

NewOptions

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Alternative to Terrorism: Siding With the World's Poor

It is astonishing how quickly we've begun to accept terrorism as a permanent part of the international landscape. Astonishing because there is a fairly painless (and fairly obvious) alternative.

The U.S. could seek to acquire the moral authority to act as a healing presence in the world. Our role could be to adjudicate disputes, support "all-win" solutions to international problems, and make our resources available to people, groups and governments that were willing to help themselves.

Practical way to begin

Easily the most practical way to begin moving in this direction is for us to change our foreign aid policies.

We could seek to play a catalytic, rather than a dominant, role in the Third World. We could pay more attention to what the poor themselves want. We could concentrate less on funding massive projects, and more on building up the capacity of indigenous institutions to do for themselves. We could pay more attention to the *context in which* our aid is given.

This may be a highly unconventional approach to foreign aid. But it could also be a highly popular one. It combines the traditional left's emphasis on equity and the traditional right's emphasis on self-help. Moreover, in each of the major aid agencies, and in certain cutting-edge organizations in Washington D.C., people are already quietly working to change our aid program in just these ways. In this article, three of them come out of the closet, so to speak:

• **Steve Hellinger** is co-director of The Development Group for Alternative Policies, better known as The Development GAP. "Maybe it's a bit presumptuous," Hellinger told us from GAP's cozy office trimmed with rough-hewn wood in downtown Washington, "but we try to represent the perspective of the Third World poor, and translate it into

policy." This GAP does surprisingly effectively—in part because it's so low-key, to the point of being self-effacing. Over the last decade, it's developed programs for governmental and non-governmental organizations in *31 countries* in Africa and Latin America, consulted with the World Bank and U.S.A.I.D., and worked closely with Congressional staffs. It even brought the Baltimore Orioles to Nicaragua. But had you ever heard of it?

• **Tom Stoel**, a graduate of Princeton-Harvard-Oxford, and an early dropout from the Nixon Administration, is president of the Global Tomorrow Coalition (NEW OPTIONS #18) and director of international programs for the Natural Resources Defense Council, which is easily the most effective environmental lobbying organization in Washington. This spring he drafted a paper for the World Commission on Environment and Development, an important U.N. initiative, on the relationship between environment and development. (He did not put his byline on the widely circulated draft—not the usual practice in Washington!) An expanded version, revised and toned down as a result of many people's comments, has been endorsed by groups ranging from the National Audubon Society to the Africa Non-governmental Organizations Environmental Network ("Sustainable Development and How to Achieve It," \$2.50 from Global Tomorrow, 1325 "G" St. N.W., #1003, Washington DC 20006).

• **David Korten** is Asia Regional Advisor on development management to U.S. A.I.D.—the major U.S. aid organization. He works out of Jakarta, Indonesia, and rarely comes to Washington. His articles don't always get published but do circulate in dogeared xeroxed form through the foreign-aid community. He has done some anthologies, and the most recent, *People-Centered Development*, includes articles by post-liberals like Kenneth Boulding, Elizabeth Dodson Gray, Willis Harman, Jessica Lipnack and

David Morris (Kumarian Press, 630 Oakwood Ave., #119, W. Hartford CT 06110, \$16.50 pbk).

Doing more with less

Probably most of us associate "doing good" in the Third World with "spending more." In the early 1970s, the U.N. General Assembly urged the industrialized countries to expand their aid to 0.7% of the Gross National Product—more than twice what we're spending now. In their 1983 election platform, the West German Greens went even further, calling for the diversion of a "far higher share" of the industrialized countries' GNP to the Third World.

Hellinger, Stoel and Korten fundamentally disagree with the "more is better" approach—and not just because Congress seems determined to cut foreign aid expenditures this year.

"Development is not something that you buy with money," Korten told NEW OPTIONS flatly. "The basic premise of most of the aid agencies is that it is a product of money. My own philosophy is that development is a product of people; it's a people-intensive process."

"There has been too much emphasis on the quantity as opposed to the quality of aid," says Stoel. "In some of the world's poorest nations, and especially in sub-Saharan Africa, there are crises which threaten the very foundations of sustainable development. In these areas, the needs which can be properly met by aid appear so great as to justify considerably greater expenditures. But in general, the kind of decentralized development [I] advocate is not very costly, and [I] do not perceive a need for massive increases in foreign aid. . . . There are times, particularly in the non-governmental sector, when too much money can smother an organization."

"The amount of money is not the crucial issue," Hellinger told NEW OPTIONS.

"What's crucial is the type of development it's meant to support, the people who receive it, and the channels through which it's provided.

"We have given an *enormous* amount of aid over the last generation. And it's wound up in places like the pockets of Marcos and Swiss banks and projects that have had the effect of *undermining* the position of the poor in the Third World—principally because we have channeled our aid through elite structures, private and governmental alike.

"Aid helps determine who gets what. And if you start working through elite channels that do not facilitate the well-being of the poor, but rather enhance the well-being of the rich, your aid is surely going to be counterproductive. That's been the history of aid by and large over the last generation.

"What happens with very well-meaning groups like the Greens, and church groups, and others, is that a lot of them really haven't been 'on the ground' and seen the impact of aid on the local level. So a lot of them are just thinking, hey, we've got to give more aid to the Third World in general, or we've got to liberalize trade, without thinking what that means. 'Liberalized trade' could very well stimulate more production for export and take land out of production for local needs. That's been the pattern, in fact, historically, over the past generation.

