

# NewOptions

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## The Democrats Won't Save Us

For much of the Democratic National Convention, held in Atlanta June 18-21, I felt sick. There was a pain in my side, and it hurt so much it made me dizzy.

I didn't understand the source of the pain. But I had a clue. For my whole adult life I'd thought of myself as an outsider. I thought significant social change could only happen outside the two-party system, and I carried around a very satisfying picture of the two major parties as hypocritical, racist, sexist, mean-spirited, etc. Now here I was at my first convention and I had to admit that the scene was very different from what I expected.

I'd thought that only social change groups fostered real inclusiveness and diversity, but the Democratic convention was more diverse than any social change group I'd ever been part of. I'd thought that only spiritual or humanistic-psychology groups were capable of establishing environments of real sharing, but the quality of listening in some of the state delegate caucuses matched anything I'd been exposed to in 25 years of Searching.

How could I have been such a fool, I thought, through my pain.

### World-weary press

Some of it was clearly my doing. But some of it was the media's doing. They tell you so little. Even in 1988, even at Atlanta, the vast majority of the 15,000 reporters in attendance weren't doing their jobs.

The vast majority of them hung out all day at the Georgia World Congress Center, a mammoth sterile warehouse of a building next to the Omni (where the televised, evening sessions were held). All day long, while dozens of caucuses and receptions were taking place around town, you could see them at the Center, eating the free food, reading the occasional press release and engaging in cynical banter. Dave Barry of the *Miami Herald* had the courage to joke about it: "The giant press facility has become a very grim place indeed,

with journalists gazing glumly at vast expanses of press releases. . . . Things finally got so bad that some members of the press, in desperation, resorted to ACTUALLY LEAVING THE PRESS FACILITY. . . ."

Because most reporters failed to do their legwork, the Democratic convention was not how it seemed:

- It seemed choreographed. In fact, it was incredibly vibrant.

- Dukakis seemed conventional, Jackson seemed exciting. In fact, Dukakis could spearhead the first major Democratic departure from New Deal ideology. And Jackson is in most ways a very conventional liberal Democrat.

- The basic division in the Democratic party seemed to be between pragmatists and change agents. In fact, three major factions are competing for supremacy. And all three factions share the *same* basic assumptions. And none of those assumptions are particularly uplifting.

### Choreographed?

Everyone said the convention was timid and choreographed—everyone from the *Washington Post* to the *Northern Sun News* (Minneapolis's alternative monthly). The parts on TV *were* choreographed. But if you attended the state delegate caucuses, the interest-group caucuses and the receptions, which began at eight in the morning and continued full-blast until just before "prime time," you'd have known the convention was brimming with passionate life.

The platform debate in the Omni—on tax policy, no first use (of nuclear weapons), and Palestinian statehood—was pompous and superficial. And the delegates knew it. They "voted with their mouths and feet" by talking loudly and running around throughout the proceedings.

But if you'd attended the Women's Caucus earlier that day—and over 800 delegates did (out of approx. 4,000)—you'd have been treated to an electric debate on all three issues.

*And anyone could have gone up to the microphone and participated.*

That debate saw the bravest single performance of the convention. Madeleine Albright and other Dukakis "heavies" were weighing in with arguments against no first use, and Claire Greensfelder, Bay Area peace activist, was trying to refute them. Bella Abzug—chair of the session and bullish as ever—began deriding Greensfelder for her lack of expertise (a devastating charge in a roomful of self-consciously "professional" women). But Greensfelder refused to back down: "I don't think I need to be an expert to be up there. . . . All I can say is we shouldn't necessarily listen to the experts whether they're men *or* women, but listen within—to ourselves. . . ."

If the Women's Caucus was electric and bruising, the Gay and Lesbian Caucus was forever gentle. Evenly divided between Dukakis and Jackson delegates, whenever passions ran too high someone would tell a joke, or someone who fundamentally disagreed with you would say, "I think that's a good point, and it's well-taken."

The most disappointing interest-group gathering was the Peace Caucus. The Monday session was advertised as a debate on no first use, and over 200 delegates showed up. But there was no audience participation and no real debate. Superficial arguments were presented with rhetorical flourishes by a galaxy of "stars" (Congresspeople, organizational leaders, etc.), most of whom didn't even stay in the room but simply came in to have their say and then went out again. We didn't even get to ask questions of the "stars." Is the peace movement so eager to achieve mainstream respectability that it's selling its soul?

### Businessmen?

The mainstream press enjoyed bashing the Democratic delegates—pointing out how they were richer than the general public, better educated, more "permissive," etc. The alternative

movement did the same thing in its own way. "We Need a People's Party, Not a Businessmen's Convention," read one protester's sign outside the Omni.

Most of the Democratic delegates *were* well-off (55% had household incomes of \$50,000 or more); most of them *were* well-educated (46% had been to graduate school). But those were hardly the most important things about them.

For example: Twenty-seven percent of the delegates were non-white, 49% female, 48% under 45 and 33% divorced or widowed or single. I wouldn't be surprised if this was the most demographically balanced convention of *any* political party—mainstream or "oppositional" — in American history.

The Jesse Jackson hospitality room was on the 10th floor of the posh Marriott Marquis Hotel. You could go up there and see a steady stream of black people, from every walk of life, peering out at the atrium and listening to the jazz pianist and sampling the exquisite salad. The sense of accomplishment and quiet pride in that room could have raised the Titanic.

Waiting for the New York delegation to come to order one morning, I was deeply moved by the casual ambience—so different from what you saw of the delegates on TV. Fewer than half the men were in suits and ties, and message T-shirts were everywhere ("Win Jesse Win"; "Palestinian Statehood Now"). There were blacks with gold pendants and blue jeans, sleepy-looking women with hip-hugging dresses. Everyone seemed to be talking at once, and their voices seemed to be coming from a deep place. They called out to and touched each other with ease.

