

CHAPTER 5

Conflicts of Progress

What is in fact the meaning of progress?

The Webster dictionary defines it as "a moving forward". As such it **may** be a good thing; it may be an improvement — or it may be a bad thing such as the progress of a sickness.

Progress in itself is not necessarily good or bad. It is a **fallacy** to take it for granted that it **must** mean improvement. The value of progress, like the value of any other activity, depends on how it measures up to our aims and purposes. Our aim, which ought to serve as the validating purpose of any activity including progress, is happiness. We hope to achieve happiness through a development, a progress towards perfection: that is perfect knowledge, perfect satisfaction, perfect understanding.

As the STATE of satisfaction, which we call happiness, comes from BALANCED, AS OPPOSITE TO ONE-SIDED satisfaction, so unbalanced progress — over-specialisation — cannot create the STATE of happiness at which we aim.

Let us consider a dictionary. Is knowledge of all the information it contains possible? It is not. Whilst I should like to obtain all information about public affairs, advance in thought, science, economy etc., I know that it is impossible to absorb the daily newspapers, the weekly magazines, the trade journals and all the books I should like to absorb.

Our time, memory and storage capacity is limited and we are forced to raise the barrier of selectivity; we have to refuse to read, listen, do and learn things since it is impossible to do otherwise.

We realise that it is good to be able to do many things; it is good to know many things; but this is worthless unless it serves one paramount aim: the achievement of a state of satisfaction, of happiness.

We don't seem to realize and accept the same limitations concerning the magic of progress.

We appear to have succumbed to the maniac, senseless idolising and blind following of **any** kind of progress — anything which is a new development — and so we are in the process of losing our control over the tools, the machines, the developments and the conditions which are created without

critical examination and measurement against our aims .

I want to refer to some aspects of indiscriminate progress which create significant problems requiring adjustment.

PROGRESS FOR PROGRESS' SAKE — motion, activity, rushing to "get ahead"; competitive success in **any** activity; winning for winning's sake; "if something is worth doing, it is worth doing well", getting ahead as a proof of one's worth and of sheer existence as the opposite to stagnation — which is equalled with death — appears to be the curse of our age.

There is a similar corollary accepted by the business world which says that society must keep on increasing consumption indiscriminately — just to keep the economy going. The misconception is that motion, advance, progress lead to increased satisfaction and automatically to greater happiness.

ARE INDISCRIMINATE PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT VALUABLE?

Because of the co-existence of a number of parallel ambitions — as represented by achievement in business, in science, in professions, in material comforts, in religious devotion, in art, in sport etc. — and the lack of a final system of priorities which would clearly give a scale of importance to achievements in these various fields, there is a common assumption that achieving **ANY** aims in any field of activity is a step towards the final aim of man.

EXCELLENCE is a very commendable aspiration but it is **not an aim in itself.**

One of the simplest and primary activities is fighting.

If fighting is an aim in itself, then of course excelling — being the most successful fighter — is a most desirable aim.

This aim is the incentive behind men who are capable of excelling in cruelty, torture, bestiality, trickery and creating the maximum fear in adversaries.

Obviously this kind of excellence is not the aim of human happiness or what we generally like to call "progress". Consequently excellence in various fields may be an aid towards achieving some overall aim but **one-sided excellence and progress** — at the cost of abandonment, exclusion or subordination of basic targets — **is misleading us**, sidetracking us into neglecting our paramount aims by cultivating excellence for its own sake in a variety of fields such as fighting, industrial production, sport or space exploration.

COMFORTS — THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY — EUPHORIA

ACHIEVEMENTS and their resulting "progress" are one way of "self-justification" of the individual, of organisations, of nations and other communities.

We all have the urge, the need or even craving to know and prove our importance and our value — from the child who wants his parents or anyone available to "watch him", "watch him", "watch him" . . . to any adult who uses such "status symbols" as a large car or being a member of the "Social Register" or who wears the insignia of rank of an army, a church or other organisation as a proof of importance.

In a more impersonal society — such as our mass-living industrial, cosmopolitan societies are — people are not known as widely for who and what they are as they were in the more closely knit communities of the past.

Furthermore values and status are much more fluid nowadays than they used to be. The leading business man of today, the leading politician, even the leading scientist is subject to continuous, meticulous competition. Processes, theories, even facts become outdated with devastating speed. Authority of every kind is under constant attack to such an extent that authority has in fact become suspect and open to the most irreverent criticism.