"This doesn't mean that aid can't do good. There are some [radicals—and some libertarians—] who say that all aid should be cut off. Our view is that the net effect of cutting off all aid would be positive. But if you asked me, is there some aid that should be continued to be promoted and expanded, I would say yes. There *are* institutions and modes of aid that have been very productive for the poor."

Dead aid

Why is most of our aid so counterproductive? According to Hellinger, the basic problem is that our aid agencies stress economic growth rather than personal growth and local capacity-building.

"The major aid organizations are essentially outgrowths of a worldview which I believe probably was benign, originally," Hellinger told NEW OPTIONS. "The belief was that if the world economy grows, the Third World will benefit.

"Our aid agencies adopted what can be called an export-led growth model, which, when pushed upon the Third World governments in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, led them to start producing for Western markets rather than for local needs—and made them dependent, in their subsequent industrialization and modernization, on high-priced energy inputs and capital inputs. And their commodities depended upon Western markets and prices in

international markets. And all of these prices caved in and created a debt problem, which we read about in the newspapers. . . ."

Stoel's language may be more temperate, but his point is much the same: "Often aid has been used to further the economic and political interests of Northern nations, at the expense of sustainable development in the South. The model of centralized industrial development has led aid agencies to support huge 'mega-projects' which have proved unsustainable because environmental and social conditions were not taken into account and local people were not involved."

Aid as catalyst

Unlike many critics of U.S. aid, Hellinger, Stoel and Korten all have well-thought-out alternatives. Taken together, they constitute what can be called a post-liberal or New Age approach to foreign aid.

Stoel argues strongly that aid should play a catalytic, rather than a dominant, role in the Third World. "The non-governmental people from developing countries [that I've been working with] are generally of the opinion that foreign aid has to be marginal," Stoel told NEW OPTIONS. "Of course, Northerners look at it and say it has to play a major role because we furnish it. But obviously these countries have to supply most of the wherewithal and in the end, all of the impetus that goes into shaping their future. And if you conceive of foreign aid as playing a major role in *that*, it's almost a contradiction in terms!

"If people are going to live [decently in the Third World], then they're going to have to move to small-scale agriculture and other things that are going to meet their basic needs. And for that, again, the impetus has to come from the local people almost by definition. Aid agencies can't support small-scale agriculture for long periods of time. They have to help people learn how to do it themselves.

"[On the other hand,] I think aid can do training of personnel. It can provide expert advice for fairly short periods of time. And it can, I think, be a catalyst for helping people see their future in a slightly different way.

"In other words, aid agencies can come into a country and sometimes serve a role of pulling people together and seeing needs that maybe people themselves have lost sight of—because they're so close to the problem. For example, people with foreign experience could see that two departments of government may be overlapping, or there may be a gap between them, or the non-governmental people might not be talking to the governmental. And the [field representatives] could, in a low-key way, if they're perceptive, build some bridges."

Respond to the poor

Hellinger makes a perfectly complementary point when he says that, in order to provide meaningful development, we simply *must* work with institutions that represent the poor.

"There are organizations in the Third World that represent the interests of the poor," Hellinger told NEW OPTIONS. "Some are governmental; many more are non-governmental. Some were created by the poor, others are truly responsive to the poor. . . ."

"These institutions range from community organizations, women's groups, small co-ops and church groups to national-level organizations, many of them governmental.

"What our aid must do is be responsive to *these organizations*—to how *they* define development in their country; to what *they* see as the direction their communities, regions, countries need to take.

"That requires a very different posture on the part of aid agencies and policymakers in this country. It takes a certain amount of humility and understanding that we don't have the answers here. That's a very different mentality than has been exhibited over the last generation.

"We have developed a community of 'development experts' in this country. Whether they're with the World Bank or consulting firms or research organizations, they're people who have taken it upon themselves to determine what is required in the Third World. It could be the latest fad; it could be 'basic human needs'; it could be the 'private sector approach'; it could be new answers to the debt problem. What's clear is that [this arrogant approach] has helped to create a real mess overseas."

Build the base

"The most important thing [of all]," Hellinger told NEW OPTIONS, "is building up

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the institutional base in a country.

"That is what makes development happen. You've got to build up a base upon which development can progress. You've got to build up the institutional capacity at the local level, at the regional level, at the national level.

"And we're not doing that. What we're building up is elite structures that 'implement' projects. And once those projects end, they disappear—leaving nothing behind. Because the poor haven't been involved. . . .

"The amount of foreign aid should be commensurate with the capacity of appropriate institutions in the Third World. There's no sense spending hundreds of millions of dollars in a country overseas when the institutions in those countries that are truly carrying out decent development work only have an appropriate capacity of \$20 million.

"So it is necessary to have non-governmental organizations, private voluntary organizations, [all kinds of] organizations out there building up the capacity of locally-based institutions, providing relatively small amounts of aid to help them progress. They've got to learn to manage credit; to manage large organizations; to represent larger and larger numbers of local structures; to build up a staff that is experienced. . . ."

Create a context

Korten would agree with most (if not all) of the above. But he would add another crucial point: private voluntary organizations (PVOs) can be used not only to build up the institutional base at the local level, but to create a *policy context* in Third World countries that could speed up the base-building tremendously.

Some lower-level officials at the World Bank are convinced that Korten's strategy represents the most promising new approach to development assistance in years.

