

TURNING POINT 2000

January 1997

TURNING POINT 2000 is about shifting to a new path of progress, enabling for people and conserving for the Earth. The aim of these twice-yearly newsletters has been to suggest links and synergies between different aspects of this transformation, and to enable readers to make direct contact with one another. Most of the space has been given to reporting the activities, publications and ideas of other people and organisations. Until a year or two ago we were assuming we would aim to keep the newsletters going pretty well on the same lines until January 2000, i.e. for another six issues after this one.

However, as we noted in August 1995, the need for this shift to a people-centred, ecological path of progress is now much more widely understood than it was. The volume of information circulating about it continues to grow. More and more newsletters and journals, networks and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), are developing and disseminating new ideas and new practice on aspects of a people-centred, sustainable future. The mainstream is taking a growing interest in the subject. Finally, more and more people are now communicating by E-mail and the Internet. We have decided that we must do the same. We expect to organise this within the next few months.

THE FUTURE OF THESE NEWSLETTERS

Because of all this, it no longer seems so useful to recycle so much information already available in other people's newsletters, journals and magazines. We are therefore considering the future of the Turning Point 2000 newsletter. The options, as we see it, are either to discontinue it altogether, or to continue with it but give more space to a smaller number of items directly connected with projects of our own or with particular projects and initiatives of other people in which we ourselves have a close personal interest or involvement.

We shall send out at least one more newsletter, in August/September 1997, saying what we have decided. Meanwhile, any comments or suggestions will be welcome. If you have not sent a subscription recently, a donation towards the costs of this issue and the next will be appreciated. There is still a lot of useful, more-or-less up-to-date information in previous issues, most of which are still available. If you want any of these, a small donation - e.g. 50p in stamps per copy from UK readers - or some currency from those abroad - will help to cover costs.

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SOME BITS OF NEWS ABOUT US

Alison continues as a Trustee/Director of the Environmental Law Foundation and a member of the Schumacher Society Council. James's Visiting Fellowship at Green College, Oxford has ended. He helped to organise a seminar on "Ecotax Reform and Citizen's Income" in November at the Green College Centre for Environmental Policy and Understanding. Copies of his resulting 8-page paper on "Ecotax Reform: Some Economic, Social and Political Issues" are available from us for £1. He has completed his stint as a Trustee of the New Economics Foundation. He will have taught at Schumacher College in early January on "A New Economics for People and Planet".

We both go to Cuba in February to speak at the conference on Environment and Society being organised by Renee-Marie Croose Parry (see page 16). Martin Stott (see page 11) is among the other speakers. We hope that, as after our visit to South Africa (see page 12), our visit to Cuba may help to initiate a continuing interest in the "new economics" there. (NB: Some copies of our April 1996 report, 14pp, IMPRESSIONS OF THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA, are still available - £2 inc p&p in UK.)

James has been asked to report to the European Commission on the emergence of an alternative economic approach to sustainable development, emphasising the policy implications. If any TP reader would like to draw his attention to particular policy proposals with supporting publications from the last two or three years, please do so by end-February. Relevant fields include:

- work, leisure and lifestyles;
- money and finance: incomes, capital, taxes, public expenditure, currencies, debt, banking, etc.;
- energy;
- globalisation, trade and aid;
- food and agriculture;
- cities and countryside;
- families and communities;
- industries and technologies;
- housing and the built environment;
- transport and communications;
- businesses and other enterprises and organisations;
- health, education and training;
- economic planning, budgeting, accounting and auditing practices.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FARMING

DEVELOPMENT, 1996:4 (Society for International Development - see page 16 - editor, Wendy Harcourt), on "Food Security and Development", stresses sustainable livelihoods as a condition of food security, the need to enable more people to produce food for themselves, and how this conflicts with multinational domination of a free-trade globalised economy. An excellent compendium.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, 136pp (ed. Lori Ann Thrupp, World Resources Institute, 1709 New York Avenue NW, Washington DC 20006, USA), based on nine case studies from North and South America, Africa and Asia, shows that farming can be environmentally safe, socially equitable and economically sound, as well as keeping pace with the world population's growing demand for food. Partnerships are needed between farmers, communities, governments, researchers and non-governmental organisations.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Richard Douthwaite: **SHORT CIRCUIT: STRENGTHENING LOCAL ECONOMIES FOR SECURITY IN AN UNSTABLE WORLD:** Green Books, 1996, 386pp, pbk, £14.95. "A large part of the world's population has lost the means and the ability to provide for itself and has become dependent on a single, highly unstable economic system that has no use for a growing proportion of it.... For the next few years, unless there is a trade war, politicians are unlikely to be willing or able to protect their citizens from being damaged by this system". So, what can communities do for themselves? Can they de-link from the globalised economy? Can they reduce their present dependence on it for inflows of money, energy, food and other necessities of life? Douthwaite believes they can. He has provided an excellent, comprehensive, practical guide for communities that want to develop their own resources and capacities, and create a protected space within which local economies and cultures can be recreated or revived. His four core chapters are on: "Cutting the Monetary Tie"; "Banking on Ourselves"; "Energy Makes the World Go Round"; and "Life from the Land". This is an important book.

Simon Fairlie: **LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT:** Jon Carpenter, 1996, 159pp, pbk, £10. Subtitled "Planning and People in a Sustainable Countryside", this is another exciting contribution to local people-centred development. Having lived for nine years in a self-built wooden shack on a small-holding in France, earning his living from agricultural work and building, the author found on his return to England that he wasn't allowed to live that way here. He argues that, instead of excluding people from residing and working in rural areas, planners should look favourably on proposals for low impact, environmentally benign homes and workplaces in the open countryside. This could help to reinvigorate the land-based economy, create a richer and more diverse rural environment, and facilitate the provision of self-built affordable housing. "Low impact development is a social contract, whereby people are given an opportunity to live in the country in return for providing environmental benefits". This authoritative critique of the rural planning system includes practical proposals for reforming it. It has been written in co-operation with The Land Is Ours (East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street, Oxford OX4 1DD). N.B. Also from The Land Is Ours - a report (£1) by Ecotrak Environment Consultants on "Do Local Authorities Want Low Impact Development?".

