

July 27, 1983

Beloved Friends,
Love.

For years, my focus of study has been political science (B.A., Univ. of Penna., 1963, M.A., Yale University, 1969, Ph.D. Yale University, 1971, assistant professor, Reed College, 1968-1971, adjunct associate professor, Portland State University 1978-1979). During this time, my main focus has been decentralization of political authority as a means of furthering democracy. My practical experience includes a year of research in Mexico on a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship (1966-67), 6 years as director of the Office of Neighborhood Associations in Portland, Oregon (1973-1979), and three years of involvement with the national board which became Neighborhoods, USA. Even in the U.S. H.U.D. research⁽¹⁹⁷⁸⁾, the main emphasis was to learn how citizens groups could organize themselves to participate in the American social and political system. Finally in 1978 and 1979, I began to travel more widely - Japan, Nepal, India.

Through a friend, I learned about the Shree Rajneesh Ashram in Poona, India. The gardens there were beautiful and the people seemed happy and productive. My initial visit took place in 1978 and I returned in 1979 to take Sannyas ultimately. Since September, 1981, I have been a resident at the Rajneesh Neo-Sannyas International Commune. In 1983, three residents, including myself, spoke for the Commune at the 62nd Oregon State Legislature

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For six months, we were able to study the legislature and its processes in a way few Americans have the resources or time to observe. With this background in mind, I would like to offer some observations on the functioning of the Rajneesh commune under the guiding inspiration of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. I speak as a participant and observer.

The human potential movements in the U.S. and abroad have been introducing concepts into American management to help work situations be more democratic and free-flowing. The prime motivation is to make possible the kind of situation where fresh ideas can lead to greater productivity in the workplace. As a manager for the City of Portland, my experience with this training for democratic management was a fruitful one. Giving time to listen more carefully to one's associates certainly increased the effectiveness of our work: to sensitively communicate between City Council and neighborhood and citizens groups. Perhaps the only rival to this form of new management in the world is the Japanese corporation. Here the organization goes to great lengths to ensure consensus and cooperation by consulting everyone. The Japanese corporate structure has been as successful as the American one; even though its structure is different in being more hierarchical, both systems are equally productive. However, both are based on authority; though the intention may be democracy, the potential for domination is always present.

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in Central Oregon, a wholly fresh approach is being evolved. Here is a group of people who ^{are} inspired and united by the love of one enlightened Master, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. They are gathering to live together in His light and to consciously act in a consensual way.

Traditional concepts of authority and management are not useful in describing this scintillating experiment. To speak of management is irrelevant, to speak of hierarchy is ludicrous. To speak of "decentralization" seems silly for there is no hierarchy to decentralize.

What is true is a cluster of people founded in love not authority or power. Love, rather than ambition, is the fundamental at the Rajneesh commune. Hence all that follows is strikingly disassociated from past experiences and present day organization elsewhere.

For example, one finds that management does not occur. Instead coordination of activities takes place in a loving and supportive environment which puts the individual's welfare first. If the individuals are happy, the work flows along; productivity is higher than conventional systems even though and because it is not the highest priority. Health, happiness, enjoyment of work, celebration are precede "organization", and yet the work is creative, outstanding, and prosperous.

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Conscious efforts are made to lovingly reveal or expose the effects of early conditioning and participation in a previous society based on authority. Hence in this experiment, there is no rant-pulling or competitiveness among the workers/worshippers. Any situation which impedes or begins to interfere with the flow among the people is readily apparent. After all, we have brought old behavior patterns with us, but we have the guidance of Bhagwan's teachings to inspire us to drop the old crusty habits. New and more tender behavior is the result. Cooperation and consensus are the visible characteristics of this behavior change on the social level; contentment and creativity are the visible characteristics on the individual level.

Without Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, this experiment could never have come into being. Under his spiritual guidance and through the channel of his personal secretary Ma Anand Shula, a beautiful new experience is evolving. People come from all over the world to visit, to live and/or work at Rancho Rajneesh to have a taste of this experience. Many return to set up similar experiments in their homeland. No one knows how influential or far reaching this experiment will be. Suffice to say that it is the most brilliant and thorough going this world has ever known, more substantial than Plato's school, and on a larger scale than Buddha's Sangham.

As an American, and speaking as one who has been blessed with one of the best educations this country has to offer, I can only express my hope that American democracy is open-minded enough to accommodate this experiment. Of course, the experiment welcomes all races, as American ideals profess, though lamentably often fails to achieve.

Of course, the experiment is based on a new religion, but so was all of the American experience.

And finally the experiment welcomes people regardless of their economic or educational background, or sexual preference.

The freedom and opportunity to realize one's human potential provided by the commune are a phenomenal opportunity.

This letter is written to express some of the flavor of the experiment, to show its relevancy to the human growth movement, and to set it in the context of American ideals. We trust to the American sense of fair play, and rely on both the American justice system as well as the Immigration and Naturalization Service to rise to this occasion with an open mind and a generous spirit.

Blessings.

With love

Ma Mary Catherine (PETERSON)

Ph.D. 1971

Sarasas 1979.