The knowledge, ability and relevancy of parents, teachers, business leaders, religious and political authorities and the usefulness of their opinions are under everyday attack, which results in frequent victories for new points of view. Defeated values and the self-importance of the men who represent them accordingly collapse.

Under these circumstances it is understandable that many individuals — especially those who have inferiority complexes, those who are insecure and who rely on the judgment of their peers to satisfy their need of self-importance — grasp the least opportunity to prove their importance, their value.

Just like the child who cries and throws a tantrum if he cannot win all games, these insecure adults charge in for an argument, a contest, a competition — and they must have the last word; they must build up insignificant achievements into great conquests and must boast about the importance of any activity and progress made by them.

We all know the "know-all" who use every likely and

unlikely occasion to display their superior knowledge of every subject under the sun and who will disclaim the reliability of any text-book or encyclopaedia which expresses opposition. We know the aggressive "show-off" who initiates arguments at the drop of a hat and proves that his actions, possessions, friends and family are the most effective, the most valuable and the greatest — whether this refers to how many miles per gallon he gets from his car; how clever his investments, his betting or his politics are; or how noble, rich or old was his ancestry.

Achievement and progress, which in some sense used to have an automatic connotation with value (this is objective value as measured against some set of standards) have become perverted into a "justification" of "self-importance" which is more and more necessary for the individual in a confused mass society to counteract his feelings of insecurity and helpless lack of importance.

Since achievement and progress of some kind are available to everyone, each person will obviously choose such fields of activity to prove his value as present him with the least difficulty. In compensation for the lack of financial success a man will become a collector of stamps; in compensation for the lack of scientific acknowledgment another man will find satisfaction in politics; in compensation for marital bliss a man will become a famous card-player.

The achievement and progress of our communities are often caused and valued by the one-sided satisfaction they offer in compensation for true (that is objectively valuable) achievement, as measured against a balance set of standards.

Labour-saving devices are important; they save time and can prolong life but the consequent saving in exercise creates the need for some other physical activity for health's sake — otherwise the balance is upset and the gains of progress promote a health deficiency.

The contemporary significance and validity of achievement and progress is in the subjective feeling of satisfaction and excellence in any given field of activity (which may be a sausage-eating world-championship) where the term of reference (the standard of measurement) is a comparison with other practitioners of the same activity, whatever that may be.

These achievements and progress are not related to any extraneous, objective and philosophical standard of measure; neither is the consequent harm from over exertion (or bilious attacks) taken into consideration.

The saying that "anything worth doing is worth doing well" is an illustration of this attitude.

It infers that all activities are of the same importance.

This idea of giving equal importance to all activities may be an excellent therapeutical method to relieve psychopathic tensions as it is practised in occupational therapy. Any kind of achievement (meaningful or not), progress and activity itself — related to the community of other busily rushing people — can often provide a compensatory satisfaction in place of the truly valuable satisfaction which is not attainable.

Our psychologically enlightened communities and educational religious, welfare and political systems have widely used the methods of compensatory satisfaction (occupational therapy) for the relief of frustration, for the achievement of consensus and for the general management of society.

This is one of the reasons why we often confuse indiscriminate progress with real value. This is why we consider any kind of achievement desirable. And this is why progress in itself cannot create happiness.

THE ASSUMPTION THAT ACHIEVEMENT OF ANY KIND — improvements in any field — PROGRESS IN ITSELF — IS BOUND TO TAKE US CLOSER TO OUR FINAL AIM is of course not true.

Trivial achievements may provide us with training for the achievement of important things in life; they may be compensations for the true satisfactions which are hard to attain or which may even be beyond the reach of the individual.

Progress and such achievements do provide comfort; they make life bearable and enjoyable with such compensatory satisfaction. Similarly anaesthesia, the drinking of alcohol, the taking of opiates, hallucinations — whether induced by drugs or religious fervour — do provide the same kind of euphoria.

These are most valuable helps for man to survive hardship, to stimulate his strength, to overcome difficulties (both physical and mental) and to persevere until better times.

The comforts offered by indiscriminate progress, material satisfaction and euphoric compensatory achievement are similar.

The Modern Threats of "Indiscriminate Progress"

Happiness, that elusive, common purpose of all activities may be quite different to each individual — but it can still be illustrated in a simple equation:

SATISFACTIONS

$$\frac{\text{NEEDS (= of fulfilment and of relief from suffering)}}{\text{SATISFACTIONS}} = 1$$

In other words — when our needs are satisfied we are happy.

