

BEYOND THE DEPENDENCY CULTURE PEOPLE, POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY

by

James Robertson

SECTION 2

This extract contains Chapters 5 to 10. The other parts of the book can be downloaded from www.jamesrobertson.com/books.htm.

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BEYOND THE DEPENDENCY CULTURE
People, Power And Responsibility In The 21st Century

SECTION 2

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CHAPTER 5. AFTER THE WELFARE STATE.

This chapter is based on a paper originally given at a conference on "Welfarism - What Now?" organised by Nordal Akerman for the Swedish Committee for Future Oriented Research in Stockholm in August 1980, and later published in *Futures*, February 1982.

The paper was written following an attachment to the University of Calgary, Alberta, arranged by Tim Tyler, Dean of the Faculty of Social Welfare. It was one of the outcomes of a project on "Changing Direction" sponsored by:

- Continuing Management Education Programme, Loughborough University (Gurth Higgin);
- Intermediate Technology Development Group (John Davis and George McRobie);
- International Foundation for Social Innovation, Paris (Georges Gueron);
- Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (Grigor McClelland);
- Scott Bader Commonwealth (Godric Bader); and
- the Vanier Institute for the Family, Ottawa (Bill Dyson).

As published in *Futures*, the paper began with an account of the HE and SHE visions of the future, and of the nature of the change of direction to a SHE path of future development. That part of the paper has been left out here, to avoid duplication with earlier chapters.

January 1997

WHAT COMES AFTER THE WELFARE STATE? A Post-Welfare Development Path For The UK

Richard Titmuss¹ described the social services as "an integral part of industrialisation". They are the mode of providing for social welfare which industrial society has evolved, following the breakdown of the old social fabric during and after the Industrial Revolution. Now industrial society in its turn has reached the limit of its development path and is nearing breakdown. The whole constellation of assumptions (the paradigm) on which industrial society has evolved, and on which its institutions and the relationships between them are based, is rapidly losing its capacity to energise, to justify and to explain. We therefore face a change of direction in the development of social welfare, as of everything else.

The question, "what comes after the Welfare State?" implies that we cannot develop the Welfare State further on lines envisaged by the hyper-expansionists, and equally that we cannot go back to the bad old pre-welfare days of early industrial society. We are seeking ways forward into a truly post-industrial future in which people will be better able, and be better enabled, to create welfare for themselves and one another - what the Vanier Institute calls a "more familial" society.

Many thinkers about social policy and many practitioners of social administration are already coming to grips with this challenge, and are placing new emphasis on voluntary social service and self-help. I hope some of them may find encouragement and stimulus in this paper.

The Industrial Paradigm

The industrial paradigm embraces the following interrelated assumptions:

- progress consists in separating the economic and social aspects of life;
- progress consists in separating the activities of production and consumption;
- progress consists in specialisation;

¹ Richard Titmuss, *Essays on the Welfare State*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1963.

- progress consists in the formalisation (including monetisation, institutionalisation and professionalisation) of the production of goods and provision of services; and
- the growth of social welfare depends on the growth of economic prosperity which must, therefore, be given priority.

20th century socialists have shared these assumptions with 19th century radical capitalists. Just as the latter assumed in the 1830s that solutions to the "condition of England question" depended on the stimulus to economic activity that free trade and retrenchment of government spending would provide, so the latter - like C.A.R. Crosland in *The Future of Socialism*² assumed that economic growth was an essential prerequisite to increasing social welfare. The same, of course, is true of US multinational business tycoons and Soviet state planners today.

There was a recent period, during the "Butskellite" consensus³ of the 1950s, when mature industrial society in the UK seemed to most people to be progressing more or less satisfactorily according to these assumptions. But this was not long sustained. On the one hand the limits to economic growth began to close in, while on the other the demand for social welfare services - fed by their availability at public expense, by widening perceptions of the scale of social need that ought to be met, by the vested interest of the growing number of social service professionals, and by the general readiness of politicians to offer more - began to escalate. The industrial growth engine turned, in a few short years, from a miracle machine capable of meeting continually growing needs, into a disaster device programmed to generate aspirations which it could not possibly fulfil - and programmed, moreover, to stunt people's capacity to fulfil their aspirations for themselves.

Conventional politicians of all shades in the UK today (including Mrs Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph who believe in the invisible hand of the market economy, the left-wing Bennite socialists who believe in the omniscience of a benign state, and those in between - social democrats, liberals and "wet" conservatives - who believe in a mixed economy) still cling to the industrial paradigm. They continue to assume that economic recovery on conventional lines is prerequisite to the provision of increased social welfare on conventional lines, and the main argument between them is about

² C.A.R. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism*, Cape, London, 1956.

³ From the names of R.A. Butler (Conservative) and Hugh Gaitskell (Labour).

how economic recovery is to be achieved. They will continue to voice this basic set of assumptions, though with declining conviction and credibility, until others have articulated clearly and coherently a new set of assumptions to succeed it. To articulate that new set of assumptions is one of the most important tasks of the present creative, pre-political phase of the transition to a post-industrial society.⁴

The whole thrust of industrial progress has been to drive human activity out of the informal sector (in which the economic and social, and for that matter cultural, aspects of life were closely intertwined) into the formal sector (where social became separated from economic activity and consumption from production, where more and more activities became professionalised, and where economists could count the money value of what happened). The institutionalised activities of society became, with industrialisation, so dominant that questions about the operation of the formal economy and the organised social services became the only economic and social issues considered worthy of debate by politicians and serious commentators. The change of direction to a post-welfare development path must involve a revitalisation of the informal sector, in which the separation between economic and social activities, between production and consumption, and between the life of the household and the life of the local community, will no longer be so sharp as it has become during the industrial age.

Meanwhile, the centralisation of political and economic power has become an increasingly dominant trend in late industrial society; this has provoked a "small is beautiful" backlash; and the "vertical" conflict between centralisation and decentralisation, big and small, has now emerged as a rival dimension of political choice to the conventional "horizontal" choices of right, left and centre. An important aspect of the post-industrial future will be a revitalisation of local control over economic and social, as well as political, affairs - or, to put it more exactly, a reintegration of economic, social and political autonomy at the local level.

These perspectives suggest two main features of the SHE approach to the future of social welfare (as to the future of economic

⁴ I clearly recall when, at an international conference organised by Alison Pritchard and myself at Hawkwood near Stroud in the spring of 1979, Bill Dyson impressed on me that creative thinking and dissemination of ideas about social transformation belonged, not to the processes and activities of mainstream politics, but to pre-political processes and activities aimed at getting new ideas and new policies on to the mainstream political agenda.

wellbeing and of employment and work): first, more and more people should be enabled to become more self-reliant in their homes and families, and to participate more actively as members of their local communities; second, more and more local communities should be enabled likewise to achieve more economic, social and political autonomy and to become more active participants in the economic, social and political life of the wider society of which they are part.

Let me emphasise that this approach differs diametrically from the HE vision of post-industrial society, one of whose main features is the growth of dependency on centralised technocracy and professionalised services. I do not see how that could possibly be a desirable or feasible path into the future. It implies that people should be seen as a problem, not a resource. It implies a society increasingly split between managerial technocracy and dependent clientele. I am not saying this is far-fetched. In Sweden, for example, it has been calculated that, if the social services continue to develop in the same way as hitherto, in a few decades half the population will be employed taking care of the other half.⁵ But a future which implies a continuing expansion of people's needs and of their incapacity to meet those needs for themselves and one another - a continuing growth of alienation and perceived helplessness - cannot be sustainable for long.⁶

The Key Dilemma: Persons or Society?

The future of welfare raises directly the crucial dilemma that faces all who propose a transformation of society: should we first try to change people (including ourselves) or first try to change society? The dilemma is that, unless we become better people, we will be unable to create a better society; whereas unless we create a better society, the existing social environment will prevent us becoming better people.

Welfare services and social policy range from personal counselling, through the administration of welfare benefits and services, to community development and radical social action. There has been much debate about which end of the spectrum is more important.

⁵ *Care in Society*, 1979, a project presentation by the Secretariat for Futures Studies, Stockholm.

⁶ [1997 note. It has now become clear that the once admired Swedish welfare state is, in fact, not financially sustainable.]

Is there a conflict between them? Should we help people to function better in society as it is? Or should we change society for the better?

This question - which comes first, persons or society? - affects most areas of social policy. Here are three examples among many. First, is poverty due to personal laziness and lack of willpower, or to the injustice of society? A recent survey⁷ showed that in the UK we tend to blame people for being poor, whereas other Europeans tend to blame society for people's poverty. Second, in order to improve health, should we encourage people personally to refrain from too much drink, tobacco, and junk food? Or should we try to change the policies of the institutions - the industries, the advertising media, and the Treasury - which depend for their revenue on high sales of these products? Third, is social work that helps people to cope with the problems of poverty, unemployment, ill-health, etc, the right approach? Or is it, as many radicals argue, merely a control function performed for the governing classes to socialise working class people into the existing economic system?

I argued in *The Sane Alternative* that we have to find ways of transcending this person/society dilemma. So far as we ourselves are concerned, we have to find ways of acting which simultaneously change our own way of living and help to change the way society functions - in other words, ways of acting and being which contribute at the same time to our own development as persons-in-society and to the development of a more person-centred society. Recent initiatives by the Association of Humanistic Psychology have this aim clearly in view. So far as other people are concerned, we have to find ways of helping them which at the same time help to create a new direction for society. These will be ways, especially, of enabling people to help themselves and by doing so to help to change society around them. Consciousness-raising is often directed to this. In general, the way out of the dilemma is to look for solutions to the problems of people today which will at the same time be stepping stones towards a new society tomorrow.

As we pursue the practicalities of the post-welfare development path, the links between personal development, social service and social action will be of the greatest importance. If we ignore them there will always be a risk that personal development may

⁷ *The Perception of Poverty in Europe*, Commission of the European Communities, rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels, Belgium.

degenerate into narcissism, that social service may degenerate into new forms of domination and dependency-creation, and that political and social action may degenerate into an outlet for the displaced personal growth needs of the activists concerned.

Self-Development for Persons and Communities

A central concept, then, for the post-welfare development path will be self-development for persons and communities; and the link between the two will attract increasing attention.

In many practical ways this is already evident. The growing interest in local enterprise trusts, decentralised energy strategy, community health centres and other approaches to local community development is matched by the growing interest in the kinds of education and training that enable people to develop their individual skills and capacities - whether practical (like plumbing and gardening), personal (like meditation), or interpersonal (like counselling). All this is a vital part of the post-welfare development path. But in the present context I wish to discuss a developmental possibility more directly related to the welfare approach.

The interest in personal therapies (which help people to deal with problems perceived as damaging) and personal growth techniques (which help people to tap their potential for a better life) has grown significantly in recent years. (In practice, the dividing line between therapies and growth techniques is blurred.) How far may it be possible to develop generally applicable community therapies and community growth techniques on similar lines? And, further, how far may it be possible to make explicit the link between community growth and the personal growth of people living in the community concerned?

As an example of a personal therapy I take the Heimler Scale of Social Functioning. In *Survival In Society*⁸ Eugene Heimler asks how we can turn the welfare state concept into a concept of self-help, and describes an approach based on the use of his scale. The scale comprises three indices, which he calls "positive", "negative", and "synthesis".

