

## STANLEY DIAMOND: IN MEMORIAM

Stanley Diamond, poet and anthropologist, and founder and editor of *Dialectical Anthropology*, died on March 31, 1991 in New York.

He was born January 4, 1922 in New York City. His first commitment was to poetry. His moral, political and intellectual conscience was forged in response to the rise of fascism in the 1930s. He attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and later New York University, from which he graduated with a degree in English and Philosophy.

When the Second World War broke out, Diamond joined the British Army Field Service and served in North Africa. He became involved in anthropology through his interest in Franz Boas' antiracist writings; he received his doctorate from Columbia University in 1951. His dissertation on the emergence of the West African kingdom of Dahomey was pathbreaking in its focus on kin resistance to state formation, and on state formation as an historically inconclusive process that pits kin communities against civil authorities and priorities in all areas of cultural life. He would return to this theme again and again in the course of his later writing. Indeed, his concept of dialectical anthropology, for which this journal is named, connotes the persistence of the deeper emancipatory practices characteristic of primitive societies, that persist or are reinvented in the interstices of civilization.

Diamond's first teaching position was at the University of California at Los Angeles. As a consequence of speaking out against McCarthyism on a divided campus, he found himself unemployed for the next three years.

Following his fieldwork in an Israeli kibbutz and in a nearby Arab mountain village in the early 1950s, Diamond held a faculty position at Brandeis University, which he resigned after Paul Radin, an anthropologist he deeply respected, was forced to retire. In the early 1960s he joined the first research team studying the culture of schizophrenia at the National Institutes of Mental Health. Following this, he became a professor in the Maxwell Graduate School at Syracuse University. In 1966, at the invitation of the Graduate Faculty, he founded the program and later the department of anthropology at the New School for Social Research. A riveting public speaker, Diamond through his vibrant scholarship and humanity as a teacher forged the reputation of the department as the center for critical anthropology in North America. He served as Chair of the department for many years. In the 1980s he was appointed Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and the Humanities, and most recently was made Poet in the University. He served in these capacities until his death.

Diamond was one of the first anthropologists to insist that researchers both acknowledge and confront power relations, often colonial and neocolonial, that form the context of their work. His sympathetic portrayal of the Arab mountain villagers, and analysis of psychodynamics on the Israeli kibbutz - as stemming from an incomplete critique of *stetl* life - was as much against the grain of contemporary research then as it is today. His concern for countering racism found its way into a number of trenchant popular and scholarly writings and, always, in his teaching. He conducted fieldwork among

the Anaguta, a marginalized people of the Nigerian Jos Plateau, in the last years of British colonial rule and wrote a series of critical articles on the Nigerian state. Later he lived among the Seneca in upstate New York, and was especially honored, given his respect for Native American beliefs, to be inducted into the Bear Clan. At Seneca request, he worked to halt construction of a dam which, when it was eventually built, flooded most of the reservation. During the Biafran War (1967-1970), he was invited twice to Biafra and became an eloquent advocate of Biafran independence. In the 1980s he planned to study the Inuit people of Ultima Thule — self-marginalizing foragers confronting the American military use of Greenland — but his plans were thwarted by the State Department.

Diamond's scholarly work encompassed scores of articles on the culture of U.S. schools, the cultural context and dimensions of schizophrenia, ethnocide and ethnogenesis, state formation and nationalism, cultural criticism, ethnopoetics, and the possibilities for transforming capitalist society. Perhaps his most influential collection of essays is *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization*, having an impact far beyond the discipline of anthropology. He also edited a range of internationally respected volumes in anthropology, including *Toward a Marxist Anthropology*.

Diamond was at the forefront of the resurgence of ethnopoetics, beginning in the 1970s. He was fascinated by the connections between primitive ritual and poetry. He organized the first national forum for poets as anthropologists and anthropologists as poets. His acclaimed volumes of poetry include *Totems*, a collection of lyric poems, and *Going West*, an extended narrative on the civilized

devastation of Native American life and the American landscape.

Diamond was extraordinary among anthropologists of his generation in fusing a theoretical intelligence and a compassion for humanity in a brilliant language that, in the words of Robert Blackburn, an artist and his long-time friend, "flies off the pages of his poetry, articles, and books." For us, who worked with him and loved him, Stanley's political fearlessness and skill in confronting bureaucratic mystifications were inspirational. But we remember as well his intense concern for the whole lives of his students, friends, and family. Stanley was always deeply caring in crises, both personal and political, and he eschewed the compartmentalization of intellectual life that marks and plagues civilization.

In keeping with his commitment to the development of oppositional culture within capitalist society and, indeed, all state societies, he founded *Dialectical Anthropology* in 1976. He saw the journal as providing a forum and a common language for comparative and historical analyses of culture, as well as critical perspectives on contemporary national and global issues. It was to be consciously subversive, intellectual rather than academic, interdisciplinary, risk-taking, and open to those attempting to contribute to a radical, humane transformation of society.

It is in this spirit that we will continue this journal. We ask our readers to be patient as together we try to do what this extraordinary engaged intellectual accomplished almost singlehandedly.

The Editorial Committee of *Dialectical Anthropology*