
New Options

Mark Satin, *Editor*

November 28, 1988

Issue No. Fifty-three

Don't Let the Election Get You Down

This month, dozens of NEW OPTIONS subscribers have written or called to share their despair with us over the recent presidential election.

We've tried to be responsive. But we don't feel despair. We think there are three good reasons to feel hopeful, even now; even at the beginning of the Bush/Quayle Years.

First, *most Americans know the real issues—and know that they're not being addressed.*

Deeply skeptical of the reporting in the mass media, we conducted our own survey of potential voters last month in Dayton, Ohio, and Wheeling, West Virginia. We spoke with people in greasy-spoon restaurants and hotel lobbies, bowling alleys and airports.

We found that people had two big issues on their minds: the declining character of the American people, and the phantom nature of the economy.

The character issue touches upon concerns like crime and drugs, but it's larger and deeper. It has to do with people's conviction that nobody works hard any more, that nobody cares any more, that everybody's just out for themselves, that there's nothing holding us together as a people.

The economic issue touches upon concerns like unemployment and inflation, but again, it's deeper. It doesn't make sense to people that their communities aren't *producing* anything any more. It doesn't make sense to them that their prosperity depends on turning their communities and their world into high-tech, service-economy heaven.

No mainstream politicians are addressing these issues. In fact, the only people addressing them are the human growth- and local-self-reliance-oriented thinkers and activists we tell you about in NEW OPTIONS. Thus, there's an opening for our perspectives like there's never been before.

A second encouraging fact: *plenty of people out there could move this country in a humane and sustainable direction.* In the first article below, we report on the results of our "Choose Our Shadow Cabinet" poll. The results speak for themselves. In the next article, futurist Robert Theobald encourages us to imagine

that a "Dynamic Balance Party" is about to take office. His point: *We already know what to do.* The basic directions are already set, and a deep commitment to nonviolent, democratic process will fill in the details. (For more on the "science-fact Dynamic Balance Party," send \$3 to Theobald at P.O. Box 2240, Wickensburg AZ 85358.)

The final article is an adaptation of a speech by black author and activist James Boggs to a Detroit audience earlier this year. It demonstrates—as well as anything we've seen—how grounded and relevant the human growth- and local-self-reliance-oriented message can be. (For a copy of the whole speech, send \$1 to Boggs at 3061 Field St., Detroit MI 48214.)

The third encouraging fact: *plenty of organizations out there are working—hard—to bring about a human growth-oriented, decentralist and globally responsible U.S.* Over the years, NEW OPTIONS has reported on nearly 200 such groups, the bulk of them fewer than 10 years old. If you're still feeling depressed because of the election, why don't you consider joining one and putting your shoulder to the wheel?

New politics, new players

The U.S. is full of accomplished, credible people perfectly capable of bringing innovative, decentralist/globally responsible ideas into government.

That's the ultimate message conveyed by the results of NEW OPTIONS's recent survey asking each of you to nominate people to fill up to 25 key positions in the next presidential administration.

A ballot, "Choose Our Shadow Cabinet," went out with issue #48. Hundreds were returned. *Over 1,500 people* were nominated in all.

You—our subscribers—didn't choose just one kind of political figure. You chose Greens

and New Agers, neo-socialists and eco-anarchists, Democrats and—yes—a Reagan Republican. It was as if, in your collective wisdom, you were choosing an administration that could bring the broadest possible spectrum of the American people along with it. . . .

Shadow cabinet

The winners:

- *Secretary of State (also Secretary of Human Services, Chair of the Civil Rights Commission, and Ambassador to the U.N.):* Jesse Jackson.
- *Secretary of Defense:* Randall Forsberg, director of the Brookline, Mass.-based Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies, which does excellent work on alternative defense strategies.
- *Secretary of the Treasury (also Secretary of Commerce):* Hazel Henderson, independent futurist and author of *The Politics of the Solar Age: Alternatives to Economics* (1981).
- *Secretary of Agriculture:* Jim Hightower, Texas Commissioner of Agriculture and tireless promoter of small farms, organic farming, in-state food processing. . . .
- *Secretary of Education:* Ivan Illich, author of *Deschooling Society* (1971).
- *Secretary of Energy:* Amory Lovins, well-known champion of "soft energy paths."
- *Secretary of Health:* C. Everett Koop, Reagan's courageous Surgeon-General.
- *Secretary of Housing and Urban Development:* Jane Jacobs, author of *Cities and the Wealth of Nations* (#14).
- *Secretary of the Interior:* David Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth and, more recently, the San Francisco-based Earth Island Institute.
- *Attorney-General:* Daniel Sheehan, chief counsel for the D.C.-based Christic Institute, which is not only trying to prosecute the Iran-contra "secret team" but is fighting for state and local control of nuclear power, and the legal rights of "whistle-blowers" everywhere.
- *Secretary of Labor:* William Winpisinger,

outspoken president of the Machinists and Aerospace Workers union.

● **Secretary of Transportation:** Ross Capon, director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (#52).

● **Director of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations:** Murray Bookchin, tireless promoter of municipal self-governance (see esp. *The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship*, 1987).

● **Director of the Agency for International Development:** Frances Moore Lappe, well-known advocate of Third World self-development (see esp. *Betraying the National Interest*, 1987).

● **Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency:** Helen Caldicott, electrifying spokesperson for the anti-nuclear movement.

● **Director of the Congressional Clearinghouse on the Future:** Barbara Marx Hubbard, futurist and planetary healer (see #30, 45, 47).

● **Director of the Consumer Protection Agency:** Ralph Nader.

● **Director of Family Policy in the Office of Policy Development:** Virginia Satir, family therapist extraordinaire.

● **Director of the Federal Communications Commission:** Ted Turner.