Perhaps because it was smaller, the Louisiana delegate caucus maintained an easy intimacy and camaraderie even after it got down to business. Two of the youngest delegates were asked to get up and say something about the "youth movement" they were hoping to get going among Louisiana Democrats. One was male, one was female; both of them were black. They got a standing ovation, and some of the people standing up for them were some of the same kinds of people that chased civil rights workers' cars down back country roads 25 years ago. The young man took the microphone and everybody laughed and hooted: "Chauvinist!" He kept his poise and his sense of humor. The young woman spoke next and said, "I allowed him to speak first 'cause I initiated all this. . . ." More laughter, more cheers.

### "We are the future!"

But for all the good human connecting, for all the passion and caring, it wasn't enough. Something was still missing. My side still hurt.

On the second day of the convention I made my way to the empty parking lot outside the

convention facilities. The parking lot was the sanctioned staging area for protest demonstrations, and Dr. Lenora B. Fulani and the New Alliance Party were out in force (Fulani, a 38-year-old black activist, is the Alliance's candidate for president).

As I arrived, a pick-up truck turned into the parking lot, then pulled out again, and the sparse crowd of protesters began shouting, "We beat back the Klan!" Speaker after speaker tried to tell people that the Klan and the police and the Democratic party were just different aspects of the same rotten system. One of Fulani's lieutenants shouted into the microphone, "This is a fascist state!"

A bevy of protesters displayed an enormous sign: "No Business as Usual—No Matter What It Takes."

I felt badly for the majority of the protesters—mostly 15- to 20-year-olds whose emotions were being manipulated by the New Alliance organizers for their own ends. Then I realized with a start that I was just as alienated—and just as credulous—when I was that age. My alienation and credulity didn't end until long after I'd walked away from my career and emigrated to Canada, ostensibly to protest the war, really to punish myself for being middle-class.

It took me 11 years to get back to the U.S. How many of these kids' lives would be equally twisted, I wondered, by the likes of the New Alliance Party?

A chant came up from the crowd: "Not the bomb, *we're* the future! Not the bomb, *we're* the future!"

### Technocrat?

The mainstream press almost unanimously agrees with Dukakis's now-famous assertion that the 1988 election—and, by extension, Dukakis himself—"is about competence, not ideology." Even the left press agrees, though it's less happy about the situation.

The press couldn't be more wrong. Dukakis is the first Democratic nominee in my lifetime that just might rewrite traditional Democratic ideology.

For the last 15 years or so—ever since the 1974 (post-Watergate) election—a new breed of governor has been coming to power across the U.S. Economically sophisticated, these "new" governors are less interested in rebuilding our industrial base than in moving us on to a post-industrial, communications-era economy. Socially committed, they're less interested in proposing big government/New Deal solutions to our social problems than in using government as a kind of facilitator.

They might not build much housing for the poor—but they'd help get needed capital to community development organizations and neighborhood banks and housing co-ops in poor

areas.

On the Democratic side, the most prominent and successful of these "new governors" are Jim Blanchard of Michigan, who addressed the convention; Bill Clinton of Arkansas, who nominated Dukakis; and Dukakis himself.

The hot book on the new governors is David Osborne's *Laboratories of Democracy*, 1988. (Among those who helped with the book: Mary Houghton of South Shore Bank, NEW OPTIONS #46, and Bob Friedman of the Corporation for Enterprise Development, p. 3 below.) Osborne concludes that the new governors offer the glimmerings of a "new paradigm" (his term). "To boil it down to a slogan, if the thesis was government as solution [McGovernism] and the antithesis was government as problem [Reaganism], the synthesis is government as partner. . . ."

"Traditional liberals in Massachusetts attack Dukakis for not raising welfare benefits to the poverty line. Dukakis responds that such a move would destroy incentives to work, and that the better path is more investment in education, training, job placement, and low-income housing. Does this put Dukakis to the left or right of his critics? The answer is that it puts him within a different paradigm."

### Change agent?

Just as the mainstream and alternative press sees Dukakis as he'd like to be seen (as a moderate), so does the press see Jackson as *he'd* like to be seen—as the radical, the change-agent, the tree-shaker. But if you paid close attention to his nominating speech, and his proposed platform planks, and the attitudes of his delegates, chances are you'd have a different view. For all his moving words, at the 1988 convention Jackson emerged as a very conventional big government politician.

In his minority report to the Democratic platform, Jackson called for doubling the amount of

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## NewOptions

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# How're we really doing?

The Gross National Product went up today, oh boy. But are we making any progress toward the kinds of ecological, quality-of-life and equity goals that a humane society might say are more important than GNP?

Until recently, it all depended on who you read. If you wanted a gloomy view you could read the political left. If you wanted an upbeat view you could read the political right.

Now, at last, five social change groups have busted up that left/right charade. They've developed their own "report cards" or "indexes" for measuring our progress.

## Human suffering

The Washington, D.C.-based Population Crisis Committee recently published an eight-color glossy 16" x 20" chart, with extensive explanations. Its provocative title: "The International Human Suffering Index."

Over 100 countries are ranked on criteria ranging from "Average Annual Rate of Inflation" to "Personal Freedom"; from "Access to Clean Drinking Water" to "Adult Literacy Rate." The worst countries are listed at the top of the chart, the best at the bottom. Because of the gaudy and powerful color scheme, just looking at the results is enough to pierce the heart. Among the worst countries: Angola and Afghanistan. Among the best: Switzerland and The Netherlands.

