

TURNING POINT 2000

March 1998

TURNING POINT 2000 is about shifting to a new path of progress, enabling for people and conserving for the Earth. For more than twenty years these twice-yearly newsletters have been suggesting links and synergies between different aspects of this transformation, and encouraging readers to contact each other.

Requested annual subscriptions - more if you can, less if you can't. Personal, voluntary groups, NGOs, etc: UK and Europe £5; worldwide outside Europe £6. Business corporations and government departments £20. Other institutions £10. Free to people who who cannot afford to pay. Cheques to 'Turning Point' please. **All payments in sterling please.** (The text is also at <www.the-commons.org/tp2000>.) Next issue, August/September 1998.

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James has become an Associate Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Environment, Ethics and Society (OCEES), attached to Mansfield College. Also see page 2.

On **21 March**, with Vandana Shiva (see page 4) and Danah Zohar, James will be speaking at the First Annual Liverpool Schumacher Lectures - on "Healthy People, Healthy Communities, Healthy Planet". Booking/payment enquiries to: Denise Glinister (JMU Conference Services, 2 Maryland Street, Liverpool L1 9DE; e-mail: <d.glinister@livjm.ac.uk>). Leaflet enclosed for UK and Europe.

James's new book, *Beyond The Dependency Culture*, will be published by Adamantine on **2 April** (details at <www.adamantine.co.uk>). (Praeger is publishing it in the US.) Discount copies will be available by mail order for TP2000 subscribers only - order form enclosed. [Copies are also available of : *The Sane Alternative*, 1983 (UK £3.50, EU £5, surface worldwide £6, inc p&p); and *Future Work*, 1985 (UK £7, EU £9, surface worldwide £10, inc p&p). Cheques to James Robertson please. Sterling only. No fax, e-mail or credit card orders. Only orders accompanied by payment will be accepted.]

SHARING THE COMMONS

Countless initiatives are now under way to create specific aspects - farming, work, business, etc, etc, - of a future that will be fairer, more conserving, more ethical and also more efficient than today. We mention many in these newsletters. But we are especially interested in the scope for systemic changes whose benign effects will pervade all these aspects of the future. The 20th century has focused on who - business or government, capitalists or politicians - controls 'the commanding heights' of society and the economy. The 21st must focus on systems change, not commanding heights. We need to evolve a less perverse institutional framework than today's, that will make the socially and environmentally healthier choice the more attractive choice for people and organisations. Hence the space given in these pages to the need for systemic changes in taxes, public spending, money and finance.

Center Focus, September 1997 (Center of Concern, 3700 13th Street NE, Washington DC 20017, USA; e-mail: <coc@igc.apc.org>), an excellent special issue on globalisation, stressed that "Catholic Social Teaching emphasises that the goods of God's creation and of human invention are for all to share and conserve". It recorded serious doubt whether personal good behaviour can be enough to convert an essentially flawed system, a 'structure of sin', into a system that reflects the values of Catholic Social Teaching. The December 1997 Jubilee Issue of *Center Focus* calls for "international mechanisms that prevent recurring, destructive cycles of indebtedness".

With our help OCEES (see page 1) will hold an international conference on "Sharing Our Common Heritage: Resource Taxes and Green Dividends" on Thursday 14 May, chaired by David Marquand. Speakers will include Mason Gaffney, Fred Harrison, Alanna Hartzok, Philippe van Parijs, Tatiana Roskoshnaya and James Robertson. Details from Anne Maclachlan (OCEES, Mansfield College, Oxford OX1 3TF; e-mail: ocees@mansfield.oxford.ac.uk). (If available in time, we shall enclose a leaflet for UK and European readers). The principle and practicalities of combining environmental taxation with taxation of land and a Citizen's Income will be explored, including local and global implications. (Some of the speakers will go on to the People's Summit - see page 14).

"'Enclosure' - allowing a privileged minority of citizens to enjoy the lion's share of the profits and incomes generated out of the natural values of land, energy, and other common resources (including the environment's capacity to absorb pollution and waste) - has shaped the economic development of the last few centuries. Will the coming of ecotaxation help to annul the effects of enclosure, and open the way to a new direction of development, as if people and the Earth both mattered?". James's review of Timothy O'Riordan (ed): ECOTAXATION: Earthscan, 1997, appeared in *Resurgence* No.185, November/December 1997.

The **Basic Income European Network's** (BIEN) 7th International Congress in Amsterdam on **10 - 12 September** 1998 will have three themes: (1) full employment without poverty; (2) sustainable funding; (3) social Europe. "Can one find ways of drawing the funds as much as possible from sources reflecting a 'common endowment', rather than redistributing the fruits of people's productive effort?". The usual proposal to fund a basic income from taxes on income (labour) raises economic, ecological and moral questions. See *Basic Income* 28, Christmas 1997 - from BIEN (Chaire Hoover, 3 Place Montesquieu, B-1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium) or at <<http://www.econ.ucl.ac.be/etes/bien>>. BIEN's secretary is Professor Philippe van Parijs (see page 2).

Congratulations to **Sean Healy** and **Brigid Reynolds** (CORI, Justice Office, Tabor House, Milltown Park, Dublin 6, Ireland). Their SURFING THE INCOME NET (1997), a glossy 34pp booklet with cartoons, provides the best simple explanation we have seen of what a basic income is, why it is needed, and how it will work. The underlying principle is that "nature and its resources are for the benefit of all". Every populariser of basic income should get hold of it.

