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HOW "SOFT," "DEEP," OR "LEFT?" PRESENT CONSTITUENCIES IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT FOR CERTAIN WORLD VIEWS

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Given a future characterized by both scarcity and the threat of continued environmental degradation, the contributors to this symposium on "whither environmentalism?" have suggested several possible directions which the environmental movement might take. In this paper I examine the degree to which these directions may be said to possess a constituency among the present members of some of the mainstream national environmental organizations as a possible clue to the likelihood of these directions becoming a more prominent feature of environmentalism in the future. The questions I will specifically address are: (1) To what extent has the appropriate technology notion influenced mainstream environmentalists? (2) How widely spread is the deep ecology worldview among them? (3) How left-radical are they? I conclude with a few remarks about the role of the anti-nuclear movement in the environmental movement.

THE ENVIRONMENTALIST SAMPLE

The data which I will discuss was gathered by a mail survey in the spring of 1978. Random, thousand-person samples of the members of five national environmental groups received a long questionnaire which asked a variety of questions on issues, attitudes, and values. The five groups were chosen to capture the diversity of the major national groups. Two of them, Environmental Action and the Environmental Defense Fund, were founded in 1970 and 1969, respectively, and represent a direct outgrowth of the new environmentalism. The other three, the National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, and The Wilderness Society, were originally part of the older conservation movement, although they have added the modern environmental issues such as air and water pollution and toxic chemicals to their traditional concerns for wilderness and wildlife. Return rates ranged from Environmental Action's 74 percent to 55 percent for the National Wildlife Federation with an average of 66 percent for the five, giving a total of over three thousand respondents.

How representative are these people of environmentalists gener-

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ally? Nationally, 13 percent of the general public regard themselves to be "active in the environmental movement."¹ The members of all the national environmental organizations amount to less than one percent of the public, however, once multiple memberships in different organizations by the same person are taken into account. Accordingly, these dues paying members may be considered to be part of the movement's core constituency. They are not fully representative of the core because many people working at the local level do not happen to belong to one of the national groups. Nor is everyone who does belong necessarily a deeply committed or active environmentalist. As is the case with many organizations, especially national ones with no local chapters, commitment varies.² Nevertheless, all of these people are sufficiently committed environmentalists to pay their membership dues and to take the time to complete the questionnaire, a not inconsiderable achievement.

In terms of personal characteristics, the sample is almost entirely white, relatively well off, and very well educated—findings which replicate those of other studies of environmental group members.³ The educational attainment of environmentalists is especially striking—49 percent of the total sample have had one or more years of education beyond college compared with a national level of seven percent. The National Wildlife Federation's members⁴ were much closer to the general public's level in this and the other socioeconomic measures, however, although the 22 percent of their members who have post-college education still exceeds the national average by a good deal.

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

My data strongly supports Denton Morrison's assertion that "soft technological thinking is increasingly penetrating environmental-

1. Mitchell, *Silent Spring, Solid Majorities*, 2 PUB. OPINION 16 (Aug.-Sept. 1979).

2. One out of four people in my sample preferred to think of himself as a contributor rather than a member. Virtually everyone (95%) considered himself to be an "environmentalist."

3. Devall, *Conservation: An Upper-Middle Class Social Movement: A Replication*, 2 J. LEGAL RESEARCH 123 (1970); Dunlap, *The Socioeconomic Basis of the Environmental Movement: Old Data, New Data, and Implications for the Movement's Future* (1975) (unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco).

4. The National Wildlife Federation sample is of their associate membership. They also have a large number of affiliate members who belong to local organizations, many of them hunting clubs, which are affiliated with the national organization through state-level federations. The associate members join the National Federation by responding to direct mail appeals, as do the members of all of the other groups except the Sierra Club, which recruits some of its members through its local chapter and group structure.

ism."⁵ Unlike the general public at the time I took the survey, most of these environmentalists believed the nation's energy situation was serious. In keeping with the soft path approach, their preference for solving potential energy shortages was decidedly not nuclear power, which three-quarters of them opposed. Instead, 82 percent expressed approval of "alternative soft technologies" and 75 percent professed to have a great deal or quite a bit of personal interest in solar power. With reference to the other soft path ideas which were included in my questions, 65 percent agreed that "if the price of a beautiful and healthful environment is the cessation of further economic growth, it is a price worth paying," and 65 percent agreed the people would be better off if they "lived a more simple life without so much technology." My final soft technology question was a blunt statement, "Society must be decentralized," about which respondents were asked to agree or disagree on a four-point scale. In this case 38 percent agreed (nine percent strongly), 29 percent disagreed, and a very high 32 percent said they "didn't know," suggesting an exceptionally high degree of ambivalence about this key soft path value.