"We wanted to put out something that was bright and colorful and simple," Sharon Camp, co-author of the document, told NEW OPTIONS. "I don't know of any other easily accessible place where you can see all of that data laid out for this many countries."

Who's using the index? "We know it's hanging up in the State Department and in some American Embassies; we've seen it around on Capitol Hill; we know a few wire service reporters have it hanging in their offices. We get a very heavy demand for it from teachers."

## Indigenous peoples

Earlier this summer Cultural Survival released *Report from the Frontier: The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*. It's chock-full of facts and incredibly thorough, with chapters on indigenous peoples in Central America, South America, Asia, Africa, "Rich Countries" and "the Socialist Countries" as well as three chapters on indigenous people's movements.

Although dispassionately written, it's not for the faint-hearted: all the continents and political systems come out dripping with blood. If Herbert Marcuse was right, and the best way to

judge a society is by seeing how it treats its marginal citizens, then *Report from the Frontier* is one of the most damning indictments of modern "civilization" that can be imagined.

"We think it's the first book ever that has dealt with the question of indigenous people on a global basis without getting caught up in a lot of East-West politics," Jason Clay, research director at Cultural Survival, told NEW OPTIONS. "Indigenous people are at the center [of the book] rather than some ideology. . . ."

"We've sent it to some carefully-chosen people [in the press and in government]. We're also trying to get it to be part of the curriculum in high schools and colleges."

## Sustainable societies

The granddaddy of the current crop of report cards is Worldwatch Institute's *State of the World 1984*. This year saw publication of the fifth annual volume, *State of the World 1988*, and it's the boldest yet.

This year the book not only hands out roses and raspberries to countries (and businesses, and movements) for their efforts on behalf of renewable energy, biological diversity, family planning, etc.; it unabashedly proposes what *could* and *should* be done in each of these areas. It goes so far as to propose a global budget to "achieve sustainable development" by the year 2000 (projected cost: \$150 billion/year)—and a way to foot the bill.

If you thought Worldwatch was just another timid, Washington-based public interest group, you should have heard Worldwatch's president, Lester Brown, at the press conference launching the book: "We're not talking about fine-tuning, we're talking about some fundamental changes in policies. . . ."

Sales of the 1988 edition are expected to top 100,000, and we went to the press conference wanting to find out how the Institute manages to produce such consistently well-received work. The speeches didn't tell us. But at one point we wandered into the back room and came upon eight or 10 Worldwatch staff people, most of them in their 20s and 30s, sitting on the desks, lying on the floor, obviously a bright and happy crew, listening to the speeches piped in over a loudspeaker and making amused sardonic comments.

## Sustainable states

At the Worldwatch press conference, Tina Hobson, director of the Renew America Project, got up and publicly thanked Worldwatch "for being sort of our dry run." In less than a

week Renew America would be holding its own press conference to release the second annual edition of its report, "State of the States 1988."

Renew America's report ranks each of the states according to environmental criteria—everything from surface water protection to highway safety. The big winners: California, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Wisconsin.

"Because of the New Federalism, the progress that we're going to make on environmental issues really depends largely on what happens at the state level," Scott Ridley, author of the report, told NEW OPTIONS.

"The report's reaching environmental organizations. It's reaching the staff in state agencies. And it's reaching state legislators and policymakers. Those are the three target groups we're trying to get it to, and we've gotten good feedback from all three."

## The new economy

Traditionally, businesspeople are happy with a state if it has low wage rates, low taxes and little welfare spending. But in "Making the Grade," the Corporation for Enterprise Development's "1988 Development Report Card for the States," the criteria are dramatically different. The authors explain: "In [the] new economy, within reasonable limits it's not how high taxes are that's important but what value you get for them. Within reasonable limits, it's not how high wages are but whether the productivity of the workforce is worth the wages it gets paid."

The criteria that states get measured by in "Making the Grade" include: equity (e.g., ratio of black to white income); entrepreneurial energy (e.g., new companies per 10,000); human resource capacity (e.g., adult illiteracy); and investing in infrastructure. Top of the line: Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey and Vermont.

"We needed a way of simplifying and hopefully elevating the public debate about what the nature of the economic challenges are today, and what kind of economic strategies are likely to be most successful," Robert Friedman, president of CED, told NEW OPTIONS.

"A lot of state officials have used at least pieces of the text. . . . The other way it's used is [by] the press."

*Population Crisis Committee: 1120-19th St. N.W., #550, DC 20036; "Suffering Index," \$5. Cultural Survival: 11 Divinity Ave., Cambridge MA 02138; Report, \$15. Worldwatch Institute: 1776 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., #701, DC 20036; State of the World 1988, \$10. Renew America Project: 1001 Connecticut Ave. N.W., #719, DC 20036; "State of the States 1988," \$15. Corporation for Enterprise Development: 1725 "K" St. N.W., #1401, DC 20006; "Making the Grade," \$25.*

Continued from page two:

federal money spent on education—without bothering to say how the money should be used, or suggesting any changes in the *ways* we educate our children!

Similarly, he proposed a government-run national health program—without once mentioning the need to incorporate holistic or preventive approaches into the program.

He proposed adopting a policy of “no first use” of nuclear weapons—without saying how we would help defend Europe if the Soviet Union invaded. Would we beef up our conventional forces (far more expensive than nukes) to deal with this possibility? Would we change over to some kind of “alternative” or nonviolent military strategy? If you want to be a change agent, you can’t just say “no” on defense.

### Two-way battle?

Because the media took what the candidates were saying about themselves at face value, they saw the convention as a battle between pragmatists and change agents. But if you hung out at the convention and trusted your eyes and ears, you’d have concluded that there were three major factions competing for supremacy. Call them “left-liberals,” “reform-liberals” and “moderates.”

