

# New Options

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## When "The People" Is No Longer Enough

Every year at about this time we like to step back from the economic and political fray and ask ourselves some questions. This year, with all the "major" presidential candidates unwilling to even address our problems for fear of dropping out of sight in the polls, it seemed a good time to ask: How do we cope with the fact that the majority of "The People" is not with us (and may, in fact, be deeply opposed to the values and visions we represent)?

### Making it enduringable

Most radical activists start out believing that if you just get the right information to The People, or make the right arguments, or present the arguments persuasively enough—then The People will be on your side. But within a few years most activists discover that it's not so; that despite Thomas Jefferson's prose and Carl Sandburg's poetry, The People is a rather leaky reservoir of wisdom.

Nobody talks about this, of course. In public, we continue to act as if the next nugget of information, the next good argument, the next well-funded project, will "turn things around." But although we never speak about our disappointment and our rage, and in fact make herculean efforts to hide it from each other (and ourselves), it does affect our political behavior.

What usually happens is that we moderate our demands, self-censor our visions. Calls for minimum and maximum levels of income become calls for full employment. Calls for democratizing and strengthening the U.N. become calls for arms control agreements. Calls for shrinking the big corporations become calls for putting labor and consumer representatives on corporate boards.

But suppose we are *not* willing to modify our visions. Suppose we're convinced that the planet and its many resident beings are deeply in need of a decentralist, ecological, globally responsible, etc., political system. How then do we deal with the fact that The People is not with us? How can we explain it to ourselves in

ways that are not just personally enduringable but politically useful?

To find out, we recently spoke with eight writers and activists who've managed to maintain their visions over the years.

### Corporate culture

For Richard Rhodes, author of *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (1987)—the only National Book Award-winning book ever to call for the "replace[ment] of the nation-state"—the problem with The People is that too many of them are in thrall to the big corporations.

"Corporations seem to me something like nation-states," Rhodes told NEW OPTIONS from his home in Kansas City. "Their budgets are certainly comparable, and they seem to have some of the same ambitions, politically speaking. But what they don't have is any one of the 10 articles of the Bill of Rights. They don't have freedom of speech, or of assembly. . . . You go through the list and it's extraordinary—it's exactly what corporations *don't* do, however much they might pay lip service to those [rights]."

"I think that has to be a terrible baleful influence on Americans who, during the day—whatever their Constitution says—live under conditions that in some political sense are not different from the conditions in the Soviet Union. And, you know, you hear about polls where the Bill of Rights is re-phrased in modern English and the citizens are asked, Do you agree with this?, and they invariably say, No-no-no. I have a feeling that a lot of people get that from slogging all day for corporations.

"Millions of Americans are working in the Gulag, as it were, and then we ask them to come home and somehow, suddenly, think? And believe in freedoms? No wonder it's hard for them to do."

### Sleep-inducing media

For Barbara Marx Hubbard, board member of the World Future Society and author of *The Evolutionary Journey* (1982), the problem with

The People is that too many of them are in thrall to the mass media.

"The mass media is more sensitive to dissonance, violence and breakdown than to resonance, breakthrough and creativity," Hubbard told us from her office in Washington, D.C. "The media is always telling us what's *not* working, and by no means balances it with good news or [promising] news. As a result, news to celebrate the human race doesn't come through the mass nervous system of the body politic!

"It's as if your own personal nervous system only reported pain and put you to sleep; and didn't alert you to your own joy, your own potential, your own growth."

### Medieval child-rearing

For Lloyd deMause, director of the Institute for Psychohistory and author of such disturbing psycho-histories as *Jimmy Carter and American Fantasy* (1977) and *Reagan's America* (1984), the problem with The People is how they're raised as kids.

"We have child-rearing which is essentially medieval in so much of our society," deMause told NEW OPTIONS from his office in New York. "[Still], small groups in society [make] some advance in child-rearing in each generation. And each new 'psycho-class'—each new group of people that results from the advance—comes of age 20-30 years later and starts to infiltrate into society and do new things. . . .

"[Some day] I suspect we'll get to a point where psycho-class differences are not that important. But at the moment the [dominant psycho-class] can't stand [the advanced psycho-class]."

"[The dominant psycho-class lives by projection. For example,] the guy who takes porno videotapes home is the same guy who says we've got to kill the Communists because they're getting 'out of control.' It's absolute projection—of our pleasures, mainly.

"[Another example.] Everybody's trying to make a lot of money these days and there are

a lot of takeover games on Wall Street. So what do we go off and blame the Nicaraguans for? They're trying to *expand* too much and *take everybody over*, right? It's our own guilt. . . .

"In the long run, if you get a more benign form of child-rearing, people won't have to project quite as much. In the short run, what you have is psycho-class warfare."

### Inappropriate worldviews

For Fritjof Capra, co-author of *Green Politics* (NEW OPTIONS #3), and George Sessions, co-author of *Deep Ecology* (#12), the problem with The People is that they're entrapped by inappropriate worldviews.

"More and more people realize we are in a state of crisis," Capra told us from his office at the Elmwood Institute in Berkeley, Calif. "But what most people don't realize yet is that the crisis is essentially a crisis of perception—or of 'changing paradigms,' as we call it often—and that a new politics will flow only from a changed perception."

"Just informational input isn't going to [change people]," Sessions told us from his office at Sierra College in Rocklin, Calif. "That's been what the environmental organizations and Union of Concerned Scientists and all those [other liberal groups have been trying for years]. You're operating off of worldview understandings people have—and people are going to interpret information based on the worldviews they hold."