The most striking evidence for the "softening" of environmentalism, as Morrison calls the effect of the alternative technology movement, is the environmentalists' responses to a question which asked for their views on 22 different environmental issues ranging from wilderness preservation to noise pollution. Two of these issues were "alternative technology" and "alternative energy sources." Thirty-four percent said alternative technology was "very important to them personally" and 61 percent said the same about alternative energy sources, placing this latter item at the top of the scale, just after wilderness, air, and water pollution in people's evaluation. When respondents were asked which three issues from the list of 22 were of most importance to them personally, alternative energy sources jumped to second place. In first place was wilderness preservation, the classic concern of the environmental movement, with 48 percent who cited it as their first, second, or third most important concern. Alternative energy sources was second, with 28 percent, followed by preserving natural areas, population problems, and air pollution, respectively. Looking at the individual organizations, alternative energy was the top concern for members of Environmental Action and the Environmental Defense Fund, the two groups which were founded as part of the modern environmental movement, while

5. Morrison, *The Soft, Cutting Edge of Environmentalism: Why and How the Appropriate Technology Notion is Changing the Movement*, 20 NAT. RES. J. 275 (1980).

it was second for the Sierra Club, third for The Wilderness Society, and sixth for the members of the National Wildlife Federation.

Morrison also asserts that the soft path's adherents are the younger and more radical environmentalists. The various measures described above show only a modest correlation with age, however, with younger environmentalists being slightly more in favor of the soft path items. The relationship with political radicalism is somewhat stronger, with those who are disaffected with present societal arrangements being more likely to favor soft path ideas.⁶ Another measure of radicalness is the respondents' participation in the anti-war movement. Anti-war activists, who comprised 27 percent of the environmentalists in the sample, were much more strongly against nuclear power than those who were not a part of that movement. With one exception, however, they were not totally more inclined to adopt the soft path position. The exception is an important one because it is the decentralization question, the soft path item in my questionnaire which was the most radical and which had the smallest amount of support. Among environmentalists, at the present time at least, opposition to nuclear power is much more strongly associated with a radical critique of American society than is overall support for the soft path.

DEEP ECOLOGY

Bill Devall contrasts "reformist environmentalism" with the "deep ecology movement" in his contribution to this symposium and argues that, as the limits of reform are reached in the future and environmental problems remain serious, "the environmental movement will have to come to terms with deep ecology."⁷ There are obvious similarities between the alternative technology approach to environmental problems and the deep ecology world view, and several of the measures I will use as indicators of support for the deep ecology approach are the same as those used earlier to describe the soft path approach. Nevertheless, deep ecology is a far more radical position than that taken by many supporters of alternative technology, involving as it does the rejection of economic growth and of the assumptions underlying contemporary western science, the subordination of human society to natural processes, and the doctrine that

6. As an indication of the magnitude of this relationship, the Pearson correlations between a question which asked people to select one of four progressively more radical views on American society and questions which measured support for the soft path notion are .11 to .16. These are highly significant statistically, but owing to the large sample size any correlation for the entire sample of .05 or better is significant at the .01 level.

7. Devall, *The Deep Ecology Movement*, 20 NAT. RES. J. 299 (1980).

humans share a profound identity with non-human nature. While all deep ecologists presumably would also support the philosophy behind appropriate technology as described by Morrison, only those appropriate technologists who are most deeply committed to it as a way of life could be deemed *bona fide* deep ecologists.

To what extent is there support for deep ecology among environmentalists who are members of reformist organizations such as the Sierra Club? Although the construction of my questionnaire predated Devall's synthesis and therefore was not designed specifically for this task, it did measure several aspects of the deep ecology world view. With reference to behavior or self-definitions, for example, approximately two percent of the environmentalists live in a household where the *Co-Evolution Quarterly*, a magazine with deep ecology sympathies, is regularly read and about eight percent where the *Mother Earth News* is regularly read. Asked whether they regard themselves as being "into new life styles," an admittedly ambiguous phrase⁸ but one which has specific meaning for deep ecologists, nine percent said this phrase was a "very appropriate" description for them and a further 24 percent said it was "appropriate." Five percent state that they currently belong to "a community of people who seek to live in an ecologically sound manner utilizing alternative lifestyles." A sizable number of environmentalists are attracted by the prospect of a simpler rural lifestyle. One question described the phenomenon of "groups of people going to live off the land and settling in agricultural and rural areas" and asked if this was something that "would interest you for a year or more?" Twenty-one percent said they would like to try it for a year or two and a further 18 percent expressed a desire to live off the land permanently. By these various criteria at least five and perhaps as high as ten percent of the members of these five groups are living some approximation of a deep ecology life style, and this life style has a strong appeal for another 30 percent or so. These life styles attract the groups' younger and newer members.