● **Director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:** Admiral Gene LaRocque, director of the D.C.-based Center for Defense Information—retired military officers who are trying to broaden the definition of “national security.”

● **Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy:** Jeremy Rifkin, well-known opponent of genetic engineering (see esp. *Algeny*, #4).

Energy

Listing the “winners,” above, hardly begins to tap into the energy and imagination revealed by our voters.

At nearly every position, you nominated 40 or more good people.

Some of you didn't choose individuals but roles—as if to say that social change should never be guided by “stars.” For example, “a citizen diplomacy person” was nominated to be Secretary of Defense. “A nurse” was nominated to run Health. Dozens of you nominated your friends—or yourselves—for one or more positions.

We were pleased to see that, using no quota system whatsoever, 12 of the 25 positions were filled by women or racial “minorities.” The 13 white men include two Jews and one Lebanese-American.

Some of your nominations gave pleasure just in the seeing. One of you nominated a Co-op America (#9) staffer to run Commerce. A couple of you nominated Starhawk, a witch (as well as an expert on psychology and group process; #46), to run the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Several Native Americans were nominated to run Interior.

What a wonderful world that would be. What a wonderful world *we could have*.

The Dynamic Balance Party takes office

By Robert Theobald

Secretary of the Department of Gaia: Beginning next week I'll be head of the Department of Gaia—our living Earth [*kneels down, caresses the ground; wild cheers*].

As you know, all of us involved in the creation of our new departmental structure agreed that the Department of Gaia was the capstone. We can only survive as we maintain—indeed, seek to become part of—the natural environment.

This department will include the current Department of the Interior and the EPA and will also be primarily responsible for thinking about long-run directions.

We shall therefore work directly with all the other cabinet departments. Every month, we shall hold a half-day meeting and discussion on the comprehensive global picture [*chant: All-day meeting! All-day meeting!*].

We shall be aiming to limit throughput of *both* renewable *and* non-renewable resources. We shall challenge maximum economic growth policies. We shall encourage community and bioregional self-reliance. . . .

Secretary of the Department of Collaboration with the Poor Countries: My friends, the key international task for the next 30 years will be to create positive relationships between the rich and poor countries [*cheers*].

It is for this reason that we have cut the Department of State into two: this one, and the Department of Collaboration with the Rich Countries. We need to recognize that the values and issues of the poor countries are very different from our own. For far too long we have defined the development process as one which would encourage the so-called underdeveloped countries to become like the overdeveloped countries. . . .

Secretary of the Department of Family and Children: As you know, the Departments of Health, Human Services and Education have been placed under the family banner. Our broadest goal is to enable families to create self-esteem in all their members [*cheers*]. . . .

Casino gambling—or putting down roots?

By James Boggs

When Coleman Young was elected Detroit's first black mayor, he had a dream. A dream that he could get the corporations to stay in

Detroit by bribing them with tax abatements.

Today Young's “dream” has turned into a nightmare. Parke Davis, Stroh's, the Mack Ave. Chrysler plant are all gone. Once thriving neighborhoods are wastelands.

Today even Young knows that large-scale industry is not coming back to Detroit. That is why he is now calling casino gambling an “industry” and trying to force it down our throats, promising that it will bring 50,000 jobs, as the auto industry did.

There is an alternative.

First, we have to stop seeing the city as just a place to which you come to get a job or make a living.

The foundation of our city has to be people living in communities who realize that their human identity is based on Love and Respect for others. We, The People, have to make sure that our children are raised to place more value on social ties than on material wealth.

Second, we have to get rid of the myth that there is something sacred about large-scale production for the national and international market. We have to begin thinking of creating small enterprises that produce food, goods and services for our communities and our city.

To create these enterprises, we need a view of our city which takes into consideration both the natural resources of our area and the existing and potential skills of Detroiters:

● Detroit is in the Great Lakes region, so we can start by developing a *fishing fleet* to supply fresh fish for the whole area.

● Michigan has the best sand in the world. We can use it to produce *glass*—glass to replace the broken windows we can see all around us, glass to harness the energy of the sun.

We can't run or hide any more. We can't go back to the farm; we can't keep running from city to city; we can't rely upon casino gambling or distant markets to save us. We must put down our roots where we are and put our hearts, imaginations, minds and hands to work.

NewOptions

NEW OPTIONS (ISSN 0890-1619) is published every month except August by New Options Inc., 2005 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., lower level, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 822-0929.

Please address ALL correspondence to Post Office Box 19324, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Subscriptions: \$25 a year in the U.S., \$32 first-class and Canada, \$39 elsewhere. Back issues \$2 each.

Editor: Mark Satin

Manager, New Options Inc.: Sylvia Tognetti

Assistants: Judith Leckrone, Mary-Coleman Ragsdale

Business Consultants: Richard Perl, Roger Pritchard

Designer/Typesetter: Baker Johnson Graphic Design, Inc.

Printer/Mailer: Newsletter Services, Inc.

Mailing List Manager: Montgomery Data Systems, Inc.

Board of Advisors (partial listing): Lester Brown, Ernest Callenbach, Fritjof Capra, Herman Daly, James Fallows, Marilyn Ferguson, Elizabeth Dodson Gray, Joan Gussow, Vincent Harding, Willis Harman, Hazel Henderson, Jane Jacobs, Petra Kelly, Winona LaDuke, Hunter & Amory Lovins, Joanna Macy, Jane Mansbridge, Patricia Mische, Robin Morgan, Magaly Rodriguez Mossman, John Naisbitt, Jeremy Rifkin, Robert Rodale, Theodore Roszak, Mark Rudd, Kirkpatrick Sale, Charlene Sprenak, Robert Theobald, Nancy Jack Todd

How can they hang on to a dream?