Capra's and Sessions's notions of the dominant worldview are quite similar. "This paradigm," says Capra, "consists of the view of the universe as a mechanical system, the view of the human body as a machine, the view of life as a competitive struggle for existence, the belief in unlimited material progress to be achieved through economic and technical growth. . . ." "Deep ecology," says Sessions, "[is] in sharp contrast with the dominant worldview of technocratic-industrial societies which regards humans as isolated and fundamentally separate from the rest of Nature. . . ."

### As simple as fear

For Joanna Macy, author of *Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age* (#6) and a major player in the Interhelp network (#44), the problem with The People is as simple as fear.

"There isn't anybody conscious now," Macy told us from her home in San Francisco, "who doesn't admit that we're in trouble as far as the environment is concerned, as far as weapons [are concerned], and that there are gross injustices, and hunger, and bloodshed all over. It is because this is so hard to face that people create resistance against more information about it."

"The more we need to block out the bad news, the more energetically we turn to diversionary pursuits. And in our culture there are

loads of them. We can really wall ourselves in with lots of comforts and distractions; we create very complicated comforts and ambitions that can totally engross us.

So I think it's fear, and feelings of futility, [that explains] why there are not more folks rallying to act. . . .

"There's nothing I have ever experienced that convinces me that apathy is genuine! It is not that people are *indifferent* and they don't act; it's that they are *afraid to feel*. . . ."

### Our impatience

For Marilyn Ferguson, author of *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (1980), the problem is not with The People so much as with change agents' own understandings and impatience.

"Things are happening both more quickly and more slowly than we imagine," Ferguson told NEW OPTIONS from her home in Los Angeles.

"When we see how slow the change process is, in our country, in our world—then we should just be patient with ourselves and patient with our country. Because I think that looking at the 'nature of nature' we can see [that the change process involves] sudden, unexpected leaps. And I think that the leaps and the patience have something to do with each other.

"The sudden turnabout of events that appeared to happen with the U.S. and USSR was in many ways the fruit of the work—and the *hard* work, and the dreams, and the *patience*—of a tremendous number of people. I mean, all over the world: [from] the 'citizen diplomats' [to] Ted Turner who dropped \$29 million in the Goodwill Games. . . . So this thing that appeared to happen overnight was the result of some people putting in the effort when it seemed foolish to others.

"To the extent that we've learned to get our reward from patient service—[to that extent] will our society change."

### Our egos

For Barbara Marx Hubbard, identified above, another problem is with activists' own egos.

"A big block in our movement is our own [lack of] cooperation with each other," Hubbard told NEW OPTIONS. "We are not modelling the change we'd like to see in the world. There is as much divisiveness among—and between—social activists, peace activists, environmental activists, as there is anywhere else.

"The greatest need we have now in our movement is to understand the process of aligning with each other. I'm [developing] the concept of a 'new alignment' which is deeper than the ordinary word 'cooperation.' It means you look at the intrinsic purpose and work of each person, each group, and discover and *respect* how that fits with the work of other groups, such that we become a whole greater than the sum of our parts.

"One of the reasons we have not broke through [to The People] is that we have not been ready; we are still like adolescents."

### Our arrogance

For Vincent Harding, author of *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (1981) and principal drafter of Martin Luther King's visionary "Beyond Vietnam" speech, the problem is with activists' own unconscious arrogance and self-righteousness.

"When you say most of the people are not with us, that strikes me as not the most helpful formulation," Harding told NEW OPTIONS from his office at the Kliff School of Theology in Denver, Colo. "There is still something a bit elitist about that idea, that if they were with us they would [all be thinking] like us.

"What I am sensing is that very few of us have any real sense about how to move at this point in history. What we are in need of is what might be called 'concurrent re-education,' in which those of us who think we know a great deal, and people who seem to us to be very slow or very misguided, can all together find directions that might surprise us all.

"I'm not sure what those directions are. But I have a strong sense that they have something to do with allowing people to respond in compassion to human need; to giving people an outlet for those *kinds* of feelings.

"Another thing I feel fairly certain about is that the kind of wisdom we need is going to have to come, among other places, from the people of color who have understood their experience. How we draw on that experience is a question that I'm still trying to understand.

"I have a feeling that we're going to have to keep digging on those kinds of levels; and some of the people whom we may think are not with us *may*, once we get down to other kinds of levels, be much closer than we think they are. And we may be much closer to them than they think we are."

## NewOptions

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## Equity Institute: building "us-ness"

Virtually everyone agrees that racial and cultural prejudice is still rampant in our society. But no one on the traditional political spectrum seems to know what to *do*.

Liberals and conservatives continue to put their faith in that magical elixir, economic growth. Radicals appear to have adopted the strategy of incessantly touting the bad news—as if wallowing in it will somehow make the society change its collective mind.

Meanwhile, from a nondescript modern office building in Amherst, Mass., without any set ideology and without any mass-media publicity, the Equity Institute is coming up with practical strategies to not only combat prejudice, but to build "multi-culturalism," appreciation of others, "us-ness." And it's helping implement those strategies all over the U.S.

Six years ago Equity set up shop as the only non-profit in North America teaching people how to "successfully interrupt racism, sexism, anti-Jewish behavior, heterosexism, classism, ageism and ableism." Its staff now includes four full-timers and nearly 40 consultants. Its 400-plus clients have included corporations, social change groups, public school systems, professional associations, and universities.

"I'd been an activist in the 60s and early 70s in New York City, organizing for tenants rights and civil rights," Joan Lester, Equity's executive director, told NEW OPTIONS at the end of one of her long, hard days at the office. "I decided I wanted to get out there [again] and do education work on social issues—identity issues. . . . [Plus] I'm a white woman and I have two black children who are just reaching adulthood and that particularly affected me, that they were going to be adults in [this society]."