Tony Gibson: **THE POWER IN OUR HANDS:** Jon Carpenter, 1996, 314pp, pbk, £10. People are not the problem; they are the solution. All they have to do is grasp and develop the potential grass-roots power they possess. In what Lord Scarman describes as these traveller's tales of voyages of discovery among the people of Europe, Africa, Asia and America, Tony Gibson explores and displays the undiscovered strengths and skills in ordinary people, as we begin to put things right - homes, jobs, schooling, environment, human rights, and so on. Good message; good stories.

Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life: **CARING FOR THE FUTURE:** OUP, 1996, 359pp, pbk. Subtitled "Making the Next Decades Provide a Life Worth Living", the Commission concludes that "equity has a crucial, even overriding role in all efforts aimed at a sustainable improvement in the quality of life. We believe that without equity there can be neither sustainability nor security. Equity denotes a principle of fair and equitable treatment to all, to be respected equally by individuals, institutions, and States". Among many recommendations are for a Quality-of-Life Audit and a Quality-of-Life Ombudsman, and for parallel national accounts which measure the value of unpaid caring work in the home and voluntary services in the community.

BOOKS RECEIVED (continued)

[The two following books are good examples of current developments in thoughtful mainstream academic economic thinking - belated and slow, some of our readers may think, but in the right direction. (Neva Goodwin is co-director of the Global Development and Environment Institute - GDAEI, Tufts University, Medford MA 02155, USA). GDAEI have details of discounts.)]

Neva R. Goodwin et al (eds): THE CONSUMER SOCIETY: Island Press, 1997, 385pp, pbk, \$24.95. This is the 2nd volume in a series on "Frontier Issues in Economic Thought". Summaries of thoughts by some seventy authors are grouped into ten sections such as "The History of Consumer Society" and "Globalisation and Consumer Culture", each prefaced with an overview essay. Juliet Schor argues that a new, positive critique of consumerism is needed which will offer people an appealing vision of an alternative society. Neva Goodwin concludes with suggestions for a research agenda that will enable "human societies to provide meaningful life options for their citizens without destroying the ecological basis for our prosperity, or restricting human goals to the wants that coincide with the producers' need to sell their output".

Neva R. Goodwin (ed): AS IF THE FUTURE MATTERED: University of Michigan Press, 1996, 313pp, hbk, \$49.50. Subtitled "Translating Social and Economic Theory into Human Behaviour", this is the first volume in a series on "Evolving Values for a Capitalist World". Twelve chapters by ten authors and the editor are grouped in two Parts - on "Investment as a Link between Present and Future" and "Political and Activist Approaches".

Owen Nankivell: ECONOMICS, SOCIETY AND VALUES: Avebury, 1995, 257pp, hbk. The author writes primarily as an economist for economists, but also - having directed the study programme at the Hinksey Centre, Oxford (which expresses a Christian concern for public issues) - for colleagues in social sciences and value-centred studies such as philosophy and religion, and others who want to make sense of economics. He expresses "the overriding importance of a wider view of economic activity than that provided by the academic discipline of economics", and the conviction that "those responsible for economic activity cannot avoid being judged ethically". His historical chapter on "Economics and Ideologies" notes two sets of losers in the "ethical game" of supporting economic innovation with ideological justification - first, those who were the previous generation of winners and now defend their conservative positions and, second, the generality of people who, throughout history, have been on the receiving end of change.

Fernando Scornik Gerstein: POLL TAX: THE TAX THAT SANK A GOVERNMENT: Land Policy Council (7 Kings Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QB), 1996, 36pp, pbk, £3.50. This booklet argues that the appropriation of land rent by individuals constitutes the basic tool with which human nature... bends the benefits of progress into the hands of the few... Taxing wages instead of rent, capital and profits was a drastic and fundamental change which had enormous economic consequences not only for the present, but for future generations as well.

Stephen Plowden and Mayer Hillman: SPEED CONTROL AND TRANSPORT POLICY: Policy Studies Institute (London), 1996, 236pp, pbk. Among the twenty-one main recommendations of this careful study are that speed limits on roads of all classes in the UK should be reduced, and that the principal means of enforcing them should be through the vehicle itself. (The use on the public highway of vehicles capable of exceeding the motorway speed limit by more than a small amount should be prohibited.)

Edward Goldsmith: *THE WAY: AN ECOLOGICAL WORLD-VIEW*: Green Books, 1996, 553pp, hbk, £28.50. Of the first edition of *The Way* we said (Turning Point 2000, September 1992) "One of the world's foremost environmentalists sets out 'to state clearly the basic principles underlying an ecological worldview'. He holds that natural evolution tends towards a stable state, that vernacular societies are in tune with nature in this respect, that progress - as seen, for example by Peter Russell [who, in *The White Hole in Time*, suggests that 'we are in the last moments of our 50,000-year dash from emerging consciousness to full enlightenment'] - is anti-evolutionary, and that we urgently need converting to an ecological worldview. Some will find Goldsmith's approach unduly conservative and feel that he fails to consider the practical implications of returning to an earlier way of life - or even to define it clearly enough. But there is much of value here, including a very powerful critique of modern science". We warmly welcome this revised and enlarged edition. *The Way* is a vital contribution to contemporary thought, to be digested by those whose hopes for the future rest on the prospect of an evolutionary breakthrough to something new, as well as applauded by those who agree with Goldsmith that we need to return to past stabilities.

Miles Litvinoff: *THE YOUNG GAIA ATLAS OF EARTHCARE*: Gaia Books, 1996, 191pp, pbk, £14.99. This beautifully illustrated guide aims to help children and young adults to become caretakers of our planet. After introducing spaceship Earth, it covers: Land; Food and Farming; Oceans; Energy and Elements; Fresh Water; Plants and Animals; Humankind; Civilisation; and Tomorrow's World. It is backed up with maps and reference material on: technical and jargon terms; map projections; the interpretation of pie charts, bar charts and graphs; relevant organisations; and suggestions for further reading. A splendid educational present, for interested not-so-young as well as for young readers.