⁸ Eugene Heimler, *Survival in Society*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1975. Heimler is Professor of Social Functioning at Calgary University. He is also Chairman of the Institute of Social Functioning in England.

- The positive index asks five questions on each of the following five topics: finance; sex; primary and secondary family relationships; friendship; work and/or outside interests. The responses can be positive, negative or uncertain, scoring 4, 0, and 2 respectively.
- The negative index is designed to indicate the nature of frustration. It asks five questions on each of the following topics: activity; somatic; personal; depression; escape routes. Again the scoring is 4, 0, 2.
- The synthesis scale evaluates past, present and future aspirations. It asks five questions (e.g. "How far have you achieved your ambition in life?"), each of which is scored between 0 and 20 (e.g. "not at all" and "completely").

The scale thus generates a profile for each person who, as an integral part of his or her therapy, completes the questionnaire. Its primary use is to provide people, in discussion with the therapist, with starting points for action to improve their social functioning. Its value as a device for enabling people to see how they can help themselves appears unquestionable. (It can also be used by therapists diagnostically; to measure improvement; to indicate priority cases for treatment; and to give warning of possibilities, e.g. of suicide.)

Much information is now becoming available about community economic development, local enterprise trusts, participatory planning, anticipatory democracy, and other approaches to local self-development, including community health, community education, community arts, and community communications. Sudbury (Canada); Jamestown (USA), Craigmillar (Scotland) and Altrincham (England) are among many localities where various methods of animating community decision making and stimulating public discussion of local futures have recently been documented. As it becomes necessary in more and more localities to accelerate the change of direction to a post-welfare development path, techniques analogous to the Heimler Scale of Social Functioning for individuals, will need to be validated and brought into widespread use to animate community consciousness and to enable local communities to evolve new perceptions of community needs, community potential, and possible courses of community action. What is required is a generally applicable framework which would enable communities to establish a profile for themselves of perceived needs, perceived satisfactions and perceived frustrations (in areas like employment, transport, welfare, health, education,

and so on), as a basis on which to mobilise energy for purposeful community action. An example may be a "social balance sheet for the town" (bilan social de la ville) which is drawn up, using a process of public participation, under the headings Housing, Education, Culture, Leisure, Health, Security, Communication, Administration, Production, Distribution, and Solidarity. The suggestion is that drawing up this social balance sheet every five years could become a regular part of the planning process.

Post-Welfare Role of Professionals

A vital task for professionals, as we switch to the post-welfare development path, will be to help persons and communities to become more self-reliant and to acquire the capacity for self-development - for example, by offering the kind of technique which I have just discussed, and knowing from experience how it can be successfully used. People from many different professional backgrounds - engineers, planners, builders, architects, managers, accountants, even economists - will have much to offer, and welfare professionals will be among them.

Even without this new task, I would not argue, as some do, that we ought to get rid of professions and professional people altogether. In social welfare, as in other spheres, professionally trained and experienced people will continue to have an important remedial, trouble-shooting role. Sick and injured people will need doctors and medical care. Disabled and poor people will need the support of social services. Distressed people will need help. Social emergencies will always occur, and they will have to be dealt with.

At the same time there is no doubt that the professions, including the welfare professions, are today in crisis. The arm's length relationship between professional and client is often found to be less conducive to the client's wellbeing than sympathetic personal care. The increasing professionalisation of social service is seen to turn the recipients of care into dependent consumers of welfare and to reduce their capacity to create wellbeing for themselves.

Because people's problems provide professionals with material to work on and a livelihood, they tend to be defined to match the skills and experience which the professionals have acquired. Problems which professionals happen to find exciting, such as organ transplants in medicine, receive a disproportionate amount of

attention compared with others which may affect the wellbeing of many more people. Demarcation lines between professions mean that people are dealt with as bundles of technical problems rather than as whole people. Demarcation disputes and rivalries between professions can create gratuitous problems for people needing care. In general, professionals in the social and caring fields are finding it increasingly necessary to compromise between their responsibility to their employers, their responsibility to their clients or patients, their responsibility to their professional colleagues, and their responsibility to society at large.

These problems are now well recognised. Of even greater importance, perhaps, is the fact that in their existing role the remedial professions cannot create conditions which positively foster well-being. The medical and health professions can help to remedy ill-health; they may even sometimes contribute to measures which help to prevent it; but they can do little to create conditions which positively foster good health. Those derive from the ways we treat ourselves, one another and our environment (sanely, humanely, and ecologically - or otherwise), and from activities and policies right outside the sphere of the medical and health professionals.

Similarly, social workers can help to deal with social problems once the problems have occurred; but they cannot help to create the patterns of residential, working and leisure life that will positively generate social wellbeing. Those derive from activities and policies right outside the social workers' sphere. Lawyers can do little to create a more law-abiding society. Even professional educators, though most of them are not explicitly involved in remedial work, have little opportunity or capacity - schooled and organised as they are to operate within the closed confines of the education system - to help to create a society that is more conducive to learning. The priority that people give to developing their knowledge and skills, and the effect of their lifestyle and environment on their capacity to learn, is determined by economic, social and cultural factors outside the professional educators' sphere.

The post-welfare challenge, then - to enable persons and communities to acquire the capacity for self-reliance and self-development - may, as an incidental bonus, turn out to offer a solution to the present problems of the professions, and a way out of the crisis which they now face. The practical questions are many. For example, how will professionals learn the experience and skills

to help people and communities to develop themselves? How will members of different professions - planners, social workers, public health workers, community development workers, energy experts, employment officials, social security officials, etc. - find ways of working together to contribute to the self-development of their local community? But once the overall aim, the new paradigm, is clearly and simply accepted, these practical questions will find practical answers.

Some Problems

However, no one should suppose that changing direction will be easy. The obstacles will include: resistance by people with a vested interest in the status quo; organisational incapacity for change; personal incapacity for change; and the propensity to co-opt new initiatives into supporting the old patterns of being and doing.

The enabling approach will be resisted by people who, because of their vested interests, their institutional and professional role, or their personal temperament, wish to keep other people dependent on them and preserve their own position and sense of superiority. As the industrialised way of life continues to break down, necessity will compel increasing numbers of such people to accept change, and the more far-sighted will positively embrace the widening opportunities to "decolonise" the old system. But, although the diehards will eventually die out, as have most of the blimps who struggled to preserve the British Empire, they will need to be confronted and defeated meanwhile.

The institutional capabilities we have inherited from the industrial age do not equip us for the tasks of enabling. Structurally, the administration of social policy has developed separately from economic policy. Local government's responsibilities for social services have not been matched by corresponding powers and responsibilities for local economic development or local employment. In central government, responsibilities for social and economic policies have been split between different departments. To take one example, social security payments from the state to the citizen have been handled by a social services department, whereas tax payments from citizen to the state have been the responsibility of the Inland Revenue, an economic department. So, although a restructuring of the whole system of taxation and social security (including its devolution to local control, at least in part) will be an

important aspect of the enabling approach, no persons or organisations currently exist with the skill, the will, or the authority to work out how this restructuring should be done. I do not yet see what practical steps can be taken to remedy this, without leading us into the trap of fruitless institutional reform in which so many of us wasted our energies during the 1960s and 1970s.

Our personal capacities for productive community relationships have also been stunted by the industrial age, which has established a market in labour, and has monetised human activity. As Karl Polanyi pointed out,⁹ this has led to the replacement of organic forms of social relations by individualistic forms of economic organisation, or - in the terms I use - informal economic activity has been replaced by formal economic activity. The industrial ethos has tended to destroy non-contractual relations between persons. It is now difficult for mutually supportive social relations to reform spontaneously. We have learned to impute a monetary value to what we do for other people and what they do for us, thus undermining our capacity for mutually supportive social relations.

The approach to personal and community self-development discussed in this paper will help to overcome these problems. So may the growing number of actual examples. Many people and groups in the UK are already working in one field or another to foster greater self-reliance for persons, communities and localities. The value of such examples is threefold. First, they can provide specific illustration for an otherwise general discussion. Second, examples can fortify lonely pioneers in the knowledge that they are not alone on the new development path. Third, an initiative already taken in one place may sometimes to some extent be replicable elsewhere, thus speeding the learning process

But too much concern for examples may prove to be a trap. First, no example can prove the feasibility of a new development path. Whether a particular initiative is succeeding or failing, whether it genuinely represents a change of direction toward a new future or is merely a fringe activity parasitical on today's socioeconomic system, is always open to argument by the sceptical. Such argument will distract energies that could be used more profitably. The second danger is more insidious. The whole range of activities involved in compiling, studying, researching, analysing, assessing, evaluating, criticising and discussing, but not taking part in, what other people

⁹ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, Octagon Books, New York, reprinted 1975.

are trying to do, is typical of late industrial society. If we genuinely want to go down the post-welfare development path towards a SHE society, we should be more concerned with how we propose to act ourselves than with discussing the activities of others. The conversion of the efforts of a comparatively small number of social innovators and entrepreneurs into material for study and evaluation by a comparatively large number of researchers, analysts, academics and functionaries is an instance of the propensity to co-opt of which we should beware.

Conclusions

Serious, practical initiatives are now needed to create a successor to the Welfare State. I have sketched some of the background and indicated some basic problems. I have suggested that a key concept for the post-welfare development path will be self-development for persons and communities, and I have outlined a few of the issues that seem likely to be important. I would sum up as follows.

Along with increasing numbers of other people, I share the view that the right development path for today's industrialised countries will involve:

- a bigger economic role for households and neighbourhoods,
- a more self-sufficient, decentralised economy,
- a new role for unpaid work,
- the possibility that unemployment benefit (and other social payments) could become a recognised source of money income for people doing useful unpaid work in and around their home and neighbourhood,
- a new distribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women,
- higher esteem for caring, people-centred occupations of the kinds traditionally regarded as women's work in the home and neighbourhood, as compared with traditional forms of men's work dealing with things, papers and ideas in factories, offices and universities,
- forms of continuing education which will bring children, adults, and the elderly closer together in contexts of shared relevance.

These changes will be directly linked with others in the spheres of technology, industry, agriculture, employment, politics and government.

They will also be directly linked with changes in the sphere of social welfare, social policy and social administration, with which this paper has been particularly concerned. Specific issues which now need to be pursued include the following:

- What steps can be taken which, by helping to revitalise the informal economy, will encourage people to enter into mutually supportive social relations? What existing discouragements need to be removed? What changes, for example, in the tax and social security system would help? What changes, again, may be needed to give families and communities improved access to capital and land?
- How might more supportive social relations evolve into, or merge with new forms of organised socio-economic activity?
- Can aids to community self-development be based on a 'scale of social functioning' for communities analogous, for example, to the Heimler Scale of Social Functioning for persons?
- In what other practical ways can links be encouraged between the movement for personal development and the movement for community development?
- As a step towards this, can professionals from different specialisms in the social and planning fields be brought together to explore the links between the self-development of their clients and other persons in their communities, and the development of those communities as a whole?
- In general, how can progressive thinkers (and radical activists) in the social welfare sphere be brought together more often with their opposite numbers in spheres like community enterprise, appropriate technology and local economic development to explore the practicalities of a post-welfare development path?

Ironbridge, 1980.

