
New Options

Mark Satin, Editor

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Who Can Get Us Out of This Mess?

Just who voted for Bush and Dukakis? Which whites voted for Jesse Jackson? Who *are* the American voters, anyway? And which ones can be counted upon to get us out of this mess?

The mass media has been remarkably unhelpful in answering such questions, and so has the traditional political press. Both still speak of the voter as "white collar" or "blue collar," "middle class" or "working class." But how much do those old terms tell us, really? Aren't they too crude and mechanistic to tell us much of anything, any more, about people's attitudes and behavior?

For the last few years, there's been a movement afoot to reconceptualize the American voter—to replace simplistic terms like "white collar" and "middle class" with more complex sets of terms that have more to do with voters' values and life chances. The marketing departments of some major American companies have begun making use of this material, but that's no reason for political activists to reject it. In fact, it would be a tragedy if activists continued making poorly focused appeals to "Labor," "the Poor," "the Middle Class," etc., even as advertisers continued sharpening their appeals to Belongers, New Collars, Upbeats, etc.

Three pioneers

At least three major attempts are being made this year to analyze American voters in new, more sophisticated ways, and this month NEW OPTIONS managed to speak with champions of each of them:

• **James Ogilvy** was, until recently, director of research at the VALS (Values and Lifestyles) Program of SRI International, a think tank based in the Silicon Valley;

• **Don Kellermann** is vice president for public relations of The Times Mirror Company, publisher of *The Los Angeles Times*;

• **Ralph Whitehead** is public-service professor at the University of Massachusetts and one of the most sought-after political consultants in the U.S. (NEW OPTIONS #25).

They don't see eye-to-eye on all things, but on one thing they are in total accord: It's time to move away from the old dichotomous schemas. Listen:

Whitehead: "As a newspaper reporter in Chicago during the late 70s-early 80s, I worked in a highly competitive newspaper marketplace where there were two kinds of newspapers: two 'white-collar' and two 'blue-collar.' And day by day, as I tried to fit what I saw happening into either a white-collar package or a blue-collar package, I came across more and more people and events that simply didn't fit into those two packages."

Ogilvy: "Even in the 70s it was clear from public polling that 'years of education' was a better correlate of liberal views than income."

Kellermann: "Life in the U.S. has changed to such a degree that one can find conflicting values and differing attitudes toward issues within the same person that would prevent you from labelling him all that clearly. And so we decided to provide a new lexicon, if you will."

"Values and lifestyles"

Of the three typologies, Ogilvy's VALS is the most widely used (so far). The nine VALS types:

• **Survivors** (4% of the population) "tend to be despairing, depressed, withdrawn, mistrustful, lacking in self-confidence";

• **Sustainers** (7% of the population) are "angry [and] distrustful, [and] live at the edge of poverty; but unlike Survivors they have not given up hope";

• **Belongers** (38%) are "traditional, conforming, conservative, 'moral,' family-oriented";

• **Emulators** (10%) are "seeking to be like those they consider richer and more successful. [But] they do not really understand the values and lifestyle of those they emulate";

• **Achievers** (20%) are "the driving and driven people who have built 'the system' and are now at the helm . . . diverse, gifted, hard-working [and] self-reliant";

• **I-Am-Me's** (3%) are "young, impulsive, dramatic, experimental and narcissistic";

• **Experientials** (5%) are "intensely oriented toward inner growth";

• **Societally Conscious** (11%) are "concerned with societal issues . . . Most try to lead lives that conserve, protect, heal";

• **Integrateds** (2%) "score high both as Achievers and as Societally Conscious types."

One useful way of seeing the VALS types, Ogilvy emphasizes, is as a hierarchy. On the first level are the "Need-Driven" groups (Survivors and Sustainers). On the second level are the "Outer-Directed" groups (Belongers, Emulators and Achievers) and also the "Inner-Directeds" (I-Am-Me's, Experientials and Societally Conscious). On the third level are those Achiever and Societally Conscious types who've managed to "overcome the split between the personal and public domains," e.g. between personal success and public service.

Who would VALS say are the white Jackson supporters? "I think they're coming from the Sustainer, Belonger and Emulator groups," Ogilvy told NEW OPTIONS. "Then there's a small fringe of highly educated liberals in the Societally Conscious group, but I think that's a pretty small fringe."

"Basic orientations"

The Times Mirror Co. is heavily promoting its typology this election year, with ads appearing regularly in *Newsweek* and the *New York Times*. "Our profiles [of people] are value-driven," Don Kellermann told NEW OPTIONS. "Our [typology] was developed by looking closely at people's basic values and orientations." Eleven types emerged:

• **Enterprisers** (10% of the population, 16% of the likely electorate) are "affluent, pro-business and anti-government, but tolerant and moderate on questions of personal freedom";

• **Moralists** (11% of the population, 14% of the likely electorate) are "middle-aged and middle-income, [and] hold strong and very conser-

vative views on social and foreign policy”;

- *Upbeats* (9%/9%) are “young, optimistic and strong believers in America, [but] are not critical of the government’s role in society”;

- *Disaffecteds* (9%/7%) are “middle-aged, middle-income, alienated and pessimistic. They’re strongly anti-government and anti-business, but also pro-military” and pro-capital punishment;

- *Bystanders* (11%/0%) are “young, poorly educated and marked by an almost total lack of interest in current affairs” — and the views they have are “fairly conventional”;

- *Followers* (7%/4%) have “little faith in America, but are surprisingly uncritical of both government and business” and are “very persuadable and unpredictable”;