Since our "needs" are different and since their intensity changes, their urgency and importance vary greatly. Because of the urgency and pressure of some needs (food, drink, comforts, sex, entertainment, social status, material possessions, dissatisfactions, suffering etc.) we respond with concentrated action to satisfy our most pressing needs.

The more effective and concentrated our action is to satisfy specific needs, the more we neglect our other inherent — but less pressing — needs. The result is "unbalanced satisfaction" and not the originally hoped for happiness.

Over-indulgence — "the seven deadly sins" — was the great danger of men of all ages. All experience, moral systems, religions and common sense warn us against indiscriminate, one-sided satisfactions.

The results of such foolish behaviour can be shown fairly simply: the drunk and the miser come quickly to suffer the ill-effects of their indiscriminate, though efficient, actions in over-satisfying some of their needs at the cost of neglecting some other vital needs.

In our modern, technological age our needs are much more complex. The possibilities of achievement and progress are so vast, exhilarating and rewarding that the successful man is blinded by his satisfaction while the less successful is dulled by his comforts and entertainments so that he does not realise how unbalanced and indiscriminate are the fruits of material gain.

The other great problem of technological progress is the fact that its complexity and its speed of development hide much of the danger, much of the harmful side- and after-effects, which are easily noticeable in simpler forms of over-indulgence such as over-eating.

Although there were always opponents to progress, technology has proved for a long time during the 19th and 20th centuries that it could cope with the problems which it has created. The man who had to carry warning flags and bells in front of the locomotive and the motor car has been laughed out of existence.

However the ever-increasing speed of technological progress in the second half of our century forces society into increasing subservience. It leaves less and less time and energy to satisfy non-technological needs and it exacts an increasingly higher cost to maintain living standards which we have come to accept as essential. Furthermore it threatens with exhaustion both humanity and the natural resources and conditions necessary for survival.

EXHAUSTION OF RESOURCES

As the population is growing in an unprecedented manner, so the basic requirement of food is growing — without a proportionate increase of food and especially drinking water resources.

Some hopeful agriculturists believe that extensive cultivation may increase food production in both land and sea farming. However even this possibility envisages that man will have to work more and more to obtain a gradually shrinking quantity of supplies.

As a greater proportion of the world population comes to live in industrialised communities, mass-production of an ever-increasing variety of goods becomes possible. It is predicted however, that the known and estimated raw material resources such as iron, coal, petroleum, copper, bauxite etc. will become exhausted within a few hundred years.

We may, at the present, dismiss these problems with the famous saying of Sir Robert Menzies: "This won't happen in my days" and we can hope that some new miracle will be produced by technology to stop the absolute exhaustion of sources of energy and raw materials before humanity is reduced to the life of an anthill.

We cannot, however, hide the fact that the wonders of technological development and our increasing living standards are bringing with them unexpected, dangerous side effects.

THREATS TO HEALTH, SAFETY, SECURITY

One group of these dangers threatens our physical health and safety; another group undermines our mental health; a third group endangers public safety and security, law and order, the survival of a peaceful society.

Our health is threatened by the harmful side effects of medicines, insecticides, detergents, conservatives, highly refined food products, industrial waste, exhaust fumes, fat-containing foods, high-calorie foods, smoking, alcohol, pollution, effluents and the ever-increasing injuries from road, industrial and other accidents.

Our mental health is undermined by ever-increasing and often conflicting demands and obligations imposed on the individual by society, his family and his own expectations of achievement.

Societies all over the world find it more and more difficult to supply all the services which increasing populations, congregating in overflowing cities, require of them. In fact mayors of the largest cities in the U.S. (New York, Boston, Detroit etc.) have recently been discussing the threatened **urban bankruptcy** of their cities. They cannot cope with the huge influx of low-income people who cannot contribute to the communal revenue and at the same time must be provided with health, educational, housing and other community services. In New York one out of every seven people is supported by the taxpayers; in Boston one out of every five. To meet this drain the cities have been forced to increase their taxes. This has had the effect of accelerating the flight of the middle class and is beginning to force industry to relocate in less heavily taxed areas.

The public utilities — firebrigades, police services etc. — are already hardly able to cope but the continuously increasing costs threaten the reduction of existing services. No wonder that it is not advisable to walk the streets of New York at night.

"This may be the first tangible sign of the collapse of our civilisation," comments the Manager of Boston City.

The Paradox of "Work-saving Devices" and the "Rat-race"

Progress is claimed to have given us, through work-saving devices, more leisure. In fact progress brings everywhere an increasing tempo of activity, speed, rush, new stresses and tensions and less actual rest and leisure.