### Tasks

If your corporation or organization or school brought in the Equity Institute, the first thing it would do is conduct a "needs assessment," says Jim Bonilla, Equity's talented young Multicultural Organizational Development Specialist. "Based on interviews [with key administrators] and questionnaires and reviews of policies, we'd give them a sense of what the climate's like [in their organization], where they're supportive of multi-culturalism and where they're not."

Based on the assessment, Equity would recommend specific action strategies and programs. "We'll usually do *trainings* for different key groups—[for example, trainings in 'team building']. We'll provide *technical assistance* in key areas—for example, if the organization is

[trying to recruit or retrain minorities], we may provide them with advice. . . ."

Right now Bonilla is doing a lot of work with colleges—including two of the prestigious "Seven Sisters" colleges. "Our finding is that a lot of these incidents that we hear about nationally have been happening on *many* different campuses but more quietly. The pattern is the same: where you can find racist incidents it's not uncommon to find Jewish stars being torn down—gay and lesbian posters being torn down—sexual harrasment. . . ."

"Typically we're brought in by administrators, and we tend to want to work at first with the top administration, including the President and his or her staff—to send a message across campus. [We help them come up with] a *vision* of what it is they're trying to create—you know, what is multi-culturalism, and how does it fit in to the vision of XYZ university. [Then] we set up a change team—we call it a "Multi-Cultural Resource Team" because for some organizations the word "change" is a little too threatening! We try to involve everyone, not just administrators but students, staff—who often tend to be overlooked—and faculty."

Besides its consulting work, Equity offers workshops and resources. Among them:

- *Project Empowerment*, an annual retreat for gay, lesbian and bisexual schoolteachers;
- *Namecalling*, a glossy brochure for educators full of good advice;
- *Training of Trainers*, a annual week-long intensive on how to train on oppression issues.

### Strengths

Equity couldn't possibly have the track record it does without some very special strengths. One is that it tries to practice what it preaches. "From the beginning we were committed to creating a multi-cultural Board [of Directors]," says Bonilla.

Another strength is its pragmatism. "We're not going to walk into the Board of Trustees of a Fortune 500 company and say, you know, 'Revolution now!,'" says Lester. "I mean, what would be the point? They'd laugh us out of the room. And we wouldn't necessarily go in to a group of grassroots activists in our three-piece business suits with our charts and so on. But we have that kind of range now, and that's exciting."

Equity's greatest strength may be that it's non-judgmental. "One of the things we'll say to any organization, and particularly to heads of organizations, is, you know, you shouldn't feel guilty or inadequate," Bonilla told NEW OP-

TIONS. "I'll have white men who are key players in institutions and have power to change them, but who feel so guilty they can't do anything. They feel frozen in their guilt. So it really is counter-productive to foster those feelings.

"What we basically say is look, we live in a racist, heterosexist, homophobic, ableist, anti-Semitic, etc., etc. culture. It doesn't necessarily make us bad people. What we need to do is start taking responsibility for our personal and institutional behavior."

### Stages

Over the years, Lester and Bonilla have discovered that there's no such thing as a multi-cultural organization. "It doesn't exist in our culture," says Bonilla. What they do find is a continuum made up of at least five stages.

"The *exclusionary* stage is at one end," says Bonilla. "Then there's what we call the *white male club* or simply 'the club.' Then there's the *token* organization.

"The [fourth stage] is the *affirmative action* organization which may in fact have an affirmative-action plan, and is trying to bring people in not just at the bottom but throughout. But it's very clear that people of color and minorities are still invited guests, you know?"

"The [fifth stage] is the *self-renewing* organization. That's one that's trying to move from being anti-racist and anti-sexist to being multi-cultural. It really pushes to see what the benefits are to being more multi-cultural and really questions its missions, norms, management styles."

### Vision

Good people can and will disagree with some of the particulars of Equity's approach. For example, its quarterly newsletter is bilingual (Spanish and English). Do we really want to foster a bi- or multi-lingual society, as well as a multi-cultural one? Or, for example, the "Namecalling" brochure includes this passage: "It . . . would be really boring if we were all the same." Do we really want to teach that group differences are spicier and more important than individual differences?

But Equity's vision of a multi-cultural society transcends such tactical questions and is deeply appealing. According to Equity board member Sonia Nieto, we haven't even reached the stage of fairness to others—let alone the stage of "awe [of and] admiration" for others. And the goal of a multi-cultural society is higher still: reaching the stage of affection for and "us-ness" with others.

"There'd be this tremendous cross-fertilization," says Lester. "To me the excitement in human history is that many different peoples have come up with many different answers to life's dilemmas. And [in a multi-cultural society], we will have access to each other." *Equity Institute: 48 No. Pleasant St., Amherst MA 01002.*

# Update . . .

## The bioregions speak

Many activists are now convinced that the "bioregion" — an ecologically- and culturally-defined territorial unit (e.g., the Ozarks, the Hudson Estuary, "Ecotopia")—is the proper focus for their political energies. Some go so far as to support schemes for bioregional governance.

The most visible manifestation of this new development, apart from the biennial North American Bioregional Congress (NEW OPTIONS #35), is the dozens of bioregional newspapers that are sprouting now across the U.S. You might want to treat yourself to one of the three best of them:

- **Kindred Spirits** (P.O. Box 542, Lewisburg PA 17837, 28 pp., \$3/sample), from the "Susquehanna bioregion," features articles by local activists, professors and freelance writers on such topics as (local) energy policy, (local) union organizing and the (local) moonshine industry. There's an ad for "Locally Raised Beef," and a poem that begins, "Amos Heintzelman's not like most farmers around here."