- *Seculars* (8%/9%) are “heavily concentrated on the East and West coasts, professional, 11% Jewish. [They] combine a strong commitment to personal freedom [with] a very low level of [militant] anti-communism”;

- *60s Democrats* (8%/11%) are “upper-middle-class, well-educated, heavily female (60%). They strongly identify with the peace, civil rights and environmental movements that grew out of the 1960s. They combine church-going and religious beliefs with a very high degree of tolerance for views and lifestyles they do not share”;

- *New Dealers* (11%/15%) are “blue collar, union members, [of] moderate income with little financial pressure; religious; intolerant on questions of personal freedom, yet favor many social spending measures”;

- *The God-and-Country Poor* (7%/6%) have “a strong faith in America and are uncritical of its institutions and leadership.” At the same time, they’re “committed to social justice”;

- *The Partisan Poor* (9%/9%) are “very low income; feel very high financial pressure; are very concerned with social justice issues.”

According to Kellermann, the Republican party has a lock on two of the types: Enterprisers and Moralists. The Democratic party has four: 60s Democrats, New Dealers, God-and-Country Poor and Partisan Poor. Of the remainder, two *lean* Republican (*Upbeats* and *Disaffecteds*) and two *lean* Democratic (*Followers* and *Seculars*).

Who would the Times Mirror say are the white Jackson supporters? “There are some indications that Jackson does very well among the Partisan Poor,” Kellermann told NEW OPTIONS. “And he cuts heavily into the 60s Democrats. But in the other areas you would have to say Dukakis has been overwhelming.”

“Life chances”

“My scheme is very simple,” Ralph Whitehead told NEW OPTIONS from his office in Amherst, Mass. “The old social structure—the one that was in place in this country for

the first three decades after World War II—was based on a broad middle-class that embraced two ways of life: white-collar life and blue-collar life. Today we have a more steeply graded middle-class.

“[Imagine it as a kind of vertical box.] At the top of that box you have what I call *Bright Collars*, sort of the evolutionary successor to white-collar life. There are about 20 million adults like that [11% of the adult population—ed.].

“Then I would draw a line and separate about 60% of what’s left of that box from the other 40%, okay? (It would not be a horizontal line; it would be either vertical or diagonal.) And I’d call the bigger half of that remaining box *New Collar*, and the smaller half *Blue Collar*. . . .

“Bright Collars make their living largely by taking intellectual initiative. [So] they face both the necessity and luxury of making their own decisions.

“New Collars are the people who work in the rapidly-growing middle level of the service economy, where the jobs are neither for manual laborers nor for coat-and-tie professionals. A Federal Express courier, a secretary, a clerk—there’s been a lot of job growth there.

“One of the critical issues in the workplace during the next 10 years is whether certain occupations move in a Bright Collar or New Collar direction. Nurses live and work on the borderline. Teachers live and work on the borderline. If I were a leader of a teacher’s union, I would have a very clear-cut and deliberate strategy that I’d be pursuing to make sure that teachers became members of the Bright Collar work force [with, e.g., more say over what goes on in their classrooms].

“At the same time, you have similar struggles gaining momentum along the New Collar-Blue Collar border, and along the Blue Collar-Bright Collar border. I believe it’s possible to turn many forms of Blue Collar work into Bright Collar work—by respecting the workers’ know-how, and investing in their knowledge and skills, and letting them call more of their shots.”

Who would Whitehead say are the white Jackson supporters? “In my terms, I would say that Jackson drew his white vote largely from the Bright Collar-New Collar border. Sort of younger and slightly marginal Bright Collars like graduate students—and sort of hip New Collars. And he also got younger Blue Collars. So Jackson drew from all three elements of the new social structure.”

Whom to look to

So—can these new typologies help us identify our natural political allies? Can they tell us where to find members for our organizations, canvassers for our political candidates?

We asked each of our interviewees to tell us

which of their “types” might be most likely to support “a candidate or organization espousing such values as ecology, global responsibility, and paying attention to the next 50 years not just the next four.” None of them hesitated.

“Given my scheme, I think we’re talking about at least a third and perhaps half of [the] Bright Collars,” Whitehead said.

“[Within the VALS hierarchy], the Inner-Directeds is clearly the primary group,” Ogilvy said. “The problem is, the group isn’t big enough. Where one has to expand that reach is to the Achievers, who need to be convinced—and are *becoming* convinced, on their own—of the problems with more short-sighted views.”

“[Within the Times Mirror typology], two groups come to mind immediately,” Kellermann said. “One is the 60s Democrats and the other is the Seculars.

“The Seculars is an interesting group. It is the most well-informed group in the population. It tends to vote somewhat less than one would expect, [given] its level of information. There is some degree, perhaps, even of cynicism there. But these are people who are interested in the very issues you are talking about. And they have a complex set of attitudes—more so, perhaps, than the 60s Democrats. . . .”

“My guess,” said Whitehead later, “is that the 60s Democrats would be more interested in your world than the Seculars, because the Seculars are secular! [However], the Seculars may be simply people who are indifferent to traditional religious belief, but very open to humanistic systems. They don’t say the rosary, but they may have a very profound spiritual and ethical dimension in their lives. . . .”

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Listening to the contras

“Because [this material] is pretty controversial, I thought of you and NEW OPTIONS,” wrote peace activist Herb Walters in a letter accompanying his manuscript. It is controversial, but that’s not the half of it. We think it asks the most important questions that the peace movement has asked itself since the Vietnam war.

By Herb Walters

After three months of planning and several instances of almost giving up the project, Carol Latharus and I sat under a tree in late February with the first of over two dozen contra fighters we’d be interviewing.