The left-liberals’ key word is *fairness* or *compassion*. In 1980, their presidential candidate was Ted Kennedy; in 1984, Jesse Jackson and Walter Mondale. The real significance of the 1988 Democratic campaign may be that, through it, Jackson took unchallenged control of this faction of the party and moved it further to the left.

The reform-liberals’ key word is *management* or *innovation*. In 1980 their presidential candidate was Jerry Brown; in 1984, Gary Hart. In 1988, the reform-liberals experienced (some might say, suffered) a sea-change. They were no longer outsiders challenging the left-liberal and moderate establishments. They had displaced the left-liberals as part of the establishment.

The moderates’ key word is *strength*—as in “military strength.” In 1980 (but not 1976) their candidate was Jimmy Carter; in 1984, John Glenn. In 1988, Lloyd Bentsen is their man.

### Balance?

Everybody at the convention seemed to speak of “balance.” It might have been the second most frequently used word (after “family”). The media was impressed by the “balance” the Democrats had been able to achieve between and among their various groups.

In his brilliant new book, *Out of Weakness* (p. 7 below), political philosopher Andrew Schmookler says, “It is balance that the warrior spirit within us has lacked.” But there was

something not satisfying about the “balance” at the Democratic convention; something not quite right.

The reason is simple. All three factions are unbalanced in the *same way*. All are based on the *same assumptions*. To be unkind, all are based on Schmookler’s “warrior spirit within us.” Just think:

- All assume that economic growth should continue forever—despite the limited carrying capacity of the Earth.

- All assume we should maintain an overly commercialized society in which getting and spending—not being and experiencing—is the be-all and end-all.

- All assume we are superior to animals and other life-forms and should continue to dominate them for our own short-term benefit.

- All assume that the full-employment economy (i.e., distributing income via “jobs”) should continue indefinitely—even though many of the jobs we’re paid for *now* could disappear without a trace, and much of the work we’re not paid for (like community organizing and raising our kids) is crucial.

- All assume our own citizens’ *wants* are more pressing than the rest of the world’s *needs*.

- All assume that simpler lifestyles, gentler on the Earth, leaving us much more time for learning and sharing and growing, can hardly be a political goal.

### A longing

Those were some assumptions shared by the Democrats in Atlanta. But there were other assumptions—genuinely “balancing” assumptions—that came out here and there.

I think of the South Carolina delegate who urged patience with the Democratic party because “under the surface” it was “spiritually evolving.”

I think of the New York delegate—hard at work in Dukakis’s trailer—convinced of the need to develop empathy for the Earth.

I think of the Georgia delegate who claimed to be looking for the “next step” beyond feminism and environmentalism.

I think of Bruce Babbitt turning to a small select audience with a pained look in his eye, and saying: As the American system ripples across Asia and even the Soviet Union, do we have the capacity to look ourselves in the mirror and ask, What kind of an example are we setting?

Most of all I think of all the receptions and parties I went to where people would turn to me and say things like, “What are you doing here? This isn’t important,” or, “So how much longer do you think we can keep it all going?,” or, “This is crazy, isn’t it?”

Beneath the surface of the convention, then, besides the dominant assumptions of the three

major factions were some very contrary assumptions. Behind many of the contrary assumptions was a longing for such values as simplicity, ecological wisdom, global responsibility, and a focus on the long-term future.

### Fourth leg

Can such values—call them Green or New Age values—be brought in to the Democratic party in a substantial way? For all that I was impressed with the intelligence and energy and dedication of party activists; for all that I’d *like* to say “yes” and finally feel part of the mainstream and get rid of this pain in my side; the truth is that I can’t see it happening anytime soon.

The reason is not that the Democratic party establishment is hostile to such values. It would be, but if we got far enough to arouse their hostility we’d have already won two-thirds of the battle. The reason is deeper and sadder. The vast majority of Democrats have personally bought in to the assumptions of the three major factions.

You could see it in the passive way most Democrats accepted the direction of the Dukakis and Jackson floor leaders on every issue.

You could hear it in the nominating speeches for Jackson and Dukakis, with their inescapable underlying theme: “He’ll save us.”

You could see it in the way the Democrats stared at Hollywood stars such as Morgan Fairchild and Ed Begley, Jr., when they came into the room. You could tell they wanted that same status and power and privilege for themselves.

The Democrats need to add a Green or New Age leg to the three-legged (three-factioned) table that they’ve been setting for the American people. Eventually, perhaps, they will. And then they’ll have a chance to bring this society into real balance. But first they’re going to have to develop the self-awareness and self-esteem (some dare call it spiritual confidence) needed to pay close attention to what’s in their hearts—and to share those deeper messages in a public and political way.

For the foreseeable future it remains with us, innovators and experimenters and pioneers, to give shape and substance to that fourth “leg.” And tens of thousands of us are doing that every day, in groups as courageous and varied as The Other Economic Summit (NEW OPTIONS #50), Earth First! (#25), Elmwood Institute (#18), Institute of Social Ecology (#38), Worldwatch Institute (#35), Search for Common Ground (#22), Regeneration Project (#15), Rocky Mountain Institute (#15). . . .

For the foreseeable future I am just going to have to continue to live with that pain in my side. And we are all going to have to continue to live with the pain of knowing how wide is the gap between what we are as a society and what we could and should be.

# Letters . . .

## All this naming . . .

I understand why people want to quantize and label everything and everyone, but I really hate the crap in your cover story, "Who Can Get Us Out of This Mess?" (NEW OPTIONS #49).

Of all the labels strenuously generated, *maybe* the Times Mirror list comes close to what is really out there. But none of the descriptions really satisfies me.