"The most promising organizations to play a catalyst role in the Third World are selected PVOs, [as distinct from governments or governmental organizations]," Korten told NEW OPTIONS. "Some are Western [e.g., CARE, church groups, Oxfam, PLENTY - ed.], some are Third World. . . .

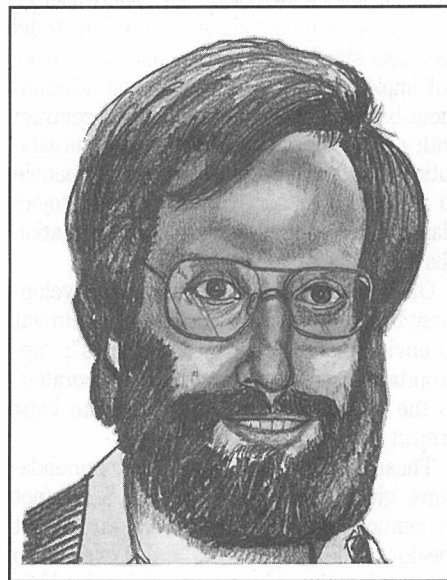
"The problem is that very few of these organizations, at this point in time, define their role as trying to achieve large changes. One of the things I'm trying to get them to focus on right now is developing the role definition that is required to play what I call a 'third generation' role or strategy.

"The first generation of PVO development activities tended to concentrate on [expanding] welfare and health care services and that sort of thing. Then in the late 1970s there was a major shift in many of them toward a focus on [what I call 'second generation' ac-

tivities]. The emphasis there has tended to be on village level activities—developing co-ops and agricultural assistance organizations and self-help projects and so forth.

"That was a very positive thing to do. The problem is, it takes place within a larger institutional and policy context [in the host country] that really is not supportive of that kind of thing. So it's very difficult to sustain it. After the donor goes away it's often problematic whether anything is left.

"Now some of the PVOs are beginning to recognize the limitations of that exclusively local focus, and are moving toward what I call a 'third generation' strategy, where the concern is with trying to develop sustainable policies that [could] influence more than a single village. They can, if they position them-



STEVE HELLINGER, of *The Development GAP*, wants us to serve the poor

selves properly, have even a national impact.

"[Take] CARE in Indonesia. For many years CARE has done village water projects in Indonesia. They go and they organize a group and they help them put in their water systems and so forth. The CARE people are now saying, well, that's fine, but what about the support systems for maintaining these water systems over time? And what about the rest of the country? We don't have the resources to put water systems in thousands of villages.

"So they begin to look around and say, yes, our resources are actually very limited. But we know some things about working with communities that some of the government people don't know. And perhaps we have some capabilities and training staff and technology that the government doesn't have.

"So the question is, how can CARE begin to develop a liaison with the government that

would help the government find ways to use its resources more effectively—possibly working in alliance with local PVOs who are doing the organizing? How can CARE help to develop the mechanisms that could help local governments develop and sustain their water systems on a permanent basis?

"[Do you see my point?] Instead of putting in a few water systems at the local level that are unsustainable over time, CARE will be working with the government—and other PVOs—to ensure that all rural communities have water."

Down to Earth

How can these new approaches to foreign aid be brought "down to Earth," down to the policy level? In large part, say our three experts, by establishing new—and explicit—*criteria* for the dispensing of foreign aid.

Stoel recommends that our aid agencies channel *at least 50%* of their funds to international non-governmental organizations and to U.S. private and voluntary organizations. He further recommends that aid agencies adopt "stringent requirements for environmental impact assessment."

Hellinger's Development GAP has drawn up a list of 15 suggested criteria. Among them:

- **Participation.** Is the beneficiary group involved in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of the project?

- **Decentralization.** Do outside participants disengage themselves from the project over time? Do indigenous institutions assume increasing responsibility?

- **Scale.** Is the size of the project appropriate to the stage of development of the beneficiary group? Of the implementing institution?

- **Participant education.** Will participation in the project enhance the beneficiaries' understanding of their environment, their relationship to it, the causes of their poverty, and their capacity to induce change?

Korten would accept these criteria, but he stresses that certain other, more subtle kinds of criteria might be even more important. "Yeah, there are [explicit project criteria] that have to change," he told NEW OPTIONS. "But organizational pressures have to change, values have to change, ways of working have to change.

"An authoritarian dictator can write all the orders he wants. But [these deeper changes] are not going to happen that way. They require people with commitment and skills working together to mobilize support to bring change. They require very sensitive and capable people interacting with their counterparts, helping them link up with other individuals and institutions, and [maybe] giving them

very small amounts of money to oil the process."

Barriers

It is important not to underestimate the barriers that a post-liberal approach to foreign aid will encounter.

"U.S.A.I.D. is part of the State Department," Hellinger told NEW OPTIONS. "That makes it incapable of focusing its efforts on uplifting the poor. They're well-meaning people, but the other objectives get in the way: short-term geopolitical concerns, economic [interests] and the like."

Stoel disagrees that U.S. aid policy is inevitably a tool of short-term U.S. interests: "Between 1973, when we enacted the 'New Directions' legislation [directing A.I.D. to assist the poorest of the poor], and the end of the 70s, I think American aid policy was remarkably free of connection to our other objectives. . . ." But he does anticipate resistance from another source: the aid bureaucracy.