Robert R. Schut: *THE \$30,000 SOLUTION*: Fithian Press (Santa Barbara, California), 1996, 160pp, pbk, \$12.95. This splendid book presents a well-worked-out set of proposals (and the social arguments in their favour) for distributing a guaranteed annual income to every American - an unearned Citizen's Income based on the right of everyone, not just the wealthy, to share in the ownership of resources received from the earth, from the heritage left to us by our ancestors, and from the common resources of knowledge of our society. An important contribution to the Citizen's Income debate, hitherto growing more strongly in Britain and Europe than in North America.

PLANNING FOR PROGRESS: Socio-Economic Review 1997: 98pp, pbk, from Justice Office (director, Sean Healy), Conference of Religious of Ireland, Tabor House, Milltown Park, Dublin 6, Ireland. Subtitled "Tackling Poverty, Unemployment and Exclusion", this far-sighted and practical review proposes a comprehensive ten-point programme to ensure full citizenship for all - including a Basic Income, a shift in the tax burden from income taxes to ecotaxes, part-time job opportunities, integrated rural development, environmental sustainability, non-profit housing, and education for participation and empowerment.

Peter Lang: *ETHICAL INVESTMENT: A SAVER'S GUIDE*: Jon Carpenter, 1996, 180pp, pbk, £10. This useful guide on "how to invest without compromise" surveys the ethical investment scene and its institutions. It warns readers to be wary of the independence of supposedly independent financial advisers, of the ethicality of supposedly ethical investments, of the reliability of pensions, and of claims that ethical investments are as profitable as non-ethical ones. The investment world rests on shaky foundations. Real ethical investments aim to create social wealth in the social economy. Their financial returns are likely to be lower than returns from investments explicitly aimed at creating financial wealth for investors.

BOOKS RECEIVED (continued)

Sebastian Kraemer and Jane Roberts: *THE POLITICS OF ATTACHMENT: TOWARDS A SECURE SOCIETY*: Free Association Books, 1996, 254pp, pbk, £15.95. This book aims "to add to the prevailing political language an account of what we know about fundamental human needs, and so renew our confidence in the possibility of more complex yet more cohesive societies". Attachment theory is associated with the psychologist John Bowlby, who stressed the key role of parent-infant bonding. In 1988 he wrote: "Man and woman power devoted to the production of material goods counts as a plus in all our economic indices. Man and woman power devoted to the production of happy, healthy and self-reliant children does not count at all. We have created a topsy turvy world". This insight runs through many of the seventeen contributions by psychologists, other academics and politicians in this very interesting book. It emphasises the importance of creating the "material and economic conditions for secure attachment, within families, neighbourhoods and the larger society. A society which provides the secure attachments which its members need, and which can contain a diversity of communities and cultures in a creative way, is not attainable unless material conditions as well as moral dimensions are addressed" (Michael Rustin).

Tom Hodgkinson and Matthew De Abaitua: *THE IDLER'S COMPANION: AN ANTHOLOGY OF LAZY LITERATURE*: 4th Estate, 1996, 176pp, hbk, £10. The editors of this agreeable, pocket-sized anthology note that idleness has a rich and noble heritage, dating back centuries. It is "a rejection of worldly pressures, an individualistic revolt against authority, a pleasure, a spiritual practice". As Robert Louis Stevenson put it, "idleness so called, which does not mean doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognised in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class, has as good a right to state its position as industry itself". [James was chuffed to see a passage about leisure from *Future Work* rubbing shoulders with fifty or so contributions by Samuel Johnson, Montaigne, Proust, Aristotle, Oscar Wilde, Pascal, Blake, Nietzsche, Baudelaire, Marlowe and other greats!]

Ruth Banks: *WILD HERBS AND HAPPINESS: Associacao IN LOCO* (Apartado 603, 8000 Faro, Algarve, Portugal), 1996, 197pp, pbk. This engaging pocket-sized account of life in an Algarve Mountain village by an incomer from an urban English culture brings out her neighbours' self-reliance and their ability to survive on their own, knowing how to build a house and to breed crops and turn them into food or clothing - in contrast to the helplessness of "educated" urban gentry who are entirely dependent on shops to supply all they require and, consequently, on wage-earning employment. (Associacao IN LOCO is an agency which fosters social, cultural and economic revival in the Serra de Caldeirao in the Algarvian hinterland. By invitation of its chairman, Professor Alberto Melo, James gave a paper on "New Employment for Social Cohesion" to a European TASC - Territorial Action for Social Cohesion - seminar in Oporto in early December.)

Katherine Morris (ed): *ODYSSEY OF EXILE: JEWISH WOMEN FLEE THE NAZIS FOR BRAZIL*: Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1996, 263pp, pbk. Ten women tell their stories, in chapters grouped under four headings: Persecution and Exile; The Concentration Camps; Transfer to Brazil; and Restitution. We naturally found the two chapters by our dear friend Renee-Marie Croose Parry particularly interesting and moving. But more generally, as the editor says, "These intelligent and sensitive women offer unique insights into the female experience of war, persecution and exile... These autobiographies help to shape the future of women's history, and of Jewish and German history. Such incorporation into the human record not only redeems the marginality of these women refugees, but confers a special meaning on their lives".

Chris Scott: *BETWEEN THE POLES: CREATIVE LIVING BETWEEN ATHEISM AND RELIGION*: New Millennium (London), 1996, 180pp, pbk, £8. Rev Chris Scott, an old friend from our Ironbridge days, writes of the possibilities for a secular spirituality "for people who know that the creeds, doctrines and scriptural interpretations of a bygone age will no longer do..., for devout agnostics and fringe atheists... who sit uncomfortably at the edge of their religion or beyond the edge, yet want to affirm that there is a meaning to life beyond the material". "Cojectivity", lying between subjectivity and objectivity, can provide a meeting place where peoples of different religious understandings or none can come together in a common understanding of their humanity. His theme is of a spiritual journey, "about finding our own authentic selves, becoming true to our deepest nature, and learning to live in ways that are truly fulfilling".