Table 1 summarizes the various attitudinal items in my question-

8. That the phrase may lack a common referent is suggested by the fact that a total of 23 percent of the National Wildlife Federation members said they were "into new life styles," an improbably high level for a group of people which would be presumed to harbor a much lower level of sympathy for the counter-culture than the other four groups. However, more National Wildlife members than any other group except Environmental Action said they lived in a "community of people who seek to live in an ecologically sound manner utilizing alternative life-styles." Since this description of the community is reasonably explicit it may be that rural Americans with less than a college education regard their small town/farm way of life as an "alternative," which it certainly is, compared with that of the vast majority of Americans who live in cities and suburbs.

TABLE 1
SUPPORT FOR ASPECTS OF THE DEEP ECOLOGY WORLDVIEW BY
MEMBERS OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

	<i>Deep Ecology Position</i>	<i>Support Position Strongly</i>	<i>Support Position</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
1. I believe plants and animals exist primarily for man's use.	<i>Disagree</i>	41%	39%	80%
2. An endangered species should be protected even at the expense of commercial activity.	<i>Agree</i>	40	41	81
3. If the price of a beautiful and healthful environment is the cessation of further economic growth it is a price worth paying.	<i>Agree</i>	25	40	65
4. People would be better off if they lived a more simple life style without so much technology.	<i>Agree</i>	23	43	66
5. We have already let technology run away with us.	<i>Agree</i>	15	38	53
6. The future welfare of our society largely depends on the discoveries of science.	<i>Disagree</i>	10	33	43
7. Society must be decentralized.	<i>Agree</i>	9	30	39
8. Here are two different viewpoints on the human use of natural resources. With which do you most agree? <i>Person A</i> believes that we have already gone too far in exploiting nature and that the balance should be restored in nature's favor. The future use of resources should never interfere with the integrity, stability and beauty of natural systems. <i>Person B</i> believes that it is an unavoidable necessity to interfere with some natural system. This is only permissible, however, when the interference is held to a minimum through careful and sensitive environmental planning.	<i>Person A</i>	14	13	27

naire which measure one or the other of the deep ecology themes enumerated by Devall. There is very strong support for the idea that humans should not dominate wildlife nor interfere with natural systems by endangering species (items 1 and 2) and strong support for the cessation of economic growth if it threatens natural systems (item 3). The deep ecology belief that technology should be a tool, not an end in itself, also finds fairly strong support as measured by items 4 and 5 and rather less support on item 6. On that item, only ten percent strongly disagreed with the notion, basic to the conventional paradigm, that our future welfare largely depends on the discoveries of science. It should be noted that items 3 and 6 do not measure whether those who have misgivings about modern technology and science *also* question its "narrow, analytic conception of the 'scientific method'" and favor what Devall calls "'ancient wisdom' science." The final agree-disagree item concerns decentralized society, as important a theme in deep ecology as it is for soft path enthusiasts, and it receives the least support with about one-third of the sample agreeing with the statement.

The last item in Table 1 poses two alternative positions on the human use of natural resources. Position A closely approximates one of the basic themes of deep ecology, whereas Position B states a reformist environmentalist point of view. Slightly more than one-quarter of the sample took the deep ecology position, with 14 percent holding it strongly. The distribution of the responses on this question across the five groups was remarkably even.