"A.I.D. personnel are some of the most dedicated people who work for the U.S. in any capacity," he told NEW OPTIONS. "But almost by definition they're going to be clustered in the capital of the [host] country; A.I.D. has a lot of projects to administer; and so the amount of detailed attention they can give to each project is just limited. . . ."

Perhaps because he works with A.I.D., Korten is even more scathing along these lines: "There are many good people at A.I.D. [But] their time is committed almost exclusively to paperwork! Many young people go into A.I.D. and get very frustrated—what you're signing up for is a career of filling out project implementation orders."

Signs

Despite these potential or actual barriers, there are signs that a post-liberal approach to foreign aid is making some headway. Just consider:

- The Inter-American Foundation (IAF) was created by Congress in the early 1970s, and according to Hellinger, "The IAF did not adopt the 'more is better' approach. Instead, it carefully sought out those organizations in which the poor participated and benefited equitably. It then responded to their proposals with grants commensurate in size with the capacity to adequately handle funding. The approach has been new and innovative for a U.S. public institution, [and] the IAF has gained the confidence of many in Latin America." Its annual budget is now \$20-30 million.

- In 1980, Congress finally authorized creation of the African Development Foundation (ADF)—an IAF-type organization for Africa. Like the IAF, the ADF draws its principal support not from moderates, but from the

most liberal *and* conservative members of Congress. During the 1980 debate over the creation of ADF, conservative Rep. Jack Kemp (R-NY) sent his colleagues a letter that read, in part, "The ADF is an inexpensive and well-conceived approach which could reap considerable benefits in U.S.-African relations. The emphasis on smaller-scale, indigenously based projects seems particularly worthwhile." Hellinger's Development GAP helped write the legislation—then helped with the lobbying.

- In 1984 the House Banking Subcommittee on International Development Institutions—which sets U.S. policy toward the multilateral banks—issued a series of 19 recommendations, and according to Stoel, "There are some fascinating things in here, much along the lines of what we'd both like to see.

"Here's recommendation #9 which would be a real startler [sic] to the banks if it ever got implemented: 'The multilateral development banks should, where possible, contract with non-governmental conservation organizations and organizations of indigenous people to provide their services during pre-project planning and during project implementation phases. . . .'"

Other key recommendations: "the development banks should increase their commitment to environmentally beneficial projects"; "appropriate technology should be incorporated, to the maximum extent possible, into bank project operations."

These are, truly, astonishing recommendations, given the track record of U.S. aid (not to mention British aid, French aid, etc.). "But the down side," says Stoel, "is that even when these things have been pushed by the U.S. government, [the World Bank] has been extremely recalcitrant."

- Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) recently introduced a bill for famine prevention in Africa that reads like it was drafted by Stoel himself; and in fact, he did have a hand in it. This passage can give you the flavor:

"A major cause of the current, tragic famine in Africa is degradation of the natural resource base. . . . There is substantial and growing evidence that the most effective, quickest, and least costly way of maintaining and restoring the resource base is through small-scale, affordable, resource-conserving, low-risk local projects, using appropriate technologies and featuring involvement of local people at all stages of project design and implementation."

U.S.A.I.D. has *officially* opposed this remarkable bill. But it does have 60 co-sponsors, and hearings will be held on it next month.

Turning point?

"If there's going to be a turning point [with

regard to foreign aid]," Hellinger told NEW OPTIONS, "it will probably be the Philippines."

"You see all the articles now about what happened to our money. Also, the Philippines have had some very good [non-governmental] institutions—agrarian reform institutions, peasant cooperatives, what have you. If the American people could only be informed that these organizations exist in *many* countries—in *most* countries—[perhaps they would be tempted] to support them, rather than waste their money on the Marcos-type governments. I mean, I think small farmers in the U.S. would much *rather* give money to their counterparts in agrarian reform movements than to some large bureaucratic state. . . ."

We would add that there has to be an inner, "psychic" turning point, as well: we have to begin to *want to listen* to what the poor in the Third World have to say. Recently Hellinger gave a speech in Italy (organized by some members of the Italian parliament) in which he said, "The poor in the Third World have had to find indigenous solutions on their own to grave problems that their governments are often unwilling to address. In this regard, they have a great deal to teach those encountering similar problems in the First World. . . . It would be worthwhile for the Italian aid program to allocate some funds to finance the exchange of experience and information between poor groups in the Third World and in Italy." It would be worthwhile for the U.S. aid program to do something similar.

Underlying messages

This month sees publication of a prestigious anthology, Benjamin Netanyahu's *Terrorism: How the West Can Win* (Farrar Straus, \$19), whose underlying message is this: the root cause of terrorism lies not in grievances but in a disposition toward violence on the part of semi-civilized or poorly civilized peoples.

The message underlying the post-liberal approach to global conflict is dramatically different. It is that we cannot live with one another if we are not willing to listen to each other, and learn from each other, and respond to each other's needs.

If the U.S. is willing to begin doing these things—first and foremost, in its foreign aid policies—then it may well achieve the moral authority necessary to engage the world in a search for constructive alternatives to terrorism.

Hellinger: The Development GAP, 1010 Vermont Ave. N.W., #521, Washington DC 20006. Korten: USAID/Jakarta, American Embassy, Jakarta, Indonesia. Stoel: Natural Resources Defense Council, 1350 New York Ave. N.W., #300, Washington DC 20005.

Letters . . .

Cathedral

In NEW OPTIONS #20 Andrew Stiller writes that NEW OPTIONS is "useless," that microscopic grouplets are powerless and could not possibly affect American politics.