CHAPTER 6. A NEW POLITICS

This was published as the Introduction to the British edition of Fritjof Capra and Charlene Spretnak, *Green Politics: The Global Promise*, Hutchinson, 1984.

Since 1984, environmental issues have gained much greater attention in political debate and public policy making generally. But this has not been accompanied by a corresponding improvement in the fortunes of green political parties. That is due, at least partly, to considerations mentioned in this chapter. Those remain valid, as it seems to me, in spite of the political changes that have taken place since the chapter was written.

Among the most important of those changes, as will be apparent to readers of this chapter now, have been the collapse of the Soviet systems of government and economy in Russia and Eastern Europe, and the unification of East and West Germany. But these do not, I would argue, call in question, the suggestion that "the politics of constructive social change can often be most effectively pursued outside the realm of conventional political activity". That, after all, was how the Soviet system was finally brought down. When the "Reformation" of globalised free-market capitalism eventually takes place, it may happen in a similar way.

January 1997

INTRODUCTION. GREEN POLITICS: THE GLOBAL PROMISE

The dominant forms of politics and government throughout the world today are based on mass political parties and centralised bureaucracies. They reflect the factory mentality of the industrial age. This is no less true of the parliamentary democracies of the western world than of the Marxist systems of government in Russia, Eastern Europe and other socialist countries. Looking back, for example to the middle ages, we see that our contemporary forms of politics and government replaced earlier forms that also matched the patterns of activity, structures of society, and cultural and religious beliefs, of their times. Just so, looking forward as the industrial age comes to an end, we can see that in their turn today's ways of doing politics and government will inevitably be replaced by new ones. The new ways of doing politics and governing ourselves will match the new patterns of activity, new structures of society and new systems of beliefs prevalent in the next historical period - the next stage of human development - that is now due.

The Greens in West Germany have achieved worldwide recognition for their political successes in the last few years. In *Green Politics* Fritjof Capra and Charlene Spretnak describe these, together with the problems which the Greens have encountered. They discuss comparable developments in other countries, and place them in a global context. They explore the forms which Green politics could take in the United States. As their book makes very clear, the issues raised by the rise of Green politics, and in particular by the achievements of the German Greens, are deeply significant for the future.

These issues have their own particular relevance for Britain. So, although hitherto I have not specifically thought of myself as a "Green", I was delighted when the authors invited me to introduce *Green Politics* to British readers.

Growing numbers of people all over the world now firmly believe that the transition to the post-industrial age - or however else we prefer to describe the period of history now beginning - will involve a transformation of our existing way of life in all its aspects, and that such a transformation has indeed already begun. The way we live, work, organise our societies, think of ourselves in relation to other people and the universe around us - all these will change just as deeply as they changed in the course of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This time the change

will involve a shift of emphasis away from means towards ends - away from economic growth towards human development; away from quantitative to qualitative values and goals; away from the impersonal and organisational towards the personal and interpersonal; and away from the earning and spending of money towards the meeting of real human needs and aspirations. A culture which has been masculine, aggressive and domineering in its outlook will give place to one which is more feminine, co-operative and supportive. A culture which has exalted the uniformly European will give place to one which values the multi-cultural richness and diversity of human experience. An anthropocentric worldview that has licensed the human species to exploit the rest of nature as if from above and outside it, will give place to an ecological worldview. We shall recognise that survival and self-realisation alike require us to act as what we really are - integral parts of an ecosystem much larger, more complex and more powerful than ourselves.

Countless initiatives in many countries are now giving expression to the fact that this transformation is getting under way. Among them are the feminist movement, the environmental movement, the soft energy movement, the holistic health movement, the organic farming movement, the animal rights movement, the decentralist and bioregional movements, the growing demand for greater economic self-reliance at local levels, and the pressures now building up for a fundamental change in the organisation and purposes of work in the post-industrial age.

Those of us who are involved in these initiatives are always faced with a dilemma: should we try to work in and with the established organisations and professions concerned with the matters in question (e.g. the medical establishment in the case of holistic health)? Or is it more realistic to assume that the established structures and processes are irretrievably committed to the status quo, and therefore that we should work outside them and even against them? There are arguments for and against both courses. What actually happens is that some of us decide one way, and others the other. Some work to achieve reform from within the established structures and processes. Others work outside, trying to create situations which we hope will force the established institutions to respond, or trying to create new initiatives and new ways of doing things which will encroach upon and perhaps eventually replace the established institutions. It may often be difficult for insiders and outsiders, each working in our own ways for

change, to co-operate explicitly with one another. But our activities often complement and reinforce one another, nonetheless.

The dilemma arises with particular force in the context of politics. In trying to achieve the changes we seek, should we do so through the established political processes? Or should we work outside them?

On the one hand, we who live in late industrial societies have learned to think of the processes of politics and government as centrally important. We have become accustomed to think of government as the main instrument of social change, or as the main obstacle to it, and sometimes simultaneously as both; we see politics as the main way to influence the actions of government. We cannot simply turn our back on the opportunities that political involvement seems to offer for helping to shape the kind of future we want. To do so simply because of the difficulties would be sheer escapism. On the other hand, the institutions and processes of politics and government as they exist today are part and parcel of the past which is on the way out - patriarchal, exploitative, adversarial, centralised, unecological. They cannot but distort the issues they deal with, by casting them in obsolescent categories of perception, debate and action. If we commit our energies to politics as politics is understood today, not only may we find our effort to create a new future rejected and ourselves represented as freakish outsiders for making the effort at all. We may also find that involvement in conventional politics positively diminishes our own capacity for constructive thought and action. It may confirm us in a sterile - i.e. patriarchal, exploitative, adversarial, etc. - cast of thought and action. It may weaken our ability to work together in creative co-operation with our fellows, whom we may come to perceive as competitors for attention and power. It may compel us to compromise with other political groups, and so obscure the clarity of our message. Moreover, just by sinking our energies in conventional politics, we may be helping to reinforce their credibility. As the sticker says, "Don't vote. It only encourages them".

Green Politics shows how issues of this kind have arisen for the German Greens, and how the German Greens have handled them. For example, it describes their need to reconcile the diverse orientations of different types of Greens - visionary/holistic Greens, environmentalist Greens, peace-movement Greens and radical-left Greens; also it discusses the conflicts that have arisen between

"fundamental oppositionists" and "realists" ["fundis" and "realos"] when the question of coalition with other political parties has come up. In such matters as these - and perhaps especially on the difficult question of co-operation between Greens and Reds, i.e. ecologists and radical socialists - people in other countries can learn valuable lessons from the experience of the West German Greens. Moreover, I believe that people in other countries can profit from the lessons that Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra have drawn about the future of Green politics in the United States

However, as they point out, the context differs from one country to another. No one country can provide a model for another. In assessing the particular relevance for Britain of the experience of the West German Greens, we have to recognise that the British context differs from the West German in two important respects.

On the one hand, the West German political system is more open than ours in Britain. For a start, it is more decentralised. Many of the powers exercised by the national Parliament and government in Britain are exercised in West Germany at the level of the regional states (the Lander). Even more significant, the West German electoral system is based on proportional representation, and new parties there begin to win seats in the national, state, or local legislature as soon as they win 5% of the votes. By contrast, in Britain the first-past-the-post electoral system means that even third and fourth parties like the Liberals and Social Democrats win a far smaller proportion of seats in Parliament than of votes at elections. And in Britain it is virtually impossible in national elections, and very difficult in local elections, for new parties to get a foot in the door at all. Furthermore, while it may be true that all contemporary systems of politics and government reflect the factory mentality of the industrial age, the British two-party system today is more than usually retarded in this respect. Each of the two main parties, Conservative and Labour, still represents one side of the great divide between employers and employees, capital and labour, that was the basic structural feature of industrial society in the nineteenth century but is so no longer today. The big question about the future of British politics in the last year or two has not been about how the new British party, corresponding to the German Greens, i.e. the Ecology Party¹ will fare, but about whether an alliance between two existing groupings, Liberals and ex-Labour

¹ [1997 note. The Ecology Party changed its name in 1985 and became the Green Party.]

Social Democrats, will be able to break the old two-party monopoly of political power.

On the other hand, perhaps because British people are not much excited by systematic thinking and intellectual ideas, any more in politics than in anything else, there has not been nearly so sharp a divide in Britain as in West Germany between those who are receptive to alternative or Green ideas and those who are not. Our pragmatism tends to blur boundaries. To take a comparatively trivial example, it is easy to find business executives in Britain who have a feel for the shift of values underlying the Green and alternative movements, and who are very ready to discuss its significance. More importantly, a tremendous number of associations, societies, lobbies, pressure groups and other organisations and groups of all kinds take an interest in every field that can be broadly defined as alternative or Green. They range from the explicitly political (including the Ecology Party and the environmental or ecology groups in the bigger parties), through parliamentary lobbies (such as the Parliamentary Liaison Group for Alternative Energy Strategies and the Green Alliance), campaigning organisations (such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Greenpeace, and Friends of the Earth), professional and research associations (such as the Town and Country Planning Association and the Research Council for Complementary Medicine), to old established bodies (such as the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the Civic Trust). Their activities form a continuing spectrum, from those of the conservative, establishment bodies at one end to those of the radical, militant groups at the other.

A recent development in Britain, as in West Germany in the last few years, has been the forming of links between sections of the peace movement and the women's movement (e.g. the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp), between sections of the peace movement and the Green movement (e.g. Green CND), and between sections of the women's movement and the Green movement (e.g. Women for Life on Earth). Many of those involved in these joint initiatives have radical socialist sympathies. Perhaps for that reason many other supporters of the peace movement, or the Green movement, or the women's movement, or - more generally - the alternative movement as a whole, tend to distance themselves from these particular forms of co-operation.

This underlines an important point. On the one hand, there is great scope for mutual support among different people and different

groups now operating on different sectors of the new frontier. Through the Turning Point network I have myself been involved for some years in facilitating co-operation and mutual support of this kind.² On the other hand, it would be a serious mistake - at least for the time being - to suppose that these widely ranging groups should agree upon, or can be systematically coordinated in, a comprehensive strategy for social change and transformation. From time to time people do suggest this. They assume, as do the manifestoes of conventional political parties, that no one can do anything together until they have first agreed about everything. What we have to understand now is that precisely the reverse of this is true: people can give one another a great deal of help and support in specific ways, and do not have to agree about everything else in order to do so.

So what are the prospects for Green politics in Britain? How should those who broadly share the concerns of the German Greens, and the view of the future which Fritjof Capra and Charlene Spretnak put forward in *Green Politics*, aim to proceed?

In the first place, the Ecology Party and the Green groups within the larger political parties are likely to grow in strength. Clearly, up to a point, they will be in competition with one. Equally clearly, up to point, there will be scope for co-operation between them. For example, they will no doubt continue to hold joint meetings from time to time on topics of shared concern. Greens who want to be active in electoral politics will have to decide whether they are likely to be more effective in the Ecology Party or as members of a Green group within one of the larger parties. And at least some people who don't want to be politically active in the conventional sense will, nevertheless, want to keep good links with politically active Greens and to co-operate with them on specific projects from time to time.