The examination of these items separately is useful in that it shows which of the various deep ecology themes elicit greater and lesser support from the environmentalists. But deep ecology as a world view necessarily involves the synthesis of these (and other) attitudes; we would expect the prototypical deep ecologist to take the deep ecology point of view on all of these items. Accordingly, items 1-5 and 7-8 were combined into a single index⁹ so that an

9. The scale was constructed using the assumption that people holding the deep ecology position could be reasonably expected to support strongly that position on those items which received the support of two-thirds or more of the sample (items 1-4) and to support the position on the rest (items 5, 7 and 8). Item 6 was inadvertently left out of the scale. People's position on the seven items were summed and divided by the numbers of the items they answered. All persons who answered "don't know" to any of these questions were dropped, giving a sample size for the scale of 926. Someone was counted a deep ecologist if his or her score was the equivalent of taking that position on five out of the six items. Statistically these items do not form a single dimension according to the results of a principal components factor analysis, which yielded a two-factor solution. Factor one was dominated by item 4 and also included items 5 and 7, while factor two consisted of items 1, 2, and 8. Item 3 loaded on both factors. Many of these environmentalists' views about wildlife and about technology do not cohere in the way predicted by the deep ecology paradigm.

estimation could be made of the number of people who hold a consistent deep ecology position on these questions. Of the 926 environmentalists for whom this scale could be calculated, 19 percent took the deep ecology view on at least six of the seven items, including 8 percent who took that position on all seven items.

The attitudinal data reveals a distribution of deep ecology adherents fairly similar to that shown by the behavior/self-definition measures described earlier. Approximately ten percent hold these views strongly and another 15 percent or so are very sympathetic to them. Those who hold deep ecology type attitudes tend to be younger, but the relationship between age and these attitudes is much less strong than it was for new life styles, and the deep ecology views are quite evenly distributed between new and long time members. Those with deep ecology sympathies have a much higher commitment to their groups than those who do not share these views and, as Devall's analysis would predict, they are especially likely to regard the environmental situation as "rapidly approaching disaster."

A LEFT DIRECTION?

The last question is the extent to which a potential constituency exists among members of "organized environmentalism" for a "left" solution to Buttell and Larson's hypothesized "emerging milieu of resource scarcity."¹⁰ According to Buttell and Larson, a deteriorating energy and environmental situation is likely to lead to either a "right" or a "left" solution to resource scarcity. Their rather abstract analysis of the conditions which would lead to one or the other solution uses classes (e.g., upper middle, monopoly sector labor), rather than interest group members (e.g., environmentalists, union members) or groups (e.g., environmental organizations, unions), as their unit of analysis. But if a left solution requires a coalition between labor and the middle class, as they argue, then one important indicator of the *potential* for such an eventual coalition would be the degree to which those who belong to the national environmental groups possess left sympathies, since they are the members of the middle class who would be most likely to initiate such a coalition. Of particular importance in this regard is the degree to which environmentalists support income redistribution from the better off to those less well off, because if economic growth stops or slows drastically, as many environmentalists would like to see happen for the sake of

10. Buttell & Larson, *Whither Environmentalism? The Future Political Path of the Environmental Movement*, 20 NAT. RES. J. 323 (1980).

the environment and future generations, and if people's standard of living is affected significantly as a result, then pressures for either a renewal of growth *or* for some degree of income redistribution are likely to be intense. The importance of redistribution and equity is emphasized in both the Buttel and Larson and the Morrison papers in this symposium as well as in Alan Schnaiberg's recent book, *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity*,¹¹ which advocates a left solution similar to Buttel and Larson's.

Environmentalists are strongly liberal, as the data in Table 2 shows. While only 21 percent of the general public think of themselves as liberals, three times as many environmentalists accept this label. Another measure which shows the magnitude of the environmentalists' liberalism is their support for and active participation in the several recent movements for social change which have occurred during the past two decades. Eighty percent or more said they were very sympathetic or sympathetic to the civil rights, anti-war, women's, and consumer's movements. Of special significance is the finding that personal activism in these movements is quite high, with one out of four environmentalists reporting that they were active in the anti-war movement (two out of five for Environmental Action), one out of five in the civil rights movement, and one out of six in the women's movement and the anti-nuclear movement.

Liberal and left are not synonymous, of course. Buttel and Larson's left environmentalist solution to the problems of scarcity involves a sharp break with the current approach to environmental control and a move towards a decentralized and egalitarian society featuring broad public participation in the allocation of natural resources. At the present time most liberal environmentalists do not advocate so radical a course. One question in my survey asked the respondents to choose one of four progressively more radical views about the extent to which American society needs to be changed. Only 14 percent indicated that they felt "radical change is needed" or that "the whole system ought to be replaced by an entirely new one," positions consonant with left environmentalism. The rest either said they believed the present system to be flexible enough to solve society's problems (73 percent) or felt "the American way of life to be superior to that of any other country" (14 percent).