In an 18pp proposal (1997) for a European Union Directive on energy taxation, **Farel Bradbury** (70 Silverdale Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9HZ) shows that Value Added Tax is a tax on employment. It would be administratively possible to replace VAT with an energy tax over a period of three months, and shift the burden of tax from the creation of wealth to its consumption.

"I would urge the Churches most strongly to declare land to be a unique form of property, requiring from its owners the payment of an economic rent for its use; that economic rent to be applied (for the benefit of the common good) in place of taxes on the production of wealth". **George Ticehurst's** (193 High Street, Batheaston, Bath BA1 7NS) 2-page note "Recapturing the Value of Land for the Community" makes a clear, concise case for raising public revenue by charging for the use or monopolisation of natural resources including land. The Churches should understand it and act to promote it.

"The dramatic human, social and ethical problems caused by concentration and misappropriation of land", and the "countless unacceptable injustices" arising from "the scandalous situations of property and land use on almost all continents" are powerfully addressed in the Vatican's TOWARDS A BETTER DISTRIBUTION OF LAND: THE CHALLENGE OF AGRARIAN REFORM in *Briefing*, February 1998, (£3 from Catholic Media Trust, Redemptoristine Convent, Back Gillmoss Lane, Liverpool L11 0AY). *Wider Angle*, September 1997, World Institute for Development Economics Research of the UN University (Katajanokanlaituri 6B, 00160 Helsinki, Finland; e-mail: wider@wider.unu.edu) reports another international study on "alternative paths of access to land". Thus the need for worldwide land reform is recognised. But, as these two examples show, too little serious consideration is given to the reform potential of land taxation. Site-value taxation can also help to reduce urban land problems such as excessive housing costs, as well as agrarian problems.

BUSINESS CORPORATIONS AND THEIR IMPACTS

“There are two paradigms of biodiversity conservation. The first is held by communities whose survival and sustenance is linked to local biodiversity utilisation and conservation. The second is held by commercial interests whose profits are linked to utilisation of global biodiversity for production of inputs into large-scale homogeneous, uniform, centralised, global production systems. For local indigenous communities... biodiversity has intrinsic value as well as high use value. For commercial interest, biodiversity itself has no value; it is merely ‘raw material’ for the production of commodities and for the maximisation of profits”. In *PROTECTING OUR BIOLOGICAL AND INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE IN THE AGE OF BIOPIRACY* - 30pp booklet, 1996 - **Vandana Shiva** (e-mail: <vandana@twunv.ernet.in>; Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy, A-60 Hauz Khas, New Delhi - 110 016, India) proposes an alternative to the Western-style Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) supported by GATT/WTO and transnational corporations. *BIJA The Seed*, Nos.19 & 20, 1997 - the quarterly monitor on biodiversity, biotechnology and intellectual property rights - is also on BioPiracy.

“Should multinational companies be allowed to patent and have monopoly rights over genes, cells, plants, animals and parts of the human body?”. The Gaia Foundation (18 Well Walk, London NW3 1LD; e-mail: <gaiafund@gn.apc.org>; **Ed Posey and Liz Hosken**) are co-ordinating the UK NO PATENTS ON LIFE! lobby against the EU Directive *Legal Protection of Biotechnological Inventions*. “Patenting, Piracy and Perverted Promises”, 12pp Briefing by GRAIN (Genetic Resources Action International, Girona 25, Pral, E-08010 Barcelona, Spain; e-mail: <grain@bcn.servicom.es>) opposes “the last assault on the commons” by big business. (Also see Corner House - page 14).

The Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), secretly negotiated in the OECD (i.e. by the rich countries) and originally planned for signature in April, would give multinational companies more rights, fewer responsibilities and greater freedom to act unethically and unecologically. In Britain, the World Development Movement (25 Beehive Place, London SW9 7QR; <www.oneworld.org/wdm>) has been opposing it, with others listed in *Red Pepper*, February 1998, p.13 (1b Waterlow Road, London N19 5NJ; e-mail: <redpepper@online.rednet.co.uk>). In the USA, **Ward Morehouse**’s December 1997 “Call to Action” from Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy (777 UN Plaza, Suite 3c, New York, NY 10017; e-mail: <cipany@igc.apc.org>) describes MAI as a giant step towards constituting business corporations as sovereign instruments of governance. The main focus of *Pacific World*, August 1997 (PO Box 12125, Wellington, New Zealand; editor **Kay Weir**) was on resistance to MAI, which would override national legislation and promote unsustainable development. On Valentine’s Day 1998 the US was reported as unwilling to support MAI in its present form. But that is no reason to relax. The threat by multinationals to remove the powers of governments to regulate the impacts of their investing and trading has not gone away.

Following TRANET's closure, **Bill Ellis** has chosen *YES! A Journal of Positive Futures* (successor to *In Context* magazine), edited by **Sarah van Gelder**, Executive Director of Positive Futures Network (PO Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110, USA; e-mail: <yes@futurenet.org>) to fulfil TRANET's outstanding subscriptions. The Fall 1997 issue of *YES!* described the MAI as the issue that may galvanise a national debate (in the US) on 'free trade' and economic globalisation and corporate dominance.

In *News from the Centre*, February 1998 (Centre for Tomorrow's Company, 19 Buckingham Street, London WC2N 6EF) **Sir Geoffrey Chandler**, Chair, Amnesty International, UK Business Group, points out that long-term corporate success depends on the alignment of company policies and practices with the contemporary values of society. The globalisation of economic development presents companies with moral challenges for which they have shown themselves little prepared, but which are of genuine concern to today's more critical consumer (let alone tomorrow's). So far, it is external pressure rather than corporate initiative which has brought about change.