We found these soldiers at the Nicaraguan refugee camps in Honduras. The contras use these camps for their wounded and other fighters who need rest and rehabilitation.

The interviews we did during the next several days were the essence of what we call the Contra Listening Project. This project was based on Listening Project models developed by Rural Southern Voice for Peace (RSVP), a grassroots peace and justice organization based in Burnsville, N.C. that I work for. Carol directs a shelter for the homeless and is a Central America activist in nearby Asheville.

A Listening Project has one main goal: Communication between people who are not communicating with each other, and should be doing so. In this case the two groups are the contras and the U.S. peace movement.

“Enemy”

I had been to Central America two other times, the first time being with Witness for Peace for two months. But this was the first time I’d come face to face with a contra fighter.

For most of us in the peace movement, the contras are the “enemy.” By having an enemy we’ve made things easier on ourselves. An enemy is a person without a face—someone it’s easy to be against. With an enemy it’s easy to take sides, and have your side be the “good” side while the other side is the one that’s all bad.

Many of us have felt very strongly the suffering of the people in Nicaragua. For so many of the poor, the Sandinistas brought hope and the contras brought death and destruction. Yet with all this, I know that things are never as black and white as we would like them to be.

Listening

Our questions to the contras were designed to help us learn more about their feelings and motivations in relation to the war.

Neither Carol nor I were naive enough to think that everything we heard from the soldiers was true. Yet both of us finished the interviews impressed with the sincerity and depth of conviction of many of them.

Many were *campesinos*—peasants and farmers. They spoke in plain, simple terms, often in soft voices and with painful memories.

Here’s a tiny sampling:

- *Santo Gonzalez*, 41: “The mass organizations went against my principles. I refused to participate so they started to look at us badly. If we didn’t participate in meetings we got less food, fewer rations.”

- *Ramon Largo*, 29: “Anything we produced had to be sold at the government center. [Even] we had to buy it back.”

- *Noel Obando*, 37: “We had to take up arms, watch the streets, and belong to the FSLN. They were forcing people to fight and they beat up some people. They tried to force me to join the military. I said no. Many people I knew were being watched or were taken away to jail.”

- *Vijillio Lopez*, 33: “[The literacy campaign] had political content. We were told we must rely on our own resources, which seemed like a slap in the face of God. We had to go to speeches about how to defend the revolution. People not a part of the militia were excluded from some things. I resisted for a year joining any mass organizations, then they accused me of being a contra. They took away nine of my cattle. After that I looked for contact with the Resistance.”

Hearing

Hearing these and many similar testimonies was at first confusing. We knew that the Sandinistas had not created a Totalitarian State. But we also felt these soldiers weren’t just making their experiences up. In time, we began to see some patterns.

After the revolution, every town formed its own organizations. People were excited and zealous about what lay ahead. But perhaps sometimes people were too zealous. Too zealous and very afraid—afraid that the Somocistas, the contras and Uncle Sam would try to turn back the hope of the revolution.

So they distrusted people in the community who objected to the changes of the revolution. And sometimes they apparently began watching, warning or even threatening people who objected to the changes.

Sometimes these people were former Somocistas or wealthy landowners. But sometimes the people who didn’t like the changes

were the poor themselves.

Why not dialogue?

I believe that we in the U.S. peace movement were right in making the role of the U.S. government our primary concern, and in calling for an end to contra aid. But the Contra Listening Project has raised some new questions for me.

One question is: Why weren’t we as a peace movement calling for dialogue and reconciliation between the contras and the Sandinistas?

There are many answers, I believe. One is that we didn’t trust the contra leadership. Another is that we saw the contras only as the enemy and therefore not worthy of even talking to. We saw their thoughts and feelings as having no validity—they were only terrorists, manipulated with money from the Reagan administration.

What we knew was a part of the truth—but we failed to seek the whole truth. Or at least I did. But the Contra Listening Project helped me develop some new understandings.

There are National Guardsmen and mercenaries and power hungry *comandantes* in the contra forces. But there are also people who receive no salary for the war they fight. They sincerely see their fight as a struggle against injustice and oppression in Nicaragua.

Advocates—or mediators?

The Contra Listening Project raises another important question.

The peace movement has played the role of advocate in Nicaragua. Is there also a place for peace organizations that could act more as mediators than as advocates for one side?

Is there a place for organizations that could be trusted by both sides—that could find the human faces of “the enemy” and carry that message across the battle lines?

Could the existence of such organizations have helped influence the contras and Sandinistas to dialogue earlier, perhaps avoiding some of the bloodshed? As mediators, could we have linked the Sandinistas with contra factions that were not dominated by the National Guard and mercenaries?

And what about the many Nicaraguans who criticize the contras and the Sandinistas? Shouldn’t we be trying to hear—and heed—their voices as well?

I am convinced now more than ever that my job as a peacemaker is not to take sides. It is to seek the truth. It is to humanize rather than dehumanize the “enemy.” It is to understand and seek out the best in all sides, even while denouncing the wrongdoing of all sides.

Walters looks forward to responding, in print, to the letters you send NEW OPTIONS about this article. Contra Listening Project: RSVP, 1901 Hannah Branch Rd, Burnsville NC 28714.

Continued from page eight:

ers of our platform. Supposedly, he was going to give it to all their writers, and they were going to try to stay within those boundaries. But I don't know that that's going to happen.

"My fear is that it's going to be a struggle to keep everything together to the point where we go to the transition team. Maybe those fears are unfounded" [laughs].

"New Synthesis"

After the **New Synthesis Think Tank** got off the ground last fall (NEW OPTIONS #43), it didn't take participants long to come up with their first major project, the "Public Policy Project." Its stated purpose: to "prepare a policy document based on holistic values."

