

detractors, the accusations continue to surface in the media as if they were irrefutably proven.

Few scholarly works have encountered the hostile scrutiny that has confronted *The Bell Curve*. Each sentence of every chapter as well as hundreds of endnotes, bibliographic entries, and even acknowledgments have been scoured for "tainted sources." The bulk of this criticism comes from egalitarian ideologues who refuse to accept any evidence showing that innate differences in mental ability contribute to human inequality.

As Michael Levin, professor of philosophy at City College of New York, points out, "You cannot loathe a man's advice because his motives are despicable, and despise his motives because his advice is loathsome." Indeed, if critics of *The Bell Curve* expect to be taken seriously, they will abandon the sophistry and ad hominem assaults that are incapable of refuting the book's principal arguments.

Kevin Lamb is an assistant librarian for Newsweek.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Dissing the Eco-Paranoids by Jim Christie

"There's a world of misery in every mouthful of meat," fumes the headline in an advertisement back in the September/October 1993 issue of *E*, "The Environmental Magazine." The ad continues: "The grain which fattens animals for our dinner tables is off time 'appropriated' from the peoples of Third World countries; it enriches dictators while vast populations starve." Meat production also "destroys the environment, squanders dwindling water reserves, pollutes our rivers and lakes with toxic animal wastes, and is causing the destruction of rain forests." Now, aren't you glad the Coalition for Non-Violent Food enlightened you?

If you want to keep up on environ-

mental issues and can do without hectoring advertisements, skip *E* and consider *Garbage* magazine, which no longer accepts advertising. In the spring 1994 issue, editor Patricia Poore says her magazine was never pressured by advertisers to toe a green line, but she acknowledges that "the changing definition of the 'green' marketplace and the pursuit of complete independence, [meaning] the freedom for editorial coverage to evolve without the pressure of serving a predetermined market," may be incompatible with eco-advertising. For instance, it is probably safe to assume that anyone who jumps at the sight of an *E* ad (in the January/February 1995 issue) built around the line, "Stop Sleeping on Beds Emitting Toxic Gases!" is of the "predetermined market" that wants its unquestioning green worldview stroked.

For *Garbage*, the issue of eco-advertising would most likely have resolved itself, as the magazine stands alone in the eco-press for its skepticism of many issues advanced by the environmental movement. A letter in its spring 1994 issue is a good example of how the environmental apparat regards this type of editorial policy. Melanie Duchin of the Greenpeace Ozone Campaign sarcastically writes, "Coming soon in *Garbage*: Dioxin: A Little Dab'll Do Ya, Defense of Clearcuts, and Nuclear Power: No Fatal Accidents Since Chernobyl."

*Garbage* sins in other ways as well. For example, it steers away from both right- or left-wing denunciations of science and has no time for eco-mysticism. An opinion piece in its spring 1994 issue begins, "One of the paradoxes of modern society is that technology allows many people to live in unprecedented comfort despite ignorance of the physical, chemical, and biological processes that support their lifestyles. Modern citizens thus have limited perspectives regarding the impacts of technology on human health, and *may be too easily swayed by arguments founded on romantic misconceptions of pre-industrial conditions.*" (My emphasis.)

And what of the blind faith the environmental movement has in government regulation? In the same issue, writer Stephen Stuebner takes on the hallowed Environmental Protection Agency for its imperial swaggering in a small town. Entitled "Triumph, Idaho, to EPA: Don't Tread On Me," Steubner's article was summarized: "Local

residents were distraught when the EPA designated their town a potential Superfund toxic waste site. But after studying the data they've concluded the area is safe—and it's Superfund that needs cleaning up."

Nor does *Garbage* buy into causes that most enviros would embrace. It once featured on its cover a shapely model in a swimsuit, which prompted one appreciative reader to write, "Personally, I never have understood how hairy legs and Birkenstocks help save the planet." Predictably, another reader reprimanded *Garbage*: "It is no longer acceptable in contemporary society to gratuitously expose a person's body. To do so is to objectify and hence demean the value and worth of the person as a whole."

Of course, sending eco-advertising to the dumpster, not following the herd of the environmental press, and offending the mullahs of green-think, has its price. *Garbage* now comes out quarterly, and its cover price is \$9.95. Infrequent circulation and skyrocketing cover prices are usually kisses of death for periodicals.

But the continued success of magazines like *Garbage* is important if people drawn to environmentalism are to receive information free of both green mysticism and Luddite delusions. Poore implies what sort of environmentalists would love to see the magazine go under. "Despite the ravings of our more paranoid readers," she writes, "*Garbage* is not secretly financed by any industrial consortium."

For paranoiac ravings, look at *E*. Mixed in with its advertisements for water-efficient laundry machines, recycled paper goods, "socially responsible" mutual funds, and environmentally correct products—my favorites include the made-in-the-U.S.A. Deodorant stone, which was not tested on animals; "The Greening of Faith" video, which provides "nuggets of wisdom that should nourish Christians and pagans alike"; and the Gentle Floss made of 100 percent vegan wax—are ads playing on the fearful imaginations of all too many in the environmental movement. Consider, for example, an ad for magnetic and electric field meters. One retailer says, "Once you know where radiation is coming from, you can control your exposure by practicing 'prudent avoidance.'"

