Bank? It truly is a bank filled with FREE services and products accessible to SA's organizational members.

The TA Bank is one tool that SA uses to work towards achieving:

- its vision of making America a place where diverse and strong local and regional economies reign, industry engages in sustainable resource use, and good jobs with family supporting wages are available to all; and
- its goal of creating "new economies" in the United States by implementing sustainable economic development models in metropolitan and rural regions of the country.

The TA Bank is based on a deposit/withdrawal system that is maintained by SA. SA welcomes all members and non-members with skills and resources to share, to deposit their services in the bank. All deposits are available to SA organizational members for free.

At present, we have 29 deposits of services and products that members are willing to share with each other in such specialized areas as:

- Business Development
- Living Wage Campaigns
- Land Use and Transportation Planning and
- Organizational Development and Promotion

For more information contact Marian Lee at the SA national office, Phone: 212-269-9500 sustamer@sanetwork.org.

China Excursion

Interested in going to China to observe shareholding cooperatives and other worker-owned and self-managed enterprises? Want to visit factory workplaces, farms, health care facilities, research institutes, trade unions? Want to see the contradictory effects of market socialism in its formative phase and talk with people who are dealing with the negative outcomes? Meet with Marxist and non-Marxist scholars? All this and more can be arranged through my contacts at the *Institute of World Economy and Politics* and "World Economy and China" journal. Arrangements for both groups and individuals. E-mail me at bigalsar@bu.edu with your inquiries and travel wishes.

Al L. Sargis



GEO BACK ISSUE LIST

- #1: Democratic Economic Initiatives in the NE
- #2: Workplace Democracy in the Pacific NW, I
- #3: Workplace Democracy in the Pacific NW, II
- #4: Linking Globally: Econ. Democracy Worldwide
- #5: Labor, Env. and Social Justice Coalitions, I
- #6: Labor, Env. and Social Justice Coalitions, II
- #7: Ohio Networks—Flexible Manufacturing, I
- #8: Ohio Networks—Flexible Manufacturing, II
- #9: Chicago's Grassroots Economic Coalitions
- #10: Building a Global Cooperative Community
- #11: Coalitioning and Collaboration
- #12: Seikatsu Japanese Consumer Cooperative Club
- #13: Building On and Towards Seikatsu in N. Amer.
- #14: Grassroots Coalitioning: An Unfolding Process
- #15: Learning from Cooperative Canada, I
- #16: Learning from Cooperative Canada, II
- #17: Labor's Activism Renewed, I
- #18: Labor's Activism Renewed, II
- #19: Homegrown Sources of Capital
- #20: Mondragon: Model or Myth?
- #21: Making the 21st Century Ours
- #22: Workers & Communities, I
- #23: Workers & Communities, II
- #24: Forum: Where Do We Go from Here?, I

- #25: Forum: Where Do We Go from Here?, II
- #26: Intercooperation: The Next Step?
- #27: Looking Both Backward and Forward
- #28: Urban Agriculture
- #29: Seeds of Sustainable and Large-Scale Grassroots Development
- #30: News from Around the Co-op World, I
- #31: News from Around the Co-op World, II
- #32: 'Round the Cooperative World, III
- #33: Worker Ownership (Joint Issue with *Dollars and Sense*)
- #34: Envisioning the Future
- #35: Wanted: A Comprehensive Vision and Agenda for Grassroots Activism

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"Success & Failure of Worker Co-ops"— \$3 \$ _____
"Worker Ownership in the Mondragon Model"—\$5 \$ _____
From the Ground Up—\$15 \$ _____
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BUILD ALTERNATIVES



News and Notes

GEO Tour Anyone?

It is still possible to enjoy a GEO tour to visit Ohio Employee Ownership Center in Kent, and ACEnet in Athens, Ohio and also the Worker Ownership Institute in Pittsburgh. Three nights, four days at \$80 per day, excluding travel to Kent, Ohio where we will stay in Kent State University housing. Interested? Need more information? Contact Berta Nelson, email, bknelson@portone.com. Let me know by May 1, 1999. If at least 12 people contact me we will go.