NEW OPTIONS began publishing five years ago next February. It feels like several lifetimes ago, and one thing we've learned over the course of that time is a tremendous respect (bordering on awe) for those who have the ability to keep things going decade after decade.

Two of the oldest decentralist, ecological groups still in existence are the School of Living, founded in 1936, and Community Service, Inc., founded in 1940. Between them they're a *hundred years old* this year, and last month we bought Greyhound bus tickets to their October meetings. We wanted to know how they'd done it: how they'd managed to survive. We also wanted to know what their experiences had to teach the budding political movements of our time.

Problems of living

The School of Living was founded by Ralph Borsodi near Suffern, N.Y. Borsodi was one of our very best critics of consumerism and super-industrialism (his book *This Ugly Civilization*, 1928, could have been written yesterday by a U.S. Green), and the School was intended to help adults find positive alternatives to those deadly isms. There were also hands-on classes in home-building, gardening, etc. At one happy point Borsodi wrote, "Every School [of Living] should bear the same relationship to the community of the future which the cathedral bore to the medieval community."

Unfortunately, Borsodi was a difficult person and a poor administrator, and by the late 1940s he'd turned the School over to his associate, Mildred Loomis, who ran it on homesteads in Ohio and Pennsylvania until her death in 1986, at the age of 86 (see NEW OPTIONS #31).

Coming out

The School's quarterly board meeting took place last month at Twin Oaks, a utopian community in north-central Virginia (one of the board members lives there). Most of the time we met outside, at a long hand-crafted table, under huge trees rustling in the wind.

The meeting was taken up with odds and ends. What should become of the 83 boxes of books and historical documents that became available when Mildred died? Should School of Living buy into a Community Land Trust near Charlottesville? Should a new recording secretary be named?

Beneath the surface trivia, you could sense that the organization was beginning to come out of a long period of hibernation. All the decisions, no matter how minor, were being made

with an eye to the long-term future. There was, for the first time, a healthy age spread among the board members. And you couldn't help but be impressed by the caliber of some of them—Cynthia Edwards, who's helping introduce permaculture to the East Coast; Tom Greco, a management consultant and currency expert; Mel Leasure, a retired schoolteacher and prominent long-time NEA activist. . . .

"I attended a board meeting in 1980," Leasure told NEW OPTIONS, "and at that point, frankly, I was not impressed. I felt that the whole program was Mildred. [Worse,] the people there [weren't] accepting the kind of leadership she was providing."

"There was no question the organization was in disarray," Greco told NEW OPTIONS. "In the early 1980s things had degenerated to a degree that the organization was barely alive. Some of the meetings I came to in those days were so chaotic and contentious that I wondered why I ever came back. It was horrible."

"I [guess I] felt there was too much of value here to let it slide. What I saw was a very rich history, plus a wholistic philosophy that I could find nowhere else."

"I, too, was greatly drawn by the fundamental philosophy," Leasure said. "But I felt the group did not know how to process."

"I had spent my whole life dealing with the idea that process is as important as content, and that process comes first. You really can't successfully work on content until people know how to proceed. So I felt this would be my contribution to the group."

And now? "Mainly I see the School of Living influencing the current Green and bioregional movements," Greco said. "I think if those movements are going to have any significance they are going to have to be decentralist in their philosophy, and I think we have a tremendous amount to offer [in that regard]."

"I feel as though most political activists are thinkers, arguers, pickers of concepts," Leasure said. "I don't think there's enough recognition that the decentralist way of living is a lot of tedious hard work. That's the kind of thing I see the School of Living teaching people."

The small community

From 1920-1936, Arthur Morgan was the much-loved president of Antioch College of Yellow Springs, Ohio; many of Antioch's innovative programs got their start under Morgan. Four years later he founded Community Service, Inc., which he ran with his son, Griscom, and daughter-in-law, Jane, until he retired three

decades later at the age of 92.

Community Service, Inc., was meant to revitalize the notion that small communities are the best incubators of good character. Morgan's original strategy was to build up two or three communities that could "prove" their worth to a skeptical world. To that end, he encouraged competent and interesting people to move to Yellow Springs from all over the U.S., and he turned the basement of the science building on the Antioch campus into what may have been the world's first "small business incubator."

But few people paid much attention to Yellow Springs, Ohio, or Community Service, Inc.; and today Morgan's daughter-in-law, Jane, now in her 60s with a bad back, runs what's left of the organization through dint of hard work and no pay. These days it sells books on community, publishes a newsletter and hosts an annual conference.

The small conference

We came to Yellow Springs for the 1988 conference, "Building Community as if the Earth Matters." Featured speakers included Susan Meeker-Lowry, author of *Economics as if the Earth Really Matters* (#47), and Bob Swann, president of the E.F. Schumacher Society (#12). At least 20 of the 50 people attending appeared to be 60 years old or over.

In most other respects it was a generic conference. The big all-wood conference center, the smells of good food, the massive beams overhead, the stunning forest outside. . . . We pull our battered vinyl chairs into a circle and take turns giving our "impressions."

And each of us listens with one ear only; and all the shy, intelligent, sensitive faces; and someone says "We're on our way to becoming community land developers!," and someone else says, "Why do the Greens use such alienating language?"; and the men fold their hands on their laps (so much unsaid); and the women adjust their sweaters and shawls; and outside the window the yellow leaves fall like rain.

Two perspectives

"I think we're still doing a service, with the books and the newsletter and the conferences," Jane Morgan tells us. "One of the secrets [to lasting five decades] is not being afraid to be small, not feeling you have to get enormous."

"I think maybe some of the people [on our board] feel we should be doing things more efficiently and on a larger scale and all that stuff. But I haven't worried about that. We are getting the message out. Things spread, you know. What we put out in *Community Service Newsletter* is going to be picked up by other people and journals, we don't have to reach every single one of them first-hand. . . . And if [Community Service, Inc.] has to stop, that doesn't mean it's necessarily a failure. It just means it has to

stop. Or it's recycled into something else [which in turn might] be modified some way. . . ."