Farid Esack: *QUR'AN, LIBERATION AND PLURALISM*: Oneworld Publications (Oxford), 1997, 288pp, pbk, £14.99. In this book, subtitled "An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity Against Oppression", the author builds on his personal experiences in the South African struggle against apartheid, in comradeship with Christians, Hindus, Marxists and others. He refers to the "hermeneutic circle" of Latin American liberation theology, involving new interpretations of the Bible to match the continuing changes in present-day realities, personal and societal - interpretations which then enrich the thinking behind the liberation struggle. He experienced the Muslim's task of understanding the Qur'an as, first, exposing traditional interpretations of it as a way of legitimising an unjust order and, second, of re-interpreting its teachings in the cause of liberation.

Peter Spink: *BEYOND BELIEF*: Piatkus (London), 1996, 166pp, pbk, £8.99. Subtitled "How to develop mystical consciousness and discover the God within", this book offers guidelines and signposts for "the journey within". "An awakened heart leads to an entirely new way of looking at life, yourself, others, contemporary society, and ultimately at the whole created order. For the Cosmos is also on a journey". The meditative exercises in each chapter are designed "not only to assist and encourage self-realisation but also to encourage an understanding of how evolving human beings relate to an evolving universe".

DEMOCRACY & NATURE, Vol 3, No 2 (Issue 8), 173pp - international managing editor, Takis Fotopoulos (20, Woodberry Way, London N12 0HG). The aims of this book-length journal (three issues p.a., \$28 from PO Box 637, Littleton, CO 80160, USA), formerly called *Society and Nature*, assume that "the only alternative to the present barbarism is democracy... Democracy is more than the only liberatory project left after the failure of the state-socialist project; it is also the only way out of the long-term, multi-dimensional crisis which was initiated by the establishment of the system of the market economy and the consequent growth economy, two centuries ago. This is so because it is the concentration of power in its various forms that marks the foundation of every aspect of the crisis". Contributors to this issue include Murray Bookchin and Cornelius Castoriadis.

WHO'S COUNTING? is a 90-minute video by former New Zealand Member of Parliament Marilyn Waring on what's wrong with conventional economics (details of shorter versions, as well as prices and discounts, from Jane Hooper, IOL (UK) Ltd, Ashwell Farm, Dolton, Winkleigh, Devon EX19 8RF). 15 sections cover the Exxon Valdes disaster, the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), the weapons trade, the ozone layer, the UN-approved system of National Accounts, and other such issues in "new economic" thinking. Each section can provide a good starting point for a discussion or a class.

SUSTAINABILITY: THE LOCAL DIMENSION

These two pages are mainly about initiatives for sustainable development under Local Agenda 21, 'local' meaning sub-national. Among the items noted are three important reports - on a mega-city (London), an urban borough in South London (Sutton) and a predominantly rural county (Gloucestershire). These are excellent examples of the kind of forward-looking policy analysis which we need so badly, and which public "policy-makers", paid by citizens out of our taxes for this very purpose, now seem unable to produce. We warmly recommend them as models from which people in comparable localities can learn. They (and the other items here) raise vital issues about how communities are to be rebuilt, trust in government and business re-established, and local democracy regenerated.

"How can we ensure that Londoners and their institutions play a life-enhancing, not life-destroying, role in the world?". CREATING A SUSTAINABLE LONDON, October 1996, 45pp (A4), £2 + 50p p&p from Sustainable London Trust (7 Chamberlain Street, London NW1 8XB) - final text by John Jopling and Herbert Girardet - could provide a guide for cities all over the world. It defines a sustainable city as "a city that works so that all its citizens are able to meet their own needs without endangering the well-being of the natural world or the living conditions of other people now or in the future". At present London imposes a giant "ecological footprint" of resource demands and pollution over a vast land area - nearly equal to the entire area of Great Britain, though much of the land actually affected lies abroad. London's food supplies are transported long distances from all over the world. The timber and paper London uses require an area of forest about five times its own size. London's direct energy use of about two supertankers per week is quite unsustainable, and there is not yet a single building in the London area equipped with Photovoltaic panels. London generates 15,450,000 tonnes of waste a year, of which 90% is still dumped. And so on. Policy recommendations cover: energy production; green spaces and local food; health at work and for those out of work; community businesses and the informal economy; transport and planning; self-build housing; and education for self-help, empowerment and human development. A directly elected strategic authority for London is proposed, and a high-profile London Citizens Forum to enable Londoners to keep sustainable development at the top of the city's agenda.

FROM RIO TO SUTTON, 1996, 22pp (A4), £5 + p&p, from the Centre for Environmental Initiatives (The Old School House, Mill Lane, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 2JY) is the first report of a community partnership - local government, local business and local voluntary sector - working towards a sustainable Sutton. A Local Agenda 21 Forum is supported by six Working Groups - on Transport, Community Wellbeing, Sustainable Land Use and Nature Conservation, Sensible Consumerism, and Local Economics - and by Action Groups on Telematics, Home Energy Conservation, Global Action Plan, etc. On most of these topics sustainability indicators and targets are being established, and leaflets have been produced. Themes include: "Ecology Begins At Home!" and "Improve Your Neighbourhood and You Improve the World!". The Centre for Environmental Initiatives, a charity supported in 1995/6 by 8,945 hours of voluntary work (according to its interesting Annual Report), continues to play the key role.

Vera Elliott (Flat 3, 16 Royal Esplanade, Margate, Kent CT9 5DX), who started the Sutton Centre for Environmental Initiatives in the 1980s, now sends out an Agenda 21 Campaign Newsletter and is active in Thanet's Local Agenda 21. Leeds ECO (c/o John Simpson, 1 Bridge Road, Rodley LS13 1LN) invites people to lobby Leeds City Council to calculate Leeds's "ecological footprint" as part of the city's Local Agenda 21 submission. (For ECO also see page 16.)