"Holistic" values? "We want to depict a new value context which is maybe contrary to much of conventional mainstream thinking," says Belden Paulson, political science professor at the University of Wisconsin-Extension who directs the Public Policy Project. "And if you want to call them 'holistic' values, which is kind of a dirty word in some circles, go right ahead. . . . We also want to translate that value context into practical, operational content, so that someone in government in an area like commerce or the environment or defense might say, 'Well, maybe that does make sense! Maybe it's something I can make use of.'

"The value context includes reverence for all life, unity of mind/body/spirit, win/win solutions, living lightly on the Earth, individual and community empowerment, global awareness, cultural diversity. . . ."

At first, Paulson and his colleagues were going to put together an enormous book consisting of 15 essays by sympathetic policy "experts" — one essay for each Cabinet department. But it didn't take them long to run up against some very real time and budgetary constraints. So now they're planning to write most of the document themselves, and to base their work largely on telephone interviews with over 100 "holistic" thinkers and activists from coast to coast.

"We'll stick with the original plan of one chapter for each Cabinet department," Paulson told NEW OPTIONS. "But it'll be a shorter and more cohesive [document this way]," as befits what everyone associated with New Synthesis is now calling a "first cut."

Spreading the word

And after the writing is done?
"The idea is to have the document come out as close to the election as we can," Paulson told NEW OPTIONS. "I've talked with a number of publishers, plus we now have the capacity to do desktop publishing ourselves. However we do it, we don't want to get it

prostituted. We want to keep it as 'pure' as we can [even while making it] something that can feed into the mainstream. . . ."

"[We'll want to get the document into the hands of] the president-elect, the transition team, all the members of Congress, all the higher-level bureaucrats. And then we'll want to get it out to directors of key organizations around the country, key editors, key people in academia and so on. . . ."

"If the best happens, [some of these people] will say, This is the kind of thinking we need more of! And that would open up a whole new educational effort. It could lead to seminars, breakfasts, luncheons, "clearinghouse" activities, media events. . . . If I could find a way to [become a courier for these ideas], I'd be prepared to pretty much give up my other activities and just do this."

Thinking Green

For several years, people in and around the **Green Committees of Correspondence**—the U.S. Green movement—have talked about putting a policy document together. Now, after at least one false start, a process to generate that document is under way.

Policy, strategy and organizing issues will be the focus of the second national Green gathering, tentatively scheduled for June of 1989. Between now and then, the 100-plus local Green groups around the country will be generating "provisional policy statements" and "provisional strategy statements," which 2-3 representatives of each group will bring to the gathering.

These statements are called SPAKAs by Greens who like acronyms ("Strategy and Policy Approaches in Key Areas").

"Some of the stuff we're getting now suggests platform-type approaches," says John Rensenbrink, professor of political science at Bowdoin College in Maine and co-convenor of the Greens' working group on the SPAKA process. "[But we're not trying to achieve] the precision of a platform. [We're trying to produce something in between] a platform and a visionary statement. [We're trying] to show how Green values and a Green outlook molds one's approach to land, or taxation, or the nuclear question. . . ."

Green process

"Anyone can join a Green group and participate in the SPAKA process," Rensenbrink told NEW OPTIONS. "But you do have to participate through a group! It's not [for] lone individuals who happen to be good at thinking large thoughts or something. This is hopefully an organic and visceral process."

We asked Rensenbrink what the advantages were to ignoring the 1988 election and embarking on a long-term, hyper-democratic process. "One advantage would be that, hopefully, it

truly involves people in their local grassroots organizations. It's an organizing tool as well as an effort to produce a program.

"Another advantage is that the people who'll be coming to the conference will have engaged in their group's discussions. And these discussions will probably be fairly heated at certain times and places! So it gives people an opportunity to speak. It's an enabling process. . . ."

"After [the document is printed], the media will be invited to give it their august attention—[including the] mainstream media. In addition, we would like [our] groups to use it as a basis for discussion. So it becomes a self-educative tool and an outreach tool. And it becomes a basis for the founding convention of the North American Greens, probably in 1991."

Recurrent fantasy

While writing this article, I had a recurrent fantasy.

You know how Hunter and Amory Lovins argue that we should have a "level playing field" for energy sources (solar, coal, nuclear, oil, etc.)—with none getting any more or less government funding than the others? Well, I wondered what might happen if the seven policy-writing projects had a level playing field, with each receiving the same amount of money from their funders.

As things stand now, there's no question that the first four projects above will receive over 95% of all the funding given to the seven projects. That virtually assures them of 99% of the attention of the politicians and the media.

But are the policy proposals of the first four projects really 99 times more worthy of attention than the policy proposals of the last three?

Are the neo-socialist ideas of IPS really so much more exciting to Americans than the post-socialist ideas of the Greens?

Are the liberty-oriented ideas of the Libertarians really so much more appealing than the solidarity-oriented ideas of PEP?

Are the left-liberal ideas Mark Green is promoting really so much more viable than the "holistic" ideas Belden Paulson is promoting?

I dream about having a level playing field so we can begin to find out.

IPS: 1601 Connecticut Ave. N.W., DC 20009; Winning America, \$18.50 pbk (due late July). Democracy Project: 215 Park Ave. So., #1814, New York NY 10003. McKee: Libertarian Party, 1528 Pennsylvania Ave. S.E., DC 20003; "Platform," \$2. Peters: Blueprint for the Environment, 1412 16th St. N.W., DC 20036. Casebolt: PEP, 13122 Parson Lane, Fairfax VA 22033; "Platform," no charge. Paulson: New Synthesis, c/o Univ. of Wisc.-Extension, 929 N. Sixth St., Milwaukee WI 53203. Rensenbrink: SPAKA Working Group, RR 2-Box 73, Bowdoinham ME 04008.