How the hell are you supposed to make use of the information offered in, for example, the "Sustainer" label? And what about all the folks from the 60s who never gave up—Abbie Hoffman, the Berrigan brothers (my first civil disobedience action was with them, in 1982), etc.???? Perhaps we should have someone create a set of labels for all American liberals and radicals (all the socialist factions, fristance) . . . or maybe we shouldn't . . . all this number crunching and Naming makes me ill!!!

—Thornton Kimes  
*The Kindred Community  
Des Moines, Iowa*

I enjoyed the article, "Who Can Get Us Out of This Mess?" Unfortunately the Times Mirror Co. is omitting an important ideological category—those of us who are Green-libertarian decentralists: anti-big business and anti-big government, but socially tolerant and socially concerned.

—Richard Clark  
*Salem, Indiana*

I have always objected to dividing individuals into so-called descriptive categories as your lead article's interviewees did. It raises the hair on back of my neck!

I've been familiar with the VALS system for several years and fail to see much difference between it and the other two systems described. From the very first time I discovered VALS I felt that it was simply designed to enable corporate America to sell more of its products to those of us who would choose quality over quantity.

I know it was supposed to aid "new age" businesses and others in marketing and provide a new look at how the consumer in the U.S. was changing (given the baby boomers and aging hippies and all that). However, those businesses still need big bucks to take advantage of even the best studies. Meanwhile, major corporations and large businesses are using studies such as VALS to their advantage, as

anyone who reads magazines or watches TV can attest.

—Susan Meeker-Lowry  
*Montpelier, Vermont*

[To gain political power,] our greatest challenge is identifying a likely plurality of voters. Your cover story helps in this regard.

For example, using the voter profile developed by Times Mirror Co., it is clear that we begin with a natural constituency of 60s Democrats and Seculars (between them, 20% of the electorate). We might leave the Moralists and Followers to the Republicans, and the New Dealers and Partisan Poor to the Democrats—while stealing away important blocs of Enterprisers and Upbeats from the Republicans and God-and-Country Poor from the Democrats.

Interestingly, a third party need only capture 35-40% of the vote to win a close election.

—Jared Scarborough  
*Payson, Illinois*

## Camouflaged Reagan?

Please CANCEL MY SUBSCRIPTION! Your contra support ("Listening to the Contras," #49) is beyond the pale. Camouflaged Reagan doesn't work here.

—John Shumaker  
*Waterloo, Iowa*

Before anyone will listen to the contras, they had better put down their arms.

Whether or not NEW OPTIONS, or we in the Green movement, or Americans, support "armed struggles of liberation," the fact is that nothing the Sandinistas are doing justifies one iota the commission of violence against innocent fellow Nicaraguans that these so-called "nice" contras are carrying out.

My sympathies lie with the maimed and murdered children, women, teachers, doctors, peasants, who are suffering the hardships of an immoral war and are doubly betrayed by countrymen who claim to have "equal" hardships.

If you look hard enough you can find people to gripe; the *New York Times* does a very good job of finding disgruntled businessmen and others who have lost their pre-revolution privileges and wealth. And if you look equally hard, you can find the peasants who have gained in health care and education, not to mention self-esteem, from this same revolution.

Who cares that the Sandinistas aren't perfect, that Nicaragua isn't a utopia, that it is a "Marxist-Leninist" state? Who cares that there are Nicaraguans who didn't want to defend their country against Somocistas and the CIA? I say big deal. These people are directly or indirectly *murdering their fellow countrymen* and supporting treasonous immoral acts against their country, inspired and assisted by outside counter-

revolutionary forces. They deserve their hardships.

Call for reconciliation? You've got a helluva nerve. You've played into the hands of the neo-liberals who are afraid to oppose contra aid because they fear being branded leftist sympathizers. Avoid bloodshed? You are really naive. Heed the Nicaraguans who criticize contras and Sandinistas? I guess you guys thought Duarte was a good moderate too. No wonder Americans are considered the most naive citizens on Earth.

—Lorna Salzman  
*East Quogue, New York*

## Herb Walters replies . . .

*Anyone who thinks my article "Listening to the Contras" implied military support of the contras missed the whole point!*

*Our struggle to end contra aid is necessary and important—as I said in the article. However, our willingness to dehumanize all contra soldiers and make them "faceless enemies" with no valid points of view actually weakens our ability to contribute to reconciliation and a lasting peace in Nicaragua. It even weakens our ability to end contra aid—many people tend not to trust the Central America peace network because they feel it's so one-sided.*

## "Peace" movement?

I congratulate you on having the courage and insight to print "Listening to the Contras," a concept as foreign to the left-of-center as breaking bread with Daniel Ortega is to Oliver North. Until the "other side" is recognized by its *opposition* as human, with a point of view, true peace is impossible and the Left is as guilty of egging on civil war as the CIA.

Thanks to such people as Herb Walters, there may yet be a chance for a peaceful resolution in Nicaragua; more so than even in El Salvador, where self-styled moderate democrats have excluded everyone and only polarized the country beyond repair. Walters's approach is one true peace activists should study in relation to other similar troublespots, like Angola or the West Bank—also the recipients of the usual one-dimensional solutions.

While I seriously doubt a contra victory would bring peace and justice to their country, neither will ignoring and suppressing them.

—Richard L. Huff  
*Keithville, Louisiana*

How can you editorially evaluate the questions raised by Herb Walters's piece as "the most important questions that the peace movement has asked itself since the Vietnam war"? Both of you seem puzzlingly out of touch with the peace movement.

As a 40-year peace movement veteran and

a longtime activist for peace in Central America, I am not aware that the peace movement has designated the contras as "the enemy." The Reagan administration made the Sandinistas into enemies, and *created the contras* as their enemy. The peace movement's enemy is the notably non-human idea of "contra aid" which gets Nicaraguans to kill each other rather than dialogue . . . with our money and in our name!