To some people on Community Service, Inc.'s board, Jane Morgan's perspective is only common sense. Others long for the organization to strike out in new directions before it does indeed have to be "recycled into something else."

"The board isn't willing to ask hard questions [about the transition from Jane Morgan to a different generation]," board member and recent Antioch graduate Theresa Fallon told NEW OPTIONS. "Nobody wants to bring it up I think. . . . They need energy. They need new ideas. They need to take risks. They need to—they need to be alive, and I think it's just sort of on a maintenance level right now."

What would Fallon do? "I think we should do local experimenting, and then report on it in the newsletter so people can get ideas of what to do elsewhere."

Other board members harbor other unfulfilled hopes. "I think [Community Service] could take the lead [in opposing an industrial park in Yellow Springs]," Tom Dunham, Yellow Springs tax franchise owner, told NEW OPTIONS. "It has the status and the lineage."

"I would like to explore Community Service develop[ing] a regional land trust," retired schoolteacher Vic Eyth told NEW OPTIONS. "We have the legal documents. . . ."

Borsodi to Morgan to you

School of Living and Community Service, Inc., may never be as "successful" as Ralph Borsodi and Arthur Morgan might have liked. But they are successful in this: they have 100 years' worth of lessons to teach our movement. Among the most important:

- **Focus on process, not just content.** School of Living's board fought with Mildred Loomis literally until the year she died. Community Service's board has never confronted Jane Morgan on key issues. Had either organization developed effective decision-making processes, either could have influenced the post-liberal, post-socialist movements of the 1980s.

- **Build in transmission mechanisms between the generations.** Until recently, neither board had given much thought to passing the torch on to a younger generation of activists. Now, both are wondering where is the competent young blood.

- **Acquire marketing skills, not just political ideas.** Both groups were overflowing with good social and political ideas. Both kind of expected the public to beat a path to their doors. Some people in both groups are still waiting, and hoping.

School of Living: R.D. 1-Box 185-A, Cochranville PA 19330. Community Service, Inc.: P.O. Box 243, Yellow Springs OH 45387.

Greens gather; party to be developed

Last year the U.S. Greens held their first national gathering (NEW OPTIONS #40); next year they'll be holding their second (#49). This year the Greens have been holding *regional* gatherings, none larger than last month's "Greening the West" gathering at Jones Gulch, Calif., 30 miles south of San Francisco.

Over 800 people registered for the gathering—approx. twice as many as registered for last year's *national* gathering; so many that the camp site reached its carrying capacity and some people had to be turned away. Hundreds of workshops were held over the course of the two days, sometimes more than 20 at a time!

Most tangible outcome of the gathering: the decision to develop a "Green Party of the West," self-described as a "network to facilitate campaigns for initiatives, referendums, and local independent Green candidates."

Welcome to Jones Gulch

"There were a lot of big trees [at Jones Gulch]," Jess Shoup, one of the four organizers of the gathering, told NEW OPTIONS. "So it was quiet—and dark under the trees—with rolling hills—and little cabins, you know, with 12 to 30 people in them, and bunk beds in the cabins. It was just like going to camp!"

"I'd say [most people] were between 26 and 44," Cara Lamm, marketing director for the Elmwood Institute (#18), told us. "The people that I talked with [were dressed very casually, though most of them] had 'respectable' jobs. I talked with people from [as far away] as Vancouver, B.C., and San Diego, and Utah. . . ."

"There were a lot of people there who were not capital-G Greens, but were just interested and had never been to anything like this before. It wasn't just an event for the in-crowd."

Heart of it all

Over 100 people gave talks or workshops or appeared on panels. Among them: Michael Closson (#38) on economic conversion, Dave Schmidt (#30) on referendum campaigns, Charlene Spretnak (#3) on community, and Ernest Callenbach (#18) on "living Green day by day." "The biggest complaint we had," says Shoup, "is people said, You tried to pack too much into 2 1/2 days! And it's very, very true."

For many, the political high point of the gathering came at the afternoon forums on Green strategy.

Starhawk, author of *Truth or Dare* (#46), facilitated a forum on nonviolent direct-action. "What it mostly was," she told NEW OPTIONS, "was people who are involved in direct-

action talking about, you know, what they are doing and what kinds of things are happening. . . . We had small groups to discuss how the Greens might relate to direct-action."

Margo Adair, author of *Working Inside Out* (#14), facilitated a forum on community organizing and networking. "I led a reflective meditation process," she told us, "in which people could look at the questions, What do networks mean to them? What does community mean to them? *Who* is their community? What networks of support do they have? . . . After that we broke into small groups and at that point the room was roaring with voices: people had lots to share. . . ."

Party of the West

Danny Moses, editorial director at Sierra Club Books, facilitated a forum called "Toward a Green Party of the West."

"I tried to go into it without having a lot of expectations," he told us. "I did feel pretty sure that there would be a number of people agreeing with the basic notion that we needed to be more active, more visible, more focused in elections as well as other ways we're working. So it wasn't surprising to me that we had a good turnout and that [some] people were pretty ardent in their expressions of support; just as [other] people were very ardent in asking questions about whether the timing was right. . . ."

"The outcome [is that] a number of people decided to involve themselves in exploring further what the possibilities are. I know of a couple of [Green] groups that are already starting to meet to discuss the prospects for Green involvement in elections in their local communities." Plus a Party newsletter—*Vote Green!*—is about to get off the ground.

Not all intellectual

"I want to make sure you understand that this was not all intellectual stuff that was going on," Shoup told NEW OPTIONS. "Friday night we had [poetry and singing], Saturday night we had a six-ring circus: a lot of music and dancing and carousing around. . . ."