Letters . . .

Maybe we can caucus

I am a Dukakis delegate from South Carolina and I'd like to offer a way for NEW OPTIONS readers to link up at the Democratic convention in Atlanta this July.

If NEW OPTIONS readers will be there—as delegates, staff, media, observers, or what-have-you—and want to get together, I'm willing to coordinate. Send me your name and address and let me know your role at the convention BY JULY 10 AT THE LATEST. I'll get back to you.

I can be reached c/o Blackwater Associates Inc., P.O. Box 5151, Columbia SC 29250, or you can call me at (803) 771-7489. If you write please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The convention seems like a convenient opportunity for some of us to meet, talk, go drinking. I have no particular agenda for this link-up—beyond thinking farther into the future than the next three months, or four years, along with some creative friends.

So let's do it and see what happens. Maybe we can plan to meet, talk—God forbid, "caucus" — as a group at the convention. It could get interesting.

—Karen Sundstrom
Columbia, So. Car.

Peace by committee?

In your sensitive and shrewd report on the Soviet-American Citizens' Summit (#47), you ask, "Could it have been organized without the Soviet Peace Committee? Should it have been?"

As director of a small private U.S. foundation, I was bemused at the "Summit" to be told by a high official of the Soviet Peace Committee that his organization is "non-governmental, non-profit, just like yours." In fact, the Peace Committee was founded as an arm of Stalin's regime. Even if it is not technically part of the Soviet government or Communist party, it has followed the propaganda line set by the regime.

I believe that Americans would do well to knock on the doors of a wide variety of Soviet organizations and individuals, including people who are truly independent of the Soviet regime. It is simply not enough to converge in harmony under posters of doves.

However, it is important to remember that our difficulty is not with the Peace Committee per se but with the system in which it's embedded. There is no point castigating the Peace Committee for failing to oppose Soviet military

interventions in Afghanistan or earlier in Hungary or Czechoslovakia. Under the Soviet system, how could such opposition have been tolerated? A Soviet peace bureaucrat trying to navigate against the course of official policy would be sailing into a typhoon.

Today the Soviet system is in flux, and who knows how the role of the Peace Committee may develop as "perestroika" unfolds? It has a network of organizers and peace houses across the Soviet Union. It has a license to deal with foreigners. It has funds to support exchanges and conferences. In visiting its headquarters a year ago, I met some bright and personable staff. Perhaps the Peace Committee will even play a role in the "democratization" of its country, as a network for more open contact with foreigners and as a matrix for more open discussion among Soviets.

—Craig Comstock
Ark Communications Institute
Lafayette, Calif.

Back to the usual

I found your article on values ("Pat Robertson Was Onto Something Big," #47) quite disappointing. After your breakthrough last summer writing about the Green gathering (#40) and then your excellent article "Two Conferences, One Generation" (#43), it's back to the usual preaching, shallowly earnest RAH-RAH for theoretical values that we "should" follow, and powerless exhortation that someone "should" organize politically.

—Marco Ermacora
Montreal, Quebec

"So bitter"

I think your article on the need for shared values was partly off the mark.

People already agree on the need for many basic human values! But they disagree on the best means for putting these values into action.

For example, most supporters of pure capitalism sincerely believe that capitalism brings the most prosperity and justice. Most socialists sincerely believe that socialism brings more.

To resolve the disagreements on means requires real dialogue. But once one side accuses the other of lacking values or having bad ones, the dispute usually becomes so bitter that dialogue is impossible.

—Les Brunswick
Pittsburgh, Penna.

I have just finished reading the page-one article from NEW OPTIONS #47. I am sorry to say that I find it thoroughly unacceptable that a piece on the possible moral values that the citizens of our country might share should in-

clude opposition to abortion [Juli Loesch's views on abortion—ed.] while failing to promulgate the notion of commitment to racial, ethnic, gender and sexual diversities. PLEASE CANCEL MY SUBSCRIPTION IMMEDIATELY.

—Joan Howard
Rye, New Hamp.

I'm writing to express my amazement and anger at your ignoring Jesse Jackson in your recent piece on moral values.

Why the title "Pat Robertson Was Onto Something Big" rather than "Jesse Jackson Is Onto Something Big"?! Anyone who has heard Jackson speak or read his book *Straight from the Heart* (1987) knows what a sweeping and stirring moral vision is at the heart of his candidacy and of his vision for America.

In ignoring Jackson, NEW OPTIONS is ignoring one of the brightest new options around. Why?

—Kathryn North, Ph.D.
Scotts Valley, Calif.

Since I believe the only beings who should have any say in whether or not a woman carries a pregnancy to term are that woman, her doctor and her god, and the so-called Pro-Lifers want to make decisions for other reasonable adults, your inclusion of Juli Loesch's nonsense is like a slap in the face.

NEW OPTIONS sounds like the same old no-choices for women, despite the attempts at legitimacy through anti-war ideals. I will thank you to immediately cancel my subscription.

—M. Wiesinger
Chicago, Ill.

Forget it

You'll have a real problem trying to introduce values into the basically dualistic, criminal, hypocritical culture that is America. The only common bond Americans have or ever will have is Look Out For Number One first, last and always.

—"John Doe"
Huntingdon County Prison
Huntingdon, Penna.