The leisurely ways of life of pre-industrialisation disappear everywhere once progress has arrived — from tropical, native, aboriginal communities to the opal fields of Andamooka.

A reporter for the R.A.C.V. tourist guide makes the following comment on the once sleepy little opal town: "In the past few years (1971) the pace of digging has intensified. Instead of working a simple pick and shovel and hand windlass, miners are using air-compressors and power-operated winches."

"To make this and other machinery pay, the miners are working it long, steady hours. The easy-going approach of earlier mining days is disappearing."

The odd thing is that we, the progressive types, of our species, dream of going to rest in "underdeveloped" areas. It is odd that when we think of rest we talk in terms of "getting away from it all" instead of partaking in the civilised, but activity-full, high-pressure "leisure activities".

Whilst progress creates a great number of satisfactions called a "high living-standard", it also creates a heap of necessary though unwanted activities, machines, organisations and conditions required to maintain and to service this new complex way of life.

It appears that the new comforts created and the energies released by the products of modern progress do not greatly increase the state of happiness but are dissipated in the efforts required to service and mitigate the side effects.

Such urgent and pressing requirements are the need of servicing, maintaining and replacing machines, homes and ourselves. The increasing complexity of machinery, of supply systems (such as water, electricity etc.) and the increasing distances and dispersal of families and friends increase the cost and effort required to maintain and service both human relationships and material facilities. The increasing complexity of needs and obligations which we accept as inevitable corollaries of progress result in heavy physical and mental burdens. These in turn necessitate increased efforts for the healing, soothing, adjusting and compensating of both the individuals and the community as a whole for the modern tensions and

stresses. This rush of activity leads to a new kind of mental fatigue besides the increasing neurotic conditions, emotional and psychosomatic sicknesses.

"Buying" Free Time

The Swedish Economics Professor, Staffan Linder, devotes a whole book to this problem ("The Harried Leisure Class"). He sees that members of affluent classes are overwhelmed by the huge variety of goods, services and leisure activities. He says that the consumer becomes the slave of the possessions and services which compete on the market. People who are talked into buying more and more things are becoming "pleasure blind"; they can no longer evaluate what is worth having and what is useless to them and even a drag.

He points out that "one may buy more of everything but **one cannot do more of everything**".

One of the most amazing facts of our times is that we do not realize that one of the most precious commodities is time. Time, which cannot be increased or produced in larger quantities.

We are willing to spend fortunes on goods and services but we do not understand that we must "buy" our free time. We cannot "buy" our time with money but only by curtailing some of our working ("money-making"), maintenance (gardening etc.), or "leisure" activities.

What is good for the Consumer?

The increasing variety of the goods and services offered to modern man increases the complexity of the choices he has to make. Even his priorities become confused under the pressures of advertising and according to the tastes, habits and "status symbols" of his community.

What are the true measuring sticks? Should the parents work themselves to the grave, or to the divorce court to pay for their children's education? Or will this only turn the kids into culture snobs who look down on their hard-working parents?

Which brand of motor-car, washing-machine and other gadgets ought one to own? And who can evaluate the true advantages or disadvantages of the myriads of products which the average person buys daily?

In our modern market societies there is a disparity in the ease with which commercial commodities, trivia and entertainment may be obtained compared to the difficulty or cost of obtaining good education, health services or security in old age.

Since the second world war we are becoming aware that our priorities in spending our money and efforts are confused and often wrong. We seem to be spending too much on unessential, even harmful consumption. We live in a make-believe dream world. We expect that our vital services such as education, hospitals, social security, public transport etc. will be provided cheaply and efficiently by "public services" for which we try to pay as little as possible. Then we proceed to squander light-heartedly the money saved from essential services on entertainment, flashy cars, TV, fashions and leisure.

The result is that we have poor education but every second family runs two cars in which most of the time only one passenger travels.

Progress and Poverty

Another unsatisfactory aspect of progress is the fact that under all contemporary social orders it increases the discrimination in the distribution of income.

This happens because all contemporary societies permit the existence of groups which enjoy exclusive advantages — monopolies. Such exclusive advantages are not restricted to capitalistic mixed societies but flourish as bureaucratic or class or party monopolies in so-called socialistic societies.

The greater the material progress in a society where there are exclusive privileges, the faster does the disparity grow between the favoured classes and the exploited ones.