In the great European cathedrals built centuries ago each brick, particularly the unseen, were the building blocks which together formed these magnificent, inspiring structures that had an immeasurable influence on religion, society and the spirit of multitudes.

I strongly suspect that NEW OPTIONS'S "grouplets" are the building blocks for a new world order, and a new way of looking at life.

—Dorothy Gillam Baker
Bronx, N. Y.

Dorothy Baker, 79, taught drama and poetry at Hunter College in Manhattan, and has been a political activist since the Spanish Civil War.

Whitewash?

I read with horror your agreement with Frances Prucha [author of *The Indians in North America*, reviewed in NEW OPTIONS #25] that U.S. policy concerning Native Americans has been only "benign paternalism."

At this moment, the U.S. government is preparing to forcibly relocate some 14,000 Navajos and several hundred Hopis from their sacred homelands in Arizona for the purpose of strip mining for millions of dollars in coal. This relocation is the largest since the Japanese were put into concentration camps during World War II. The relocation will completely destroy the Navajo culture, which has remained intact for centuries. It is nothing less than genocide, as many of the Navajos who have already been relocated have died from the effects thereof.

This is no case of "ignorant paternalism." It is a case of greed—pure and simple. Americans Indians are being robbed of their homelands today in Big Mountain, Arizona, and other parts of the country, not to assimilate them into white society, but because valuable mineral deposits have been found on their land.

Your concept of *past* history leaves a lot to be desired also. You seem to forget that the government not only has treated Indians with "ignorant paternalism," but has deliberately

murdered thousands upon thousands of them. If that is "benign paternalism," what do you call the Holocaust?

Your publication is one of the last I would have expected to whitewash our past and present vicious treatment of Native Americans. You even stated that "the Dee Browns and Rex Weylers can only generate defensiveness and guilt."

While we should not feel guilty about merely being white, and while we, as individuals, do not go out to reservations on weekends to shoot Indians, we deserve to feel guilty for not speaking out or doing our damndest to prevent the present and future genocide and destruction of Native American culture. Damn guilty!

—Frances Longmire
Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Frances Longmire: We did not say—and Father Prucha does not say—that U.S. policy concerning Native Americans has been only benign paternalism. What we did say is that, according to Prucha's several books (including a massive two-volume history, 10 years in the making), U.S. Indian policy has reflected partly viciousness, partly greed, but most of all "a kind of well-meaning but ignorant paternalism."

We are sure that, if you read Prucha, you will see that his purpose is not to "whitewash" our treatment of the Indians. It is, rather, to explain that treatment without simply demonizing the white majority. It is to force us to confront the genocidal consequences of our behavior without allowing us to fall into the basically self-serving attitude of, "Most white people are awful (except for me and my close friends)."

In the 1950s and 60s, German historians portrayed Hitler as a madman and his followers as basically sick. More recently, without in any way whitewashing the consequences of Hitler's actions, German historians have begun portraying Hitler and his supporters as the complex, confused, vulnerable people they were (see, e.g., Joachim Fest, Hitler, 1974). Which approach do you think can do more to prevent the rise of future Hitlers?

The Dee Browns and Rex Weylers suppose that there is a sickness at the heart of white American culture. This is an emotionally satisfying supposition for those of us who feel alienated from that culture, but according to Prucha it is just plain wrong. He says—in fact, he tries very hard to demonstrate—that most of us mean well and have always meant well toward the Indians. So his books force us to confront what is in our view the essential political question: Why is there such a glaring gap between the goodness in our hearts and the real effects of our policies?

Those consultants

Those "top political consultants," Fred Branfman, Paul Dietrich and Ralph Whitehead, offer some thought-provoking criticism not often heard in the Green movement (NEW OPTIONS #25 and 26). As you well know, the importance of realism, pragmatism and rationalism is denied by some of those [Greens] who argue in favor of restoring "spirituality" to politics.

Dietrich goes so far as to call for "less heart and more rigor." But the real dilemma is not how to make people think harder, better or more rationally. The real dilemma is how to develop practical policies without suppressing the diverse interests of minority groups.

Political parties in which small, professional elites reproduce themselves can easily hand down coherent policies formulated by knowledgeable authorities. By contrast, the Green movement will grow slowly, through the interaction of all its participants, as disagreements are worked out and conflicts resolved openly.

This will not result in "less heart, more rigor." Over time, I feel, it will result in "more heart, more rigor."

—Sean Stryker
East Bay Green Alliance
Berkeley, Calif.

I share Fred Branfman et al.'s concern for rigorous treatment of our logic and values. I also believe that there are a number of core values upon which we *must* agree to assure our survival.

Robert Theobald lists honesty, responsibility and love as necessary values. I would add seeking truth and willingness to communicate as necessary corollaries.

Ultimately I would hope to see an integration of science, religion and values.

—Paul Krumm
Lindsborg, Kans.

After our talk, and before NEW OPTIONS #25 appeared, I had my first chance to see Dick Gephardt and later Bruce Babbitt with my own eyes. What I said about them in your pages, I discovered, is dead wrong. They are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

My earlier appraisal was based solely on media reports—hardly the way to follow my own highfalutin' advice, "Engage the environment, be a good organism." My apologies to you and your readers.

—Ralph Whitehead
Amherst, Mass.