In *The Environmental Forum*, September/October 1997, **David Rejeski** (Executive Office of the President, Council on Environmental Quality, 722 Jackson Place NW, Washington DC 20502, USA) discusses the environmental impacts and opportunities of the service sector. The impacts of distribution and transportation systems, phone companies, the healthcare sector, real estate operations, restaurants, universities, hotels and motels, and mail order and retailing businesses are poorly understood. They have the opportunity to exercise influence upstream on environmental decisions in manufacturing and agriculture, and downstream on environmental concerns of their customers.

In OCEES (see page 2) Research Paper No.10 on EVIDENCE OF A NEW ENVIRONMENTALISM: INVESTOR AND CONSUMER ACTIVISM AS EXPRESSIONS OF POSTMATERIAL VALUES (1997, 32pp, £5) **Maurie J. Cohen** explores why business organisations, especially multinational corporations with wide public exposure, are now facing demands to upgrade their environmental performance from investor and consumer groups, as well as environmental organisations. He discusses the different emphasis on romantic and rational forms of environmentalism in different industrialised societies.

SPLICE, Jan/Feb 1998 (The Genetics Forum, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF; e-mail:<geneticsforum@gn.apc.org>) expects conclusions in March of the Citizen Foresight Project on (1) should genetic engineering be used in UK food production and, if so, under what conditions? and (2) what changes are required to restore mutual trust between consumers and the food industry?

"We are in danger of slipping into a situation where the genes of all creatures, including humans, come to be regarded as just one more resource which can be bought, sold, and exclusively owned". *World Goodwill*, 1997, No.4, quarterly bulletin of **The Lucis Trust** (3 Whitehall Court, Suite 54, London SW1A 2EF).

THE MONEY SYSTEM

Alan D. Armstrong (see p.8), chairman of the Social Credit Secretariat and editor of the bi-monthly *Social Crediter* (£12pa from 16 Forth Street, Edinburgh EH1 3LH), was active in the successful campaign for a Scottish Parliament. He is now preparing a CAMPAIGN FOR MONETARY AND ECONOMIC REFORM - to create greater equity in the distribution of wealth, less pressure on the environment, and more democratic control of economic decision-making.

A new CAMPAIGN FOR INTEREST-FREE MONEY (**Sabine McNeill**, Global Cafe, 15 Golden Square, London W1R 3AG; e-mail: <sabine@globalnet.co.uk>) supports monetary education and research, political campaigning and alliance building. (EURO Citizens - same address - works for economic democracy in Europe). **Canon Peter Challen** (21 Bousfield Road, London SE14 5TP) is the new chairman of the Christian Council for Monetary Justice. Details of CCMJ's Study Day on Debt on 28 March in Manchester Cathedral from **Revd Andrew Dawson** (Church House, 5th Floor, 90 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GJ).

Christopher H. Budd's *New Economy*, bi-monthly journal of Associative Economics (PO Box 341, Canterbury CT4 8GA) sees monetary policy as the central issue of modern economic life, analagous to the heart as regulator of the body's bloodstream. Recent articles include European financial integration and the Euro (Sept/Oct 1997) and Bank of England reforms (July/Aug 1997).

If a single currency is good for the USA, why not for Europe? **Lawrence Lindsey**, a Governor of the US Federal Reserve System, points out in "The American Experience of Currency Union" in *New European*, Vol.97, No.2 (**John Coleman**, 14-16 Carroun Road, London SW8 1JT) that the US can respond to interregional economic fluctuations with two alternatives to exchange rate flexibility which Europe lacks: (1) very high labour mobility throughout the area; and (2) the automatic fiscal transfer mechanism of a politically unified nation, which takes lower taxes from, and directs higher public spending to, economically depressed regions. [The growth of local currencies in the USA may also have a bearing on the question. See *Local Currency News* June 1997 Directory (**Susan Witt** and **Bob Swann**, E.F. Schumacher Society, 140 Jug End Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230, USA; e-mail: <efssociety@aol.com>).]

Orthodox economic theory sees "national currencies, local currencies, competing currencies, exchange controls as anachronisms, imposing social and economic costs and impeding economic growth". But developments in digital cash may "lead to a revolution in the monetary order equivalent to that brought about by the invention of paper money - a revolution, moreover, which favours the use of alternative currencies". For a very useful 10pp overview see "Alternative Currencies: A Challenge to Globalisation?" in *New Political Economy*, Vol.2, No.1, 1997, by **Rachael Tibbett** (14 Church Street, Lydgate, Todmorden, West Yorks OL14 8HS; e-mail: <R.Tibbett@mmu.ac.uk>).

Monetary reform will take place in a world of electronic money and multiple currencies. "In the virtual world where big no longer confers automatic economic advantage, money management will become much more of a community activity, as groups - both local and inter-local - increasingly set up their own arrangements for managing and investing their currencies". In **ELECTRONIC EXCHANGE SYSTEMS**, February 1997, **Jan Wyllie** and colleagues (Trend Monitor International, 3 Tower Street, Portsmouth PO1 2JR; e-mail: <jan@trendmon.demon.co.uk>) survey the implications of electronic cash and internet banking. **Tom Greco** (PO Box 42663, Tucson, AZ 85733, USA) writes on "New Money: A Creative Opportunity for Business" in *La Otra Bolsa de Valores*, No.42 (Tlaloc 40-3, COL. Tlaxpana, CP 11370, Mexico, DF Mexico) - "E-cash, cyberbucks, direct deposits, electronic fund transfers - what's happening to money today? It's hard for most people to imagine a world without money, but that's what's on the horizon". Meanwhile, in *Fourth World Review* Nos.83 and 84, 1997 (£2 from 24 Abercorn Place, London NW8 9XP) **Dave Birch** and **Neil McEvoy** describe how tomorrow's e-cash, electronic purses and the internet will help to break the stranglehold of centralised money systems.