However, political activity in the conventional sense is likely to play only one part among many in the growth of the Green or alternative movement in Britain in the next few years. In fact, I think we shall increasingly come to see that the politics of constructive social change can often be most effectively pursued outside the realm of conventional political activity. This may be particularly true in

² [1997 note. Alison Pritchard and I have been sending out a twice-yearly *Turning Point* (latterly *Turning Point 2000*) newsletter since 1975, with the aim of spreading information and ideas about a people-centred, ecologically benign future.]

Britain where, as I have said, the existing system of politics and government is abnormally congested. In its most fundamental form, of course, the politics of change is about how we actually live our own lives, and about the effect we have on the people and the microstructures of society immediately around us on whom our way of living impinges directly. As the saying goes, "Think globally, act locally". But between lifestyle politics at one end of the spectrum and formal electoral politics at the other, there is an almost infinite number of ways in which we can positively help to create the new future we want.

It would be wrong to underestimate the importance of Green politics in the conventional sense. The political achievements of the German Greens have been an inspiration to very many people across the world. However, it is in the less formal, more open-ended, more pluralistic, more pervasive sense that I personally believe Green politics will become a really significant force for change in Britain in the next few years. Some Greens will agree with that, others may not. In either case, I warmly recommend Green Politics to British readers, as an invaluable source of information, encouragement and ideas.

Ironbridge
1984

CHAPTER 7. MONEY

This is the text of a talk given in October 1987 in London at the Teilhard Centre for the Future of Man. Other aspects of money are discussed in Chapters 12 and 15.

I had been interested in the evolution of cultures since studying Greek and Roman history at Oxford. Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History* and its account of the rise and fall of civilisations had fascinated me in the late 1940s. But I think it was Teilhard de Chardin's writings that first focused my attention on the evolution of consciousness - or the "noosphere" - as a key feature of human evolution. I can remember the excitement I felt as I read them when they came out in the late 1950s, starting with *The Phenomenon of Man*.

When I returned to Teilhard's thinking in the 1980s after my own ideas about the desirability of a SHE - as contrasted with a HE - future had crystallised, I realised that there were questions that needed to be asked. One of them, to do with the emergence of a global money system, is discussed here. But there were others too.

Four years later, in discussion following a paper of mine on "Future Wealth and the Evolution of Consciousness"¹ at another Teilhard Conference in April 1991, I suggested that Teilhard's thinking had reflected the traditional Christian belief that humans should look up towards God and away from the rest of Creation beneath them. He saw human progress as an ascent from the material towards the etherial, in conflict with today's "new paradigm" thinking, including "creation-centred spirituality" which urges us not to try either to dominate or escape from Nature and our own corporeal bodies, but to enter into them fully as aspects of our true selves. He urged that much greater resources - in money, men and organisation - [should be] employed in visiting and conquering the still unknown tracts of the world.²

In that passage and the pages immediately before it Teilhard - whose ideas, of course, took shape sixty or seventy years ago - appears to have supported a vision of progress not unlike what I have referred to as HE. This is, I believe, an aspect of Teilhard's thinking which today's Teilhardians should address.

January 1997.

¹ Published in the Teilhard Review, Autumn 1991.

² *Human Energy*, Collins, 1969, pp.133-134.

MONEY. I, THOU AND IT

A Question Raised By The Emergence Of A Global Money System

I am grateful for this opportunity to put before you for comment and criticism some thoughts which are still in process of clarification. They are on an aspect of a topic which has occupied my attention for about twenty years now - the role of money in an evolving world society. On some aspects of that topic, I am conscious that my thinking has advanced during that time. But on others - including the emergence of a global money system as an aspect of what Teilhard de Chardin called the noosphere - I still have a problem, as you will see.

In the first part of what I have to say, I shall refer to Martin Buber's reflections - in "I and Thou"³ - on the personal, the interpersonal and the impersonal; and then to Teilhard's concept - in "The Future of Man"⁴ - of noogenesis as the evolution of a thinking web or envelope surrounding the earth, over and above the web of living matter that we call the biosphere.

Next, I shall discuss the growing role of money in the modern world, and suggest that it has tended to enlarge the province of the impersonal at the expense of the interpersonal. I shall then explain why we have to regard the emergence of a computerised, global money system as part of what Teilhard meant by the noosphere. This will leave us with the question, Is noogenesis, as Teilhard supposed, a process of personalisation, or is it actually tending towards the enlargement of the impersonal?

Finally, I shall ask you to reflect on the personal, interpersonal and impersonal aspects of your own money relationships - all those incomings and outgoings of money to you and from you, which are part of the worldwide network of money links that connect each of us with other people and organisations. I shall mention a number of ways in which it may be possible to personalise these links, and I shall ask you to consider whether, and to what extent, these may be ways in which each one of us can help to personalise the noosphere.

³ Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, 2nd edition, Scribners, New York, 1958, pp. 43-45 and 106.

⁴ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man*, Collins, London, 1959.

I and Thou and The Future Of Man

Martin Buber asserts - convincingly, it seems to me - that the development of the function of experiencing and using (i.e., treating people and things as It) comes about mostly through a decrease in the power to enter into relation (i.e., to treat them as Thou). The province of It expands at the expense of the province of Thou. And, as he says,

If a culture ceases to be centred in the living and continually renewed relational event, then it hardens into the world of It.

Buber has a cautionary word for those of us who have been excited by recent market research and opinion surveys⁵ suggesting that a shift is taking place from "outer-directed" materialist and status values to "inner-directed" values concerned with personal development and self-actualisation. He would have seen this as a shift from It-values to I-values, in accordance with his perception that man

has divided his life into two tidily circled-off provinces, the province of It and the province of I. Institutions are 'outside', where all sorts of aims are pursued... Feelings are 'within', where life is lived and man recovers from institutions.

As Buber puts it, those who are disillusioned with institutions say,

Let the state be replaced by the community of love, and they imagine that this community will arise when people, out of free, abundant feeling, wish to live with one another. But, he says, this is not so. The true community does not arise through people having feelings for one another (though that is, indeed, necessary) but through people being in mutual living relation with one another.

Now, two brief points about Teilhard's concepts of noogenesis and the noosphere.

The first point is that, in describing how progress, as the evolution of consciousness, has led to

the growth, outside and above the biosphere, of an added planetary layer, an envelope of thinking substance,

Teilhard made it clear that he saw this process of noogenesis as a personalising process. He stressed that, if you accept the reality of noogenesis - the coming into being of the noosphere as an aspect of

⁵ [1997 note. An accessible account of these is in Francis Kinsman, *Millennium: Towards Tomorrow's Society*, W.H. Allen, 1990.]

the evolution of consciousness - you are compelled to allow increasing room, in your vision of the future, for the value of personalisation..

because a Universe in process of psychic concentration is identical with a Universe that is acquiring a personality.

And he spoke of embracing

a spirit of togetherness and personalising unification with all things.

The second point is about what Teilhard was actually referring to when he spoke of the emergence of the noosphere. He makes it quite clear that he had in mind

the extraordinary network of radio and television communications which... already link us all in a sort of etherised universal consciousness [and] the insidious growth of those astonishing electronic computers.

Now, an important aspect of this emerging computerised, global telecommunications network is the emerging global system for transferring money and other financial claims electronically. And, as I shall suggest, there is, in fact, good reason to suppose that this and other developments in the use of money have tended towards the depersonalisation, not the personalisation, of our relationships - in other words, towards expanding the province of It and diminishing the province of Thou.

The Growing Role Of Money

The role of money in the lives of people and societies has grown immeasurably in the last few hundred years.

Money plays the central role in late industrial society that religion played in the late Middle Ages. Then the local church was the most prominent building in most villages; today the prime sites in every high street are occupied by branches of banks, building societies, and other financial concerns. The centres of medieval cities were dominated by cathedrals; today's city centres are dominated by the tower blocks of international banks. Today's army of accountants, bankers, tax-people, insurance brokers, stock jobbers, foreign exchange dealers and countless other specialists in money, is the modern counterpart of the medieval army of priests, friars, monks, nuns, abbots and abbesses, pardoners, summoners and other specialists in religious ,procedures and practices. The theologians of the late Middle Ages have their counterpart in the economists of the industrial age. Then they argued about how many angels could

stand on the point of a pin; now they argue about how the money supply should be measured. Financial mumbo-jumbo holds us in thrall today, as religious mumbo-jumbo held our ancestors then.

Whereas in pre-industrial times most people, living in rural village communities, provided most of the necessities of life for themselves and one another directly through their own work, most people in modern society are almost wholly dependent on money for the goods and services they need - either to purchase them themselves or to be provided with them by public services paid for with public money.

As the role of money has become greater in the lives of people and society, the institutions set up to handle money have become bigger and more remote. In step with increasing centralisation in industry and government, financial institutions have become more centralised. Small local banks have been taken over by bigger banks and turned into local branches of national banking networks. Only in very exceptional cases are local financial institutions found today with the function of channelling local money into investment in local enterprises and projects.

So the investment of money has become less personal and less local, as has the spending of money in supermarkets instead of local corner shops, and the earning of money from faceless employing organisations instead from personal employers. As increasing numbers of people have acquired savings to invest - in pensions for their retirement and in mortgages for their houses, as well as in other forms of saving - they have not been expected to take a personal interest in how those savings are used. Just as employees have become content to hand over responsibility to employing organisations to direct the purposes of their work, so savers have been content to hand over responsibility to a bank, or a pension fund, or a building society, or some other financial institution, to decide what use is to be made of their money.

With this has gone a growing tendency to try to make money out of money rather than out of useful activity. This has resulted in the huge growth of stock markets, money markets, bond markets, currency markets and other financial markets throughout the world, and in the ever-growing demand for capital assets like land and property, not mainly to make good use of them but in the hope of selling them later at a capital gain. And this in turn has been one of the contributing factors to the massive expansion of borrowing and

debt - personal, corporate, national and international - that has taken place in the last thirty or forty years.

As the use of money and our attitudes to money have become more impersonal in these ways, money itself has become more abstract and less material. Not many generations ago most of the money in common use was of metal, and most money transactions involved the handing of metal from one person to another. Since then, money has evolved into paper (e.g. bank notes and cheques) and is now taking the form of electronic information in the interconnected computer systems of banks and other large organisations. A computerised global communications network has developed, through which money transactions are carried out by crediting and debiting (adding to and subtracting from) the accounts of the parties to the transaction. The whole process is a much less personal way of making payments than the person-to-person transfer of coin and paper.

The upshot of all this is that we now have a world money system, which has clearly developed into one aspect of Teilhard's noosphere. In this system, the money markets and stock markets of Tokyo, London and New York are linked in a continually active web of financial transactions twenty-four hours a day. Many of these transactions are activated automatically, by computers programmed to buy and sell currencies and bonds, stocks and shares, when their price level reaches a certain point. The people operating the system and carrying out the transactions know nothing and care nothing about the lives of the people ultimately affected by these financial transactions. Their work has become depersonalised to a degree which fully justifies Buber's question:

Can the servant of Mammon say Thou to his money?.

Money as an Aspect of the Scientific Worldview

Money is a quantitative calculus of value, providing a measure of the value of the work we do and the things we exchange with one another. The growth of money in people's lives and in the life of societies has represented a shift out of what is known as the informal economy, in which people provide goods and services for themselves and one another directly, into the formal economy in which people produce goods and provide services for monetary exchange. Exchange values now predominate over use values.