SUSTAINABLE GLOUCESTERSHIRE, 1996, 147pp (A4), from Vision 21 (16 Portland Street, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 2PB; co-ordinator, Lindsey Colbourne) reports a surprising consensus among groups as diverse as teenagers and business leaders, parishes and adult education workers... In the future the people of Gloucestershire want:

- appropriate use of technology, to achieve society's goals, not to shape them;
- a thriving countryside, with more small farms using organic methods and up-to-date technologies to grow more local food for local consumption;
- new forms of work, more evenly distributed, blurring the distinction between people employed and unemployed, reducing the gap between rich and poor, with more time being spent working for the family and local community;
- a new approach to travel, involving less use of cars, and more public transport, cycling and walking;
- more opportunity for education and decision-making, with education being 'more relevant to life';
- a greater sense of security and community, supported by patterns of work which mean greater equity, reduced poverty, and more time for socialising and being at home; and
- less stress.

This impressive report - part of Gloucestershire's Local Agenda 21 - covers: people and countryside; rural land use and natural resources; biodiversity; the built environment; energy; transport; waste and pollution; health and the social environment; and the economy. It concludes with an Agenda For The Future.

Stephen Young's detailed Report For Practitioners (83pp) on PROMOTING PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF LOCAL AGENDA 21 (copies free from him - send stamped (64p) addressed envelope (A4) - at Department of Government, Manchester University, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL) is based on findings comparing Dutch, Danish and British experiences. This useful resource notes four strategies: 'Top-Down'; 'Bottom-Up'; 'Yes, But'; and 'Limited Dialogue'. It emphasises the wide variety of community-based partnerships in the social economy, the importance of capacity-building, and the opportunities given by Local Agenda 21 to regenerate local democracy.

George Henson (22 Castle Garth, Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5AN) writes about the 'top-down' and 'grass-roots up' models for building participation around Local Agenda 21, and emphasises the need to combine the two in order to revive people's trust in local government and business.

"Ten key elements for sustainability of human settlements have been identified: resource budgeting; energy conservation and efficiency; renewable energy technology; long-lasting built structures; proximity between home and work; efficient public transport systems; waste reduction and recycling; organic waste composting; a circular city metabolism; and a supply of staple foods from local sources". HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AS PART OF A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE, 1996, 33pp, (£5 from Building and Social Housing Foundation, Memorial Square, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 3TU; contact Diane Diacon), reports on a Consultation at St. George's House, Windsor in June 1996 following the Istanbul Habitat Conference. An Agenda for Action contains twenty four points for action by individuals and communities, for action at the national level, and for action at the global level.

Ecological Agriculture Projects (EAP, 21,111 Lakeshore, Macdonald Campus, McGill University, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec, Canada H9X 3V9) have received new funding to expand their services and set up a Worldwide Web site on sustainable agriculture. (For other items on sustainable agriculture, see page 2.)

WORK AND MONEY

WHY WORK? (details from Peter Merry, 21B Napier Road, Edinburgh EH10 5AZ) is a new campaign for "a comprehensive package of solutions to the multiple problems of unemployment, overwork, overconsumption, and social and ecological breakdown caused by the present structures of work and employment... The future of work is undoubtedly going to be the subject of the turn of the century. It provides a real opportunity...to expose the fundamental flaws in present economic thinking and offer positive, practical alternatives". An introductory article is in the next issue of *Sustainable Economics* (£5 pa from Brian Leslie, 12 Queens Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9LU).

The Royal Society of Arts (8 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6EZ; contact Paul Simpson) has initiated a national debate on REDEFINING WORK with a useful introductory paper by Neil Hartley. But the focus continues to be on conventional forms of employment, and "the workplace" as conventionally defined. We hope the RSA will take another look at the text of the keynote address which James gave at a June 1981 RSA Conference on "Work: Changing Patterns and Places".

"We must find ways to liberate people from dependence on full-time employment, and to enable them to choose and control what work they do.... Changes in Tax and Social Security could stimulate self-employment, part-time work, voluntary work, early retirement, more frequent sabbaticals, and the more equal sharing of unpaid work (as well as paid work) by men and women. Recipients of unemployment benefit could be encouraged to do useful work on their own account or with other members of their local community, and not to compete for scarce jobs. Useful moonlighting could be made legitimate. Unemployment benefit might be consolidated with other social security payments and tax reliefs to create a 'personal allowance', 'guaranteed minimum income' or 'social dividend', to which all citizens of working age would be entitled. It might be decided that central government should make over an increasing proportion of social security expenditure to local agencies charged with stimulating community self-help activities". It would be nice to think that these proposals, from our Turning Point Paper No 1 of 1981 on THE REDISTRIBUTION OF WORK (now out of print), will be acted upon before the end of the century.

THE IDLER, Nov/Dec 1996 (119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER; editor Tom Hodgkinson - also see page 6) includes an article by James on "Goodbye to the Dole", proposing a new social contract including a Citizen's Income as a key part.

"How much theoretical justification is needed before the poor are given a real chance to work themselves out of their poverty?". George McRobie (27 Kenilworth Road, London W5 5PA) writes on "Technology For Development - What Is Appropriate For Rich And Poor Countries?" in a recent Frank Cass publication on TECHNOLOGY AND TRANSITION: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE II.

The NORTH SOUTH PLAN, a Savings Account to help to tackle poverty in developing countries, was launched in October 1996. Details from Susan Jenkins, Triodos Bank (Brunel House, 11 The Promenade, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3NN).

Owen Ephraim (UNIFAX, 50 New Road, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7QT) and Prof. Peter Roberts (Lark Cottage, Rack Hill, Chalford, Stroud Glos GL6 8LA) were among the participants at the Green College seminar in November - page 2. Each, working separately, has developed a computer model exploring the effects of shifting to higher energy taxes and lower taxes on employment. Both are glad to share information about their models with other interested people.

Should everyone (in the European Union countries) *be compelled* either to use a single European currency, or to continue using a single national currency? What a lot of political fuss about the wrong question! We should *be allowed* to use a common European currency, our national currency, a local currency, and/or become a member of a Local Exchange and Trading System (LETS), as and when best suits us. Serious statesmen and policy makers should be working out how such a multi-level currency system will operate. For a good account, referring to our proposals for multiple currencies and to LETSLINK UK (61 Woodcock Road, Warmminster, Wilts BA12 9DH; contact Liz Shephard), see Oliver Tickell's two-page article "LETS KICK-START THE ECONOMY" in the Geographical Magazine, May 1996 (available in public libraries).

