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A 1984 survey of Canadian writing on disarmament and arms control* shows a marked increase in public concern, an increase which has been accompanied by a shift of focus. Where scholars and activists once stressed technological concerns—patterns, statistics and the hardware of war—they have turned to examining the psychological, medical and environmental impact of the politics and technologies of war.

Here are three books that reflect the same 'soft' trends, concerned with preserving sanity, the environment and the species. They encourage public participation and offer information about organizations and resources.

Facing the Danger is unified by the interviewees' search for the roots of activism. The Tottens focus on activist stars, although some names will not be familiar to some readers. An interesting alternative to the star system is found in Pat Farrell's book What Will It Take to Prevent Nuclear War? Grassroots Responses to Our Most Challenging Question (Cambridge, Mass., Schenkman, 1983). Farrell reminds us that 'among the contributors are very few famous names' because his goal was to discover anti-nuclear consciousness from below. His book is intended as a resource and a starting point for classroom and community discussion.

There is little surprise in the revelation that Dr. Ernest Sternglass started with a 'concern for babies' or that George Maci's witnessing of 'over thirty-five atomic and hydrogen bomb blasts' stimulated his interest in anti-nuclear action. (One wonders why it took so many blasts to activate his consciousness.) Like their subjects, the Tottens work hard for a nuclear-free future. Yet their selection of activists makes me wonder who is to create, and who to enjoy, the future they seek. Of the 20 activists interviewed, eight are women. Given the consistent leadership of women in the field, the balance might have tipped in the other direction. The choice of interviewees does not adequately reflect an international peace movement: the activists all reside in the US, are mostly middle-aged, male, white and religious, with Christian religions predominating.

For all its good intentions, Facing the Danger misses the reality of who faces the danger. As well, it misses the vitality of the contemporary peace movement. It is directed too much to the old guard among the converted. It lacks the energy, depth or breadth to inspire the newly conscious or the unaltered.

More successful is Green Politics, a lively discussion of Germany's Green Party that attempts to link Green consciousness on both sides of the Atlantic. Sprenkl and Capra provide an intelligent and intelligible portrait of Green politics and persons. They admire the Greens but are willing to acknowledge conflicts within the party. They don't try to whitewash the reality of the party.

The authors aim to demonstrate the possibility of translating Green politics to a North American setting. They point to various non-German influences. The Greens were influenced by the 1974 Club of Rome document Limits to Growth, by US economists E.F. Schumacher's Small Is Beautiful, by Ernest Callenbach's futuristic novel Ecostopia and the works of Ivan Illich.

Teachers and religious leaders make up a sizable portion of Green leadership, in contrast to the preponderance of lawyers in the US political parties. The authors stress the wide range of professions represented in the Green Party, but there is little indication of a comparable range of class interests. We are introduced to young-to-middle-aged, white, mostly Christian political activists who are often more concerned about 'spiritual impoverishment' than about solving specific economic or social problems.

The romantic attachment to native American spiritual/ecological traditions is not linked to an effort to incorporate the political concerns or leadership of contemporary native Americans into the Green program. The authors do include native groups in their roster of 'green' organizations, but there is no indication that those groups consider themselves 'green' or that the long history of political and economic antagonism is specifically addressed by green policies in or out of Germany.

One of the Greens' strengths is their media wisdom, something North American activists could learn from. They have not only mounted effective grassroots campaigns but major national advertising campaigns in television and other media. Although the authors are quick to point out the abusive oversimplification that has plagued US media coverage of Green activities, they note that the Greens have captured media attention wherever they have traveled.

SILENCED
by Mikeda Silvera
(Toronto, Williams-Wallace, 1983)

Silvera presents a collective portrait of black domestic
as legal slaves, as victims of manipulation and
degradation, as lonely and
isolated, as desperately
missing their home and
children. She stresses the
powerlessness and passivity
of these women to the point
that it paralyzes the reader
as a result of the experiences
they describe. Ultimately, there is
no sense of dynamic exchange between
researcher and subject.

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