I can easily supply you with an anthology of literature documenting that the peace movement has consistently promoted dialogue among Latin Americans—the people most directly affected by conflict in their region of the world.

We have not functioned as advocates of one side in the Central American conflicts, as Walters claims, but of peaceful solutions and the right of Central Americans and other peoples to self-determination. We have not arrogated to ourselves the role of self-appointed mediators, as Walters would have us do; instead, we have promoted others as multilateral mediators.

Unlike Herb Walters, I do not conceive of my role as a peacemaker as seeking "the truth." I operate from the premise that there are *many* truths, none of which are advanced by warfare.

Here's a "genuinely important" question you could ask: Why won't our government allow Latin Americans to find their own solutions to their conflicts?

—**Ingrid Komar**  
*Coalition for a New Foreign Policy*  
*Washington, D.C.*

I believe the article by Herb Walters is the most significant statement about the role of peacemakers I've read. After 40 years in the peace movement, I am finally persuaded that Reconciliation must be our primary objective.

—(Ms.) **Gene Knudsen-Hoffman**  
*Santa Barbara, California*

Alignment with truth—rather than with a Green ideology—seems the most defensible position to me. To do that one has to listen fairly to all parties. I'd like to hear much more about what Herb learned from the contras.

—**Jerry Howard**  
*Former editor, Whole Life Times*  
*Wayland, Massachusetts*

You have done a service by publishing Herb Walters's article. Maybe it will cause some sober reflection among those self-styled "peace" activists who are not wholly wedded to the idea that Sandinista (and other) totalitarianism is the most desirable condition for mankind.

Walters wonders if "peace" groups could have mediated between the Sandinistas and "contra factions not dominated by the National Guard and mercenaries." Better that "peace"

groups should have mediated between the Contras and "Sandinista factions not dominated by committed Marxist-Leninists." Unfortunately, since 1982 there have been no such factions within the Sandinista regime, a point that was repeatedly affirmed to me by business leaders, Catholic Church officials and journalists during my November visit to Managua.

—**John McClaughry**  
*Former Sr Policy Advisor, Reagan Admin.*  
*Concord, Vermont*

I wholeheartedly support the Contra Listening Project.

Too often the Anti-Contra Left in the U.S. assumes that a Sandinista military victory over the contras is the only road to peace; that Daniel Ortega and a Sandinista-style revolution is the only hope for the entire region. These people overlook Costa Rica which abolished its army 40 years ago and has committed itself to peace, literacy and conservation.

—**Gregory McIsaac**  
*Champaign, Illinois*

## Utterly appalled

I am utterly appalled by Herb Walters's piece, on two grounds.

First, I'm appalled that he finds reasonable grounds for complaints against the Sandinistas at this late date. Where has he been? The Sandinistas themselves have admitted making mistakes, both conceptually and concretely. But that doesn't alter the basic justice of their cause.

Secondly, and more seriously, I'm appalled by the approach to contra soldiers. Soldiers in a war are not a democratic community. They are there to obey. They are instruments in the hands of the leaders. This is true of all armies, in all wars, at all times. The purpose of the contra army is to recapture Nicaragua for the heirs of Somoza and to restore the oligarchy to the position from which they can suck the blood of the people. That is the only issue in this war.

In the present instance, since the contras have lost the war in the field, they and their handlers may be trying different means. Who is [Walters's organization,] the Rural Southern Voice for Peace ("RSVP," yet!)? Their position sounds subversive. Are they a front for the CIA? Or some fascist fundamentalist religious group—Moonies? I wouldn't be surprised.

—**Ruth Kaswan**  
*Berkeley, California*

## Herb Walters replies . . .

*The RSVP is in fact an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a pacifist organization that's been working for peace and justice since 1914. We are happy to send anyone information about our work and about our Listening Projects [most of] which we've organized here in the U.S.*

*RSVP: 1901 Hannah Branch Rd, Burnsville NC 28714. [Ed. note: We urged Walters to not respond to the red-baiting-in-reverse in the last paragraph of Ruth Kaswan's letter. And we feel the first sentence of his reply plays right into this reverse red-baiting. Suppose RSVP were not affiliated with a traditional peace group. Should that cast one iota of suspicion on it?]*

## New peace strategy

Peace and justice movements generally use an adversarial strategy in which they try to gain power so as to defeat their opponents. However, adversarial strategies often fail, or succeed only after many years and much suffering.

When Herb Walters listened to the contras, he was using another strategy, the dialogue/mediation/win-win strategy. This can often succeed in bringing peace and justice in situations where the adversarial approach fails, and it can often do so with surprising speed.

—**Les Brunswick**  
*Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

The article by Herb Walters was very refreshing and encouraging. I have steadfastly refused to support most so-called peace groups because the methods used feed our war-like (separative and punitive) mentality rather than dissipate it.

Almost every conflict has a long and frequently obscure history. That coupled with our perceptual shortcomings makes it practically impossible to find the "truth." So if we want to be useful, our strategy should be to *join* rather than judge the parties involved.

—**Terry Schansman**  
*Lacey Spring, Alabama*

Herb Walters sounds a note that NEW OPTIONS's "master critics" need to hear. It is a note of *self-criticism*.

Any of us who are susceptible to zeal for the right cause will fall—readily—into the trap of supposing that we ourselves could not possibly be part of the problem. Still, some persons and groups must articulate and develop the peace-making position. Some of us must become the bridging, the listening, the humanly affirming ones who will put themselves in contact with pro's and con's alike.

It is a very tough stand to take. But what else will deliver us from the seductive simplicity of "Sons of Light vs. Sons of Darkness"?