BALANCING EUROPE FOR SUSTAINABILITY is a comprehensive 257pp report (1996) from **Aktie Strohalm** (Oudegracht 42, 3511 AR Utrecht, Netherlands) co-edited with **Richard Douthwaite**, on using Financial MicroInitiatives (FMIs) to build a better environment. **Aktie Strohalm's** intensive training programmes aim to ensure that every European country has experts in FMIs.

Triodos News 3, Winter/Spring 1998 reports **Triodos Bank** (Brunel House, 11 The Promenade, Bristol BS8 3NN; e-mail: <mail@triodos.co.uk>) now financing about 25 microfinance institutions in the developing world. Among Triodos' new savings accounts are an Organic Saver Account (in partnership with the Soil Association) and a Just Housing Account (in partnership with the Churches National Housing Coalition).

Congratulations to **Liz Shephard** and **LETSLINK** (at new address: 2 Kent Street, Portsmouth PO1 3BS; website: <www.communities.org.uk.lets>) on their 2 years' Lottery funding. A new model LETS uses printed notes as well as cheques. Send LETSLINK £2 for info pack; and £1 for info on proposal to treat LETS credits as tax-exempt income/earnings. Please ask your MP to support a 10-minute Rule Bill to that effect in the House of Commons on 25th March.

"Future money flows should be organised and directed in a way that a maximum benefit is reached for society". **Udo Reifner** and his colleagues at IFF (Institut Fur Finanzdienstleistungen, Burchardstrasse 22, D-20095 Hamburg, Germany) believe declining trust in the banks may mean that only by "actually lending money in socially beneficial areas, rather than disguising day-to-day business activity with cultural or charitable giving, are they likely to arrive at a new state of co-operation with the people".

BOOKS RECEIVED

Fred Harrison (ed): **THE LOSSES OF NATIONS: DEADWEIGHT POLITICS VERSUS PUBLIC RENT DIVIDENDS:** Othila Press, 1998, 250pp, pbk. This important book powerfully supports moving towards “a system of charging people directly for the public and environmental services from which they benefit”. We should stop taxing people’s wages and the income from their savings. Instead, people would pay rent to the community for the use of land and natural resources. Calculations show that this would achieve an astonishing improvement in economic efficiency, resulting in per capita increases in annual income between \$6,902 and \$15,166 in the seven richest industrial countries.

Alan D. Armstrong: **TO RESTRAIN THE RED HORSE: THE URGENT NEED FOR RADICAL ECONOMIC REFORM:** Towerhouse (Gilnockie House, 32 Kilbride Avenue, Dunoon, Argyll, Scotland PA23 7LH), 1996, 137pp, pbk, £11.95. The debt-money system, whereby new money is put into circulation by commercial banks in the form of interest-bearing loans to their customers, causes escalating levels of debt in every sector of the economy worldwide and rising poverty and environmental destruction. This excellent book explains clearly how this happens and proposes a campaign to put it right. (Also see page 6.)

Marion Shoard: **THIS LAND IS OUR LAND: THE STRUGGLE FOR BRITAIN'S COUNTRYSIDE:** Gaia, 1997, 521pp, pbk, £10.99. In Britain, political struggle for the last 200 years “has largely revolved round the jobs and incomes and taxes and welfare of a population apparently firmly rooted in the towns and cities of one of the world’s most industrialised countries”. “As the third Millennium approaches, land is coming to be seen once more as a key human resource”. Many people will find a key resource in this new edition of a “brilliant and extraordinary” (George Monbiot) book, for too long out of print.

Vandana Shiva et al: **THE ENCLOSURE AND RECOVERY OF THE COMMONS:** Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology (see page 4), 1997, pbk, 182pp. “The expansion of ‘intellectual property rights’ into the domain of life forms and biodiversity, and the globalisation of this regime through Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreements (TRIPs) of GATT/WTO, has been an attempt to enclose the biological and intellectual commons”. This book presents a people’s agenda for their recovery and the rebuilding of communities and nature by implementing a community intellectual rights (CIRs) regime.

Ted Trainer: **THE CONSERVER SOCIETY: ALTERNATIVES FOR SUSTAINABILITY:** Zed Books, 1995, 246pp, pbk, £14.95. “Our most serious problems are due to overproduction and overconsumption, yet we have an economy that constantly has to increase levels of production and consumption” and is “the overwhelming determinant of what happens in our society”. Excellent, action-orientated overview, emphasising strategies for more self-sufficient rural towns and urban neighbourhoods.

Wolfgang Sachs et al: GREENING THE NORTH: A POST-INDUSTRIAL BLUEPRINT FOR ECOLOGY AND EQUITY: Zed Books, 1998, 247pp, pbk, £14.95. This important study by the Wuppertal Institute (see page 16) outlines how a sustainable Germany might look over the next 50 years. Its sections cover Guidelines, Targets, Stock-Taking, Paradigms, Transitions and Contexts. It stresses the link between ecology and equity (the affluent peoples will have to cut our overall throughput of nature by 90% - Factor 10 - to allow better quality of life for the peoples of the majority world), and the need for efficiency (to do things better) and sufficiency (to do the right things). This authoritative book provides practical guidelines for the transition that all the rich countries face in all sectors of our economies and societies.

