

Community

Community, Family, Children

Communities have become too big and families have become too small. Because of the sprawling nature of cities and towns, and because of increased family and individual mobility, the formation of small areas with a community of interest is now rare. New Zealand badly needs a set of clearly defined national goals with which the whole community can identify. Government should be decentralised, and people given as much say as possible in running their own affairs - in determining the type of community in which they live. Extended families - of grandparents, parents, children, and perhaps friends and other relatives - should be encouraged. So should other forms of communal living. Children should be under the influence of more than one adult, and child-care centres should be more than mindless baby-minders.

Education

The education system can be used to maintain the present system or to help develop an alternative. At the moment, our education system is not equipping young people with the skills they need to cope with life in a changing world. There is little point in simply updating the system so it caters better for a society which is fundamentally competitive and materialistic. Education should be geared to the development of a just, co-operative, community-based society. A major effort is needed to tackle many of the problems of modern education - there is a need for improved adult education, for greater retraining, and to improve facilities for minority groups. The decision-making process of education must be reformed, to allow for greater power at community and regional levels. There should be greater diversity of educational styles, to allow for individual preferences and differences.

Health

Everyone has a right to health care, when and where it is needed. Need should be the only criterion for receiving care. The health service should be decentralised, so that communities can decide for themselves the type of service they want. But because resources are finite there is a limit to the amount of money that can be spent, so services must be spread as equitably as possible. Prevention is better than cure, and the development of a stable society would do much to prevent many of today's diseases - the diseases of stress and affluence.

Welfare

An objective of all Values' policies is to create a society which has no need for social welfare as it is traditionally understood. A guaranteed minimum income would replace most benefits and superannuation schemes. The caring, cohesive community established once growth rates had been stabilised, would cater for most people's needs. There will nevertheless be a continuing need for the traditional forms of welfare, and "common situation" groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous should be encouraged.

Housing

Shelter is a basic need of mankind. People have a right to warm, dry, comfortable accommodation, at a reasonable price. Yet after many years of effort by successive governments many people live in poor quality housing at too high a price. It is very difficult to buy a house. Part of the problem is that speculators are taking advantage of people's need for housing. Part of it is that some dwellings are under-used. Building cannot keep pace with population growth. There should be tighter controls on speculation. More houses should be built, and money and other assistance made more readily available. Variety in housing, and alternatives in living styles, should be encouraged.

Local Government

Local bodies should be more concerned than they are with the wider needs of the community. Too often, important decisions affecting a local area are left to a distant bureaucracy. Decisions on matters such as housing, health, welfare and education should all be decentralised. At the same time, there is a need for a reorganisation of local government - regional, district and community councils should be developed. Rates should be abolished in favour of a local income tax.

Government Reform

Only a strong sense of community can counter the massness and alienation of modern western society. More power, more responsibility, and more autonomy must go to regional levels of government. Greater openness is needed in central government, and the public must be more involved in its processes. The present "confrontation" debating system should be reformed, and MPs given greater assistance in their work.

Survival

“An examination of the relevant information available has impressed upon us the extreme gravity of the global situation today. For, if current trends are allowed to persist, the breakdown of society and the irreversible disruption of the life-support systems on this planet, possibly by the end of the century, certainly within the lifetimes of our children, are inevitable”
From “A Blueprint for Survival” [The Ecologist Vol.2, No.1, 1972]: Supported by 34 distinguished biologists, ecologists, doctors and economists.

Some people have dismissed the Values Party as sentimental nature-lovers. On the contrary, we know that nature is utterly indifferent to any one species and couldn't care less whether human beings survive or not. We disagree with environmentalists who believe man shouldn't interfere with nature at all. There is nothing wrong with altering our environment provided it is really in our interests - in the long term as well as in the short term.

The trouble is that much of our present intervention in the relationships between living species is not making the world a better place. It is not in the interests of any species.

It wasn't until this century that man found out

- how to make weapons that could destroy the world;
- how to poison and break down the atmosphere, and
- how to use up energy resources and minerals in a few generations.

No doubt you are already aware of the possibility of a nuclear holocaust. But the danger of ecological breakdown is more subtle, less obvious, harder to understand, yet just as real a threat to our survival. Our species depends for its survival on the predictability of ecological processes and on the continued resilience of the ecological networks of which homo-sapiens is an integral part.

The time has come when you can no longer take the survival of yourself, your family, your fellow countrymen or other world citizens for granted. You may argue that there'll be a last-minute miracle, that the back-room boffins will make a scientific breakthrough, and that man has always survived so far and thus will continue to do so.