—**Geri Cooke**  
*Laporte, Pennsylvania*

## Stay brave!

You are unique and wonderful. Stay brave!

—**Lynda H. George**  
*Indianapolis, Indiana*

## It's Worldwatch—by a mile!

The voting deadline is past, the results are in. NEW OPTIONS's subscribers have given New Options Inc.'s eighth annual Political Book Award to Worldwatch Institute for *State of the World 1987*.

In the previous two years, Worldwatch's annual *State of the World* report finished a close second. This year it won by the biggest margin any winner had enjoyed since 1984.

Three other books did well: Scott Peck's *The Different Drum*, Anne Schaeff's *When Society Becomes an Addict* and Riane Eisler's *The Chalice and the Blade*.

Once again, sole male authors fared poorly in the voting. The Worldwatch book has 10 co-authors (including five women).

Nine books were nominated for the Award by a panel of four distinguished decentralist/globally responsible thinkers chosen by NEW OPTIONS. All nominees had to be published in 1987 in the U.S. Ballots were sent to all 10,000 NEW OPTIONS subscribers.

### The global & the local

*State of the World 1987*, reviewed in #35, not only gives the world a kind of "physical exam" from the point of view of ecology and economics. It calls for social control of technology and for strengthening, even "inventing," global institutions.

It received much praise from you. From a 48-year-old male "househusband" in Cottage Grove, Ore.: "The best single source on our most critical problem—survival." From a 57-year-old male professor of history in Claremont, Calif.: "Good information and sound generalizations." From a 56-year-old male professor in Normal, Ill.: "Good sense of the interconnectedness of Earth's human and other societies."

But, from a 48-year-old male teacher in Dakar, Senegal: "Just because a group calls itself a 'world' something doesn't make it globally responsible; decentralism is not even given lip-service." From a 64-year-old female psychotherapist in Rowley, Mass.: "Needs translation into anecdotes about real-life people." From a 56-year-old male economist in San Francisco: "Lester Brown et al. make their living fronting for capitalism."

*The Different Drum*, reviewed in #47, is a meditation on, plea for, and strategy for getting to small-scale community. It received as many first-place votes as the Worldwatch book.

From a 40-year-old female administrative assistant in Lincoln City, Ore.: "Offers practical and realistic steps to change human interaction." From a 32-year-old female library worker

in Seattle: "Helped me 'enter into community' with my mother for the first time in my life!" From a 32-year-old male "welfare scum" in Montreal: "As someone who lives a very isolated existence with little purpose, this book made me realize that it is not entirely my fault."

But, from a 53-year-old male minister in Indianapolis: "Smooth crap. . . I'm a local activist and the book doesn't connect in any meaningful way with my involvements locally."

### 21st century feminism

*When Society Becomes an Addict*, which came in third, argues that our society can best be described as an "addictive system." (In a previous book the author had described it as a "white male system.") Self-centeredness, dishonesty, the "process of trashing," fear, cynicism, etc.—all are built-in characteristics or processes of that system. Beyond it is said to be the "living process system."

From a 40-year-old female planner in Bethesda, Md.: "Describes how thoroughly we are addicted to our world view and how desperate we are to keep it—at a very high cost!" From a 46-year-old male vocational rehabilitation counselor in Tacoma, Wash.: "Makes the crucial point that dysfunctional humans created dysfunctional institutions which reward the dysfunctional behaviors of individuals: workaholics, war-mongers, polluters et al." From a 43-year-old female "social activist" in Los Angeles: "Once we realize the system is itself sick, we will stop trying to 'fix' it—be co-dependents—and channel our energy toward creating a society based on an inclusive, non-hierarchical connection with each other."

But, from a 38-year-old female "feminist consultant" in Atlanta: "There is no scrutiny of power and accountability in the book—just a poorly researched, non-resourced, arrogant diatribe for a blanket obedience to the 12-step [Alcoholics Anonymous] program. Please. Spare me."

*The Chalice and the Blade*, which finished fourth, offers a new theory of cultural evolution. There are two possible models of society. The *dominator* model—patriarchy or matriarchy (!)—is based on the supposed inferiority of one of the sexes. The *partnership* model is based on the "principle of linking rather than ranking."

The book sets out to tell "the story of how the original partnership direction of Western culture veered off into a bloody 5,000-year dominator detour." About two-thirds of it revisits anthropology and history from the

dominator/partnership perspective. It goes on to argue that our global problems are "in large part" the result of a "dominator model of social organization at our level of technological development."

Those who liked it *really* liked it! From a 44-year-old female educator in New York City: "No other book ever written comes anywhere near to this. It is a completely accurate statement of reality." From a 40-year-old female "facilitator/consultant" in Los Angeles: "Fills in what has been 'lost' over time and opens the doors to more wholeness and creative expression for women *and* men." From a 33-year-old male editor in Berkeley: "Speaks to the important relationship between political change and cultural [change], and cuts through the biological determinism that plagues much feminist writing."

But, from a 50-year-old male futurist in upstate New York: "Another simplistic New Age misfire while the world suffers on."

### Age and sex differences

Once again, age and sex differences had a dramatic impact on the voting.

Among women, Scott Peck's book narrowly beat out Riane Eisler's and Anne Schaeff's—the first time a male author finished first among women. *State of the World* finished fourth.

Among people over 60, *State of the World* received 25% more votes than the next book (*The Different Drum*). That's a lot! Eisler finished third, Schaeff finished sixth.

### Why the "best"?

NEW OPTIONS subscribers didn't confine their comments on the ballots to the books. Let's give the last word to a 39-year-old female management consultant from Westport, Conn.: "Why does there have to be a 'best' book? Will the second-place book be a 'loser'? One of the elements of the new paradigm should be not competing with each other. Why don't you recommend that we read all these books, or at least some of them?"