Most of these advocates of radical change, who tend to be younger in age and to have belonged to the groups for fewer years than their centrist or right counterparts, describe their ideological position as

11. A. SCHNAIBERG, *THE ENVIRONMENT: FROM SURPLUS TO SCARCITY* 432 (1979).

TABLE 2
 IDEOLOGICAL CATEGORIES FOR ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

	<i>Environmental Action</i> (656)	<i>Environmental Defense Fund</i> (596)	<i>National Wild- life Federation</i> (482)	<i>Sierra Club</i> (631)	<i>The Wilderness Society</i> (592)	<i>Total Environ- mentalist</i> (2957)	<i>Total Public*</i> (1009)
<i>strongly conservative</i>	2%	2%	9%	4%	6%	4%	8%
<i>moderate conservative</i>	7	11	38	19	23	19	41
<i>middle of the road</i>	9	13	31	16	18	17	31
<i>moderate liberal</i>	48	49	18	44	39	41	14
<i>strongly liberal</i>	24	18	3	12	12	14	5
<i>radical</i>	10	7	2	9	2	5	2
	100%	100%	101%	99%	100%	100%	101%

*Resources for the Future, national telephone survey, August 1978.

being strongly liberal or radical. They are especially likely to believe that environmental problems are very serious, to have been active in the anti-war movement, and to support the decentralization of society and income redistribution, views and activities which support the idea that they are left environmentalists in Buttel and Larson's sense.

Although the correlation between left environmental views and deep ecology views is high, indicating an overlap in membership between the two groups, there are important differences between the two types of environmentalists. Deep ecologists are much less likely than the left environmentalists to support income redistribution and federal aid to women needing abortions, two further measures of a left orientation. Secondly, the stronger the belief in deep ecology the greater the individual's commitment to their environmental group, whereas the left environmentalists are no more or less committed to their groups than those of the center or the right. This is probably related to the fact that the left environmentalists, unlike the deep ecologists, are disproportionately found among the groups' newer members.

To summarize, the potential left constituency among these environmentalists at the present time consists of the 14 percent or so who seem to have a strong left orientation, and a larger group of liberals, perhaps 25 percent of the sample, who believe that economic growth must be slowed or stopped for the environment's sake, and who support income redistribution.

CONCLUSION

Anthony Downs once wrote an essay called "Up and Down With Ecology—the Issue Attention Cycle"¹² in which, contrary to the tone of its title, he argued that environmental issues have certain characteristics which are likely to protect environmentalism from the rapid decline in public interest typical of many other recent issues. These characteristics include the visibility of pollution problems, the availability of a small group of "villains," the range of environmental issues, the fact that they threaten almost everyone, and the likelihood, now realized, that a pollution control industry with vested interests in the issue will emerge. For these and other reasons environmentalism has been a vital reforming force in American society over the past decade, and the prospects for it continuing to play this role in the one to come are very good.

12. See Downs, *Up and Down with Ecology—the "Issue Attention Cycle,"* 28 PUB. INTEREST 38 (Summer 1972).

It seems very unlikely, however, that the environmental movement will become a force for radical change either of the deep ecology or of the left variety. The movement is essentially a middle class reformist movement whose members have not become more radicalized since the early 1970s.¹³ The legislative response to the nation's environmental problems has been sufficiently extensive that most environmentalists will be too busy defending the existing laws and calling for new ones to push for a radically decentralized society in any serious way in the years to come. The radical elements of the movement are likely to become more vocal as scarcity and other world problems force compromises between environmental objectives and other social needs, so conflict and possibly schism within some of the environmental groups may be anticipated. But those who do seek to bring about a radically changed society will find that impending scarcity, if such is to be our fate in the coming decade, will lessen rather than increase the audience for their program. Pollution control programs are currently at the stage where additional increments of control are more and more costly and inflation is lowering the real incomes of many Americans, making them more vulnerable to equity and efficiency considerations. The future environmental debate is far more likely to be over the nature of the trade-offs than over whether we should continue with a system that engages in trade-offs on these kinds of issues.

Environmentalism will continue to be an important source of new ideas and values with the soft path/appropriate technology complex of ideas as its cutting edge. And these will continue to be attractive to the large segment of the public who have come to desire that elusive entity, a "better quality of life," of which environmentalism is an important constituent. But unless environmentalists are able to build a coalition with labor, blacks, and the poor and simultaneously to tackle the problems of declining environmental quality and social equity in such a way that they gain widespread public support, the extent to which the soft path ideas influence policy will be determined far more by the accidents of presidential leadership and world and national events than by the efforts of environmental lobbyists.