A newly launched European "Ecocurrency" is based on tokens for one, ten and fifty ECOs - an ECO being worth half an existing ECU (European Currency Unit). One Italian local authority and a local supermarket chain have set up a scheme for people to earn ECOs by returning their bulky wastes - old freezers, computers, etc - to collection points, and to spend them on green products in the supermarkets. Details in WARMER BULLETIN, November 1996 (World Resource Foundation, Bridge House, High Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1DP).

"LETS at present suffer from a similar problem to the one faced by co-ops a decade ago - they are predominantly a 'lifestyle statement' as much as a reaction to economic circumstances... Both co-ops then and LETS now give prominence to the opportunities they offer to unemployed people. Yet neither, with a few honourable exceptions, draw their membership from the unemployed". Martin Stott (65 Divinity Road, Oxford OX4 1LH) is co-author of one of three informative articles on LETS in LOCAL ECONOMY, Vol 11, No 3, November 1996 (Local Economic Policy Unit, South Bank University, Borough Road, London SE1 0AA). LETS ON LOW INCOME by Perry Walker and others, 1996, 34pp, £7 from New Economics Foundation (First Floor, Vine Court, 112-116 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1JE), recommends a shift in government policy from benign neglect to proactive support for LETS. (Ask NEF for details of their many other recent publications.)

"Couldn't we look at money in a totally different way? Buddhist teachings emphasise the emptiness of all things, meaning that nothing has a separate intrinsic existence... We forget that we are co-participants in the creation of money. We give it an authority that ought to belong to us all. We see it as alien, and it alienates us... [But] money cannot exist by itself; it has no value or meaning apart from us". "A Visible Illusion: The Truth About Money" is a thoughtful and thought-provoking 5-page article in TRICYCLE: THE BUDDHIST REVIEW, WINTER 1996, by Jose Reissig (141 Lamoree Road, Rhinebeck, NY 12572, USA).

"In ancient and Renaissance times, indeed until the nineteenth century, foreign coins circulated in most countries freely side by side with the native... Perhaps it's time for every town to have its own Internet Exchange Bank?". Peter Etherden (Custom House, 7 High Street, Rye, Sussex TN31 7JE), writing on "Genuine Money" in FOURTH WORLD REVIEW (24 Abercorn Place, London NW8 9XP) Nos 77 & 78, 1996, recalls the "early function of banks - that of finding good money when the official and governmental money was bad money".

A good report, September 1996, from the Development Bank Watchers' Project (Nancy Alexander, BREAD FOR THE WORLD INSTITUTE, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA) on "Gender, Justice and the World Bank". Borrower surveys show that recipient-country government officials are unhappy about the lack of World Bank response to their countries' social equity problems. Some are even unaware that poverty reduction is an objective of the World Bank.

PEOPLE AND PROJECTS

Following visits to South Africa by Manfred Max-Neef and then (in 1996) by ourselves, a SOUTH AFRICAN NEW ECONOMICS Network (SANE, PO Box 53057, 7745 Kenilworth, Cape Town; co-ordinator Wayne Visser) has been set up. John Clarke, Aart de Lange, Donald Northcott and Andrew Shackleton are among the other members of the co-ordinating group. Among the aims are the establishment of a resource centre and a research foundation.

The NETWORK FOR HUMAN SCALE DEVELOPMENT (SA) (PO Box 34678, Groote Schuur, Cape Town 7937, South Africa; chairperson Busi Gcabashe) aims to achieve, by the year 2000, "a recognised public image nationally and internationally as a transformative force on all levels of development (human, economic, political and social). We endeavour to achieve this by participating at policy making level and delivering equitable training and empowering programmes that will lead to self-reliant and sustainable families and communities".

David Olivier is director of the Gold Fields FAITH AND EARTHKEEPING Project (RITR, SP 3-23, Unisa, PO Box 392, Pretoria, South Africa 0003). In the December 1996 Newsletter (No 7) he argues that the pivotal issue for conservationists will be to help to deal successfully with the problems of the urbanised poor. The project is administered by the Research Institute for Theology and Religion.

The now independent CENTRE FOR HUMAN ECOLOGY (PO Box 1972, Edinburgh EH1 1YG; co-ordinator Nick Wilding) is becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status. Its main potential areas for research and consultancy include community benefit, new economics, conservation/biodiversity, and land use. An associated group in York (contact Paul Anderson, 61 Nunnery Lane, York YO2 1AH) is developing proposals for a UNIVERSITY OF INTERDEPENDENCE.

In BEFRIENDING THE OPPONENT in the journal "Medicine, Conflict and Survival", Vol 12, 1996, Ronald Higgins (Little Reeve, Vowchurch Common, Hereford HR2 0RL) has written an interesting 5-page account of fifteen years' work at the Dunamis Open Forum at St James's Church, Piccadilly. "Talk is also action, often a very potent kind. And so is the meeting of persons, especially in a safe place where privacy fosters listening, respect and second thoughts".

Stephen Tindale (who was a speaker at the Green College seminar on ecotax reform in November - see page 2) is to succeed Julie Hill as director of the GREEN ALLIANCE (49 Wellington Street, London WC2E 7BN) in January 1997. He has been working at the Institute for Public Policy Research.

Bruce Lloyd, principal lecturer in Strategic and International Management, South Bank University (103 Borough Road, London SE1 0AA) has recently published several interesting pieces in business journals about LEADERSHIP FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM. He raises crucial issues about the relationship between power, responsibility and leadership. Power-driven leadership is essentially self-focused and ego-driven, and usually has a short-term focus, whereas responsibility-driven leadership is more likely to achieve long-term success.