- **Katuah** (P.O. Box 638, Leicester NC 28748, 32 pp., \$2/sample), "Bioregional Journal of the Southern Appalachians," has a focus theme each issue: for example, "Shelter," "Watershed Awareness," "The Mountain Black Bear." Its articles capture the *tone* and *spirit* of bioregionalism better than anything we've seen in print.

- **Siskiyou Journal** (P.O. Box 741, Ashland OR 97520, 32 pp., \$2/sample), from the "Siskiyou bioregion," may be the most politically sophisticated of the bioregional newspapers. It is also fun to read, with some great first-person regular columns, a "Forum" in which various local notables are asked to respond to questions of burning bioregional import (e.g., "Is it desirable to use non-native stock in our fisheries?"), and more ads than are carried in some mainstream monthly newspapers—suggesting a degree of local interest and acceptance that augurs well for the future of the movement.

## The NGOs speak

If you thought our review of the Brundtland Report—product of the U.N.-initiated "World Commission on Environment and Development" — was a bit too critical and uncharitable (#41), then you should see what the **Environmental Liaison Centre** (ELC) has done. The ELC, which helps network non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the world, and is

supported in part by the U.N., has just devoted an *entire issue* of its glossy magazine, *Ecoforum*, to critical reviews of the Report (\$5 from ELC, P.O. Box 72461, Nairobi, Kenya).

The reviewers include people like "a leading environmentalist in Indonesia" and "senior consultant with The Woodenergy Systems Group in The Netherlands." Nearly all their articles find fault with the full employment/economic growth/social democratic logic of the Report. The alternative most of them point to is . . . well, very much like the Greenish/New Age-ish one laid out in Mark Macy's *Solutions for a Troubled Planet*, also reviewed in #41.

The best defense of the Report we've seen to date is not a review, but a concise "Reader's Guide" to the Report put out by the **International Institute for Environment and Development** (1717 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., #302, Washington DC 20036, \$3). The power and urgency of the photographs, and the refreshing bluntness of the text (no U.N.-speak here), combine to make you aware of the great achievement of the Report: that 22 "experts" from the Third World, the Soviet Bloc and the West could have met together for two years and come up with any kind of consensus at all.

## Breaking the hold

If we're ever going to be able to leave the production-consumption treadmill behind as a society, then we've got to be able to break its hold over us as individuals. (Just ask psychologist Paul Wachtel, NEW OPTIONS #44; just ask historian David Shi, #15). Still, we were skeptical when we sent away for Joe Dominguez's audiocassette/workbook course, "Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Achieving Financial Independence."

The promotional literature sounded weird ("There is an alternative to wasting your creative juices decade after decade pursuing money . . ."). And we wondered about Dominguez, a Harlem street kid turned Wall Street stockbroker who figured out a way to achieve permanent "financial independence" for himself, implemented his plan and retired for life at the age of 30. (Through the New Road Map Foundation, which he runs with his "cellular family," he distributes all the profits from the course to various decentralist/globally responsible organizations.)

Over the past few weeks we've gone through the 94-page workbook with a fine-tooth comb and listened to all six tapes, some of them twice. And our skepticism is much diminished. The material may not be for everyone. But it does what it claims to do—show us how to reduce our expenses and become financially independent. And that's no small achievement!

You listen to the tapes and you write in the workbook, and at first it's hard to do either.

Dominguez comes across as, well, a little obnoxious; the workbook seems unprofessional. But eventually you realize there's a message in the style. The whole first half of the "course" is devoted to breaking not just the hold of money on you, but the hold of all those things that cause you to chase and endlessly spend money—such as wanting to be something or somebody you're not.

The second part of the course consists of nine nitty-gritty-practical steps to financial independence. The first will break your heart: Dominguez makes us figure out how much money we've earned in our lifetimes, then makes us create a balance sheet to determine our net worth. Gently he adds, "Give three reasons why making your peace with the past is useful."

Subsequent steps show us how to: record the money flowing into and out of our lives; correlate money spent to "life energy" spent; practice "intelligent use" of money and lower our expenses; build up capital; and establish an investment program (in government guaranteed bonds—no "risky speculation" here).

Would Dominguez's course work for you? We have no idea. We do know that at least three NEW OPTIONS subscribers claim to be on the way to financial independence using Dominguez's methods. And we note that, though the cost of the tapes and workbook is a hefty \$60, there's a full money back guarantee if the materials are returned within 30 days. *Dominguez: New Road Map Fdn, 507 Third Ave., #301, Seattle WA 98104.*

## All in Green

Davorin Jambor, 28-year-old Yugoslavian Ph.D. candidate at the University of Vienna, came by our office the other day. Jambor is co-editor of *Green Spirit: Bulletin for Spiritual Green Politics*, a new publication we'd heard good things about from Petra Kelly and Charlene Spretnak, and he'd been on a cross-country bus tour developing sources and acquiring subscribers.

The first issue isn't much to look at, but the contents are unique and intriguing: excerpts from texts of spiritual-political groups from all over Europe.

"Our purpose is to put spiritual and deep-ecological points of view in Green politics," Jambor told us. "In the future we'll be printing news from [spiritually-oriented] Greens all over the world and excerpts from various books, lectures, position papers. . . . We will try to connect Christian, Buddhist and pagan [Greens], not to make one new Green 'church' but to develop [in our movement such qualities as] good will, openness and affirmation of the life principle." *Green Spirit: c/o Teresa Richling, Troststrasse 45/11/22, A-1100 Vienna, Austria, \$3/sample.*

# Letters . . .

## Midterm report

If you care to know why you make me mad, here's a list from the top of my head:

- Your breathless, tedious, telegraphic prose style. I know that newsletters as a genre tend to imitate *U.S. Snooze and World Distort*, but why do you have to follow the pack?