13. See Molotch, *The Radicalization of Everyone*, in RACE, CHANGE AND URBAN SOCIETY 517 (P. Orleans & W. Ellis, eds. 1971). Molotch hypothesizes that those who engage in environmental activism will gain "radical-left insights" and thus become radicalized. In collaboration with Ted Bartel I have re-surveyed a large portion of the Sierra Club members which he originally surveyed in 1972. Our preliminary findings show a small decrease from 1972 to 1978 in the percentage of that sample advocating a fundamental change in our social and political system. For these people at least the process of radicalization which Molotch described has not taken place.

The apparently remote likelihood of such a coalition occurring and gaining widespread public support for fundamental change is illustrated by the anti-nuclear movement's inability, thus far, to attract a large and broad-based constituency. This movement is a particularly instructive case study because it is the most activist expression of radical environmentalism today. While the deep ecology theorists live their exemplary lives in the countryside and the appropriate technologists "network" and tune up their windmills, the anti-nuclear activists directly confront the "system" as embodied in billion dollar nuclear power plants and seek to turn it towards an environmentally benign soft path utopia.

If any contemporary movement for fundamental change should have the chance to gain broad appeal in our society, this one should. Although it commands financial resources infinitesimally smaller than those of its adversaries, the anti-nuclear movement possesses a number of important advantages. Nuclear reactors are highly visible local symbols which make convenient protest objects. The hazards they present are potentially catastrophic and overlaid with the emotionally charged images of the atomic bomb and Three Mile Island. For the past seven years the urgency of expanding our commitment to nuclear power has abated thanks to the slackening of demand occasioned by the Arab oil embargo and its expensive aftermath, making it possible realistically to consider a moratorium on new plants. The movement's principal opponents—the nuclear industry, the utilities, the Department of Energy, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission—are often clumsy and ineffective in their dealings with the public and the press and are saddled with an unfortunate history of arrogance and deceit that has made it difficult for them to establish their credibility. Its adherents are middle class whites, for the most part, who bring to the movement lessons learned from previous movements: a knowledge of how the system works, access to a certain amount of scientific expertise, an understanding of how to use the media, and an ability to raise enough funds to maintain viable, albeit lean, organizations from their own pocketbooks, sympathetic small foundations, direct mail, and rock stars. As an issue, nuclear power has sufficient facets to reflect the interests of virtually all the contemporary progressive movements for social change. The environmental movement has always been sympathetic to it, and in the past five years environmentalists have become strongly anti-nuclear. A final advantage held by the anti-nuclear movement is its vision of a positive alternative to a nuclear society—the notion of the soft path.

Although the anti-nuclear movement has had an important impact on the agencies regulating nuclear power and although it has contributed to a public wariness about nuclear power's safety, its accomplishments to date have been reforms rather than fundamental change. Organizationally it has been much more adept in mounting direct actions than in reaching out to ordinary citizens who live near nuclear power plants or to the major unions. Even after Three Mile Island, no more than one-third of the general public is sympathetic with the movement, in contrast to the 60 percent support enjoyed by the environmental movement.¹⁴ If another accident at a nuclear power plant resulted in direct harm to the public, a sharp turn away from the nuclear option can be expected. Yet it is unlikely that American society would turn towards a radically decentralized society as a consequence.

Environmentalism seems destined, in the years to come, either to a process of slow disintegration as the hard facts of scarcity create conflict within the movement and disillusion those of the general public who are sympathetic with its aims or, as presently seems more likely, to a continued role as a reformist movement which harbors a vision of an "appropriate" society but which presses for reforms that are neither too deep nor too left to alienate either its middle class constituency or its potential allies among the less affluent sectors of society.

14. The question asked: "In the past several years the anti-nuclear movement has been very active. Do you consider yourself to be an active member of the anti-nuclear movement, sympathetic towards the movement but not active, neutral or unsympathetic to the anti-nuclear movement?" In a 1978 national poll, 29 percent were active or sympathetic. A year later, after Three Mile Island, those who were favorable towards the movement increased to only 33 percent. See Mitchell, *supra* note 1 and Mitchell, *Public Opinion and Nuclear Power Before and After Three Mile Island*, 60 RESOURCES ____ (Jan.-Apr. 1980).