So long as the benefits of exclusive privileges (monopolies) are permitted to remain with individuals, material progress is certain to increase social discontent irrespective of how much the living standards of even the poorest classes are raised.

In fact, the cure of the social problem is more urgently essential in a fast progressing, affluent society than the search for further material progress.

Tensions, Frustrations, Insecurity

We are bewildered to see that the fantastic advances of medical science do not reduce sickness and ill health. It is true

that medical knowledge has dramatically reduced child mortality, gained control over most epidemics, prolonged life expectancy and provided cures for many major historic sicknesses. On the other hand, the cure of historically serious illnesses has permitted other sicknesses and health hazards to come to the forefront.

The place of tuberculosis, diphtheria, scarlet fever and cholera has been taken over by cancer, heart and kidney diseases and we are now experiencing the increasing seriousness of a syndrome of anxiety conditions.

More and more attention is being paid to **the breaking down of the mental health in society**. The tensions of every-day life, the stresses associated with ever-increasing competitive efforts, the frustrations and maladjustments lead to new physical sicknesses such as peptic ulcers or compulsive obesity and to a variety of mental disorders.

There is also a behavioural response to the new stresses of life which induces a general desire to "escape" from the pressures of daily commitments and from the inevitable temporary feelings of frustration, insecurity and inability to cope. This drive for escape often takes the form of drug dependence, from comparatively harmless aspirins to alcoholism and hallucinatory "hard drugs".

Progress flourishes most in societies which ensure the greatest freedom for individual activities, which permit and provide limitless opportunities and which restrict and oppress the least.

Disciplinarian, dogmatic, moralistic communities will not tolerate innovations which are contrary to sanctified teachings, whether they are nebulous "oracles", "divine revelations", or dictatorial decrees.

In such "closed societies" progress is slow and, although the small number of dissenting, rebellious, innovating individuals is cruelly oppressed, the majority accepts its predestined situation without great mental anguish. The "Dark Ages" of Medieval Europe stifled invention, innovation, science and progress but they provided spiritual security and peace for the faithful.

In contrast, the very conditions of freedom, such as permissiveness, the absence of dogmatically dictated behaviour patterns and reverence for tradition, are directly causing states of anxiety and other breakdowns of the human mind.

Dr. E. Cunningham Dax, who was until recently Chairman of the Mental Health Authority, writes: "Anxiety occurs in a

society with indefinite limits and the more the permissiveness the more the likelihood that its members will be insecure and disturbed . . . Societies which are undergoing rapid change produce psychiatric disturbance because of the insecurity of their members and the inability to adjust."

Escapism, Suicide, Rebellion

People who are dissatisfied with the pressures, obsessions and conditions which progress brings attempt various adjustments.

One of the most popular ways of adjustment is the idea of escape: "getting away from it all".

There are many forms of "escape", the simplest being rest. Rest is an absolute necessity for everyone. It is basically an opportunity for the body to rid itself of the toxins which cause physical and mental tiredness. It is an activity to "refresh" or regenerate our organisms with new energy so that we may look at our tasks with a surge of confidence and the conviction that we can cope.

Another constructive form of escape is the renunciation of the glitter, the gadgets, the "city lights", comforts, entertainments, cultural facilities and higher incomes available in a hustling, bustling, competitive community. One can retire into a less competitive, less money-conscious community — even to a Greek island as did Charmian Clift and George Johnston.

This kind of escape provides satisfactory adjustment to people who can truly forego the advantages of stimulating company, material comforts and hygiene and who can cope with the demands of physical work which is necessary to make ends meet in a community with simple living standards and low expectations. It often happens, however, that the escape from physical, external conditions does not provide the hoped for adjustment in face of the dissatisfactions caused by the primitive, hard living conditions.

Although the pressures of civilisation appear to be external, in truth they originate more often from our innermost wishes and desires, our repressed resentments and frustrations caused by some lack of achievement. We resent the society which does not recognise and reward us and our activities according to our expectations. Often we also refuse to realise that our failure to succeed originates from attempting to achieve targets which are beyond our limitations.

The individual, indoctrinated to limitless expectation, feels caught if he is unable to accept his limitations and to adjust to the indifferent social position, income, living conditions and satisfactions which are obtainable by him.

This inability of modern man in progressive communities to live within his limitations produces a strong drive to escape from reality, consciousness, responsibility and even from life itself.