- Your gently sneering put-downs of many of the movements you cover.

- Your open-jawed adulation for high-tech centralist proposals which pretend to be more than warmed-over liberal industrialism but rarely are.

Sorry to be so nasty, but almost every issue of NEW OPTIONS makes me holler. It's been building up for some time.

Hopefully some of my indignation is from my preconceptions being stepped on. In that hope, here's my renewal.

P.S. Are you using recycled paper yet?

—Prentiss Riddle  
Galveston, Tex.

I found it fascinating that the New Synthesis Think Tank conference (NEW OPTIONS #43) proceeded the way it did. It seemed to me that the people and the ideas simply weren't ready yet, lacking an expansiveness, an inclusiveness, an impersonality, a potency, a ripeness.

Still, there is no doubt in my mind that we are witnessing the emergence of something so vast and exciting that our power to name it and perceive it will take much longer than we thought.

What excites me about NEW OPTIONS is the degree to which you seem to be reflecting the *process* of birth through which the necessary qualities are being synthesized and assimilated by all of us.

As you are standing as a fair witness and saying yes to the best (and *only* to the best) in all of us, I can feel something unfathomly deep being catalyzed in me and the collective "us" and moving inexorably to the surface.

—David Doolittle  
Cambridge, Mass.

## Thanks a lot, bub

Thank you for the fascinating effort you made seeking to compare two different trends in our generation ("Two Conferences, One Generation," NEW OPTIONS #43). However, a few important facts were not correct in your reporting on the New Synthesis Think Tank conference, which I helped organize:

Forty-five percent of the attendees were *not*

your generation—they were over 50. And quite a few did *not* come out of the political left of the 60s—some had been apolitical and others had been on the right.

And a large percentage were *not* representing alternative groups with few resources. Some were from mainstream institutions, such as the World Bank, the U.S. Congressional staff, South Shore Bank of Chicago, Ballantine Books, *Phoenix Magazine* (Arizona), the *Tribune Chronicle* (Ohio)—as well as 11 major universities such as the University of Wisconsin. And even the alternative groups represented have supporters such as Senator Claiborne Pell and *Megatrends* author John Naisbitt, and have made the front pages of periodicals like *The Wall Street Journal* and *Boston Globe Sunday Magazine*.

But a more fundamental question which you neglected to address is, Does power flow primarily from financial resources and mainstream connections? Or is there something still more powerful: ideas whose time has come!

Historically, we know the answer to this. To me, that is what this "new synthesis" is all about.

Although there were a great many diverse ideas suggested during a brainstorming session on what the function of the Think Tank might be, the conference wisely did not attempt to make a collective decision on this. Instead we broke down into small task groups based on what people could actually commit themselves *personally* to do—not what fantasies they might wish *someone else* would do.

What emerged from that exercise were two [standing committees]: one to work on the policy implications of the "new synthesis" values and models, and another to work on editing and publishing the papers prepared for the conference, highlighting innovative models in everything from holistic health to socially responsible economics, and the common values underlying them.

—Corinne McLaughlin  
Shutesbury, Mass.

*Dear Corinne: Please re-read our article. We did not say or imply that everyone at the conference was under 50; we did not say or imply that the conference was dominated by "alternative groups with few resources."*

*Our article was a meditation on, precisely, the "fundamental question" you say we "neglected to address." One of our conclusions was that good ideas and good intentions have less to do with social change than we might wish.*

*In this connection, we cannot help noticing that the two standing committees you set up after the conference are both devoted to . . . thinking and writing about policy. Neither is devoted to organization building, fund raising, program planning, test marketing, or any of the other yucky old-paradigm things your people "might*

*wish someone else would do."*

*Well, we think we've spent enough time in the movement to tell you that, unless you do these things, and do them right away—NOW—your publications will end up exactly where the New World Alliance's "Transformation Platform" and the Planetary Initiative's "Declaration on the World We Choose" ended up: in their founders' basements.*

## Links in the chain

I want to tell you how much I enjoy your NEW OPTIONS. I have been interested in an holistic approach to personal/national/world problems for a long time; in fact, I wrote my first piece on the subject in 1936, in my native pre-Hitler Vienna.

—Frederick Forscher  
Pittsburgh, Penna.

Congratulations on your wonderful issue on political priority #1 being "Rearing a Gentler People" (#42). Since my Vassar days as a Child Study major (1925-29), I have been certain that this is the case.

—Adelaide Furman  
Boulder, Colo.

## Supply is the problem

To read the words of the "panelists" or "interviewees" in "The Stock Market Crash Was a Good Thing" (NEW OPTIONS #43) is truly a saddening experience.

I know a few of these panelists, I have read and listened to others of them, and I have long sympathized with what they believe they are trying to do. The extent to which they are addicted to the most conventional forms of thinking is much greater than they think, and enormously greater than you would have us believe.

- Robert Theobald asserts that the "lesson we learned in the last depression [was] that it wasn't a supply issue but a demand issue." That may be the lesson that *economists* drummed into us—preaching the silly dogma that it is impossible to have too much supply. However, historians have been telling us for decades that depressions are caused by *overinvestment*, *overexploitation* of resources, etc.

- Lester Brown, whose other contributions are monumental, has his Washington-based needle stuck in the local groove, e.g., "decrease the budget deficit. . . ." The underlying premise of the "cut the deficit" gang is that government spending is bad because it takes money away from industrial expansion.

A real stock market crash is a very rough indicator of overcapacity (surplus assets really aren't worth much). But since economic theory does not allow for overcapacity, small wonder

that few economic commentators admit to "crisis."