In NEW OPTIONS #25, Fred Branfman "doesn't see much political potential for ecology." This is simply a reflection of his own

ignorance and the fact that the environmental movement has not communicated its most urgent message.

The establishment is very vulnerable on the issue of the impact of environmental abuse on our health. Although people have a general notion of the problem from occasional news stories, very few understand the breadth and depth of the problem, which transcends party labels and class distinctions. There is enormous potential here politically.

—Scott Smith

Thousand Oaks, Calif.

I appreciate your Top Political Consultants' emphasizing that we must treat existing organizations and people as potential allies. It does nothing but harm to keep complaining about their inadequacies.

Complaints are cheap. You can keep your ideals pure if you do nothing but complain, but you can't accomplish anything that way.

It is also clear, as your consultants imply, that returning to the same old liberal or conservative "solutions" will not suffice. Figuring out how to use existing institutions and mechanisms *in the service of new approaches* is the way we have to go.

I have one reservation: Your use of "Green" almost as a synonym for "good" makes me nervous. I keep recalling the words of Roland Vogt, an Executive Committee member of Germany's Greens, who was elected to the Parliament on the slogan: "Our goal is to make the Western democracies un-governable." That's not a goal I want to import.

—Theodore Rockwell

Chevy Chase, Md.

Point, counterpoint

I see that "Expro" is trying to envision the political and cultural conditions for a warless world (NEW OPTIONS #20 and 26). I think one of the cultural conditions that has to come about is for Americans to get a chance to see that life in the Soviet Union is not all black, and that people live lives there which are not so different from ours.

—Lawrence R. Ephron, Ph.D.

*Institute for a Future
Berkeley, Calif.*

I'm afraid NEW OPTIONS is too political for me. But it's a very good lesson for me, too.

I am 39, and living in the middle of Prague with my wife Helena, daughters (Vanda, 9, and Viktorka, 5), cat (Mates), and my music and typewriting. I used to give lectures on Japan—I went there to study Zen in 1979—and currently I'm publishing a magazine on rock music and mind growth.

The "New Age" movement here is dangerous activity, unfortunately, and has to be [engaged in] strictly in private. Every attempt at group activities or networking is interrogated by police and authorities. Last winter, for example, the regular yoga exercise lecture here in Prague was interrupted by state police with dogs. About 20 people were driven by police cars to police center and interrogated till midnight.

I work hard at translating and then [typing out carbon-paper copies of] material from any available source of information. A [typed] book of translations from *New Age Journal*, *Tarrytown Letter*, Ferguson, Capra, etc. (mostly sent as second-hand books or back issues from my American friends) is very successfully circulating throughout young Czech and Slovak families, bringing hope for a better future. Gradually, with the help of musical concerts, lectures on New Age movement, listening to New Age music cassettes, a few of us are building the Czech version of the Hundredth Monkey phenomenon. . . .

We'll do our best ourselves. But just in case it will not be enough, I'd like to ask you and your readers for your help. Please do your best in promoting sending literature, magazines, cassettes and PEOPLE to Czechoslovakia. And do try to learn as much as possible about our situation. Only if people know about our everyday struggle will they be able to help in appropriate and effective ways.

—Marek

Prague, Czechoslovakia

Marek hopes to visit the U.S. this fall. He can be reached at Slovenska 17, 2120 00 Prague, Czechoslovakia.

The big picture

For two years now I've been reading your questions about the Big Picture. What do you think about mine?

— That the marriage/militarism/money system has been the curse of the world for thousands of years?

— That mutual aid/communal living is a sane alternative to the marriage/militarism/money monstrosity?

— That popularization of intimate touching and loving without sex might be a key to [discouraging marriage and militarism]?

— That retirees might become the prime movers to turn the world from the marriage/militarism/money ratrace to mutual aid/communal living with no rich and no poor?

—Ellery Foster

Winona, Minn.

Ellery Foster, 80, was director of national forest planning under FDR.

Continued from page eight:

#27, we tried to show how the need for self-esteem of all citizens in a functioning democracy could be reconciled with the need for strengthened families and schools in a complex modern democracy—viz., by training parents to teach self-esteem in the schools. In this passage, Thompson provides an enduring model for this kind of political healing-by-synthesis:

"Both American astronauts and Russian cosmonauts have described the experience of mystical connection they felt by looking homeward from outer space. They could not see boundaries or ideologies, but they could see oceans and continents and know that it is not the case that the continent is 'right' and the ocean 'wrong.' The true relationship between these opposites is through a reconciliation at the higher level of the atmosphere in which the clouds bring the moisture of the ocean to the continent in the form of rain.

"As it is now with the ecosystem, so shall it have to become with the political system."

New world-system?

What does all this have to do with the Pacific? According to Thompson, plenty. For a new world-system is arising around the shores of the Pacific (California, Japan, Australia, China)—and that world-system will be characterized by an enantiomorphic polity in the same way that the "modern" world system, centered around the Atlantic, is characterized by an industrial-nation-state polity.

The bulk of *Pacific Shift* consists of Thompson's meditations on how the emerging new Pacific world-system will differ from the present Atlantic one. The differences, as you might have guessed, are said to be profound.

The Atlantic communications system is based on print, the Pacific system will be based on electronics. The Atlantic religious system is distinguished by each person's commitment to a particular religious belief, the Pacific spiritual system will be distinguished by shared group consciousness. The characteristic good of the Atlantic system is having the "correct line," the characteristic good of the Pacific system will be universal compassion.

