

Clarification

George Bradford (David Watson)

1988

Friends:

In the FE report of the July '88 Toronto @ Un-convention [FE #329, Summer, 1988], the description of a workshop that I gave, "Empire and Ecological Destruction," contained a misleading inaccuracy. Since I was not in town when the FE was produced, I wasn't able to clear it up then but would like to do so now.

The article says, "Following the session, Bradford expressed a feeling that what once was a tiny corner of anti-authoritarian theory—anti-industrialism, anti-technology, pro-primitivist—had emerged to a wider appreciation in recent years." This is true in my estimation, and indicates that the megamachine itself, rather than theory in the FE, is generating such perspectives. However, the article goes on to say, "Only a little was heard from those who fail to realize that technology is inherently a system of domination and continue to claim it is neutral..." This is definitely not the case, and not what I said to the author in our conversation (she had not attended the workshop). If the misunderstanding was my fault, my apologies. But there were many differences of opinion on these interrelated questions in my workshop and the technology workshop. While I do think that some people came away with a better appreciation of the critiques that have appeared in the FE on technology and civilization (a California person I have regularly seen at these gatherings articulated this process of understanding well), I never meant to imply that everyone was now in agreement. I was satisfied for the time, even elated, that so many people were talking about these questions at a deeper level—and with far less of the acrimony, actually, that previously characterized such discussions.

In general, the article may have inadvertently given the impression that FE folks (or Detroiters) came to the conference as a bloc, with "our" point of view to peddle. I don't think that was its intention, but we must be careful in this regard. The FE is a loose group of long-time friends who agree on much in general, but we participate in such things as the unconvention not as a cohesive group but as individuals, each with a particular voice and vision to offer. One should never assume that any FE writer's voice either in the paper or at a gathering speaks for us all.

—George Bradford

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