—Prof. Frederick C. Thayer  
University of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, Penna.

## Hubris is the problem

All the interviewees in #43 know almost nothing about *patterns* in economic history; about the tendency of events like the recent stock market crash to repeat.

I can understand their urge to want to do something about the way things are. And I also think there were people just like them, in earlier times, who had the same urge to fix things.

It seems to me that your interviewees might think about some means of cooperatively improving their *own* lot through various forms of economic instruments, seeing how well they work, then using them as models for the larger society. Why don't they—or why don't we, the readers of NEW OPTIONS—buy some houses or apartments in common, charter flights & buses, start a holistic HMO?

Now that seems like a real project, as opposed to the more abstract course of writing papers, discussing legislation, and buttonholing other "important" people.

It is difficult for me to take seriously anyone who proposes what's "good for me," or good for others, unless they've tried it themselves. This proposing of abstract solutions for others is also an historical pattern, and needs to be broken if there is ever to be anything more than simple technological progress.

—Richard Gardner  
Dorchester, Mass.

## What is the problem?

The stock market crash was definitely a big media event. It's fascinating to the media and a lot of people like to read about it. But what difference did it really make? So many people *don't* have a stake in the stock market.

I think a lot about what I call "the forking of America" — rich people are getting richer and a lot of people are not. And it could be that, while the stock market crash was very painful to speculators and people in the market, it was much less significant to the rest of us. There are so many people now who are insulated from fluctuations, there's all these things like Social Security and pensions now.

Also, my bias is toward thinking that the stock market is less connected to the real economy today than it used to be.

So the real "good news" about the crash may be that the market can go down 5-600 points and not much will happen as a result.

Incidentally, the only money I have in the stock market is in the Calvert Social Investment

Fund—which went up rather slowly during the stock market rise, but went down by only six percent (as compared to 17% for the Dow).

—Robert Rodale  
Chairperson, Rodale Press  
Emmaus, Penna.

## AIDS is the problem

While I was quite taken with your optimism about Black Monday ("The Stock Market Crash Was a Good Thing," #43), I was appalled that you followed the lead of *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News*, etc. and ignored altogether the great National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights (October 11, Awesome Sunday).

Where was NEW OPTIONS's realization that gay genocide is being practiced by Administration policies? Millions are slated for worse than werewolf fates, death at its most horrid, because of the far right's aggressive misuse of AIDS as an issue on which they are fast winning too many battles.

Blacks and Hispanics are at great risk. In New York City, AIDS is the number one killer of young women (25-29 years old). World War II will be a tea party by comparison when we take into account the heterosexual spread of this plague.

The Left has always been prudish. Intellect and Body separateness finds too many intellectuals knowing about sex but seldom practicing its pleasures. I'd always thought that the 60s revolts—more hippie than SDS—had come in great part to destroy this dualism. To some people, like the present Secretary of U.S. Education, abstinence seems perfectly reasonable as *the* alternative to AIDS. Would NEW OPTIONS or its readers see this as a reasonable response?

As a representative of Cure AIDS Now-Brevard County, I recently spoke with the president of the Florida State Senate. He told me there'd be no money of substance allocated to Florida so long as AIDS is perceived as a minority problem (translate: gays, druggies, Black, Hispanic).

AIDS is a Nazi's dream, and the Left is hardly doing its job at pointing this out, but then neither is your Decentralist/New Age/Green coalition.

—Jack Nichols  
Author, *Men's Liberation* (1975)  
Cocoa Beach, Fla.

## She believes in magic

I love what the Magic Committee did in assigning representatives to speak for all creatures of our Earth ("Bioregional Congress Lays Firm Foundation," #35). Please give those people my love and gratitude.

—Susan Topf  
Milltown, N.J.

Continued from page 8:

Third World and socialist-bloc futurists.

In a free-verse poem—a real show-stopper—Hazel Henderson contrasts the pompous, victory-oriented "Hero's Journey" to the vital, service-oriented "Lover's Journey." Victor Ferkiss (NEW OPTIONS #8), Willis Harman (above), and Donald Michael (#33) also write with a nice blend of head and heart.

## New heroic model?

Berkowitz's *Local Heroes* showcases "local role-models," "ordinary people of extraordinary accomplishment" whose efforts are "restoring community life." Twenty were interviewed for the book—founders of obscure local groups you've never heard of, groups that get food to the hungry, bring kids into nursing homes, produce plays, run "neighborhood justice systems," etc., as well as founders of groups that started local and went national: Citizens' Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Guardian Angels, 9to5. . . . We don't, as a rule, care for the interview format (we consider it a lazy form of journalism, and unavoidably *wordy*), but Berkowitz has a knack for encouraging people to be their own feisty, cantankerous, wise, creative (and also insecure and self-questioning) selves, and as a result we get a goodly amount of insight into what makes successful activists tick.

But just as futures studies is subtly different from sociology, so Berkowitz's community-builders are subtly different from some traditional community organizers. A professional psychologist as well as an unabashed idealist (author of *Community Dreams*, #10), Berkowitz spends some time trying to put his finger on the differences—ultimately trying to suggest a "new heroic model for our times."

The real local heroes, Berkowitz contends, are those who see their task as "strengthen[ing] community values—cooperation, trust, self-reliance, belonging." In virtually every case, "The primary goal is service [which] will empower others. . . . The resources at the start are minimal. . . . The hero is stirred by a perceived community need. . . . Risk is undertaken—personal, financial, social or otherwise." Plus there's an intangible "something going on inside the person to make things happen. . . . The essence of [effective] social action is character rather than skill."