On Sunday afternoon, people met with others from their communities or regions to plan their next steps. "A lot of people really did stay to the end to be in [those] groups," Starhawk told us, "and that was encouraging to me."

"We did a closing ritual that was really nice and people liked."

"Beyond contradictions"

"[The gathering] lent itself to being seen however you wanted to," Lamm told NEW OPTIONS. "It was *completely decentralized*, with [very few] plenaries; so everybody's experience of it was different."

The least you can say is that most people

Continued on page six, column three . . .

Letters . . .

Them and us

I have never been so moved by NEW OPTIONS as I was when reading your report on the Democratic convention ("The Democrats Won't Save Us," #51). Given my disillusionment with America's political system and the media's coverage of it—shared by many, I'm sure—your piece was really a breath of fresh air.

—Jeff Gordon
Los Angeles, California

Excellent piece on the Democratic convention—best I've read anywhere. You articulated many of the things I felt while watching it on TV, that dichotomy of really wishing the party could reach its promise, but knowing inside it hasn't . . . yet.

Can it ever, or is the genetic material flawed? That will be the political organizers' question of the 90s.

—Harvey Wasserman
Author, *America Born & Reborn (1983)*
Columbus, Ohio

One giveaway statement in your "coverage" of the Democratic convention (not to mention the whole tenor of your painful—and paining—recital) makes me think it would be better for you to retile your newsletter *NO Options*. You say: "If you want to be a change agent, you can't just say 'no' on defense."

Perhaps, "living and working in" the provincial atmosphere of "downtown Washington," you are simply unaware of the existence of the hundreds of thousands of us in groups like the Group for a Switzerland Without an Army. We are saying *precisely* that—"no" on defense—four decades into the Atomic Age.

—John H. Davenport
Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain

From your maiden incursion into the Democratic political thicket, you emerged with a pain in your side—rather than in a lower portion of your anatomy—because the Democratic party did not embrace six New Age, decentralist values (all commendable ones, of course).

Those who embrace the values you found absent in the Democratic party might consider two options. One is the Norman Thomas route via a separate minor party which will advance programs which may catch on in two or three decades, as some of his did. The other is to utilize the present parties by becoming active in local, state and national political affairs.

I am convinced that in most cases the door to the political process is wide open to any energetic person. Thus the fault, dear Brutus, the reason for your pain, is not in the stars but in the sun. In the main we are too lazy to govern ourselves.

—Eric Cox
Campaign for U.N. Reform
Washington, D.C.

Cleaning house

Do you really want to be cured from the metaphorical (?) pain in your side because the Democrats "won't save us"? If so, try a little holistic medical analysis.

Your first-hand observations on the Democrats ring fairly true to my understanding about their three factions: the "left-liberals" (read Old Left), the "reform-liberals" (read managerial progressives), and the "moderates" (read Henry Jackson Democrats). Although I question your labels ("progressive" is increasingly preferred over "liberal," and the so-called "moderates" sit in the middle of a narrow right lane), you are essentially correct that all three factions share the same assumptions about economic growth, etc.

Your prescription for the Democrats is that they "add a Green or New Age leg to the three-legged table that they've been setting for the American people." But you are unwilling or unable to identify the irreconcilable factions within the new leg.

To parallel your Democratic trio, I'll suggest three "new leg" groups that you unwisely seek to fuse.

First there are the New Agers, resolutely middle-brow folk who are intensely self-centered and anti-intellectual (rather than fusing head and heart, they go for the heart every time), as well as apolitical or politically naive (they seek peace, holism, and living with nature, but don't care to go beyond the simple slogan level).

The New Agers should in no way be equated with the American Greens, who themselves are split in two unrecognized factions similar to the "fundis" and "realos" in Germany.

The U.S. "fundis" or fundamentalists are utopian purists who believe in deep ecology, bioregionalism and other politically impossible or very long-term goals. The "realos" or realists, such as those at the Worldwatch Institute, try to enlighten existing political and intellectual leaders by suggesting immediate actions toward a sustainable society.

If you are serious about alleviating that pain in your side, you should try your darnedest to help fashion a solid new leg that the Democrats can stand on. Such a leg cannot be built by mixing New Agers, utopian Greens and realistic Greens. If you truly wish to promote new op-

tions for ecological wisdom, global responsibility and the long-term future, a base must be built around the realists, and permissiveness toward the airheads must cease.

Cleaning house to build a solid leg will be painful in the short run. (Excuse my metaphor-fest!)

On the other hand, perhaps you enjoy the Peter Pan Politics of the sandbox, and prefer living in the long-term with a perpetual pain in your side. It does give rise to passionate lead essays, which in turn evoke letters such as this. And so we go round and round.

—Michael Marien
Editor, *Future Survey*
LaFayette, New York

Speaking of investments

Speaking of investments in community (NEW OPTIONS #46), what about the children?

We hear a lot from activists about environmental problems and about such potential horrors as nuclear holocaust. In children we have a whole potential army of people who have a very vested interest in keeping our world safe, sane and sanitary. Yet this group is left to waste their time and energy or misuse it in pointless activities which teach them the skills of hate and violence and destruction.

It occurs to me that a corps of activists who really care about our future could organize the children into groups (perhaps along the lines of other youth organizations, like the scouts)—young pro-Earthers who, once taught about the potential dangers to their future and about various effective strategies to counteract them, could well be our salvation.

—Laurie Corzett
Medford, Massachusetts

Voices of experience

How many people will accept all those taxes proposed in NEW OPTIONS #48 ("To Balance the Budget, Build a Sustainable Society")? A merger tax, inheritance tax, stock market tax, alcohol and cigarette tax, gas tax, higher income tax, etc.