"Community well-being centres and co-operative structures offer effective ways of fulfilling Health of the Nation policies by realising the potential of people and communities for health improvement", concludes a recent report on "Co-operating For Health". Details from Pam Elven ('Camolin', Birtley Rise, Bramley, Guildford, Surrey GU5 0HZ) of the PIONEER HEALTH CENTRE, or from the Centre for Research in Social Policy (Loughborough University, Leicestershire LE11 3TU).

Alan Heeks (Well House, 13 St. Thomas Street, Winchester SO23 9HE) is chairman of the WESSEX FOUNDATION. Aiming to help young adults to fulfil their potential, the Foundation has created a 130 acre organic farm at Magdalen Farm (Winsham, Chard, Somerset TA20 4PA) as a learning centre. Alan's training and consultancy firm Working Vision focuses on personal development geared to organisational success. He is now developing a "4 QUESTIONS PROJECT" on the world environmental and social crisis.

Ian McChesney (93 Rattray Street, Christchurch, New Zealand) is managing the Energy and Transport Section, Canterbury Regional Council. He is also involved in COMMUNITY ENERGY ACTION - a charitable community company he helped to set up four years ago. It has recently got funds to upgrade energy efficiency in 1000 homes in Christchurch over the next two years.

The RURAL REVIVAL TRUST (co-ordinator Martin Golder, The Georgian House, Gas Ferry Road, Bristol BS1 6UN) was set up in 1993 to help to regenerate rural social life, support local economies and press for better use of land and landscape. One of its first publications, "The Democratic Farm", 16pp (A4), by David Gordon (19 Gordon Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1AN), with a Preface by Robert Waller (Willow Cottage, Clarendon Road, Widcombe, Bath BA2 4NJ), is based on the author's experience of managing 120 cows and 7 bulls, and 500 Speckled Welsh ewes and 15 rams, on two linked Devon farms. As contrasted with the overmanagement of intensive chemical farms, the democratic farm is one in which the animals are allowed to lead their own lives, little interfered with by humans. In such a farm, the weight of the livestock under the pasture, i.e. the earthworms, may be twice as great as that of the livestock above, i.e. the cattle - just one of the interesting facts in this interesting paper.

We were glad to hear again recently from Don Weaver (Hamaker-Weaver Publishers, PO Box 1961, Burlingame, CA 94010, USA) that he and his colleagues continue to promote the importance of remineralising the soil, as originally advocated by the late John Hamaker. He asks us to mention REMINERALISE THE EARTH (152 South Street, Northampton, MA 01060, USA) as a resource centre which is part of a grassroots network that stretches to every continent.

Writing on "Euro-Hope - Northern Ireland" in THE GANDHI WAY (Gandhi Foundation, Kingsley Hall, Powis Road, London E3 3HJ), No 50, Winter 1996-97, Peter Cadogan (3 Hinchinbrook House, Greville Road, London NW6 5UP), of the Gandhi Foundation's Northern Ireland project, suggests that the European Union, having launched a Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation there, is now only a short step away from political mediation with the same goal.

"By avoiding thinking about the future you hand over the future, as a prisoner, to the presently dominant political economy and to unthinking, docile professionals and bureaucrats". Ashis Nandy writes in the WFSF Bulletin, September 1996 (World Future Studies Federation, GPO Box 2434, Brisbane Q 4001, Australia). He is director of the CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF DEVELOPING SOCIETIES (29 Rajpur Road, Delhi 110 054, India). The Centre's current four-part research programme covers: democratic politics and its future; politics of culture and politics of knowledge; politics of alternatives and human futures; and violence, ethnicity and diversity.

Details of a UNIWORLD DATABASE for computer users "to supply basic national data that will increase international awareness of countries' development efforts" from Uniworld Software (PO Box 10363, London NW2 2ZN; contact Elizabeth Segall). Jeffrey Segall has prepared a useful two-page note on "Qs and As on A Civil Society Forum linked to the UN General Assembly".

NEW MODELS IN SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS The Scope For Mutual Learning

This page and the next outline a question on which the time may be ripe for some serious work. We would like to help to take this forward in 1997 in co-operation with other interested people - as, for example, members of the Scientific and Medical Network (director, David Lorimer, Gibliston Mill, Colinsburgh, Leven, Fife, Scotland KY9 1JT). (Please note this is SMN's new address.) We would be interested in comments or suggestions on these ideas.

Since the middle 1980s a worldwide movement for a new economics has come into existence which aims to transform today's conventional patterns of economic activity and thought into a new economics of person, society and planet. How will the conceptual underpinning of this new post-modern economics influence and be influenced by post-modern developments in science and philosophy?

Newtonian physics no longer provides the dominant model for science. Systems theory, the study of interactive processes, the morphogenetic and developmental theories of the biological sciences, and mathematical theories about chaos and turbulence, are more typical of today's scientific frontiers. It is beginning to be accepted that scientists are not and never could be value-free observers, and that they cannot be altogether detached from the world which they observe. Scientists belong to the particular society in which they happen to live, and the questions they study are greatly influenced by social, economic and cultural factors. This raises political and ethical issues: for whose benefit and for what purposes are scientists doing their work? At the same time, more attention is now being given to experiential types of knowledge and understanding, acquired not by external observation but by direct participation in the processes about which knowledge and understanding are sought. In the economic and social spheres, this takes the form of participatory study and research. It cannot be divorced from ethical and political issues. The new knowledge it brings cannot be dissociated from action, nor its epistemology from its ethics.

Crucial aspects of contemporary science, including medicine, are about:

- the role of information and codes and decision rules in systems of every kind;
- patterns of energy flow and energy use;
- processes of structural change;
- interactive relations between systems and subsystems;
- factors determining whether a system is efficient, well-functioning and healthy, or inefficient, malfunctioning and unhealthy;
- relations between the measurable and the unmeasurable, quantity and quality, matter and mind; and
- the role of ethics in science.

All these have their analogues in economic processes. Economic life is increasingly concerned with information, as well as with material commodities and products. The advent of electronic money reminds us that money is basically a scoring system. It provides information about people's entitlements and obligations. Money is an information system for regulating economic activities, transactions and relationships. Looked at another way, flows and stocks of money reflect and determine flows and stocks of economic energy. Laws, regulations, management procedures and corporate cultures embody decision rules which help to shape economic behaviour. Changing them in order to reshape economic behaviour has been compared with modifying genetic codes in biotechnology.