This shift has been part of the larger shift that has taken place in recent centuries in favour of what can be quantified. It has been paralleled, for example, by the growing importance of clock time and calendar time, as contrasted with the daily, monthly and annual rhythms set by the sun, moon and seasons. More generally, it has been paralleled by the growth of science and technology and measurement in every sphere. This shift in favour of the quantitative can be traced back to the dualism established by Descartes between matter (*res extensa*) and mind (*res cogitans*). It is epitomised in Lord Kelvin's famous dictum:

When you can measure what you are speaking of and express it in numbers, you know that on which you are discoursing, but when you cannot measure it and express it in number, your knowledge is of a very meagre and unsatisfactory kind.

The effect of this shift, of which the expanded role of money is one aspect, has been to exalt the province of It at the expense of the provinces of I and - particularly - Thou. In the last few hundred years we have distanced ourselves from nature and the universe, which we have come to regard as a machine, to be explained from outside by natural scientists, and to be manipulated from outside by engineers, industrialists and factory farmers. Similarly, we have distanced ourselves other people and society. We have learned to think of people as impersonal role-players - consumers, employees, pensioners, and so on - cogs in the society machine. And we have come to suppose that people and society can be understood and manipulated from outside as if they are things - by economists, market-researchers, politicians, advertisers, and so on.

The depersonalising effects of developments in the sphere of money can thus be seen as part of a larger evolutionary trend - in conflict with Teilhard's idea of personalising noogenesis. Whether one regards money as a device for institutionalising trust or, as some think, for institutionalising mistrust, either way it seems to have been an increasingly powerful force for expanding the province of It.

Personalising the Use of Money

At this point, then, let us take a personal approach. Let us think about the incomings and outgoings of money to and from ourselves. Each one of us receives inward payments from other people and organisations - as wages, salaries or fees for work, as pensions and social security benefits, as dividends and interest on our savings, as gifts and prizes, or from the sale of property and possessions, from

realising savings, and so on. And each one of us makes outward payments for such things as food, clothing, household expenses, transport, holidays and leisure, mortgage payments, insurance premiums, taxes, and so on. All these inward and outward payments link us into the network of money transactions that flow through our society and the world. Each of us is a nodal point on that global network. Participation in that network is one of the things that binds us into the larger system of society, and the pattern taken by these flows of money to us and from us helps to determine the nature of that larger system.

Although we have been increasingly conditioned to regard most of these inward and outward flows of money to and from ourselves impersonally and amorally, the fact is that each of us does have a degree of choice over their size and direction. If we disapprove of certain types of work or certain types of people, we can decide against earning money from them, and we can exercise the same kind of control over our spending and saving decisions. In other words, each of us has some scope to determine how our money transactions affect society and the world, and to exercise conscious, personal care in this respect.

If this scope is to be enlarged, three things will be necessary. The first is a growing awareness that we do have this power of conscious choice and that, by exercising it, we can help to influence the kind of society and the kind of world we live in - awareness that this exercise of power as earners, spenders and savers is one of the principal ways in which we can personally help to shape the further evolution of society and the world. Second, in addition to growing awareness, people will need to acquire the knowledge and skills to enable them to direct their earning and spending in ways that are for the better - knowledge, for example, of how the money they spend or invest will be used by its recipients, and the skills needed to change existing spending and investing patterns for the better. Third, the institutions of society, such as banks, supermarkets and so on, which loom large in our money relationships, will have to be persuaded to respect our wish to handle these relationships more consciously; they will have to learn to help us to do so.

There are, in fact, signs that moves towards more conscious earning, consuming and investing are under way. Although recent high levels of unemployment in all the industrial countries have brought pressure on many people to accept jobs which they find distasteful, they have also provided the occasion for increasing

numbers of people to earn their living in self-employment or community enterprises or other forms of what I have called "ownwork" - that is work which people themselves regard as valuable.⁶ A "conscious consumer" movement is growing, partly in the form of boycotting purchases from what are seen as undesirable sources,⁷ partly in the form of positive discrimination in favour of certain products (e.g. "green" products), and partly in the form of reducing unnecessary consumption (e.g. as recommended by the Lifestyle Movement⁸). So far as saving and investment are concerned, there is a strongly growing 'movement for "ethical" or "social" investment - again, partly in the negative sense of enabling people to avoid investing their savings in things they disapprove of (e.g. tobacco or armaments), and partly in the more positive sense of enabling people to channel their savings into enterprises and projects which they themselves wish to support.

Conclusion

If millions of people over the coming years were to begin to develop these kinds of conscious controls over their own patterns of money inflows and outflows, that could have an important personalising effect on the further evolution of the noosphere.

However, it is hard to see how far that could go, and we are left, with difficult questions.

One result of the development of the noosphere, including the emerging global money system, is that each of us today can be directly connected with, and can transact with, many more people all over the world than our ancestors could. With how many people is it possible to be in living mutual relation - to have an I-Thou relationship? Could it ever be possible for several billion people to enjoy I-Thou relationships with one another? What would that be like? How might the money system support such relationships, and how would we have to reform it to enable it to do so?

Cholsey, Oxfordshire October 1987

⁶ For a fuller discussion see James Robertson, *Future Work*, Gower/Temple Smith, 1985.

⁷ [1997 note. In the original 1987 paper I gave South Africa as an example of a source of goods which conscious consumers boycotted. How things have changed! I recently saw South African firms (with good employment policies for black employees) listed among the kinds of firms which ethical investors should positively favour.]

⁸ The Lifestyle Movement's members undertake to live simply "so that others may simply live".

CHAPTER 8. TOWARDS A POST-MODERN WORLDVIEW

In the late 1980s and early 1990s I took part in several conferences in Dublin, at the invitation of Father Sean Healy and Sister Brigid Reynolds of what is now the Justice Commission of the Conference of Religious of Ireland. For many years they have been publishing outstandingly constructive proposals for rectifying economic and social injustices, both in Ireland and in the wider world economy.

On one of these occasions they introduced me to John Quinn of Irish Radio RTE. He subsequently arranged for me to give the 1990 Open Mind Guest Lecture. This was broadcast in Dublin on RTE on 10th October 1990, under the heading "Health, Wealth and Wisdom for the 21st Century: The Missing Ethical Dimension in Science, Economics and Lifestyles". This chapter is the text of that lecture.

On this same visit to Dublin John Quinn recorded six half-hour interviews with me on *The Sane Alternative*, and these were later broadcast by RTE in weekly instalments.

January 1997

TOWARDS A POST-MODERN WORLDVIEW

I wonder what 1992 means for you?

For most businesspeople, bureaucrats and politicians in the countries of Western Europe like yours and mine, 1992 means the European single market. I hesitate to call this a short-sighted and narrow view, taken by those who cannot see further than the end of their nose or - as the Indian saying has it - wider than the tips of their ears.

But the historical significance of 1992 is much more far-reaching, much less parochial, than the European single market.

In 1992, for the first time in history, representatives of all the peoples of the world will come together to discuss our common future - at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil. This will be held on the 20th anniversary of the 1972 Stockholm conference on the environment. It will be the first major landmark in the follow-up to the Brundtland Commission's report *Our Common Future*, published in 1987.

And, more significant still, 1992 will be the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing in the Western hemisphere.

Many people of European, or Western, outlook will celebrate Columbus' achievement as the "discovery" of America - as if the indigenous peoples of the continent did not exist and were of no account. From that Eurocentric point of view, 12th October 1492 was an unqualified "good thing" - in Sellars' and Yeatman's phrase from *1066 And All That* - a historic milestone in the upward progress of the human race from savagery to civilisation.

To the indigenous peoples of North and South America it is a different story. They will have little to celebrate in 1992. To them, Columbus was a historic disaster - leading to the loss of their traditional freedoms and livelihoods, the devastation of their lands, and the destruction of their cultures. That story continues today, for those like the Yanomani and other forest peoples of the Amazon basin.

And not only for them. The same is true for other non-European peoples all over the planet. For them Columbus in 1492, and Vasco da Gama sailing to India in 1498, signify the beginning of half a

millennium of European world domination - at first Christian and latterly secular.

I don't want to deny that this 500-year epoch has brought progress of many kinds - though this raises questions about how we define progress. A generation or two ago, it might have made sense to interpret the competitive success of European, or Western, culture simply as an example of Darwinism - the survival of the fittest. But, as things are now turning out, that might seem like a sick joke. For it is the kinds of progress European culture has brought to the world, and the direction of further development it entails, that are now the gravest threat to human survival.

Weapons development is one obvious aspect of this.

More deeply dangerous, because a little less obvious, is the vision of the good life - the high consumption lifestyle - which we relentlessly promote worldwide as the main goal of development. I'm not just thinking of African villagers watching Dallas on TV, though that is an example.

With the 5 billion people now in the world, we are already threatening the Earth's life support systems. Projections show that the number will ultimately rise to 10 or 15 billion. If development, as we now promote it, were fully successful and all these 10 or 15 billion people were to consume as many resources and cause as much pollution as today's rich minority (which includes you and me), today's ecological impacts would be multiplied by 20 or 30 times. Anyone who thinks this makes sense, must be crazy. I said that the dangers might not be immediately obvious. But, in fact, even some mainstream economists are now beginning to put out blueprints for a greener economy.

We urgently need to switch to a new development path. We need a new way of economic life and thought. It must be enabling for people, not disabling and dependency-creating, as much economic progress is today. And it must be conserving for the Earth, not ecologically damaging and destructive.

This switch to a new economics must be part of a larger "paradigm shift". Conventional economics is part of our prevailing worldview. That worldview - and the existing world order based on it - are beginning to break down. One of the main tasks - the historic role, you might say - for us who are living at this time, is to help to bring

into being a new worldview and a new world order. This has tremendous implications, and there are very many aspects we could explore. What I want to do in this talk is to look at the need for a new economics in the context of that larger paradigm shift - and that means in the context of the history and the future of ideas.

The European Inheritance

The addictive, destructive and unsustainable approach to economic life which now prevails in almost every corner of the world is linked to the dominance of European culture and the Western worldview.

So where did we Europeans go wrong? Where did our European inheritance play us false?

One view is that the damage was done when the medieval order in Europe broke down. Although we can't go back to the middle ages, looking at what happened then may help us to see our way forward now.

The medieval worldview was hierarchical, static, religious, and moral.

The medieval hierarchy started with God in his Heaven at the top, - followed by archangels and angels. Then came humankind, below the angels but above the beasts. Highest among humans were popes and kings, followed by princes and bishops and nobles, and so on down the line to the poorest of the common people. Then came the animal kingdom, with the vegetable and mineral orders of creation following on below.

The medieval picture of the world was static. Evolution played no part in it. People were expected to remain in the station in which God had placed them in society - the rich man in his castle and the poor man at his gate. Sons would follow in their fathers' footsteps. The village baker's son would become the village baker after him, the miller's son the miller, and so on. There was not much scope for yuppies in the Middle Ages. Upward mobility - and downward mobility, for that matter - were exceptions to the rule.

Above all, the medieval worldview was religious and moral. The central purpose of human life - the purpose that gave it meaning - was to save one's soul for eternal life with God and his angels in another world from this one. The workings of God's creation,

including the behaviour of human beings, were governed by God's laws. Economic transactions and relationships were subject to moral law: the just price and the just wage were part of the divinely sanctioned web of rights and obligations that held everyone and everything together.