I would like to make a comment about a phrase which appears almost ubiquitously in this publication and in many position papers of Green groups and which reflects, in my mind, a disturbing development in the process of working out the grounding premises of a Green politics; namely, the conception of its central ideas in the form of enumerated "values."

The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche argued that moral discourse always takes on the form of domination characteristic of its age. The terms "value judgment" and "values" do not appear in any major works of moral philosophy

prior to the [late 19th century. I am concerned that] an ethical term unique to capitalism—and especially liberal economics, utilitarianism and positivis[m]—has insinuated itself into the basic conception of the Greens in the U.S.

I would propose the simple change of “values” to “principles” in future Green discussions. The word “principle” brings politics into the [discussion]. And it asserts a solidness to our conceptions, which are then not just a “matter of agreement” among people [as are values] but are in some manner rooted in the nature of the world.

—John Ely
Santa Cruz, Calif.

Essential for community

No doubt the world needs a set of shared values. My 2 cents is that the way to get there is Christian situation ethics.

Someday, I think, all people will agree on a foundation of morality, namely the greatest of the 10 Commandments and the Golden Rule. Situation ethics can start from there and recognize that we all face different choices in life, that what's right for you may not be right for me. Awareness of this creates space for community.

—Mark B. Peterson
Charlottesville, Va.

Yes: The worth-wholeness-integrity of which *Our Bodies, Ourselves* co-author Esther Rome speaks [in your article] is essential. Without these qualities there can be no self-connection or other-connection, no real dialogue and no real compassion.

—Rosalie Taylor-Howlett
St. Thomas, Ont., Canada

Platitudes not enough

As usual, your issue #44 is high quality and provocative. The discussion of economic growth by Daly, Wachtel and yourself does not, however, get at the deeper level issue.

The dilemma of modern society is that every person needs some way of relating productively to the society of which he or she is a part. The main way in which that is achieved in modern industrial society is through having a job (or being married to someone with a job, or being in school training to get a job). Thus there is tremendous pressure to consume, have arms races, create make-work, wreak havoc on the environment, and in other ways strain to maintain economic growth to create those jobs.

The conventional approach to the dilemma is to continue frantically promoting economic growth and job-creation. A better approach might be to promote alternate wholesome, sociologically beneficial ways in which individu-

als can relate to society. But we can't even think in that direction as long as our sense of identity is derived from our job in the economy, and we are obsessed by the notion that work (= jobs) is a scarce commodity.

We do not notice that there is no shortage of creative work opportunities that would benefit society and the individual—there is only a shortage of ways that work can be structured to create jobs. We desperately seek ways that government spending could create jobs; ways that one job could be divided among two or more people; and so on, and on.

The real solution to the dilemma involves reversing a long-term trend, namely the trend toward an increasing fraction of the potential work force having jobs in the mainstream economy. It no doubt involves increased importance of the “third sector” of voluntary organizations and non-profit organizations. In any event, it involves more restructuring of the whole society than is implied by platitudes about human growth and moral growth being more desirable than economic growth.

—Willis Harman
Author, *Global Mind Change (1988)*
Sausalito, Calif.

Us and them (cont'd)

At the risk of trading profundity for a cheap aphorism, may I suggest that NEW OPTIONS's observation that “the majority of ‘The People’ is not with us” (#45) is an observation made through the wrong end of the telescope?

I think it is far more likely that “we” —bookwriters, “eggheads” and such—are not with “the People.”

—John H. Davenport
Tenerife, Canary Islands

How much energy should really go into “getting The People over here” when the energy could be going into “being here”? A “being here and now” person is a much [better promoter] of an idea than a path cutter can ever be!

—Richard Hilton
North Hollywood, Calif.

Your article on why “The People” aren't with us hit many facets of the problem—and all are correct, at least in part.

But there's one very big piece of the puzzle that you left out. One reason mainstream people don't want to work with us is our failure to go to them.

After many years working on the outer edges of social change, I became convinced that social change agents had to find ways of bringing their message *effectively* to the wider public. Ironically, I came to this conclusion after living for nine months in a community of avowed social change agents—who were talking only to and

among themselves, and who were doing virtually no meaningful social change work.

For the last several years, I have constantly tried to look for parts of my own belief system which were thoroughly compatible with the ideas of average people. With this as a guidepost, I meet people in areas of common ground, then try to push gently but firmly toward a more fundamental critique—and then to action. My motto is, “As fast as possible but as slow as necessary.”

For example, my community has seen a tripling of housing costs in the last three or four years. Long-time working class residents find that their children and grandchildren can't afford to stay here. I took this issue into a city council campaign against an extremely reactionary five-term incumbent, and I proposed a number of very Green solutions. By forcing my opponent to come out against any city intervention to promote affordable housing, I was instrumental in his defeat.

And meanwhile, my housing platform is still on the agenda, and some of the most traditional politicians in our area are being forced to deal with the proposals I raised.

—Shel Horowitz
Northampton, Mass.

The bigger story

The story told in Todd Gitlin's book *The Sixties* (NEW OPTIONS #45) is no doubt an important one. But there is another story that needs to be told even more, because it is still going on.

I am referring to the story of those of us who were not inside the movement, but who still tried to find fragments of truth in the radical rhetoric of the times. We sensed that *something* new was on the horizon and we weren't sure what.

Most of the more thoughtful members of the 60s youth culture were too aware of their own confusion to speak up when reporters waved their microphones into the crowds. That left it to the fanatically simple-minded to become “spokespeople for their generation.”

Their pronouncements seemed ridiculous even to them after they had a decade or more to think. This produced the depressing spectacle of dozens of such “spokespeople” totally rejecting ideas they had never fully understood and becoming stockbrokers, fundamentalist Christians, and/or rabid anti-communists like Collier and Horowitz (#43).