Tim Beaumont: THE END OF THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD: WAYS AND MEANS TO THE SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY: Jon Carpenter, 1997, 146pp, pbk, £10. "The individual is not helpless... If we believe that the economy of the world must be sustainable, we must do our best at least to be moving in that direction ourselves". This humane contribution to the sustainability debate by the Liberal Democrat spokesman on conservation and the countryside in the House of Lords is enlivened by quotations on almost every page, beginning with "Old men and comets have been revered for the same reason; their long beards and pretences to foretell the future" (Jonathan Swift) on p.1, to "Scottish landowners are a selfish, ferocious, famishing, unprincipled set of hyenas" (Tom Johnston MP) on p.135. Very readable and thought-provoking.

Ervin Laszlo: 3RD MILLENNIUM: THE CHALLENGE AND THE VISION: Gaia, 1998, 155pp, pbk, £9.99. To meet the "urgent need creatively to evolve the patterns of thought and action that dominate our existence, it has become imperative that: individuals think globally and live responsibly; businesses evolve a new enterprise culture; politics lift the sights of national governments; society adopt a code for environmental morality; and peoples and states create a culture of interexistence". Concise, wide-ranging and readable. Strong on the need to change unsustainable behaviour and values; not very strong on how to change institutions which perversely encourage and reflect them.

Neva R. Goodwin et al (eds): HUMAN WELLBEING AND ECONOMIC GOALS: Island Press, 1997, 427pp, hbk. According to neoclassical theory interaction between profit-maximising producers and utility-maximising consumers leads to a social optimum. But is that the same as human wellbeing? This is Volume 3 of the "Frontier Issues in Economic Thought" edited by Neva Goodwin. The first two were on Ecological Economics and the Consumer Society. "Over all, the series asks: what is the purpose of the study of economics? whom is economics intended to serve? and what should be its subject matter?". The eighty summaries and overview essays in this excellent collection are on: Interdisciplinary Perspectives; Utility and Welfare, Historical and Modern; Applied Welfare Economics; Economics and the Good for Individuals, Community, Society; National Development; Critiques of National Income Accounting; and Alternatives to Gross National Product.

BOOKS RECEIVED (continued)

Ziauddin Sardar and Jerome R. Ravetz (eds): CYBERFUTURES: CULTURE AND POLITICS ON THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY: Pluto Press, 1996, 161pp, pbk. "It is an open question whether our material civilization has irreparably damaged its matrix in the global natural environment; and we cannot even be sure that we are safe from a crippling nuclear war. Now we face another open question, whether the social and cultural stresses and instabilities induced by microcybernetics will be too much for our inherited institutions to cope with". The three opening chapters by the editors - "Reaping the Technological Whirlwind" (both), "Cyberspace as the Darker Side of the West" (Sardar), and "The Microcybernetic Revolution and the Dialectics of Ignorance " (Ravetz) - reflect the critical tone of these seven essays on this central aspect of the transition from modernity to post-modernity.

Kaoru Yamaguchi (ed): SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL COMMUNITIES IN THE INFORMATION AGE: VISIONS FROM FUTURES STUDIES: Adamantine, 1997, 218pp, pbk, £14.50. "The industrial age can be said to be the age of scientific knowledge that failed to retain the wisdom that villagers had cultivated for centuries. The information age could be the age to unify wisdom and knowledge". Its key features could be: information-sharing networks; self-management and participatory democracy; and sustainable development. Dedicated to the memory of consciousness-scientist Roger Sperry, this is an optimistic collection of 20 visions - about sustainable community developments in Asian and Pacific countries and the USA, and about the "cognitive revolution". More detail at <<http://www.adamantine.co.uk>>.

Georges Anderla, Anthony Dunning & Simon Forge: CHAOTICS: AN AGENDA FOR BUSINESS AND SOCIETY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: Adamantine, 1997, 224pp, pbk, £14.50. "This book is about chaos. And complexity. Together they spell 'chaotics'". Part I is on the conceptual and scientific effects of chaotics. Part II on the principles of a new economics and Part III on how to handle the challenge of the coming decades - massive unemployment, underdevelopment for the majority world, environmental destruction and our crisis of identity. Very interesting, but not easy for readers who aren't mathematically and scientifically literate. Even for readers who are, will it provide a convincing basis for the proposals in Part III? We're not sure.

M.W. Thring: THE ENGINEER'S CONSCIENCE: 1980 (reprinted 1992), 240pp, pbk, details from the author (Bell Farm, Brundish, Suffolk IP13 8BL). The question which should face every engineer is "How can the good consequences of the Industrial Revolution be extended to the whole of humanity, and how can its bad consequences be remedied or avoided?". This book describes the way forward; the role of the engineer in such fields as fuel and power, transport and communication, food, medical engineering, and employment; and engineers' responsibility to rely on their own conscience when choosing the course of their careers. A good present to give to a budding engineer.