Isn't this basically the old discredited idea of liberal big government that has been rejected around the world? It makes me wonder if NEW OPTIONS is serious about seeking [innovative] solutions or if it is really stuck in peddling the same old left-wing stuff in new bottles.

I agree with NEW OPTIONS that the only way to reduce the deficit is to replace the old system with a new system. But if we really hope to create a New Capitalism that integrates left and right into a broader, more effective synthesis, it will not be based on taxing things we don't approve of. It will have to *reconcile* the conservative's demand for entrepreneurial

freedom with the liberal's demand for human welfare.

—William E. Halal

*Author, The New Capitalism (1986)
Washington, D.C.*

Your suggestions for balancing the budget all seem to assume that any revenue raised will actually be used to balance the budget and that the Civil Service will willingly cooperate to cut back its expenditures and make its operations more efficient. Were you born yesterday?

We should always bear in mind that when we propose anything that involves a U.S. government action, the requisite monies will most likely wind up in the hands of a government department in which wastefulness and inefficiency are thoroughly entrenched.

—Daniel Jacobson

Gaithersburg, Maryland

I was interested in the "visionary" ideas of the economists you contacted for balancing the budget. However, I felt a raging frustration building up as I read to the end. To see the task of balancing the budget solely in terms of "raising revenues and reducing expenditures" is to ignore the source of not only the unbalanced domestic budget but also of the U.S. foreign deficit—the Fed's run amok monetary policy!

The deficit never would have grown to anything worrisome were it not for the extortionate interest rates Paul Volcker imposed with Carter's and Reagan's acquiescence.

What should be done? Reduce interest rates now. Cutting the rate of interest 1% would knock \$20 billion off the deficit. . . .

—John H. Hotson

*Cttee on Monetary and Economic Reform
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada*

Unvarnished truth(s)

I'm sure that most women readers of NEW OPTIONS, reading two different and seemingly favorable [paragraphs] on anti-abortion groups in #47, felt the same chill of fear I felt.

Outlawing abortion means police with guns raiding abortion clinics. It means tens of thousands of women a year hospitalized because of botched abortions.

The anti-abortionists you mention may talk a good line about survival, nonviolence, justice and being "consistently pro-life," but to millions of women, and the men who support them, all they are pushing is violence, oppression and death.

—Carol Moore

Washington, D.C.

I am bisexual, pagan with some Christian influences, nonmonogamous, a mother, and

middle-aged. My pro-life conclusions grow out of my pacifist and anti-animal-experimentation sensitivities to physical violation and violence.

Also, they grow out of a deeply sensualistic and intuitive sense of life. I feel connected to my own history as a quickly growing embryo bursting with possibilities and as a small fetus leaping in my mother's womb. I catch the fly or ant that wanders into my home and take it to my yard. Every time I hear of an abortion, my very womb hurts from the news.

As a psychotherapist, I learn more every day that people's real reasons for actions may be very different from their political rationalizations. Many clients who have had abortions were re-enacting their mothers' rejection of them as babies. This kind of acting-out behavior gives a feeling of immediate relief and of empowerment, but it is ultimately more wounding than healing. It is a form of joining with and emulating one's oppressor. The thinking of others as property is dehumanizing to us all, I believe.

I know of no other person who shares my mix of lifestyle and values. Perhaps there are others like me among NEW OPTIONS's subscribers?

—Mallory Crawford

West Hartford, Connecticut

How frightening it is

How difficult and frightening it is to listen to one another, to allow our deepest beliefs to be examined and to reach a new synthesis! But I think it is imperative for the human race to develop the humility, compassion and wisdom to listen with open hearts to people whose ideas challenge our own. I believe your inclusion of Juli Loesch's views against abortion (#47) and Herb Walters's limited pro-contra ideas (#49) have enriched the movement for a sustainable culture.

As an active supporter of abortion rights, I think it is important to acknowledge the depth of feeling of those who thoughtfully question abortion. It is tempting to label Anti-Choice viewpoints as nonsense—or evil—especially since radical Anti-Choice forces have used harassment, assault, fire-bombing and other violence against Pro-Choice advocates. But I suspect that such polarization allows people to avoid the ambivalence that resides within themselves regarding this complex and painful issue.

I would like to live in a world where every child was a wanted child, where "compulsory pregnancy" was unthinkable, where abortion was not a necessary choice for some women. Until that day, I will support abortion rights, particularly for poor women. I intend to continue to read NEW OPTIONS as well, and expect you to continue to challenge my thinking.

—Deborah Wiese

Seattle, Washington

Continued from page four:

seemed to get something out of it.

"There was a lot of energy and a lot of interest," Bill Moyer, director of the Social Movement Empowerment Project (#48), told us.

"I think the feeling here was a lot more a feeling of solidarity than was present at [our national gathering]," Moses said.

"Spirituality-versus-politics wasn't even an issue," Starhawk said.

"The tone of the conference was not heavily confrontational. It much more tended to [exude] a sense of respect for what[ever] different people were interested in. People weren't fighting about things. They were sort of, I think, really trying to see 'beyond contradictions.'

"[And] there seemed to be a remarkable lack of ego-tripping."

Frustrations

There were gripes too—sometimes from the same people.

"One of the frustrations about the conference for me was it was so white!" Starhawk said. "There was barely any representation of people of color. One of the things that did come out of it is a group to start talking about organizing across the lines of race and class. . . ."

"I think there's a real lack of understanding or ability or maybe experience [on the part of the Greens]," Moyer said. "The Greens are very 'green' as organizers. [Most of them] don't quite have an understanding about organizing or the politics of organizing."

"There were a lot of people there who were not necessarily willing to commit themselves to anything terribly radical," Starhawk said. "[For example], after a discussion about all of the different political problems and things that were going on, [you might] say, 'Well what could the Greens do?,' and people would say, 'Let's do a recycling project!' [laughs]. *Some* [of us], at least, felt a little frustrated!"