It is now up to the rest of us who were the members of that generation to perform a careful exegesis on our subconscious and discover the truths that we experienced but were never able to say.

—Teed Rockwell
San Francisco, Calif.

A few good platforms

When was the last time you saw a stirring, visionary, comprehensive policy document that had been put together in the U.S.? Would you go back to 1983 and the Planetary Initiative's “Declaration on the World We Choose”? Or 1981 and the New World Alliance's *Transformation Platform*? Or all the way back to 1977 and Friends of the Earth's magisterial *Progress as If Survival Mattered*?

Now, all of a sudden, thanks in part (but only in part) to the coming of the 1988 presidential campaign, at least seven national groups are hard at work on comprehensive, visionary policy documents.

Left field

Two new documents will be coming out of the traditional political left.

The **Institute for Policy Studies** (IPS), Washington's dominant left-wing think tank, is about to release *Winning America: Ideas and Leadership for the 90s*, which it describes as a “progressive policy platform for the next decade.” Three dozen short chapters—each by what IPS pointedly describes as a “recognized expert”—cover the gamut of social, economic and foreign policy issues.

Many of the “recognized experts” are very pro-big government and very pro-growth, and most of them would take serious issue with the Regeneration Project's Jeff Bercuvitz when he argues, as he did here last month, that “the more innovative solutions require fewer subsidies.” But the document should be full of stimulating ideas even for post-socialists, and some of the chapters are can't-miss, e.g. Richard Falk on “Strengthening the Rule of Law in Foreign Policy” (Falk was co-founder of the World Order Models Project, discussed in #34).

To its credit, IPS called NEW OPTIONS after our “Economic Growth Is Not the Answer” cover story appeared (#44) and asked us for the names of some “dissenting,” “anti-growth” economists. That explains the presence of a chapter that should stick out like a sore thumb, Paul Wachtel's “Toward a Quality of Life Society.”

If the contributors to *Winning America* can be characterized as the “anti-establishment left,” then the contributors to the **Democracy Project's** forthcoming document, *Blueprints for America: Transition '89*, can be characterized as “establishment left.” Many of them could serve in a Dukakis administration; not a few of them—e.g., Joan Claybrook, Stuart Eizenstat, Derek Shearer, Theodore Soren-

sen—have already served in government. Mark Green, president of the Democracy Project, was director for many years of Ralph Nader's Congress Watch project and author of one of the best Nader books, *Who Runs Congress?* (orig. 1972); more recently he's tried running for Congress himself.

The Democracy Project is promoting *Blueprints* as “a guidebook for the next president-elect, cabinet, sub-cabinet and Congress.” When it's published this December it will contain 36 “extended memoranda” on all the standard policy issues.

Libertyville

For a dramatic contrast to the left-liberal approaches above, see the **Libertarian Party's** latest platform, which is coming off the press this month.

“We hold that all individuals have the right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives,” it begins. “Governments throughout history have regularly operated on the opposite principle, that the State has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labor. . . .”

That brave rhetoric is followed by 62 carefully-crafted planks, sometimes brilliant, always provocative. The plank on “Victimless Crimes” argues for the “repeal of all laws prohibiting the production, sale, possession, or use of drugs.” The plank on “American Indian Rights” states that “tribes should be allowed to choose their level of autonomy, up to absolute sovereignty.” The plank on “Children's Rights” states, “We oppose all laws . . . forcing children to remain in the custody of their parents against their will.”

We asked Kirk McKee, acting national director of the Libertarian Party, whether the platform is the product of “recognized experts” or an open, democratic process, or both. “We have a Platform Committee,” he replied, “and between conventions, which take place every two years, individual Libertarians or—more likely—a state party, will make [suggestions to it]. Then at the convention itself the Platform Committee convenes and [prioritizes the suggestions and makes] recommendations to the convention body. Then [there's] public debate. [Finally,] there's a vote.

“We have delegates [at the conventions]. But in addition to the delegates, any member is allowed to vote at the convention as long as they're present.”

Like the IPS and Democracy Project efforts, the Libertarian Party plans to use its document to reach policy makers at all levels. “We're not

limited to running for office,” McKee told NEW OPTIONS, “[and I know] there's a lot of outreach right now on individual and local levels to people who are part of the Republican Party. We have a better chance at it this year, being that [our presidential candidate], Ron Paul, is a former Republican Congressman. . . .”

For the Earth

Quietly but decisively, 18 of the nation's leading environmental organizations have come together to launch a new project, **Blueprint for the Environment**. Its purpose: To present the next administration with carefully-crafted recommendations on environmental policy.

“The idea came together last fall over a cup of coffee,” Clay Peters, executive director of the project, told NEW OPTIONS.

“Efforts in the past to influence incoming administrations had been quite ad hoc and had not met with the greatest success. The entire idea [here is] to speak with one voice; to say, this is the nation's major environmental community, and here's what we think.”

The project is run by a Steering Committee consisting of key officers from each of the 18 organizations. The entire environmental “establishment” is represented—groups like the National Audubon Society and the Sierra Club. So are some respected innovative groups—among them, FREE (#36), Global Tomorrow (#18) and the Worldwatch Institute (#35).

Why the focus on Washington-based groups? “We know there's tremendous expertise all over the country,” Peters told NEW OPTIONS. “But as a logistical thing it is very hard to meet and make decisions [while including] people [from] all over the country.” Where are the two major “deep ecology” groups, David Brower's Earth Island Institute and Dave Foreman's Earth First! (#25)? “There's no exclusion of Brower's group. Same with [Foreman's]. We have not excluded anybody. But we haven't made the effort to reach out everywhere, that would just wipe us out. . . . If [Earth Island] took the initiative and contact was made and they wanted to be involved with us, as long as there's something they want to do that's not at great variance with the rest of the group, then there's no problem at all.”