In economics, increasing attention is now being given to the relationship between - on the one hand - the unquantified, informal, non-monetised sphere of activity in which goods and services are directly used by the producer and the producer's family, friends and neighbours, and - on the other hand - the quantified, formal sphere in which goods and services are produced for monetary exchange. This parallels the growing attention being given to the relationship between complementary and allopathic medicine. "Barefoot" economists who participate in the economic activities they are studying may be compared, not only with anthropologists whose presence affects the behaviour of the communities being studied, but also with physicists whose observations affect the behaviour of the particles they are observing.

The dual nature of cancer growth in biological systems - the formation of cancer cells accompanied by the weakening of the immune system - has analogues, such as the spread of crime, in the economic and social sphere. An approach to agriculture which emphasises pesticides, and to health which emphasises allopathic medicine, is analogous to an approach to crime which emphasises police and courts and prisons.

Physical addictions to alcohol, nicotine and drugs have their analogues in socio-economic addictions - over-consumption and over-production as, supposedly, the only way of organising employment and distributing incomes to the citizens of modern societies. In these sick societies much of the available energy and resources is spent in response to malfunctions - ill-health, crime and pollution - leaving less to be used positively to create a healthier, securer, cleaner and less wasteful society. Does something similar happen in sick biosystems?

Do such analogies provide scientific parallels, or merely metaphorical ones? Is it possible to establish whether the same or similar structural and (where appropriate) topological and mathematical patterns are found, on the one hand in particular physical and biological functions and malfunctions, and on the other in particular economic and social functions and malfunctions? Do the links between information and energy provide a basis for modelling comparable behaviour in biological and socio-economic systems?

Might it be possible to show, for example, similar patterns in the development of some cancers as in certain unhealthy developments in the economic sphere - such as the overdevelopment of Third World (and other) cities or the overdevelopment of financial flows and financial institutions in the global and national economy? Might this provide insights of practical value in both the economic and the medical sphere?

The experience of the HYPERACTIVE CHILDREN'S SUPPORT GROUP (secretary, Sally Bunday, 71 Whyke Lane, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 2LD) over the past twenty years illustrates the damaging effects of a combination of scientific ignorance and economic and career vested interests. The medical establishment largely fails to recognise that dietary deficiencies and food allergies are a frequent cause of hyperactivity and attention deficit in children - which often lead to criminal and other anti-social behaviour in later years. The resulting costs - in terms of wasted education, law and order (including the imprisonment of young offenders), and pain for the sufferers, their victims and their families - not to mention the National Health Service costs of unnecessary pharmaceutical treatments from the drug companies - must be astronomical, running into billions every year. Is there anyone out there in a position to calculate what the present order of magnitude of these costs actually is?

SOME DATES TO NOTE

25 January, 10.30am-5.30pm, London. A GREEN LABOUR GOVERNMENT? Speakers include Robin Cook, Sara Parkin, Joan Ruddock, Stephen Tindale, Michael Jacobs, and many others. Details from SERA (11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ; Tel: 0171 263 7389).

1 February, 10am-4pm, Oxford. FUTURE OUTLOOK, the Oxford University Sustainable Business and Alternative Careers Fair. Contact Louise Thomas (13 Bevington Road, Oxford OX2 6NB; Tel: 01865 316121).

2-4 February, Washington, DC. MICROCREDIT SUMMIT. The purpose is: "Working to ensure that a hundred million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families, are receiving credit for self-employment and other financial and business services by the year 2005". Programme details and other information from Microcredit Summit Secretariat (c/o RESULTS Educational Fund, 236 Massachusetts Ave NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20002, USA) or in UK from Sara Murphy (RESULTS Education, 13 Dormer Place, Leamington Spa CV32 5AA; Tel: 01926 435430).

10-14 February, Cuba. ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY - MEDIO AMBIENTE Y SOCIEDAD. International conference on the Imperatives of Ecological Stewardship and Community. Details from Renee-Marie Croose Parry (PO Box 15778, Gainesville, FL 32604, USA; Fax: 352 373 5371).

22 March, 10.30am-4.30pm, London. ECO Seminar on PROSPECTS FOR ECOLOGICAL POLITICS AFTER THE ELECTION. Speakers include David Taylor (Green Party). Details from ECO, Campaign For Political Ecology (42 Rose Terrace, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4QA; Tel: 0113 259 0812).

26 March, 6.15pm, London. THE ALISON BARNARD MEMORIAL LECTURE, by the Bishop of London. Details from Robert Vint (REEP, 8th Floor, Rodwell House, Middlesex Street, London E1 7HJ; Tel: 0171 377 0604).

18-20 April, London Colney. JUNG AND TEILHARD - AN EXPLORATION IN COMPLEMENTARITY. Speakers include Bronwen Astor, Robert Faricy SJ, Fabio Mantovani, John Woodcock. Details from Caroline Cowell-Unsworth (Plas Maelog, Beaumaris LL58 8BH; Tel: 01248 810402).

21-24 May, Santiago di Compostela, Spain. WHICH GLOBALISATION? OPENING SPACES FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT. The Society for International Development's (SID) 22nd World Conference. More than 1000 participants from the international development community and other social and economic sectors are expected. Details from Elisabetta Vaccaro (SID, 207 Via Panisperna, 00184 Rome, Italy).

7-12 July, Capri. THE ECONOMICS AND POLITICS OF GENES AND IQ, "Differences in intelligence matter". Gunnar Adler-Karlsson's Capri summer seminar. Details from him (CP 79, 1-80071 Anacapri, Italy).

28 July - 1 August, Brighton. HENRY GEORGE CENTENARY CONFERENCE. Details from Fred Harrison (Land Policy Council, 7 King's Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QB; Tel: 0181 943 3352).

28 September - 3 October, Brisbane, Australia. GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS - WHAT YOU AND I CAN DO FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. XV World Conference of World Futures Studies Federation (Sally Brown, WFSF Conference Secretariat, see p.13).