That hierarchical, static, religious and moral worldview, which had been dominant in the middle ages, broke down about 500 years ago, as did the structures of society and ways of life based on it. It broke down because the old order had become unsustainable, and because the way to a new future was being opened up by pioneers like Columbus and Machiavellian (1469-1527) and Copernicus (1473-1543), breaking through previous limitations of territory, behavior and thought.

The same dynamic - breakdown of the old and breakthrough to the new - is at work today. The worldview now dominant, and the structures of society and the ways of life based on it, is becoming unsustainable. And pioneers in many fields - including the growing worldwide movement for a new economics - are opening up the way to a new future, whose characteristic worldview, structures of society and ways of life we still have to crystallize.

Origins Of The Modern Worldview

When the medieval worldview broke down, it took some time - nearly 300 years - for the modern worldview to crystallize in its place. This time, the process will have to be quicker. Nonetheless, what happened then is interesting and relevant for us today.

Among the thinkers who helped to shape the modern worldview were Descartes, Francis Bacon, Newton and Hobbes. Theirs were among the ideas that Adam Smith took up when, in the Enlightenment of the 18th century, he systematised the modern approach to economic life and thought.

Descartes divided reality into two categories, *res cogitans* and *res extensa* (thinking matter and extended matter). In due course, knowledge and science concentrated on, and came to regard as real, only the second part of that Cartesian duality - that is, those aspects of human experience and understanding which are material and measurable and outside ourselves. And Descartes' analytical method encouraged us to split those aspects of reality up into separate fields. So that now, for example, our conventional way of

understanding what we take to be health, wealth, and wisdom is splintered among different professional disciplines called medicine, economics and philosophy.

Bacon encouraged knowledge and science to focus on harnessing and exploiting the resources of Nature - Nature corresponding more or less to Descartes' *res extensa*. Bacon taught us to torture Nature in order to learn her secrets, and to use her for, as he put it, "the relief of the inconveniences of man's estate". And now we are beginning to inflict catastrophic damage on the natural world.

Newton's example led science to interpret reality in the form of mechanistic, mathematically structured, value-free systems. So scientists now teach us to understand the workings of the universe in terms of numbers, and to assume that neither it nor any of its component parts are guided by purposes or moral choices.

What most people probably remember about Hobbes is his argument that, since, in fact - regardless of what theory might say - moral or divine law does not effectively control people's behaviour, they must submit to control by an earthly sovereign. Otherwise their lives are bound to be "poor, solitary, nasty, brutish and short". Hobbes' significance for us is that, like Machiavelli before him, he taught his successors to see human society, not as it ought to be, but as it actually appeared to be - a competitive struggle for power. So that very many people now take it for granted that success in life means getting one up on other people - or at least keeping up with the Jones.

It was on ideas such as these, then, that Adam Smith drew in systematising his - and our - understanding of economic life. They are all ideas that we now need to question.

For example, Smith followed Descartes in excluding from economic understanding the less tangible aspects of human experience and activity, such as those we now call "participation", "self-fulfilment" and "self-development". He followed Bacon in accepting that economic life was about exploiting the resources of Nature for human advancement. He followed Hobbes in interpreting economic life as a competitive struggle for power - in particular, power over the use and the products of other people's labour. He followed Newton in seeing economic life as a value-free system, governed by its own impersonal laws. Smith's "invisible hand" of supply and demand meant that God no longer had a part to play in economic

life. It made God redundant - put Him out of a job. And the consequences of Smith's ideas was to exclude not just religion, but morality too. He taught that the economic system operates best in the interest of all, if each pursues his own self-interest. As he put it,

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.

Another important point that Smith took for granted was that economic life revolves around money - prices, wages, profits, rents, and so forth. Now, money means numbers. And there's a very significant parallel between the emphasis on numerical data in modern science and the emphasis on money values in modern economic life.

The supremacy of quantitative values in modern scientific knowledge was nicely put by Lord Kelvin:¹

When you can measure what you are speaking of and express it in numbers, you know that on which you are discoursing, but when you cannot measure it and express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a very meagre and unsatisfactory kind.

As with knowledge, so with value. Money puts numbers on value, and conventional economic understanding regards as very meagre and unsatisfactory the value of goods, services, and work (such as what used to be called women's work), which are not paid for with money. In fact, so far as economists are concerned, if you can't count something, it doesn't count. They just don't notice it. They blank it out.

This has led some critics - half-humorously - to interpret economics as a form of brain damage. Others, in similar vein, think economists are suffering from a lack of investment in up-to-date capital equipment. But I mustn't start telling jokes about economists or we'll be here all night. The serious point is that there is an aspect of reality here which we are going to have to rethink in the post-modern world.

We are going to have to learn to value other forms of knowledge - personal, intuitive, moral and spiritual - as well as the knowledge offered by conventional science. We are going to have to learn to value what are called alternative or complementary approaches to

¹ [1997 note. This quotation was also included in Chapter 7.]

health, as well as conventional medicine. We are going to have to learn to value informal economic activities - everything people do for themselves and one another without either paying or being paid - as well as activities whose value can be measured in money.

It will not be easy to marry the qualitative and the quantitative. They often conflict. For example, scientifically controlled monitoring of mystical experiences may destroy the conditions in which mystical experiences take place - like looking for darkness with a torch. But we are going to have to find ways to systematise new understandings - new theories - about knowledge, health and wealth which give full weight to both qualitative and quantitative values. Perhaps future historians of thought will see these new understandings and theories as post-scientific and post-medical and post-economic.

Recovery Of Purpose

So let us now compare the modern worldview with the medieval worldview.

The modern worldview has remained hierarchical; it continues to see the world in terms of ladders. But it is mobile, not static. It sees human progress in terms of climbing a ladder of knowledge and power. It sees human life as a competition to climb higher than other people up ladders of career and status and wealth and power. And, when it can, it judges progress in terms of numerical measurements.

But, most important, the modern worldview has excluded religion and morality. It has offered no meaning to human life, no goal at the top of the ladders, no purpose in climbing the ladders other than climbing for its own sake. "Ladders To Nowhere" - that is the name of the game the modern worldview asks us to play.

Even the most advanced scientists still suspect the very idea of purpose, and assume that what they call "objectivity" excludes it. In his recent book *The Ages Of Gaia* (p.214) James Lovelock endorses the view that

the cornerstone of scientific method is the postulate that Nature is objective. True knowledge can never be gained by attributing 'purpose' to phenomena.

That's what Lovelock says, and many people have hailed his Gaia theory as a new milestone in science. But can you really understand people without attributing purposes to them? or cats? Or earthworms? Or plants? Or the component parts of any organism? And who is to say - how could anyone know? - that true knowledge can be gained of the Universe itself by assuming in advance that it has no purpose?

These are difficult questions. But one thing is absolutely clear. The theoretical notion that scientific knowledge and economic behaviour are value-free has left a vacuum. And in practice this vacuum has been filled by values of power and greed and competition.

In short, our European worldview has led us - and now the rest of the world - to err and stray from the ways of wisdom. There is now no health in us, in the old senses of wholeness and holiness. And the kind of wealth we strive for is often not wealth in the old sense of well-being - whether the well-being of other people, or of the Earth, or even of ourselves. The world's crisis today is a crisis of values.

Revival Of Ethical Values

We have seen that the breakdown of the medieval worldview meant the decline of an existing moral order and the rise of a new scientific order. By contrast, I see the breakdown of the modern worldview as the decline of the existing scientific order and the rise of a new moral order. This will be clearer to future historians than it is to us now, but the signs are already there.

Take economics. The existing science of economics has told us that the chief aim of economic life is to make money values grow. So a national economy's chief aim has been money-measured economic growth, a business's chief aim has been financial profit, and the chief aim of consumers and investors has been to get best value for money from their purchases and the best financial return from their investments. But in the 1980s these assumptions have begun to be questioned - even in the most respectable quarters.

For example, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are now beginning to recognise the devastating consequences of conventional economic orthodoxy for many Third World countries, and are beginning to face up to the need to resolve the long-

running Third World debt crisis. Meanwhile, many people all round the world are not just feeling that the systematic transfer of wealth from poorer and less powerful peoples to richer and more powerful ones is wrong - which it clearly is. They are also recognising it as an inevitable outcome of a competitive, amoral economic system, driven by the aim of making money values grow and regulated by the impersonal mechanics of supply and demand.

Another example is from the Brundtland Commission's report, *Our Common Future*. Brundtland pointed out that environmental policy and economic policy must be integrated. It is no longer good enough for environmental policy just to clear up the messes left by economic development, and to deal with what Brundtland called "after-the-fact repair of damage: reforestation, reclaiming desert lands, rebuilding urban environments, restoring natural habitats, and rehabilitating wild lands". And it is no longer good enough for economic policy just to "create wealth" in the narrow and abstract conventional sense, regardless of the environment.

In almost exactly the same way, the World Health Organisation, with its strategy on Health For All by the Year 2000, has begun to shift the emphasis away from remedial sickness services to the positive creation of healthier conditions of life. And WHO's conclusion on health, like Brundtland's on the environment, is that health goals must be brought into economic policy. Again, "creating wealth" in the conventional sense is seen as too abstract and too narrow. Economic policy must pursue real purposes, like maintaining a good environment and enabling people to be healthy, and not just money-measured growth.

It is not just the conventional goals of economic policy that are beginning to be rethought, but also the conventional ways of measuring economic progress. A lot of work is getting under way - in the United Nations and national governments, as well as in activist groups like the New Economics Foundation - to develop and introduce new economic indicators and targets. This involves trying to improve existing money-measured indicators like Gross National Product (GNP). But, more importantly, it also involves supplementing these money-measured abstractions - perhaps eventually replacing them - by bringing into economic decision-making indicators of the state of the real world - which will show, for example, whether people's health, the cleanliness of air and water, and so on, are getting better or worse.

There is a parallel at the personal level to this bringing of real goals and purposes, and not just conventional money-measured criteria, into economic policy-making. I am talking about the increasing numbers of consumers and investors who are trying to be "green", or "ethical", or "socially responsible". They are deciding to bring their values into their economic lives, and to use their purchasing power and their investing power to support the kinds of projects and causes which they themselves favour. They are rejecting the conventional idea that their only economic goal should be to get best money value for themselves.

Even in science itself the idea of value-free objectivity is increasingly under fire. It is becoming more widely understood that, in many fields, objective knowledge is not even a theoretical possibility because the observer cannot observe the subject matter without affecting its behaviour in one way or another. In that respect the particle physicist is in the same boat as the anthropologist studying a tribal society.

There is also growing awareness that the idea of value-free objectivity in science, just as in economics, has been used as a smokescreen by powerful groups - governments, business, finance, the military and the professions, including the scientific establishment itself - to use science in their own interests. In recent years more and more people have become concerned about the purposes for which science is used.

Evolving A New Worldview

Those few examples of ethical purposes and moral choices being brought back into areas of practice and thought which the modern worldview has seen as value-free are pointers to the new worldview of the future. But what are they pointing us to? I can only give you my own personal thoughts.

Not back to the middle ages. Even if we could go back, the medieval picture of a static world is at odds with our knowledge of evolution today. The medieval assumption that the Christian God is superior to the divinities of other faiths does not fit the emerging multicultural one-world community of today. The medieval beliefs that God is masculine, that men are superior to women, and that humans are superior to Nature - special creatures with special kinds of souls to whom God has given dominion over the rest of His

creation - clash with the feminist and ecological understandings of today.

