

Chapter 9

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Building an Alternative World confronts every concerned member of world society with a tremendous, stimulating challenge, which must be accepted if mankind is to both survive and prosper. If any, or all, of the proposals put forward below appear at first to be impossibly difficult of achievement, it must be remembered that perceptions at present are, not unnaturally, blurred by the all-pervasive false values of today's money culture. It is unthinkable that such a shallow, demeaning culture can survive indefinitely, when such an enormous untapped reservoir of socially-conscious citizens exists world-wide, who need, and deserve, a vastly better way of life. Essential, fundamental changes in world society can and must be brought about by publicising their potential worth, and thus enthusing men and women of goodwill everywhere. Their innumerable, diverse abilities could then be harnessed to achieve the needed changes, by powerful collective action. This would be non-violent, because the abandonment of all weapons is one of the cornerstones of Alternative World. At the same time, it could be brought home to many of the elites of today that they too could look forward to vastly more settled lives in an alternative world, through involvement in genuinely constructive activities, rather than their often spurious and uncertain ones as at present.

Need for global change

Fundamental social change is undeniably a formidable task on the scale of a continent, or even one country, but to succeed, Alternative World would need to comprise what its name implies: global change. The 20th century has taught us that individual attempts to effect serious political changes, on both large and small scales, have been all but strangled by the remaining capitalist world, and no doubt would be again. Apart from that negative reason, the positive case for global change is that Alternative World could only function properly, for the maximum benefit of mankind, if every important activity were planned and co-ordinated in a global context. The proposals made below are intended to be applicable to any part of the world. Man's essential physical needs in life are broadly similar everywhere; once these are taken care of, then true local cultural diversity in many forms can flourish - for the benefit of all.

Human equality

The first basic principle of Alternative World is that, world-wide, all men and women are born equal and, lifelong, remain equal in potential for using their abilities to the full, regardless of race, language, culture, religion, ancestry or any other allegedly special factor. One of the greatest advantages of abandoning money is that its possession, or lack of it, constantly undermines human equality and exacerbates differences. Freedom from the money system would enable all individuals to maximise their abilities, and thus lead full and rewarding lives. In particular, freedom from the hampering monetarist excuses of 'lack of funds' would enable societies to provide innumerable worthwhile jobs, meeting a vast range of badly needed requirements.

World scale planning

Whenever the will of the concerned majority prevailed, global agreement to introduce Alternative World arrangements would be signalled, in particular, by setting a date when all money would be abandoned, all weapons destroyed, and new societal organisations adopted (as in Chapter 10). At that stage, representatives from all regions should convene to draft the first global master plan, for the optimum locations of the

world's agricultural and industrial production activities in the light of access to resources, distribution networks and other relevant factors. This preliminary, strategic plan would take account especially of the anomalous disparities between the original 'First and Third Worlds' - terms which henceforth would be consigned to history.

Levelling-up

In the light of the strategic plan, significant transfers of resources, including, for example, complete production plants, should be made from 'North' to 'South', so that, at the appointed date, Alternative World could commence on a more even footing than exists today. Clearly it could not be fully even: achieving a truly balanced spread of production facilities world-wide would inevitably take time. A particularly significant, automatic outcome of the abandonment of money is that the terrible scourge of Third World debts would be eliminated forever.

Sharing world resources

The world's most precious resource resides in the mental and physical potential of all its human inhabitants. With the advent of Alternative World, this resource would soon be augmented to the extent of at least 1 billion people, hitherto incapacitated by malnutrition. Further, it would also be added to forthwith, by the hand and brain power of at least 100 million able-bodied men and women, who would be released from both armed services with their support industries, and from all the various financial institutions. The latter, too, would see the freeing of vast numbers of valuable ex-armament production facilities, together with barracks, banks and a host of other commercial buildings for conversion, so far as possible, to dwellings or other useful purposes. The world's existing natural resources are amply sufficient to provide for full lives for all humanity, provided only that they are properly cared for and fairly distributed.

The second basic principle of Alternative World, therefore, is that the entire surface of the globe, land or sea, with everything under or upon it, natural or man-made, belongs jointly to every world citizen. This joint ownership would unite whole populations, both locally and more widely, with the common purpose of conserving and improving their entire environments in the most ecologically sustainable ways. The concept of sharing would be basic to the successful emergence of immeasurably healthier societies, whose citizens could forget enmities, jealousies and the like, and instead progress together towards the natural goal of continuing enhancement of their lives and communities.

Individual rights from society

The third basic principle of Alternative World is that every man, woman and child, fit or disabled, throughout their lifetimes, should receive as of right, from society as a whole, the basic essentials necessary for healthy and fruitful lives.

These should include as a minimum: appropriate accommodation in sound and sanitary buildings, balanced diets with adequate calories, basic clothing and footwear, full health care, all appropriate education and training, and the various other ingredients of really fulfilled existences, as set out in more detail in Chapter 11.

Individual obligations to society

The fourth basic principle of Alternative World, a corollary of the third, is that, after receiving adequate education and training, everyone up to an agreed age should contribute to society a certain agreed amount of work. Without the constraints of the money system, the whole work/leisure culture could be far more flexible, granted

steady production and distribution of all the requirements of life in each region.

Again, an important factor would be the fair sharing of both the more arduous and the more interesting occupations, as discussed further in Chapter 12. A further obligation would be that every individual, from time to time, should contribute in appropriate ways to the organisation and smooth running of society, as outlined in the following Chapter.