“Task Forces”

Blueprint for the Environment is nothing if not well-organized. Its recommendations are being put together by over 30 Task Forces of environmentalists.

“We're trying to take advantage of existing groupings of people that are working on things,” Peters told NEW OPTIONS. “We're trying to [make use of] the networks that are already there.”

Some of the Task Forces are covering subjects that are already well-known to the public

(e.g., Clean Air, National Parks); others are taking up subjects that are new or controversial (e.g., Global Warming, Genetic Engineering). Will the Task Forces dare to include the costs of their various recommendations? "We want to be honest and straightforward about what the costs really are. But we don't want to be blunderingly advocating tremendous expenditures right up front, because we know that could be a real killer. . . ."

"We think an awful lot of what needs to be done can be done by policy shifts that don't necessarily cost bucks. We also think that if [the government] *stopped* doing some things, they'd not only save tremendous amounts of money but there'd be better environmental policy as a consequence!"

And after the Task Forces have completed their work? What then? "Our recommendations will go into so-called Green Books—loose-leaf binders that will go to every Cabinet officer for whom we develop recommendations. In effect, they'll [contain] very specific recipes [for] what we think any new administration ought to do."

"Now, these Green Books will be fairly voluminous. [So we'll also] have an executive summary of the project. That document will tend to be more far-reaching, longer-range. . . ."

"There are 'transition teams' that come into play very early [after a presidential election]. We want to make all our information available immediately to those people to the extent that they're interested—and help them to be interested!"

"We would also like to have the opportunity, following [the presentation of] our product, to be personally helpful [to the policymakers] in any ways we can, in dialogue or whatever. . . ."

Peace plus

The Peace and Environment Project (PEP)—outgrowth of the Peace and Environmental Convention Coalition founded five years ago in San Francisco (NEW OPTIONS #4)—is about to publish a platform committed to moving us "from the arms race to an environmental recovery race," and dedicated to the proposition that "peace, social justice and environmental concerns have become intertwined and unsolvable apart from each other."

PEP is soliciting endorsements for its platform from grassroots groups across the U.S. Over 50 have already signed on, including SANE/Freeze, Campaign for U.N. Reform, Center for Economic Conversion (#38), Center for Reflection on the Second Law (#44), Earth Island Institute, Friends of the Earth, and 10 regional Green groups.

Who is PEP, exactly? "The Board of Advisors more or less took over the role of the Steering Committee," Carl Casebolt, PEP's D.C.-based executive director, told NEW OPTIONS. "They meet on a regular basis in

California." Advisory Board members come from 18 activist groups, including Elmwood Institute (#18), Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament (#31), and quite a few of the endorsing groups above. Casebolt works part-time for IMPACT, a national religious lobby.

"By moving here from California, [I] have the chance of involving more national groups," Casebolt said. "I knew if we were going to have a chance of making great inroads, we were going to need more national groups."

Most of the way home

The platform—formally titled "Platform for Peace and Common Security and for a Healthy, Just and Sustainable Environment" — went through three drafts over two years. Dozens of thinkers and activists contributed their ideas. The result is a platform that's partly still rooted in the old industrial paradigm. For example, the "Economic Conversion" section looks toward traditional 40-hour-a-week full employment rather than beyond it. But the original, positive reference to "economic growth" has been withdrawn (in favor of a reference to "economic development"), and many other passages demonstrate a sensitivity to post-liberal, post-socialist perspectives and concerns.

For example, the "Peace" half of the platform speaks only of "military non-intervention," leaving the way clear for the exercise of moral and even economic pressure on behalf of humane values. The "Environment" half once called for "sustainable" agriculture, but now calls for "sustainable, organic" agriculture. One plank forbids releasing genetically-engineered organisms into the environment unless "predictive ecologists" are "unanimously . . . fully confident that no adverse effects will result." Another calls for an "Office of Ecological City Development."

How does PEP hope to affect the public policy debate? "What we'll do from now on is try to get additional endorsements," Casebolt told

NEW OPTIONS. "[Plus] we've talked with Blueprint for the Environment here in town [see above—ed.] to try to make sure that the positions [they take] are consistent with the PEP platform. Our thought is that if we can connect the PEP people and the religious community with the [Blueprint people], we'll [all] have a little better chance of getting our voices heard in the next administration."

Hardball

We asked Casebolt how realistic he thought that strategy was, and he told us he had two big questions. First, would Blueprint's document be sensitive enough to the needs of the poor to warrant PEP's support? Second, would Blueprint be "straightforward about the costs of environmental sustainability programs, [including] what needs to be done in the Third World? . . . [They've got to acknowledge] that you cannot continue with high military spending and expect that there's going to be enough left over for environmental sustainability."

"I've talked to Clay [Peters] about it, and he mentioned it had come up in *their* deliberations as to whether or not they're going to be straightforward about the money. They were afraid that if they were, [their recommendations] would be discarded."

"So I told Clay, I said, Now the religious community and the PEP people would like to cooperate with Blueprint. But that is one area where there is no compromise as far as we're concerned. If you're not going to be straightforward about the money, then I don't see any way we can support [your document]. And I don't really see, then, where you're going to find the grassroots support elsewhere to really convince the new administration that there's public support for it."

"So that's where it was left. Now, he says that they would try to stay within the paramet-

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