Thompson concludes by noting that the Pacific world-system with its emerging enantiomorphic polity needs "for some political genius to play the role of a Thomas Jefferson." But does it really? According to Thompson's deeper text, there will be no single Jefferson, but a synthesizing movement consisting of many different groups. The movement itself will do the synthesizing, aided and abetted by popularizers such as Theodore Roszak and Marilyn French.

French: from power to pleasure

For years, all kinds of disillusioned activists had been saying that the "holistic new politics" we need would come out of feminism. But no feminist equivalents of *Das Kapital* were forthcoming, and by the early 1980s most of us had begun to look elsewhere.

Marilyn French, author of *Beyond Power* (Ballantine, \$12 pbk), might say: How short-sighted we were, and how male, to assume that the new politics would be the product of one "heroic" Karl Marx-like woman writing alone. If we looked around we'd have seen that, throughout the 70s and 80s, women in anthropology, sociology, psychology, history, had been developing bits and pieces of what could be called a holistic new politics. All that remained was for some popularizer to come along. Ideally she'd be a feminist with the expository skills of a best-selling novelist and the analytic skills of a literary critic. A feminist much like Marilyn French herself, author of the novel *The Women's Room* as well as studies of Joyce and Shakespeare.

In *Beyond Power*, French draws on feminists writing in all those disciplines (as well as on male writers like Theodore Roszak and William Irwin Thompson) to give us our first truly systematic introduction to the holistic new feminist politics. It is superbly written, awesome in scope (and size—640 tightly-packed pages), and builds relentlessly around a single theme: For centuries, our goal in life has been to acquire power-as-control, power-over. In order to survive (let alone flourish), we must now begin to seek not control but pleasure; not power-over, but power-to.

At the beginning

French begins at the beginning, with the earliest "matricentric" societies. (She does not call them "matriarchies" because she does not want to imply that women *dominated* men.) Life was good in those days, she says, "and we made art and rituals celebrating our participation in the glorious spectacle and process of life within nature."

But by and by, men discovered their role in procreation, and began to separate themselves from the idea of embeddedness in nature. And soon they began to develop a new value: the idea of control. And "the idea of control is contagious: if a person is interested in power without reference to any other value, he or she will be able to gain power relatively easily over those who are not interested in it." Thus arose patriarchal societies—and soon enough, says French, a patriarchal

world. Her argument here is much like Andrew Schmookler's in *The Parable of the Tribes* (NEW OPTIONS #5): "If [even] one state desires power over other states, states which want to live in peace and freedom will be overrun. They have to learn to value power or be eradicated."

Devastating effects

The spiritual heart of *Beyond Power* is its analysis of the effects of patriarchy—on women, on men and on our social institutions.

French paints a devastating portrait of women's condition under patriarchy. You may have heard it all before, but you'll hear it even more clearly when set against the backdrop of French's core conviction, that "female inferiority is essential to male self-definition."

Patriarchy has constricted men too, says French, often in ways that are nearly as destructive. For example: "Men in business, government, or any other institution are apt to find their worst rival in the man who could be their closest friend. This inevitable competitiveness between men who are similar enforces the solitude enjoined on men." Or, for example: "[Many men] dedicate themselves utterly to their jobs in the hope that will bring them love, but discover that their effort has destroyed the affection they crave."

As for our social institutions, French demonstrates in detail how the patriarchal morality (power-as-control) has twisted them all horribly.

The alternative

"Feminism is the only serious, coherent and universal philosophy that offers an alternative to patriarchal thinking and structures," French claims; and her presentation of the feminist alternative is in many ways the high point of the book. Here is its essence:

"The only true revolution against patriarchy is one which removes the idea of power from its central position, and replaces it with the idea of pleasure. Despite the contempt in which this quality has been held for several millennia, pleasure, felicity—in its largest and deepest sense—is actually the highest human good. . . . Power-to primarily increases pleasure, and power-over primarily increases pain. . . . To restore pleasure to centrality requires restoring the body, and therefore nature, to value. . . ."

True to her notion that enshrining pleasure would enhance harmony and cooperation, French finds value in virtually all the "modes of approach to realizing the feminist vision":

separatism, socialist feminism, feminism-under-capitalism, the positive reassessment ("revalorization") of "feminine" qualities, and—even—many of those movements "dedicated to the feminine principle but opposed to feminism." In the distant future, she argues, many anti-feminists "may be seen more as part of the feminist struggle for a more felicitous world than as antagonists to it."

Schmookler's paradox

In her last chapter, French returns to what we might call "Schmookler's paradox." If states in the modern world *must* learn the ways of power or be eradicated, then how can we do away with the patriarchal morality of power-as-control?

Wisely, perhaps, French doesn't offer one definitive answer, but several partial ones. Among them:

- She urges us not to identify goodness with powerlessness.
- She urges us to use our power in the public world "as a means to noncontrolling well-being."
- She urges us to live "with an eye to delight rather than to domination. And that is the feminist morality."

That was, in fact, the morality of the social movements of the 1960s—until the urgency of the Vietnam War made us want to achieve power-as-control so we could stop the war. Will we have more patience, this time around?

Rozak: our minds, their machine

For our money, Theodore Roszak was the very best explainer of the counter-culture of the 1960s. In elegant, even scholarly books like *The Making of the Counter-Culture* (1969) and *Where the Wasteland Ends* (1973), he told the world that we were *serious*, that we were trying to introduce such life-giving qualities as intuition and imagination into a society that had become altogether too dependent on reason and "expertise."