We don't like the odds. The Values Party does not accept that the world can continue speeding recklessly along the path towards crisis in the assurance of a technological salvation on the way.

The Values Party exists to tell anyone who'll listen that we must start taking sensible action now in case our species does not find a last-minute escape route from the logical consequences of its greed and stupidity. If you want to ensure survival for your descendant help us start making provision. We are offering New Zealand a survival kit. As the Blueprint said:
“We do not need to destroy the ecosphere utterly to bring catastrophe upon ourselves: All we have to do is to carry on as we are.”

The Stable-State Society

"What is quite clear is that a way of life which bases itself on materialism, that is on permanent limitless expansion, in a finite environment, cannot last long, and that its life expectation is the shorter the more successfully it pursues its expansionist objectives."

Dr E. F. Schumacher - Economic Advisor, British National Coal Board.

What We Want

In a finite world, infinite growth is impossible. Every person must be cared for in a limited amount of space and with limited resources. Common sense demands that the whole world develops a sharing, cooperative, decentralised stable society which ensures the satisfaction of both the material and the non-material needs of all of us, now and in the future.

The Values Party believes that New Zealand is a very good place to start and that the time to set the example is now. We have three priorities:

Survival of our species, of the environment it depends on, of our planet.

Justice a fair sharing of resources, wealth, and decision-making power, both between and within nations.

Community a face-to-face society where people are precious.

We have a three-fold programme:

Short-term what we want the present Government to do.

Transitional what steps must be taken to transform New Zealand.

Long-term what we want for New Zealand and the world ultimately.

How To Get What We Want

Our policies are concerned with:

Causes rather than symptoms.

Prevention rather than cure.

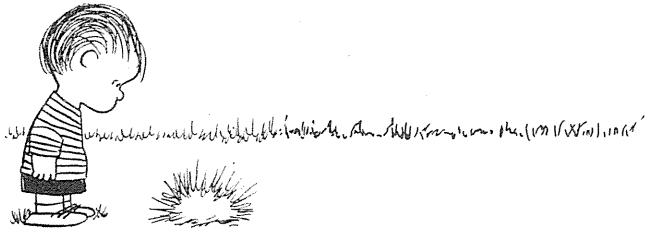
Preparation before the event.

We want a social order that we can expect to be sustainable. We must live within our means and use only our just share of the world's resources. In every area of our lives, there are thresholds beyond which mankind pays too high a price for growth. Society must decide which levels are best (for people and for the environment) and then stick with them until such time as there is a change in the information on which the decision was based.

The Values Party proposes that New Zealand aim to stabilise its levels of:

Population. We must bring into the world only as many people as society can care for justly.

Economy. Once the population has been stabilised we need a Stable-state economy: we must produce and consume only as much as the environment can stand.



This is what the Values Party means by stabilisation: **Analysing the information** affecting limits in the light of social goals rather than economic goals.

Determining what level is the best (which is not the same thing as trying to have as much as possible!). **Discontinuing growth** when the optimum level is reached and maintaining that level until there is good reason to alter it deliberately, in a planned orderly manner.

Growth

What really makes the Values Party different from the other political parties is that they all believe in continuing economic growth, irrespective of what has grown and who if anyone has benefited ultimately. We say that infinite growth in a finite environment is impossible. Limited controlled growth in areas such as education and culture enrich society without endangering it.

But what of pathological growth which like a cancer, renders unhealthy the living organism it feeds on? Cancer cells are defined as cells which have lost the power to control their reproduction. They divert energy from other essential parts and if not stopped or removed, they spread through the body and kill the victim.

The world today has two cancer-like problems-- population growth and industrial growth. Neither is critical yet in New Zealand, but the dimension of these problems overseas constitutes a warning we must heed.

Most population experts and ecologists give our civilisation a slim chance of reaching the end of the century intact unless world population growth is checked. The now famous computer study of the future of mankind, "The Limits to Growth" predicts the irreversible breakdown of the life-support systems on earth by the year 2100 if industrial output continues to grow exponentially.

What causes dangerous and unnecessary growth? In societies where industry is controlled only by the people who contribute the capital, the pursuit of profit overrides all considerations such as the quality of life of the workers, the length of life of the product, or the security of the environment. When demand is satisfied, the profit-oriented industry must continue to grow somehow.

And so, such industries pressure the public into demanding things they do not really desire. More and more items are manufactured to wear out quickly or to break. In addition, the obsession with regular changes of style and fashion make people throw things away while they still have a useful life. In the context of a