William Graham-Smith: CREATIVE LEAPS SHAPE THE WORLD: THE HISTORY OF THE FUTURE: Jon Carpenter, 1997, 224pp, pbk, £14.99. 15 chapters survey changes in the essential nature of things since the original Big Bang. The 16th lists new types of system emerging during this evolutionary process, starting with Hydrogen Atoms and leading to The Present World. Chapter 17 suggests four scenarios for the next 50 years, ranging from “Early Reorganisation” to “All Human Life is Destroyed”, and concludes that our future in the Universe depends on whether we can now bring about a new creative leap.

PEOPLE'S EMPOWERMENT: GRASSROOTS EXPERIENCES IN AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA: IRED Nord, 1997, 402pp, pbk, details from **Maria Teresa Cobelli** (IRED Nord, Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II, 31, 00185 Rome, Italy). Six informative case studies of People's Organisations in India, Senegal, Ecuador, Brazil and Peru, and an introductory overview of the concept of empowerment by Christina Liamzon from the Philippines, contribute to the global dialogue on social transformation between people's movements and intellectuals.

Simon Zadek et al (eds): BUILDING CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY: Earthscan, 1997, 239pp, pbk, £15.95. This book discusses emerging practices and possible future developments in social and ethical accounting, auditing and reporting (SEAR), and provides case studies of contemporary initiatives in Denmark, Britain, USA, Norway, Italy and Canada. It is for managers, stakeholders in organisations of all kinds, and students and researchers.

Sue Stickland: HERITAGE VEGETABLES: THE GARDENER'S GUIDE TO CULTIVATING DIVERSITY: Gaia Books, 1998, 191pp, pbk, £14.99. The five chapters in Part One of this beautiful book are on “Variety: the Essence of Life”. They deal with our vegetable heritage, the importance of diversity, pressures for uniformity, positive growth, and saving the seed. Part Two contains a Directory of Heritage Vegetables. It includes crop-by-crop descriptions of each vegetable in its historical context; gives information about its cultivation; and provides international lists of seed suppliers and organisations (including the Henry Doubleday Heritage Seed Library) concerned with genetic conservation. [We were pleased to see the Crimson Flowered Broad Bean given a good write-up. We've been growing it here for the last few years!]

Michael Sclater: IF YOU COME TO US BRING MUSIC: THE STORY OF THE WORLD'S MOST SUCCESSFUL COMPANY IN 2005: Self-published (8 Malthouse Passage, London SW13 0AQ), 1997, 57pp, pbk, £8. A readable and thought-provoking story about the psychological and spiritual (and practical and profitable) transformation of a business and the people involved with it, and its impact on the wider business community.

In his 50pp 1997 paperback **MONEY OR YOUR LIFE**, **E.C. Hamlyn** (Rutt House, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0DQ) explains why we should restore to the Government the sole right to issue new money into circulation. “It will become difficult to believe that we ever tolerated the existing monetary system”.

COMMUNITIES - CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES

In **A COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE AND PLACE** (1997, 45pp, £7 from NEF - see page 14) **Pat Conaty and Ed Mayo** put forward proposals: (1) to extend the powers of British credit unions to offer new services, (2) to create a new type of Community Development Credit Union which accepts an explicit social purpose, and (3) to set up a National Development Fund for Credit Unions. **TAKING POWER: AN AGENDA FOR COMMUNITY ECONOMIC RENEWAL** (1997, 21pp, £7 from NEF), written by **Ed Mayo, Stephen Thake and Tony Gibson** for the Neighbourhood Thinktank, proposes a new policy framework and a community regeneration budget.

COMMUNITIES ONLINE, a new government-backed three-year campaign to support local projects including electronic villages, digital cities, community networks and resource centres, will be launched in March 1998. Details from UK Communities Online (c/o Aston Community Involvement Unit, Durning Hall, Forest Gate, London E7 9AB; **David Wilcox**; e-mail: <david@communities.org.uk>).

The new **NETWORK FOR LONDON** will be launched at a Gathering for Change on 4th April. Details from **John Jopling** (London 21, 7 Chamberlain Street, London NW1 8XB; e-mail: <slt@gn.apc.org>). The Network's map looks like the London Underground, but its 80-odd stations include Fair Trade, Gift Economy, Credit Unions, Pedal Power and Community Talent, on lines that include Well-Being and How We Are Governed.

Hockerton Housing Project (**Nick White**, 2 Mystery Hill, Gables Drive, Hockerton, Newark, Notts NG25 0QU; e-mail: <nwhite@fatmac.demon.co.uk> is developing five earth-sheltered houses on a 25-acre site as a model of sustainable living for the 21st century - renewable energy, organic food growing, water from sources on site, and a reed-bed sewerage system.

1998 WORLD HABITAT AWARDS: Call for Entries. Details from **Diane Diacon** (Building and Social Housing Foundation, Memorial Square, Coalville, Leics LE67 3TU; e-mail: <100567.3433@compuserve.com>). Preliminary submissions must reach her by 1st July. Projects are sought, in developed and developing countries, which offer sustainable futures to residents and practical and imaginative solutions to current housing problems. Each year two Award-winners receive £10,000. **HOUSING, SELF-HELP AND CO-OPERATION** (£5) is the report of a BSHF Consultation at St. George's House, Windsor in June 1997 (in which Alison took part). Chapters include "An Agenda for Action", "Social Housing and Dependency", "Self-Help and Co-operation in Housing", and "An Enabling Role for Government". **SLUM NETWORKING** - 82pp report, 1997, £10 from BSHF - describes an innovative city-wide, community-based sanitation and environmental improvement programme, being successfully implemented in a number of Indian cities.

SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN

John Davis (4 Streche Road, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1NF) has been in discussions with his fellow professional engineers on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change (see CLIMATE CHANGE - A BRIEFING NOTE, July 1997, Royal Academy of Engineering, 29 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3LW). His paper ECO-EFFICIENT TECHNOLOGY for the 1997 international symposium of the US and British Institutions of Electrical Engineering identified ten guidelines for sustainable development and seven items of eco-efficiency. (Also, Swanage Family Housing Association's success helped to encourage Triodos to set up their Just Housing savings scheme - see page 7.)

Acid News, December 1997 (Swedish NGO Secretariat on Acid Rain, Box 7005, S-402 31 Goteborg, Sweden) reports that hundreds of small decentralised units for combined generation of heat and power, privately owned and selling electricity into the national grid, are already operating in Denmark. "It is difficult to see how conventional large-scale power technology will be able to compete in future with mass-produced small-scale units using gas. There appears to be nothing less than a new energy revolution ahead of us".

ELECTRIC FUTURES: POINTERS AND POSSIBILITIES. **Walt Patterson** (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 10 St. James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE; e-mail: <waltpatterns@gn.apc.org>) has put five Working Papers on "International Futures", "Liberal Futures", "Decentralised Futures", "Network Futures", and "Business Futures" on website <www.riia.org/eepwp.html>. He welcomes reactions and comment, as input to his forthcoming book *Transforming Electricity*.

"The investment, profit and job opportunities presented by the need to convert the global economy to solar power, supporting the survival of civilised life on Earth, dwarfs everything that has flowed from war and post-war prosperity since the advent of capitalism itself" - **Paul Rothkrug**, co-chair, Environmental Rescue Fund (1998 Broadway, Suite 806, San Francisco, CA 94109, USA) in his presentation on "The Coming of the Solar Economy: From Entropy to Renewal" to the Ninth International Conference of the Society for Human Ecology in October 1997.

EcoDesign, Vol.V, No.2, 1997 (£3 from Ecological Design Association, British School, Slad Road, Stroud, Glos GL5 1QW) is on Eco-Housing. It includes articles on "Cities: Compact Communities for Sustainability", "Claiming Back the Countryside", "Low Impact Autonomous Housing" and "Towards Sustainable Architecture".

The INDIA DEVELOPMENT GROUP, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and founded by E. F. Schumacher, promotes sustainable and people-centred rural development, based on appropriate technologies. Project Profile and other information from **Surur Hoda** (68 Downlands Road, Purley, Surrey CR8 4JF).

PEOPLE AND PROJECTS

Sara Murphy (New Economics Foundation, 1st Floor, Vine Court, 112-116 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1JE; e-mail: <neweconomics@gn.apc.org>) is organising the People's Summit in Birmingham on **15-17 May**. (As two of TOES founders in 1984, we are sad that the name TOES - The Other Economic Summit - is being dropped, but we understand why.)

11 July. Fred Blum Memorial Day. The Swiss-based KAPP FOUNDATION - with **Kurt Dopfer, Johan Galtung, Herman Graf Hatzfeldt, Christian Leipert, Rolf Steppacher, and John Ullman** - will discuss Alternatives In Economics that take seriously psychological, social, ecological and ethical needs. Details from THE ABBEY, Sutton Courtenay, Oxon OX14 4AF.

VISIONS OF A NEW RENAISSANCE. Manchester Schumacher Lectures, **25th April** 2.00 - 5.30pm; speakers Charles Secrett and Geoff Mulgan. Evening lectures 8.00 - 9.30pm; **18th March**, Walter & Dorothy Schwarz; **27th May**, Herbert Girardet. All lectures (organised by the Knutsford Lectures Association) are at Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, central Manchester. Details from **Chris Lyons** (Farway, Wilderswood, Horwich, Bolton BL6 7ET).

OCEES (see page 2) is holding a second series of 'Simplicity Circles' for people to share their ideas and experience on less consumption-orientated lifestyles.

Oxford University **THIRD WORLD FIRST's** (**Ella Heeks**, New College, Oxford OX1 3BN; e-mail: elinor.heeks@new.oxford.ac.uk) "Don't Look Away Day" on **9 May** will be on environmental sustainability and social justice, humanitarian aid, feminist perspectives, alternative media, VSO and non-violent direct action.

Details from **Alan Heeks** (Well House, 13 St Thomas Street, Winchester, Hants SO23 9HE) about a post of part-time director for the Wessex Foundation's Magdalen Farm Centre - 35-bed residential programme centre and 130-acre organic farm - on the Somerset/Dorset border.

Russell Bishop is the new (first) administrator of SANE (South African New Economics Network, PO Box 53057, Kenilworth 7745 Cape Town, South Africa; e-mail: <sane@iafrica.com>). Recent newsletters and e-mail-based forum include discussion of taxes, debt relief and financial market reform.

THE CORNER HOUSE (PO Box 3137, Station Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1YJ; e-mail: <cornerhouse@gn.apc.org>; **Nicholas Hildyard** and colleagues) is the new NGO set up by the former editors of *The Ecologist*. It supports a democratic, equitable and non-discriminatory civil society in which communities control the resources and decisions that affect their lives and means of livelihood. Its useful series of 12pp Briefings include "No Patents on Life!" (September 1997), "Nuclear Legacy: Democracy in a Plutonium Economy" (November 1997), and "Climate and Equity After Kyoto" (December 1997).