"We didn't see ourselves as trying to start a movement, lead a movement," says David York, co-founder of Toughlove (which now has over 1,000 chapters across the U.S.). "We just saw ourselves building something in our community that would help us." It is Hazel Henderson's Lover's Journey, not the traditional Hero's Journey, that Berkowitz's "heroes" are engaged in.

## Harman: best & worst of the New Age

Dear Willis Harman,

Thanks so much for sending me the page proofs of your new book, *Global Mind Change*, which is coming out this January (Knowledge Systems Inc., 7777 W. Morris St., Indianapolis IN 46231, \$18.50). Before giving you my comments, I'd like to tell you how much you've meant to me over the years.

In the mid-70s, when I was struggling to finish my own book, *New Age Politics*, in a house trailer off the Vancouver coast, and losing all my political friends because they found the "New Age" perspective so outrageous, someone handed me a copy of your *Incomplete Guide to the Future* (1976). It was a real boost to me that someone with your credentials—think tank associate, Stanford professor, member of the board of regents of the University of California—would make some of the same arguments, dream some of the same dreams. It made me feel less alone.

Then after my book was published and I got amnesty, you did something for me that I'll never forget. I was attending my first colloquium, and was scheduled to be a "critical respondent" to someone's paper, but sitting there among all those high-powered people in my "uniform of purity" in those days, torn shirt and ratty pants, I'd begun to feel intimidated. I certainly didn't feel I had a right to criticize anyone. Somehow you sensed what was going on. You came up to me, introduced yourself and gave me a little pep talk. I've been criticizing you freely ever since.

### New improved version

In many ways, *Global Mind Change* is a new improved version of your earlier book.

The politics are as visionary as ever. You wouldn't try to create jobs for everyone; instead, you'd scrap the "core belief" that we need to be production-focused, and replace it with a belief that we need to be focused on learning and human growth. Similarly, you wouldn't try to create global security primarily by reducing the number of nuclear weapons; instead, you'd scrap the core belief that war is a legitimate way to resolve conflicts among nations, and replace it with a belief in the "feasibility of peace."

What makes this book different from your earlier one is that, before, you were never totally clear *why* the changes you envisioned would come about. Often it seemed you were saying they'd come about because they *had* to. In *Global Mind Change* you say we'll see such changes because our "prevailing metaphysical

assumptions" are changing.

That was, of course, a minor theme of *Incomplete Guide*, but it was tucked away toward the back and between the lines—in part no doubt because of its lack of academic respectability. In *Global Mind Change* you've dared to make it the central theme. The first two-thirds of the book is devoted to arguing that the basic assumptions of modern society are shifting—away from "M-1" ("the basic stuff of the universe is matter-energy") and toward "M-3" ("mind or consciousness is primary, and matter-energy arises in some sense out of mind"). Some of the most fascinating pages in your book are about how our "M-1" assumptions cannot satisfactorily account for what we now know about health and healing, instinct and evolution, creativity and "exceptional abilities."

If political activists don't quite see the point of all this, you are much less shy than you were 12 years ago in pointing it out to them. "The world macroproblem will be satisfactorily resolved," you write, "only through fundamental[ly changing our mind-sets away from the] industrial society paradigm with its M-1 metaphysical base." Moreover, "Throughout history the really fundamental changes in societies have come about not from dictates of governments and the results of battles but through vast numbers of people changing their minds."

### Second thoughts

But Willis, even though I believe your new book is better structured and more explicit than the one that got me through *New Age Politics*, I am less enthusiastic about it. Maybe it's just me; maybe I've changed.

*Global Mind Change* doesn't establish that a society based on M-3 assumptions would *necessarily* be more just, more peaceful, etc., than a society based on M-1. We would, of course, have a wonderful society if everybody's M-3-based reasoning were as enlightened as yours. But why should M-3 *necessarily* lead to enlightened reasoning? Any selfish person or clever tyrant could use M-3 to justify oppression (as Rajneesh has—see James Gordon's fine study, *The Golden Guru*, 1987). At the same time, many atheists and agnostics—steeped in M-1—have fought for the political vision you espouse. Must we accuse them of "false consciousness"?

Behind your assumption that a society based on M-3 would be more benign may be a "core belief" that spiritual people—people who are comfortable with the M-3 mindset—are more decent or more caring than those who are un-

comfortable with that mindset. I have a confession to make: when I wrote *New Age Politics*, I suspected and hoped that that was so. But my experience has been that it's not so; that spiritual people are no kinder, or more perceptive, or more tolerant, etc., than the rest of us.

I do still believe that, in order to want to create a decentralist/globally responsible society, a person has to comprehend the preciousness or holiness or oneness of life. But you don't need M-3 for that. Some people acquire or maintain that deep comprehension by meditating—a quintessential M-3 activity. Others acquire or maintain it by holding their children's tiny hands, or listening to the Brahms or Beethoven violin concertos. No M-3 required there.

Another thing about your book is that you fail to prove your central thesis—that we are "somewhere in the middle of a shift in prevailing metaphysical assumptions." Most of the evidence you offer is anecdotal. Many of your arguments go to show not that we *are* changing, but that we *could* or *should* change.

I am not trying to score debaters' points on you; I am deeply concerned that your apparent "core belief" that we *are* changing has prodded you into an ineffective political strategy. Here it is: "The key challenge [over the next decade or two] is not to try to resist a change that may well be inevitable, nor is it to be zealous in fomenting a change prematurely. It is, rather, trying to help our society understand the nature and necessity of the forces of historical change we are experiencing."