Many of us had wondered how Roszak would adjust to the collapse of his beloved counter-culture. Would he turn cynical? Would he write versions of *Where the Wasteland Ends* forever? Well, this month he's back with a new book, *The Cult of Information* (Pantheon, \$18), and we are happy to report that he is neither cynical nor out-of-touch. In fact, his new book advances his old arguments to a new level of maturity and synthesis.

Under the computer

On one level, *The Cult of Information* is a

book about computers and society.

It is harshly critical of the ways we've used computers, but it is by no means a Luddite-like attack on computers themselves. Roszak is being absolutely sincere when he says his purpose is to save the computer "from the inordinate claims that its enthusiasts are making for it."

This he does with an enthusiasm bordering on vengeance. He argues that the greed (his word) of computer-makers is causing them to induce the public to see "information"—more and more and more of it—as a necessity of modern life. But we already have more information than we can ever use, he says, and there is no known connection between data gathering and social progress. He warns, darkly, that in the capitalist countries information overload is becoming a means of social control, just as—in communist countries—lack of information is a means of social control.

His chapters on education are particularly persuasive. He demonstrates that computers are irrelevant to the real needs of students and schools. He contends that students who spend much of their time with computers inevitably end up thinking of *themselves* as merely "computers that feel."

He is fully aware of the hopes of the "guerrilla hackers" (politically-minded computer advocates) of the 1970s and early 80s, and he has some kind things to say about computer-assisted networking. But let's face it, he says, our political hopes for the computer as a democratic force in society have been dashed. We grossly overestimated the numbers of people who'd want to buy home computers. And we were fools for thinking that a clever technology could ever substitute for the hard work of political organizing.

Mind games

On a deeper level, Roszak's book is about the uses of the mind—and how the computer is perverting those uses.

Computers can only provide us with information, Roszak says. But information is not the substance of thought! *Ideas* come first. As a matter of fact, *experiences* come first—then imagination—then ideas. So to argue that this society needs more information is getting things exactly backwards. What we really need is for each of us to immerse ourselves much more fully in life, and for each of us to spend some time developing the "true art of thinking": renewing our respect for the imagination; reflecting upon our values; practicing *critical* thinking; investigating myths and legends. Our minds are far, far more than data gathering "machines," and life is nothing if it is not an intellectual adventure.

Thus the message of *The Cult of Information* is similar to that of Roszak's earlier books,

but there is one transcendent difference. In his earlier books, he argued (or often appeared to argue) that reason was irreconcilably opposed to imagination, logic irreconcilably opposed to intuition. In *Cult*, he makes it crystal-clear that the split is between reason *and* imagination, on the one hand, and a rigid, bureaucratic, information-processing mentality, on the other. As Marilyn French might put it, the former can give us pleasure, power; the latter serves mainly to foster power-as-control.

W.I. Thompson: synthesis now

"Dare to [synthesize], dare to take it all in," we wrote at the end of our special issue on terrorism (#24); and we've been trying to explain that statement to some of you ever since. But now all we have to do is send you a book: William Irwin Thompson's *Pacific Shift* (Sierra Club Books, \$16).

Thompson, you may recall, is the former M.I.T. historian who'd written a series of books in the early 1970s expressing not just his boredom with the old culture but his frustration with the new. In *At the Edge of History* and *Passages About Earth*, he was constantly "walking out on" the university, the World Order Models Project, the Club of Rome, Paolo Soleri, etc., etc., until finally he established his own quasi-think tank, the Lindisfarne Association. In *Pacific Shift* he changes his stance: rather than rejecting the old and the new, he "takes it all in."

Ideology vs. ecology

Ideologies are rigid and narrow, says Thompson. What we need instead is what the Lindisfarne fellows had—"a recognition that

they were all part of a larger ecology of consciousness." For Thompson, the phrase "ecology of consciousness" is not just poetic and clever. It is profoundly political. For Thompson, "an ecology is a form of life in which opposites coexist"; therefore, an "ecology of consciousness" is a way of viewing the world in which different points of view are welcomed, learned from, celebrated (much as Marilyn French, above, welcomes all the different brands of feminism, including even "antifeminism"). He coins the unfortunate term *enantiomorphic* for "a polity that has the shape of opposites [and is] an interaction of opposites."

What's so great about an enantiomorphic polity? Well, to begin with, it may be inevitable: "Precisely because enemies won't go away, we have no choice but to love our enemies. The enantiomorphic polity of the future must have capitalists and socialists, Israelis and Palestinians, Bahais and Shiites. . . ." Furthermore, an enantiomorphic politics may give us our best shot at The Truth: "Truth cannot be expressed in an ideology, for truth is that which overlights the conflict of opposed ideologies. . . . The Truth is what we see when we look down from on high at the entire field of cultural manifestation." Finally, an enantiomorphic politics is benign: "A politics of compassion, as contrasted with a politics of violent conflict, begins to become a cultural possibility. . . . [Enantiomorphic politics] would lead us from a [playing] out of the mechanisms of a remorseless karma [to an] awareness of the play of Being."

In our cover story, above, we try to show how the commitment to social justice of the political left and the commitment to self-help of the political right can be reconciled at the higher level of a foreign aid policy that seeks to "do more with less." In NEW OPTIONS

Continued on page six, column three...

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