April 9-11—Socialist Scholars Conference, *The Role of Freedom in Popular Movements*, Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York, NYC. Contact: Socialist Scholars Conference, c/o PhD Program in Sociology, CUNY Graduate Center, 33 West 42nd Street, NY, NY 10036-8099; 212-642-2826; socialist.conf@usa.net; www.soc.qc.edu/ssc.

Abolition 2000

Abolition 2000, a network of over 1,270 organizations worldwide intends "To Achieve by the year 2000 a signed agreement committing the world to the permanent elimination of nuclear weapons according to a fixed timetable." It is set on securing 1 million citizen signatures and on gaining broad-based support by municipal governments through resolutions. It also has a goal of making disarmament an issue in the 2000 U.S. presidential campaign. [www.napf.org/abolition2000; 1187 Coast Village Rd. Suite 121 Santa Barbara, CA 93108; Tel. (805)965-3443].

April 15-17—National Community Land Trust Conference, *Supporting CLT Capacity, Promoting CLT Growth, Building the Foundation for Permanently Affordable Housing*, Sheraton Midway, St. Paul, MN. Contact: Julie Orvis, Institute for Community Economics, 57 School Street, Springfield, MA 01105-1331; 413-746-8660; JOrvisICE@aol.com.

New Civ Org

A recent conference in the San Francisco Bay Area, "Strategies for Global Economies and Local Currencies" featured numerous possibilities for strengthening community. The information about local currencies at this conference was picked up by the organizer of the New Civ Org, an internet site which draws culturally creative people around the world. As a result, thousands more people around the world have a basic knowledge of what, why, where, and how of local currencies. [www.worldtrans.org/newcivnet.html]

April 29-May 3—Alliance for Democracy Convention 99, *Ending the Corporate Century; Launching the People's Millennium*, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder. Contact: The Alliance for Democracy, PO Box 683, Lincoln, MA 01773; 781-259-9395; peoplesall@aol.com; www.ea1.com/alliance.

May 5-8—Association for Enterprise Opportunity, *Ninth Annual Conference and Membership Meeting*, Chicago, Illinois, *Microenterprise, Small Investment, Big Return*. Contact AEO at PO Box 88-502, Chicago, IL 60680; 312-357-0177, ext. 32; www.wwa.com/~aao.

Worker-owned Temp Agency Opens

Enterprise Staffing Services (ESS) recently opened in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington, DC, near Howard University. The temp agency, sponsored by the local community development corporation MANNA, is part of the Temporary Services Initiative of the Boston-based ICA Group. ICA helped open a temporary services partnership in Boston, and is working on another in Brooklyn, NY. The purpose of the initiative is to restructure poor quality jobs for low income workers by improving employment conditions and offering a supportive work environment.

May 29-June 18—Institute for Social Ecology, Planning, Design and Construction for Sustainable Communities, a studio and practicum. See article page 11.

June 17-20—Planner's Network Conference, *Working for a Decent Living*, Univ. of Massachusetts, Lowell. Contact: Marie Kennedy, Center for Community Planning, College of Public and Community Service, Univ. of Massachusetts, 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125-3393; mariekennedy@umb.edu; 617-287-7262 or 617-983-3202 (home).

June 24-July 23—Institute For Social Ecology, Ecology and Community, a four-week-long program of seminars, practica, workshops and lectures. See article page 11. □

Contact: ICA Group, 20 Park Plaza, #1127, Boston, MA 02116. Phone 617-338-0010. E-mail icaica@aol.com. Webpage: members.aol.com/icaica/ICAPAGE.htm □

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- Bob Stone & Betsy Bowman "Bringing Mondragon to Mexico"
- Bob Howard on Education for Democratic Citizenship
- New Hampshire College faculty discuss education for co-ops
- WAGES curriculum for starting worker co-ops in low income communities