Greens in bloom

It is extraordinary that, with virtually no mainstream publicity and a minimal budget, the Greens were able to pull off such a large and varied gathering. Only time will tell if they become effective change agents, or if they straighten out their organizational and ideological problems (#40), or if the "Green Party of the West" takes hold. In the aftermath of their gathering, however, it's hard not to share Shoup's enthusiasm: "The whole Green movement is just going to bloom out here! It's going to be wild."

Green Committees: P.O. Box 30208, Kansas City MO 64112. Green Party of the West: 370 Turk St., #21, San Francisco CA 94102; Vote Green!, \$10/yr.

Thomas Berry's Earth community

Dear Thomas Berry,

I've got to confess, I wasn't looking forward to reading your book. After about two hours, nature bores me, and I figured any book entitled *The Dream of the Earth* (Sierra Club Books, \$19) would bore me too.

I wouldn't have even opened it except for the good things I'd been hearing about you. They say you're a wise old Passionate priest in the Bronx who's been on a decades-long spiritual-intellectual journey. They say that, for years, your hand-typed xeroxed essays have been circulating among spiritual and political visionaries from coast to coast. And of course I'd met your brother Jim, sponsor of the "Case Against Economic Growth" conference (NEW OPTIONS #44).

So I opened your book. And read it—twice. And the first thing I want to say is, Thank you for giving "nature" back to me—not as a place of pretty scenery, necessarily, but as part of *who and what I am*. It is awesome, and so damned exciting, to realize that I *complete* the Earth, in the sense that I and all humans make it possible for the Earth community to self-consciously reflect upon itself.

Another thing I want to tell you is, I'd *like* to be persuaded by your core argument—that once we see ourselves as an integral part of the Earth community, we won't want to go back to the old redemptive religion, the old growth-oriented economics, the old nation-state-based politics. I'd like to believe that very much. So thanks for making that argument as powerfully as you do . . . and for proposing appropriate new spiritual and political-economic alternatives.

Dream vision

A dream vision holds us together, you say—the dream of endless human progress and economic "growth."

You argue, very persuasively, that the dream vision of Progress-and-Growth has turned out to be disastrous. But what to do? Ecologists such as Paul Ehrlich would have us transform contemporary cultures in a quasi-religious direction. You go much further. You say both contemporary cultures and traditional religions are inextricably bound up with the dream of progress. You'd have us adopt a "postcritical naive-ete." You'd have us try to get back in touch with "the primary tendencies of our nature itself," with "the ultimate powers of the universe as they make themselves present to us through the spontaneities within our own beings."

In plainer language, you'd have us engage in a new descent into the primitive, the wild, *nature* . . . in all its beauty and fierceness . . . go back to the well, see what we can find there. You'd have us listen to contemporary shamanic personalities, develop our own shamanic sensitivities. *You'd have us start over*—without forgetting our humanistic/enlightenment tradition but without holding onto it, either.

Starting over

What I like most about your book is that you're not just posturing for philosophers and intellectuals; you *really mean* for us to start over. Thus, much of your book is devoted to helping us conceive a new religious cosmology, a new history, a new politics, a new political unit.

The old cosmology was, you say, based on the Biblical story of creation. A new cosmology could be based on the new creation story that has evolved in the scientific community—a story that's fully capable (you claim) of uniting the entire human race . . . and of evoking the "entrancement with life" that's necessary to awaken us to life's problems and potentials.

Our history, you say, has been either matricentric (Old Europe, 6500-3500 B.C.) or patricentric. The new historical period will, hopefully, be "omnicentric." Everyone will participate, and every life form's interests will be taken into account.

Our politics, you say, will move from "democracy" (rule by humans) to "biocracy" ("the participation of the larger life community in our human decision-making processes"); similarly, our preferred decision-making unit will move from the nation-state to the bioregion.

Unlike many visionaries, you've thought long and hard about how to implement your proposals. In one of your best chapters, "The American College in the Ecological Age," you show how much of your perspective could be introduced through the educational system. Throughout the book you refer hopefully to such groups as the U.S. Greens (p. 4 above), the bioregionalists, Greenpeace, Earth First!, Institute for Social Ecology. If you were a Maoist, you might present your political program like this: Re-invent the human; re-invent education; mobilize the masses of visionaries and seekers and all those who love Life.

Second thoughts

The first time I read your book I was entranced. (Everyone should allow themselves to just BE with you the first time through.) The

second time I read it more critically, and I have a couple of questions.

Sometimes you say we should just "listen to" the Earth, or learn to listen to the Earth. How can you be so certain that the messages we get will be socially benign? As a Jew, I feel compelled to point out that the track record of 20th century nature-and-soil movements has not been good. While an enlightenment-based, humanistic ideology might not be as radically ecological as the ideology you are proposing, might it not be a much safer route to roughly the same ends?

Is it *reason* that's at fault (as you'd have it), or our *lack* of reason, our bizarre *irrationality* in the teeth of all kinds of perfectly obvious ecological and economic and cultural warnings? Where is the evidence that Americans are even *thinking* about their long-term problems and possibilities?

Here's another concern of mine: For 20 years the social change movement was torn apart by people who sought to represent a higher truth, Marxism or socialism or anarchism, whatever. Now, finally, those people have been whittled down to size. Isn't your book an "open, sesame" for a new kind of tripper, those who claim to be in closer touch with Nature than the rest of us?

I opened your book fearing I'd get nature essays. Instead I got a book that does for the 1980s what Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* did for the 1960s. It helps explain me to myself, and our movement to itself. It is not the mirror's fault that I have some questions about what I see.