Perhaps, then, in this coming post-European era of world history, we should turn to non-European faiths like Buddhism or Hinduism, or to the cultures of peoples like the North American Indians? They all offer wisdom about human life and the place of human beings in the world, that has been lost in modern European culture. But, like Christianity, they have been quite unable to halt the worldwide juggernaut of conventional, secular, consumerist development, although it runs altogether contrary to their teachings. I am sure their insights will be reflected in the new worldview that eventually emerges. But, stemming as they did from small agricultural and pastoral and hunter-gatherer societies of long ago, we cannot realistically expect them to offer us a new post-modern worldview more or less ready-made, off the peg.

No. We should draw on the wisdom and insights of the past. But the peoples of the world today and tomorrow will have to create the new worldview afresh out of our own lives and predicaments, out of our own contemporary experience and understanding.

I think the new worldview will be a developmental worldview, in which purpose is combined with evolution in a new vision of progress. I think it will comprehend person and society, planet and universe, as aspects of the evolutionary process - a process which includes the evolution of consciousness and purpose - and perhaps of divinity too. I think that what gives value and meaning to our lives will be the part we play in this process: developing our own potential, enabling other people to do the same, contributing to the development of our society and the emerging one-world human community, maintaining and perhaps even enhancing the natural riches of our planet, and consciously participating in the evolution of the cosmos.

That is the wider context in which the idea of a new, enabling and conserving, economics makes sense to me. It is in that context, I foresee, that people in the next century and the next millennium will seek health, wealth and wisdom. It is in that context that we should interpret current issues - such as closer co-operation in Western Europe, or the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, or the crisis in the Middle East. And it is in that context, I believe, that we should now be preparing to chart our common future in 1992.

Cholsey, 1990.

CHAPTER 9. HEALTH

This chapter was published in Sara Parkin (ed.): *Green Light on Europe*: Heretic Books, London, 1991.

Lengthier papers on health, arising from collaboration with Ilona Kickbusch and her colleagues at the World Health Organisation's Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen, had included:

- *Health, Wealth and the New Economics: an Agenda for a Healthier World*, based on papers and discussions at the 1985 meeting of The Other Economic Summit (TOES), and
- *Scenarios for Lifestyles and Health*, published in European Monographs in Health Education Research, Issue 6, Scottish Health Education Group, 1984.

When I presented the latter at a seminar for WHO European Region chief medical officers in Corfu in September 1985, the Soviet bloc CMOs unanimously protested that it was unnecessary, indeed insulting, to ask them to discuss scenarios (alternative futures) for lifestyles and health, since their plans were already firmly in place to achieve Health for All by the Year 2000! A happier memory is of helping to draft the Ottawa Charter at WHO's first International Conference on Health Promotion in 1986.

January 1997

NEW COMMONHEALTH

No, it's not a misprint. I believe that commonhealth will be one of the energising ideas of the 21st century. In twenty or thirty years' time, it will seem no stranger than commonwealth does today. Indeed, the two ideas will reinforce one another, as new insights spread about health and wealth and the links of both with ecological sustainability.

That is what this chapter is about. It weaves together strands that a mechanistic culture has dealt with separately. The first section is about the movement for a new public health, which emphasises health, rather than sickness. The second is about the movement for a new economics, which emphasises wealth as well-being. The third is about the need to integrate these new approaches to health and wealth with one another, and with a new approach to natural ecosystems - a vital aspect of the post-Brundtland "1992 Process". The concluding section discusses the particular significance of all this for Europe.

Health, Not Sickness

One aspect of the modern secular culture which stemmed originally from Europe but now dominates the whole world, is that we pay more attention to sickness than to health. Health workers and others in the health business have been able to make a better living out of sick people than out of healthy people, and politicians have found more votes in sickness than in health. So much so that the word "health" is now used more often than not to mean sickness. Our health services, health professionals, health statistics, health policies and health insurance, for example, are primarily sickness services, etc. Our Health Department is a sickness department, and our Health Ministers are sickness ministers.

This modern tendency to treat health from a remedial point of view, after the event, has been paralleled by our approach to the environment. As the Brundtland World Commission on Environment and Development reported¹:

environmental management practices have focused largely upon after-the-fact repair of damage: reforestation,

¹ *Our Common Future*, OUP, 1987, p.39.

reclaiming desert lands, **rebuilding** urban environments, **restoring** natural habitats, and **rehabilitating** wild lands.

In just the same way, health policies and health services have concentrated on remedying sickness once it has occurred rather than on positively promoting healthy conditions of life and enabling people to be healthier. Economic policies have reinforced this remedial approach. Far from aiming to improve health and the environment, they have treated health and environmental risks and damage as unfortunate but inevitable side effects of economic progress, to be minimised and then remedied - if possible - after the event.

That is one way in which the idea of commonhealth cuts across today's conventional approach to health. Another is that it recognises health as something more than an individual condition. Conventional health services have concentrated on the provision of care to individuals. Conventional health education and health promotion have been mainly designed to encourage individuals to look after their own health - an approach that all too easily degenerates into "blaming the victim", when ill-health is due to social and environmental circumstances outside people's control. Community medicine and public health have come low in the pecking order of the medical and health professions. Commonhealth, by contrast, emphasises our common interest in creating and maintaining conditions that will enable us to live healthy lives. Such conditions include physical, social, political and economic environments that make "the healthier choice the easier choice" - for politicians, public officials and businesspeople, as well as for people in their personal and family lives.

Another point of difference between the idea of commonhealth and the conventional approach to health is the emphasis conventionally placed on new drugs, new equipments and other new medical technologies. The conventional assumption is that advances in health - and in all other fields - are to be achieved primarily through scientific research and the development of improved technology. The commonhealth approach does not dispute the importance of technology, any more than the concept of commonwealth disputes it. But it emphasises that the key to health creation, like the key to genuine wealth creation, lies in the social and environmental factors which determine how technology is actually developed and used.

It would be wrong to think that commonhealth is just a pie-in-the-sky idea. Since the early 1980s the European Regional Office of the

World Health Organisation (WHO-Europe) has been alerting us to the need for a new understanding of health and a new approach to health policy. The 1982 publication, *Health Crisis 2000*,² based on the WHO European Regional Strategy for Attaining Health for All by the Year 2000, warned that

there could be a health crisis by the year 2000 unless radical steps are taken by the public, the professions, industry, and the governments of the Region. This is no idle warning. A careful analysis of trends in health and disease, made over the past three years by representatives of the medical profession and the health ministries of the Region's 33 Member States, has produced ominous signs that our health policies since the Second World War have set us on a dangerous course. The glittering attraction of high technology and the public's demand for "miracle cures" have meant that we have almost abandoned the principle of self-care in a "caring community". Instead of promoting health and preventing disease, we have invested the bulk of our health budgets in "disease palaces" which have really only cured our acute illnesses.

Through the 1980s WHO-Europe has taken the lead in WHO's work on lifestyles and health, health promotion, health education, healthy cities and healthy public policies. Key milestones have included: the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, issued at the first International Conference on Health Promotion in 1986; the launch of the Healthy Cities project in 1986; the second International Conference on Health Promotion in Adelaide in 1988, which concentrated on healthy public policies; and the European Charter on Environment and Health, issued in 1989. A third International Conference, to be held in Sundsvall, Sweden, in June 1991, will focus on creating supportive environments for health.

The impact of these efforts on actual developments may have been disappointing so far. But the ideas behind them have laid the foundations for rapid progress when the breakthrough comes. They can be briefly summarised as follows.

The Ottawa Charter affirmed the importance of fundamental living conditions and resources, including a stable ecosystem, as prerequisites for health. It defined health promotion as the process of enabling people to take control over and improve their health, and stressed the importance of community empowerment. It

² Peter O'Neill, *Health Crisis 2000*, Heinemann, 1982.

outlined a comprehensive strategy for health promotion based on healthy public policies, supportive environments, community action, the development of personal skills, and a reorientation of health services. It pointed towards a new approach to public health, in keeping with late 20th century needs.

The Healthy Cities project in Europe covers 30 cities in 19 countries, committed to achieving greater support for healthy local policies from political decision-makers and local communities. The spread of the healthy cities idea has, in fact gone much wider than the cities directly participating in the project. A total of some 300 are now involved.

The Adelaide recommendations stressed that healthy public policy must involve all sectors of government decision-making, including especially those not specifically responsible for "health". Public policy in such fields as agriculture, education, social welfare, housing, transport and economics, should ensure that everyone has equitable access to the prerequisites for health. New systems of political accountability should make policy-makers answer for the health impacts of their policies.

The European Charter on Environment and Health was issued in December 1989 by the Ministers of Environment and of Health from the European Region of WHO, meeting together for the first time. The Charter lays down entitlements and responsibilities for a healthy environment, principles for public policy, and priorities. It has been endorsed by the European commission as a guideline for future action by the Community. Its Principle 6, that

the health of individuals and communities should take clear precedence over considerations of economy and trade, has been ignored so far in the process of creating a European single market - as indeed have environmental considerations. The Charter must be brought to bear on further economic integration in Europe up to and beyond 1992.

Wealth As Wellbeing

[1997 note. In *Green Light on Europe* this chapter included at this point a short description of conventional economics, new economics, and the new economics movement. This is omitted here to avoid duplication with previous chapters. The relevance to health of a new approach to economics was then developed as follows.]

So far as health is concerned, conventional economic policies have had many damaging effects. For example, conventional economic growth involves treating as additions to well-being such things as the expansion of the tobacco industry and the arms trade, investments in unhealthy processes, and the advertising of unhealthy products and lifestyles. In industrialised countries, conventional economic development fails to solve the problems of poverty and deprivation that lead to ill-health. In Third World countries, it positively creates health problems - for example by depriving peasant peoples of their traditional livelihoods. All over the world, conventional development has created widespread health problems associated with various forms of chemical and other pollution.

Underlying the health-damaging effects of conventional economic practice is the assumption that the creation of wealth and the creation of health have nothing to do with each other. Effort expended on safeguarding or improving health is actually regarded as a cost - as a drag and a constraint on economic and business growth. A new understanding of wealth creation is needed. Health creation must be seen as an aspect of it, and investment in health must be recognised as an economically valuable form of investment.

This means questioning the misleading ideas of conventional economics about what are wealth-creating and what are wealth-consuming activities. It is absurd, for instance, to accept that tobacco manufacture creates the wealth required to support the medical services needed to deal with lung cancer. And that is just one example of where we are led by those who tell us that conventional economic growth is a necessary prerequisite to social progress and so must be given priority over it.