## Schmookler: toward peace & wholeness

Twenty-five years ago, on campuses and in coffee-houses, you could see certain kinds of people reading Albert Camus's book *The Rebel*. It is conceivable that you will soon see the same kinds of people reading Andrew Schmookler's just-published book *Out of Weakness* (Bantam, \$11 pbk). Like Camus's book, Schmookler's seeks to push the social change movement forward from the rut it had been in. And it does more: It offers all of us, hawks and doves and in-betweens, a psychotherapeutic journey to-

ward a spiritual place of great personal and political power.

Schmookler graduated *summa cum laude* from Harvard, and *Esquire* recently named him one of its "Men and Women Under 40 Who Are Changing the Nation," but so far he's resisted the Establishment's efforts to tame him. He chooses not to teach or otherwise work in any institution, preferring instead simply to write. His previous book, *The Parable of the Tribes*, gave us a clear-eyed and yet hopeful vision of the meaning of human history (NEW OPTIONS #5). *Out of Weakness* displays the same easy familiarity with philosophy, anthropology, political economy, etc., but it is far more personal and passionate. It had to be. Its aim is to give us a clear-eyed and yet hopeful vision of the depths of the human soul.

The basic question it asks is, Why are we wounded? What is the nature of our wounds? And what can be done to heal them? The subtitle of the book is "Healing the Wounds that Drive Us to War," but it's clear that Schmookler is speaking of the wounds that drive us to do *any* sort of damage to self or others, and render us incapable of changing the nature (as distinct from the forms) of our institutions.

Schmookler's answer, in brief, is this: "The ceaseless struggle for power" that began thousands of years ago and continues to this day has "structured [our] living energies into the form of fear." To some extent, our fears are "adaptive in a world plagued with insecurities" (Schmookler's willingness to concede this point keeps him from sounding like a peacenik). But to an even greater extent, our fears are exaggerated—and are destroying us:

- To keep from feeling that "We are weak!," we go to staggering lengths to demonstrate our superiority and prove that we are "in control." Our status ranking systems, our nuclear weapons, our rampant materialism—all are rooted in this.

- To keep from feeling that "We are evil!," we set up rigid boundaries between ourselves and other people—not to mention ourselves and our own inner lives!

- To keep from feeling confused and uncertain, we try to convince ourselves that "Our truth is God's truth!"—thereby cutting ourselves off from other truths, and much of life.

### Strength of weakness

Because Schmookler's description of our predicament is so devastating, the solutions he offers can't cut any corners. And they don't.

To get us beyond our needs for superiority and control, he'd have us do no less than construct a world "beyond scarcity" — a world without "winners" and "losers" — a world in which the things that deeply matter to us have little to do with money or power. To get us beyond our arrogance, he'd have us "embrace

mystery." Above all else he wants us to acquire the courage to experience "the *strength* of weakness . . . the power and freedom that can come from embracing the true vulnerability of one's condition."

There is a politics behind these kinds of solutions. Listen: "One can, it is true, condemn the [world's] winners for the injuries they cause others in the pursuit of their own gratification." That is the left-liberal approach. "But the more fundamental insight is the recognition that 'winning' is a losing battle." That is the Green or New Age approach. The left would make the world *fairer*. Green or New Age politics would, in addition, have us re-evaluate who *we* are and what we want from life.

A staggering task. But according to Schmookler, the evolutionary process gives us grounds for hope. Like Riane Eisler (p. 7 above), Schmookler believes that the "rule of power" originated only with the rise of civilization; and he reminds us that civilization is but a speck in the sands of time. Thus, "in the larger evolutionary process it is not sin but wholeness that has been growing upon the planet," and there are signs that the "natural wholeness of life" is being re-established. Moreover, "The encompassing Whole we are challenged to create at a new level may have something to do with God."

Living and working in downtown Washington, D.C., I am naturally inclined to find hope in more mundane places. I find hope in the fact that this book manages to take the thoughts and dreams of some of the most courageous members of my generation and weld them into a compelling whole. I find hope in the fact that Bantam had to increase its print run for this book *before it even hit the stands*. I find hope in the fact that the humility this book teaches and embodies is ultimately more appealing than the character-armor and power games we've concocted to ward off our fears.

## Seed et al.: toward a living Earth

There is one way of warding off our fears that Schmookler mentions only in passing: ". . . our seeing ourselves as separate from the rest of Earth's living body." Fortunately, another book has just been published that gives this factor its due: John Seed, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming and Arne Naess, *Thinking Like a Mountain* (New Society Publr, Box 582, Santa Cruz CA 95061, \$9.50 pbk).

Seed and Naess are spokespeople for the "deep ecology" movement (see NEW OPTIONS #12); Fleming and Macy helped create the "Despair and Empowerment" workshops that peace activists use to work through their grief and anger and other understandable but self-defeating emotions (#6). The four authors together have created an innovative—and totally engrossing—kind of book. Some essays focus on the logic behind deep ecology. Others are more feelingful and evocative. Still others describe the "Council of All Beings Workshop," in which participants act out the truths of deep ecology by taking on the masks (and "thoughts") of "Earth's living body": rainforests, condors, snakes, mountains. . . .

The "logical" essays make a compelling case. Naess's essay brilliantly argues that through our wider and deeper self ("Self") every living being is connected intimately—thus, environmental protection is Self-protection. The evocative essays are tolerable, and one of them, Macy's prose-poem "Bestiary," is a gem.

But the real show-stoppers here are the essays on the Council of All Beings. Read them and you'll see and feel yourself *as* plant, *as* animal, *as* fellow life-form. Read them and you'll "hear within [yourself] the sound of the Earth crying."

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