Solo: what the movement needs

Pam Solo's just-published book *From Protest to Policy* (Ballinger, \$20) is a thoughtful critique of the nuclear freeze movement and the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign organization (recently merged with Sane to form SANE/FREEZE). It's searching and honest and often painful to read, much in the manner of two other recent internal critiques, Jane Mansbridge on the ERA campaign (NEW OPTIONS #35) and Todd Gitlin on SDS (#45).

Like Mansbridge and Gitlin, Solo has certainly earned the right to speak out. She's worked on disarmament for the American Friends Service Committee, coordinated the Nuclear Weapons Facilities Task Force, helped the nuclear freeze movement get off the ground and been chair of the Freeze Campaign's strategy committee. (She's also managed some of Pat Schroeder's congressional races and worked at Radcliffe and Harvard.)

From Protest to Policy addresses itself to two

key questions: Why did the freeze turn into a tame "arms control" issue rather than become (as its initial supporters hoped) the opening salvo in a campaign to break out of the traditional cold war discourse? And why did the freeze suffer from endless organizational problems?

The book is full of answers to both questions. With regard to the freeze turning into a mere arms control issue, Solo shows that the organizers had no clarity about strategy, points up innumerable personal and political differences among them, and shows how easily they were romanced and awed and basically led around by their allies (certain congressional aides) on Capitol Hill.

With regard to the movement's organizational problems, Solo is even more devastating. She argues that many freeze enthusiasts saw the commitment to direct democracy and consensus as "a way of opting out of the larger society"; that many were almost neurotically suspicious of power and professionalism; that many exhibited "fierce individualism and the internalization of an atomized culture, even while rejecting it."

Fortunately, Solo has much to say about how to address both problems. To ensure that the peace movement remains critical of the status quo, she'd have it work out a shared program and strategy—the sooner, the better. She goes so far as to suggest such a program, a program for "common security."

Organizationally, Solo wants the movement to have a strong local base *and* a strong national presence. "The more decentralized the organizing base, the higher a priority must be put on national strategy building and coordination. . . ."

Toward a Greener vision

Solo's critique clearly contains much truth; her recommendations clearly contain much wisdom. But some of it makes me wonder.

Her program for "common security," based on the principle that "only when our enemy is secure will we be secure," is appealing. But her formulation is too rooted in the political left, too one-sided, too unbalanced. For example, we're told that "Each Third World nation has the right to choose its own political and economic course. . . ." But most Third World nations are dictatorships, and most First- and Second-World nations benefit greatly from all kinds of sinister suppressions and manipulations. Is that really none of our business? Should peace be our highest value, or only one of several key values?

Similarly, we're told that "True security is reached not by amassing weapons but by restoring our social and economic integrity. . . ." That is exactly the kind of statement that gives non-leftist Americans fits—and for good reason. Surely it is more accurate to say that true security is reached *both by amassing appro-*

priate weaponry and by restoring our social and economic integrity.

Solo's vision of a decentralized *and* national-focussed, democratic *and* professionalized movement is music to my ears. But I don't completely trust her on these points. She seems too skeptical of consensus decision-making and direct democracy, too eager simply to make national policy. I'd strike a different balance than she, weighted more toward modified consensus and grassroots decision-making.

If you want to think seriously about the peace movement's future, you have got to bite into this very juicy book. But be careful.

Rensenbrink: light in Poland

There have been plenty of left-wing and centrist interpretations of Poland's Solidarity movement (see NEW OPTIONS #9). Now we have a Green interpretation, John Rensenbrink's *Poland Challenges a Divided World* (Louisiana State Univ. Press, \$20).

Rensenbrink is coordinator of the U.S. Greens' platform-writing process (#49) as well as professor of government at Bowdoin College in Maine. Whereas the left sees Solidarity as providing an opening for "real" socialism, and moderates see Solidarity as providing an opening for free enterprise, Greens like Rensenbrink tend to suspect that Solidarity has more to give the traditional political "ism's" than vice-versa.

At first, he tells the reader, he wanted to track down Solidarity's ideology, suspecting it might be a veritable "third way" for us all. But the longer he spent in Poland, the more convinced he became that the sources of Solidarity were non-ideological. "It had its ideas and principles, of course. But these were secondary to the call for action to provide structures for the

defense of historic rights." Recent history had taught Poles a crushingly unavoidable lesson, namely, that they needed to take *personal and social responsibility* for themselves and their situation. And so they set up an organization—Solidarity—that would allow them to do just that.

Have we Americans learned that lesson, really?

Model

In many ways the book is a model of what a humane, Greenish political book should be.

The first of its three Parts is not academic but personal. Entitled "A Family Trip to Poland," it's a first-person, blow-by-blow account of Rensenbrink's travels, experiences and learnings. It not only breaks down the barrier between the personal and the political, it also breaks down the barrier between the author and the reader—thus making it easier for you to argue with Rensenbrink in your mind's eye, and come to your *own* conclusions about Poland.

The middle Part is a fascinating catalogue of the forces behind Solidarity—not just the structural forces, party, church, family, etc., but also, and equally, the "psychological" forces, such as the commitment to nonviolence (purely pragmatic, says Rensenbrink) and—most important of all, perhaps—the deeply moving commitment to the pursuit of selfhood ("subjectivity").

The final Part examines Solidarity itself, including the many political tendencies within it—far more than in both our major political parties combined. "The challenge that Walesa poses," Rensenbrink concludes, "is to win for ordinary people both economic rights and political rights, both social guarantees and civil liberties [—and to do so] through a transformative, constitutionalizing, nonviolent process. . . . This is a worldwide challenge, a worldwide project." It is the Green project.

NewOptions

New Options, Inc.
Post Office Box 19324
Washington, D.C. 20036

Address Correction Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Washington, D.C.
Permit No. 4999

Issue No. Fifty-three