Prudent avoidance? Most radiation occurs naturally. You probably get more radiation from a day at the beach than

from a lifetime spent under high-tension wires. But reason is beside the point; eco-capitalists know that paranoids and their money are soon parted.

Indeed, given the hypochondriac leanings of environmentalists, one may expect that soon every block may have at least one New Age parent running up and down the street measuring radiation from telephone and light posts. Just imagine the consequences, which is not hard to do given that an article in *E'* conjures up a green utopia—a constant campaign against (who else?) corporate polluters—in a way that closely resembles the preachy advertising in the magazine.

Back in an October 1993 article entitled “Tales From Toxic America”—subtitled “Grassroots Environmentalists Visit Washington, D.C. to shout: ‘Al Gore, Read Your Book!’”—writer Will Nixon describes glowingly a Citizen’s Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes convention: “CCHW members have won many fights, from lobbying McDonald’s into dropping its polystyrene clamshell box, to persuading the state of California to stop using toxic weed killer along its highways.” But “no matter what the issue, the basic message remains the same: the way to stop the poison is not through scientific studies or legal proceedings, but through political defiance. And the goal is to go from NIMBY to NOPE: Not-In-My-Backyard to Not-On-Planet-Earth.”

But how do Greens get from here to there? “Lois Gibbs takes a moment in her speech to push beyond the N words. ‘How many of you work with your local PTA, health care center, tenants groups and women’s groups?’ she asks. Not many raise their hands,” Nixon reports. “They must build bridges to other causes, she tells them, and join together to make their own alternative economy, based on waste cleanups, new technologies, sustainable agriculture and good jobs. . . . But for this weekend at least, anything seems possible. ‘Can anybody in this room say the word “power”?’ Gibbs asks. The room roars back. The P word is bouncing off the walls.”

More recently, in the January/February 1995 issue of *E'*, an “In Brief” feature (edited by Nixon) heralds the “Earthship” home, a structure built with used tires and dirt. The caption to the accompanying photograph reads: “The Earthship may look like a military bunker, but it treads lightly on the

Earth.” Hypochondria thus just isn’t a public obligation, but a private, personal shepherd to greener pastures, where man’s footprints won’t be noticed, where—to use that delusional mantra—“We can be one with nature.” Understatement: advertising and editorial content in the eco-press act to create a kinetic kook energy. For instance, anti-meat activist Jeremy Rifkin is spotted in the September/October 1993 issue of *E'* preaching in support of the pure foods campaign. “Food will be the battleground of a new green politics in the 1990’s,” he says. “On the one hand lies a future of genetic engineering, high-tech foods and synthetic, industrial food production. On the other, a future of sustainable, ecological agriculture that preserves our soil, our family and our planet’s biodiversity.”

Rifkin’s blather could have been lifted from or superimposed over the Coalition for Non-Violent Food ad. Thankfully, you will not find that sort of paid sermon in *Garbage*. As Poore says in the January/February 1995 issue, “The unrelenting flood of humorless words [from the environmentally-concerned and correct] tells me instead that environmentalism has become a religion of shalt nots.”

*Jim Christie is a Seattle-based writer.*

## EDUCATION

### Socialization as Schooling by B.K. Eakman

For 30 years, elementary and secondary education has been taking on a new orientation, away from substantive subject matter toward a mental health agenda. Personality development—i.e., the “whole child” concept of education—has become the primary focus of schooling. Collection of psychological data on minors, and its storage in nonsecure, cross-referenceable facilities, without the prior notification

much less the consent of parent or guardians, has launched a new era in the debate over privacy rights, while undermining traditional parental prerogatives in directing the education and moral development of their children. An ever-increasing nationalization of policy and management structure has further weakened involvement in education through such outlets as community associations and school boards.

In short, public education today is directing the bulk of its energies toward such pursuits as “self-esteem,” “intervention,” condom distribution, and social services rather than developing proficiency, literacy, or the tools for financial independence. Eventually, even the most dedicated parents tire of the battle and decline to participate further in the education process.

On an unprecedented scale, education policymakers at the national and state levels are infusing subject-oriented curricula with materials referred to in the vernacular as “strands.” These are intended to mold the opinions of young people. If unsuccessful, corrective strategies (some of them bordering on the subliminal) are brought in to “remediate” viewpoints considered “inappropriate,” or otherwise undesirable, by a vastly overrated behavioral science community.

Testing companies, which are staffed primarily with behavioral scientists rather than educators, are bringing into the classroom massive quantities of tests and surveys, under the fraudulent labels “achievement,” “aptitude,” and “assessment testing,” which are explicitly designed to elicit and predict the viewpoints and proclivities of youngsters and their parents. Selected “strands,” or minicourses, are then supposed to “modify” students’ opinions and behaviors. The scope of this activity in public education is particularly troubling, as it threatens on a nationwide scale student individuality and the constitutionally protected right to conscience.

When combined with the current level of sophistication in record-keeping, this deceptive testing-programming-remediating scheme portends a dossier-building capability which, in the hands of political opportunists, is leading us all unknowingly to the breakdown of the democratic process. Even many who initially applauded these innovations are beginning to wonder what would happen if the political winds shifted and a