Why do environmental NGOs persistently refuse to recognise and campaign on population issues? **Val Stevens** (Shepshed Fields Farm, Rempstone Road, Belton, Loughborough, Leics LE12 9XA) has carried out a survey of their attitudes. "Population, Environment and Development: Seeking Common Ground" costs £1.25 inc p&p from ECO (Campaign for Political Ecology, Marsh Cottage, Wanborough, Wilts SN4 0AR).

Each quarterly issue of *World Review* (UK price £3.95 per issue, £15 pa; 14-16 Carroun Road, London SW8 1JT; **John Coleman**) contains short accounts by the authors of 12 recent books chosen by the editors, to "give a morsel of the author's offering and maybe whet the appetite for more". An excellent service.

Rights imply responsibilities. **Richard Bryant-Jefferies'** (e-mail: <udhr@hartcentre.demon.co.uk>) draft Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities is on his website <www.hartcentre.demon.co.uk>. He welcomes comments and suggestions for taking this forward.

ANTIDOTE (13 Streatley Road, London NW6 7LJ; e-mail: <antidote@geo2.poptel.org.uk>; **James Park**) is setting up an Emotional Education Forum. Background is in their 40pp report "Realising The Potential: Emotional Education for All" (1997). **CAVE** (Centre for Alleviating Social Problems through Values Education, 85 Argyll Place, Aberdeen AB25 2HU; **Bill Robb**) sees changing people's demands as the key to social change.

"Because technicians, businessmen and engineers don't typically get a holistic education, the scientific discoveries and technologies of today have caused much social, moral and environmental destruction". **Dr Vladimir Kabakov** (Rostovskaya nab 3-144, 119121 Moscow, Russia), an engineer in non-polluting energy, welcomes the transformational power of music for business - to create an ecologically clean atmosphere for people's minds and souls.

ECHO is the bilingual English/French quarterly newsletter of AAWORD (Association of African Women for Research and Development, Villa 4050, Amitie II Dakar, PO Box 15367, Dakar - Fann - Senegal; e-mail: <aaword@telecomplus.sn>). Articles in the special 20th Anniversary issue, December 1997, include "Women and the New Debt Relief Initiative".

CADUCEUS (38 Russell Terrace, Leamington Spa, Warwicks CV31 1HE; editor: **Sarida Brown**; e-mail: <caduceus@oryx.demon.co.uk>) Issue 38, winter 1997/8, on "Inspiring the Future - Visions for the Millennium", includes **Willis Harman's** and **Tom Hurley's** "A Chronicle of Transformation Dated 2050", and a resource guide of organisations creating a positive, sustainable future.

Kathleen Jannaway's readable 20pp booklet, **A NEW WORLD ORDER** of Self-Reliant, Tree-Based, Autonomous, Vegan Villages, inspired by Gandhi and Richard St Barbe-Baker, costs £1 from Movement for Compassionate Living (47 Highlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8NQ).

ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY

James's Briefing on "The New Economics of Sustainable Development" for the European Commission is at <www.the-commons.org/tp2000>.

Are governments subsidising ecologically harmful activities worldwide to the tune of US\$500 billion or \$1500 billion a year? "Global Guide to the Subsidies Jungle", *Wuppertal Bulletin of Ecological Tax Reform*, Summer 1997, Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy (PO Box 10 04 08, D-42004 Wuppertal, Germany), suggests \$500 billion. A forthcoming book-length study by **Norman Myers** (Upper Meadow, Old Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 8SZ; e-mail: <normanmyers@gn.apc.org>) suggests \$1500 billion. Either way, the polluter clearly doesn't pay, but gets paid.

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC WELFARE IN THE UK, 1950-1996 (February 1998, 42pp, £12 from NEF - see page 14) by **Tim Jackson**, **Nic Marks** and colleagues at the Centre for Environmental Strategy, Surrey University (Guildford GU2 5XH) presents an updated Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW) for the UK which shows that between 1976 and 1996 sustainable economic welfare declined by 25% although conventional economic growth (GDP) rose by 44%.

Tim Cooper's new Centre for Sustainable Consumption (School of Leisure and Food Management, Sheffield Hallam University, Pond Street, Sheffield S1 1WB; e-mail: <t.h.cooper@shu.ac.uk>) is being launched this spring. It will involve specialists in design, consumer behaviour, food, economics, energy, tourism and environmental management.

URBED's (Urban & Economic Development Group, 19 Store Street, London WC1E 7DH; e-mail: <urbed@urbed.co.uk>; **Nicholas Falk**) Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood (SUN) project is collecting best practice on urban development which is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, and is offering new models for urban development to rival the attractions of the suburbs. The 4th issue of their journal *SUN Dial* is on Model Neighbourhoods.

DOUBLE YIELD: JOBS AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION, September 1997, by **Vicki Hird** (SAFE Alliance, 38 Ebury Street, London SW1W 0LU; e-mail: <safe@gn.apc.org>) recommends reform of the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to support labour- and skill-based farming, and an integrated Sustainable Food Policy for the UK worked out interdepartmentally by Agriculture and Food; Employment and Education; Treasury; Trade and Industry; Environment, Transport and Regions; and Culture, Media and Sport.

Dartington Hall Easter Conference, **15-19 April 1998**, is on LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING: VISION AND ACTION FOR THE NEXT CENTURY. Speakers include **Mark Edwards**, **David Hicks**, **Sara Parkin** and **Sir Crispin Tickell**. Details from **Lyn Brown** (Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EL; e-mail: <dart.hall.prog@dartingtonhall.org.uk>).