But suppose historian David Shi is correct, and there has *always* been a minority of 5-10% of the American people that's been drawn to spiritual, ecological, globally responsible, etc., ideas, and that that minority is no more effective (or ineffective) now than it's ever been (NEW OPTIONS #15). Shouldn't our task then be, precisely, to help "foment" the necessary changes? To help *create* the "forces of historical change" and not just act as if they're already in place?

### Pep talk II

Those core beliefs of yours (spiritual-is-best and it's-already-happening) are of course not yours alone; they're the beliefs of the whole New Age movement. One of the great gifts of your book is that it takes the New Age analysis about as far as it can go. Its strengths are apparent and its limitations are also apparent.

If I get to give you a pep talk now, 12 years after you gave me mine, it would be this: You don't have to pin your hopes for political transformation on everyone adopting a metaphysic that appeals to some personality-types but not others. And you don't have to buy 100% into the notion that the transformation *is* happening. All over the country, metaphysically diverse political groups are trying very hard to make it happen. They could use your strengths and support.

## Gitlin: best & worst of the New Left

Dear Todd Gitlin,

I had an extraordinary experience last week. I started reading your book, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Bantam, \$20), and the next thing I knew it was the middle of the night and I was around page 400. And I realized my cheeks were moist with tears. And when I looked around, everything seemed to glow, as if the passion and intensity and intellectual/sexual/emotional radiance of The Movement of the 60s, which you captured so well (along with its seamier side), had leapt out of your pages and inserted itself into this time and place.

I have to confess that I was not prepared to like your book. Your anthology of movement poetry, *Campfires of the Resistance* (1971), full of poems celebrating Mao and Ho and ridiculing ordinary Americans, spoke to the worst in me; it took books like Willis Harman's *Incomplete Guide to the Future* to get me out of that mindset. And I'd had my fill of books about The Movement this year. Three had something to recommend them: George Katsiaficas's *The Imagination of the New Left*, James Miller's *Democracy Is in the Streets* and Joan and Robert Morrison's *From Camelot to Kent State* (all 1987). But none of them captured the best and the worst.

Your book, *The Sixties*, does. Your focus is neither too broad nor too narrow, concentrating on Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)—largest and most vital of the radical student groups—but also including SNCC, the early women's movement, the liberal ("loyal") opposition to the war, Panthers, Yippies, Weatherman, not to mention movies and music. And though it's accessible, it's a book that only an insider could have written, full of intimate details about people and factions (you were in fact an insider's insider, one of the first presidents of SDS, part of the SDS Old Guard, the kind of person the social democrats and Weathermen both liked to trash, the kind of person the rest of us wanted to be like).

I love the way you switch from first to third person and then back again—as if to say that politics cannot, must not, be altogether separate from *who we are*. I love your honesty, painful at times, as when you remember how and why you were "willing to look the other way" when the Black Panther paper started printing anti-Semitic political cartoons.

### Lessons

Precisely because of your honesty, *The Sixties* is a treasure-trove of lessons for current and future movements. It can be read as a

sustained meditation on your brutally honest observation, "As unpopular as the war had become [by late 1968], the antiwar movement was detested still more—the most hated political group in America, disliked even by most of the people who supported immediate withdrawal from Vietnam."

Over the course of your book, you offer literally dozens of reasons for our movement's ultimate failure. Among them:

- The intellectual and moral poverty of late-60s movement leadership;
- The omnipresence of Vietnamese National Liberation Front flags (and sentiments, and apologists—in one almost unbearable passage you tell us how Staughton Lynd feels he was "snookered" by the North Vietnamese);
- The "self-abnegating style of leadership" that didn't eliminate leadership, only made it less accountable;
- The "middle-class guilt" that drove us all in "search for a congenial Other" (the NLF and ghetto blacks then—what are their equivalents today?);
- The tensions that kept activists from talking to each other across the generational divide.

Toward the end you observe quite rightly that "there are [new] movements waiting to happen, movements that do not necessarily spring from the old social categories or speak the same languages." It is the great selfless gift of your book to demonstrate that the 60s left provides no model, and that even the New Left's early years—the memory of which can make our rooms glow in the dark—is a point of no return.

## Marien, Berkowitz: real heroes

If Willis Harman's *Global Mind Change* has brought us up against the limitations of the New

Age analysis, and Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties* has brought us up against the limitations of the New Left experience, then where can we turn? Who is thinking the thoughts and doing the deeds that can take us beyond those limitations? Who are today's real heroes?

Two recent books offer answers: Michael Marien and Lane Jennings, eds., *What I Have Learned: Thinking About the Future Then and Now* (Greenwood Press, Box 5007, Westport CT 06881, \$30), and Bill Berkowitz, *Local Heroes* (Lexington Books, D.C. Heath, 125 Spring St., Lexington MA 02173, \$18).

### Intellectual heroes

The Marien-Jennings anthology showcases 17 contemporary intellectual heroes—"futurists." Just as sociology was the key radical discipline of the 60s, so futures studies may be the key discipline today. The best futurists seek to be neither defenders of the status quo nor defenders of "utopias," but definers of an array of plausible (i.e. at least vaguely possible) "alternative" futures. These are the kinds of futurists featured here.

Marien is author of the politically astute *Future Survey Annual* (NEW OPTIONS #23), so it's not surprising that he and Jennings should have asked their futurists to build their essays around a political question: "What have you learned since the 1960s about social change and non-change?" A number of the responses are vivid and searching.

Irene Thompson concludes—against the fashionable back-to-traditional-values radicalism of people like Robert Bellah and Christopher Lasch—that we are moving from "fixed" to "fluid" identities, and that that's on the whole a good thing. Jim Dator tells of his 15-year struggle to build the World Future Studies Federation, which unlike the better-known World Future Society includes substantial numbers of

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