We urgently need new indicators of economic, social and environmental well-being, as a basis for setting economic policy targets and for measuring economic achievements. The inadequacy of Gross National Product (GNP) for these purposes is much more widely appreciated now than it was even five years ago. GNP needs to be replaced, or at least supplemented, by more concrete indicators of the state of economic and social well-being and of the natural and man-made environment. The infant mortality rate and

the under-5 mortality rate are good measures of the general health and well-being of a population.³

Health, Wealth And Ecosystems: The 1992 Process

Over the past two decades - since the Club of Rome's first report⁴ and the United Nations' Stockholm Conference of 1972⁵ - awareness has been growing that the world faces serious environmental problems. During the 1970s and early 1980s the issue was commonly seen as being about trade-offs between environment and development - about reaching compromises between acceptable levels of economic activity and acceptable levels of environmental damage. By the later 1980s it had become more widely understood that, if economic activity is to become ecologically sustainable, a new marriage between ecology and development is needed. The Brundtland Report reflected this shift:

Economics and ecology must be completely integrated in decision-making and law-making processes - not just to protect the environment, but also to protect and promote development. Economy is not just about the production of wealth, and ecology is not just about the protection of nature; they are both equally relevant for improving the lot of humankind.⁶

It was unfortunate that this call by the Brundtland Commission for a new direction - or new paradigm - of development was muffled and largely obscured by its simultaneous, more conventional call for a new era of economic growth. But at least the "1992 Process", leading up to the forthcoming U.N. Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992 in Brazil, is now focused on the need to deal with the worldwide environmental threats and the widespread failures of economic development as aspects of a single world crisis. That is useful progress in itself. A crucial part of the 1992 Process from now on must be to get it understood that conventionally measured economic growth is neither good nor bad in itself but is a meaningless target or measure of progress.

³ See Victor Anderson, *Alternative Economic Indicators*, Routledge, London, 1991.

⁴ Donella and Denis Meadows et al, *The Limits to Growth*, Pan Books, 1972.

⁵ Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos, *Only One Earth*, Penguin, 1972.

⁶ *Our Common Future*, OUP, 1987, pp.37-38.

So where does health come in? Brundtland made the right noises, at least so far as the Third World is concerned:

Good health is the foundation of human welfare and productivity. Hence a broad-based health policy is essential for sustainable development. In the developing world, the critical problems of ill-health are closely related to environmental conditions and development problems....

These health, nutrition, environment and development links imply that health policy cannot be conceived of purely in terms of curative or preventive medicine, or even in terms of greater attention to public health. Integrated approaches are needed that reflect key health objectives in areas such as food production; water supply and sanitation; industrial policy, particularly with regard to safety and pollution; and the planning of human settlements....

Hence, the WHO Health For All strategy should be broadened far beyond the provision of medical workers and clinics, to cover health-related interventions in all development activities.⁷

Good, as far as it goes. But two further points are outstanding. First, the need to integrate health, environmental and economic decision-making applies to industrialised countries, as well as Third World countries. Second, activists for "the new public health" - including those involved in the WHO initiatives on health promotion and healthy public policies outlined earlier in this chapter - must find ways to engage effectively in the 1992 Process.⁸

Europe, And The Challenge of 1992

Parochial Europeans - from the business, financial, political, bureaucratic and professional classes - think of 1992 as the year in which The European Single Market is to be achieved. They are largely unaware of its wider historical significance.

1992 will be the 20th anniversary of the Stockholm conference on the environment. More importantly, the UNCED Conference in

⁷ Ibid., pp.119-110.

⁸ [1997 note. In the event, this hope was not realised. To date, the need to extend healthy public policy-making beyond the boundaries of the professional "health" sector is still unmet.]

Brazil - the Earth Summit - will be the first time in human history in which representatives of all the peoples of the world will have come together to discuss our common future. Most significant of all, 1992 will be the 500th anniversary of what, with engrained cultural arrogance, European peoples have been taught to think of as Columbus' "discovery" of America. That event marked the beginning of the aggressive expansion of European Christianity and subsequently European secular culture all over the globe. This has led to the dominance of today's mechanistic, amoral, economic worldview over those of other cultures. And it is that which now threatens the health and very survival of the human race and even of life on Earth. So 1992 will be an occasion for a worldwide reorientation of the most radical kind.

That, together with developments in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union - countries in which the links between health, economy and environment have become all too apparent - presents the peoples of Europe with a threefold challenge.

First, we must put our own house in order. This means switching to a new development path in Europe itself, in which the creation and maintenance of healthy living conditions for people and the restoration and maintenance of natural ecosystems are among the primary objectives of personal lifestyles, business strategies and economic policies. The principles evolved by WHO-Europe over the 1980s must be brought into economic decision-making.

Second, by making this switch ourselves, Europeans must offer to the rest of the world a new model of economic progress - much less rapacious and much more benign towards people and the Earth than the model we have propagated over the past half-millennium.

Finally, commonhealth has an international dimension. Europeans, in transforming our own economic order, must take a lead in transforming the present worldwide pattern of economic dominance and dependency between rich and poor countries - together with the UN, Bretton Woods and other international institutions which reinforce it. By helping to create a new, more equal system of economic relations, we will be helping today's poorer peoples to create healthy and sustainable economies, and healthy and sustainable natural environments, for themselves.

Cholsey, 1991

CHAPTER 10. DEVIL'S TUNES

This chapter was first published under the heading "An Infernal Strategy Review" in Sheila M. Moorcroft (ed.), *Visions For The 21st Century*, Adamantine Press, London, 1992.

January 1997

AN INFERNAL STRATEGY REVIEW

The attached document came to me recently without explanation, from a source which I have been unable to trace. It carries no date, but internal evidence suggests it was written in 1991.

It embodies a vision for the 21st century - and beyond - which highlights the subjectivity of futures thinking. The future to which it is committed is not the future to which most of us look forward. On its own terms it is optimistic, but most of us may well draw pessimistic conclusions from its optimistic approach.

James Robertson

Cholsey, 1st April 1992

Top Secret Memorandum to the President

STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT CENTURY AND THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

After the last Stygian Council meeting a hundred years ago, You asked us to review infernal strategy for the next century and the next millennium. This is a summary of our report. It is for discussion at the forthcoming Council meeting.

Since the Council first met several millennia ago we have steadfastly pursued the goal we then agreed. This was well summarised by a Mr. Milton in a report on those early events. That report, titled *Paradise Lost*, is quite recent and You may not yet have had time to read it. Milton describes our aim as "seducing the race of Man" into "wasting God's whole creation" to the point where He "with repenting hand would abolish His own works" - an accurate reflection of our self-appointed task.

We are able to report good progress over the past few hundred years. The cancerous impact of the human species on itself and on the ecosystems of the Earth has now well and truly taken hold - to the point where it could soon prove terminal. This offers us the prospect of an important victory over the Enemy. We can take satisfaction from it.

However, we must not be complacent. As increasing numbers of humans come to recognise the gravity of the world crisis they are creating (with our concealed assistance), they might be inspired to halt their stampede toward the abyss. They could still change direction just in time to thwart our Plan.

The following is a possible scenario. A United Nations Conference on Environment and Development is to be held in June next year in Brazil. This Earth Summit will be a historic event,

For the first time ever the peoples of the world will meet together to discuss their "common future". And 1992 will be a historic year. It will be the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to the western hemisphere. That voyage marked the beginning of the modern Euro-American period of human history, which now promises to culminate in the global disaster for which we have been working. The suggestion is that, when such a historic meeting in such a historic year confronts humans with the occasion for worldwide reflection and repentance, this will bring them to their senses; and that then the approach of "The Year 2000", which many of them will see as the time for a millennial breakthrough, will strengthen their determination to switch to a different path of progress for the future.

We have examined this scenario and understand it, but we do not find it realistic. The pressures of career competition and survival in business and finance and politics and government around the world will almost certainly be strong enough to frustrate the success (from the human point of view) of the Earth Summit. Furthermore, in this as in other matters of concern to us, our infernal skills of disinformation and public relations will keep the professional communicators on our side. We can rely on the world's media to ignore the potential significance of the Earth Summit until it is actually taking place, and then to concentrate on its entertainment value rather than the serious issues at stake.

Nonetheless, we recommend that infernal observers watch very carefully the efforts humans make in the next few years to change their present path of development. We should continue to encourage them to play down the severity of the risks they now face. We should persuade them that prudence and good judgment call for delay until scientists and economists can agree on what needs to be done. (We can rely on economists to argue for many years about what "sustainable development" actually means.) For

the longer term we must make sure that the efforts which humans eventually make to achieve sustainability are positively counterproductive.

In that respect we must follow the pattern of our previous successes. We contrived to persuade humans to transform the Christian atonement of 2000 years ago into the service of their own material ambitions and struggles for power. We helped them to transform the initial journeys of Christian explorers from Europe 500 years ago into a worldwide wave of destruction, in which many peoples and cultures and biological species have perished - and continue to perish today. In the last two or three hundred years we have successfully encouraged them to transform the scientific revolution and the "Enlightenment", on which they originally embarked with such high moral and spiritual purposes, into more powerful engines of physical and moral and spiritual destruction and waste than have ever existed before. We have helped them to redefine "the creation of wealth" as a competitive struggle for supremacy and survival among themselves, and to redefine "economy" as a compulsive addiction to unnecessary extraction and wastage of nature's resources.

These are no mean achievements. The challenge is to live up to them now. But this should not be beyond our powers.

Influential human leaders are already calling for "a new wave of economic growth" to deal with the problems that past economic growth has caused. What might have been dangerous ideas like democracy and development have already been converted into instruments - like the "free market" and "free trade" - through which rich and powerful people can dominate and disable the poor and weak. In the last few years concern with sustainable development has itself mushroomed into an unsustainably wasteful bonanza of parasitical busyness - national and international conferences, consultations, publications, research, and so on. Mad scientists, dreaming of nuclear reactors in 50 years' time which will generate heat 2000 times hotter than the sun, are given serious attention; while sober engineers, capable of providing all the energy humans need by a mixture of energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy supply, are dismissed as unreliable cranks. (Our experts from the Ministry of Destruction and Science and the Ministry of Disinformation and Public Relations are asking for increased budgets to step up their successful cooperation in this area.) Meanwhile leading humans, by

simultaneously paying themselves huge salaries and preaching the virtues of wage restraint, elegantly combine encouragement of financial greed with the promotion of widespread cynicism. (You recently recognised the brilliance of our infernal taskforce in this area by bestowing a Satan's Award for Excellence on the relevant division in the Ministry of Waste and Economic Affairs.)

In these and many other ways things are going well. With discreet help from us, the human race seems hell-bent on its own destruction and the destruction, if not of a very large part of the Universe, of enough of the Enemy's creation to be well worth our while.

As You know, the question has been raised whether this would necessarily turn out to be a victory for us. Might not the self-destruction of the human species and its environment, like the past destruction of earlier species (e.g. the dinosaurs), help to create conditions in which new, more advanced forms of life and consciousness would eventually emerge on Earth? Might we not then feel that, far from our having triumphed over the Enemy, He had skilfully outmanoeuvred us?

We reject that doubt for two reasons. First, more advanced forms of life and consciousness would, in fact, widen the future scope for infernal subversion of the Enemy's creation - *corruptio optimi pessima*, as His supporters say. That is an outcome we would welcome. Second, the disaster threatening the human species is now so imminent that their successful avoidance of it might well be interpreted as a defeat for us. That is an outcome we would want to avoid.

To conclude, then, our unanimous recommendation is that infernal strategy should encourage humans to continue on their present catastrophic course. We seek the Council's agreement and Your authority to proceed accordingly.

B.L.Z. Bubb (Minister, Planning)
M. Ammon (Minister, Waste and Economic Affairs)
M.O. Loch (Minister, Destruction and Science)
B.E. Lial (Minister, Disinformation and Public Relations).