In response to this almost physical pain of dissatisfaction "consumerism" (which is the activity whereby the individual can assert his identity and value simply by going shopping, which provides him — and more often "her" — with social contact and entertainment while the purchase provides a temporary relief from a general feeling of dissatisfaction), alcoholism, drug addiction, "nervous breakdowns" and suicides are becoming prevalent.

The figures published by the World Health Organisation show that the most cultured and civilised countries in the world, i.e. Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland, have the highest suicide rate and, together with France and Finland, they have also a very high alcoholism rate.

Drug addiction cannot be related so directly to high living standards since it has been widely practised in very poor communities in Asia for hundreds of years. It is, however, a fact that drug addiction, as a form of escapism, spreads very rapidly amongst the young, dissatisfied groups of highly developed communities.

Another form of escapism is the "opting out" of society-imposed responsibilities by the so-called "drop-outs". Theoretically the adjustment which the "drop-out" makes when he withdraws from the competitive struggles of society to follow his self-imposed objectives is the best possible adjustment.

He achieves his escape from the rat-race, physically remaining within the community which provides stimulation, comforts, protection, public services and even pocket money — provided that he can accept a reasonably low level of material satisfaction.

There is one aspect of this form of escapism which causes conflicts with the body of the community. This conflict arises when those who opt out refuse their communal responsibilities and break the law (either on principle such as violent demonstrations etc. or because they consider themselves above the

law as in the case of the murders committed in California by the "family" of Charles Manson).

The same kind of conflict arises when the "drop-outs" insist that the community "owes them a living". Obviously the other members of the community resent the suggestion that they are obliged to provide services to people who refuse to accept the reciprocal responsibilities required by other members of the community.

Frustrations and resentment against the value structure of the acquisitive or dictatorial society, conflicts over the obligations and responsibilities of the individual (especially those concerning military conscription, which can be openly objected to only in the permissive freedom of western societies) — all combine to co-ordinate various conflicts into a vague movement of rebellion.

The Way Out: Reforms

(1) Slow down Progress — Live within our limitations.

The frustration and feeling of impotence suffered by the individual instigate the alienation of increasing numbers and lead to irresponsibility and violence which threaten order in society. There is a sense of having lost control over the direction of progress. There is a fear that progress threatens the destruction of humanity.

We have seen how **impossible** it is for us **to assimilate all desirable knowledge**; how **senseless** it is **to rush into any activity** in the blind hope that it must lead to happiness.

We see the **futility of continually improving** our living standards **at the cost of ever-increasing maintenance and nervous stress**. We have seen that, **without the elimination of exploitation**, progress only increases social discontent. We have seen that **indiscriminate achievement**, which may have **psychotherapeutic significance**, is **confused with real progress**. We have seen how scientific and technological **developments could destroy our environment** and conditions of **survival** and we have also seen how **improvement in products and services, if they are not subordinated to the requirements** of the satisfactions **of the consumers**, lead to danger.

We have seen how the increasing complexity, the increasing variety of choice and **our inability to make reasoned selections** cause psychopathic, **suicidal trends** in the "most advanced" communities.

It seems to me that there is a basic common factor in all of these problems of modern progress.

The **basic problem** and the common cause of the ever-increasing conflicts following progress **is the inability** of man, both as an individual and as a community, **to adapt to the SPEED OF THE CHANGE** of progress.

We are simply incapable of evaluating the consequences of progress because we can measure the value of a change only after its consequences have become known with all their ramifications.

IF IT IS SPEED which causes the troubles associated with modern progress and which makes us lose control — then **THE OBVIOUS SOLUTION IS TO SLOW DOWN** the tempo of progress.

Concentrate on the solution of existing problems — WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OF OUR PRESENT RATE OF ADAPTABILITY AND ABSORPTION. We must slow down to operate within our capabilities, or to the limits of our computers.

It may turn out that computerised robots will be the only mechanisms which are able to cope adequately with the rapid changes created by uncontrolled progress, and living organisms, as known today, may not be able to adapt at all.

For man, then, the aim must be to reduce the speed of progress to manageable proportions, that is within the limits of our ability of adaption to the new demands placed upon us.

Progress must not be accepted uncritically just because it is fashionable. Targets, achievements and possibilities must be individually evaluated and measured against the individual's standard of measure, which is **his** ideal of happiness.

When this measuring — this conscious evaluation — is given up in favour of conformity or for the senseless mania of progress for progress' sake, whether this conformity means the following of fashionable trends or a race in nuclear armaments — then progress has ceased to be a tool of man — **and we have lost the control over the machine.**

It may be that the speed and pressure of progress, will eliminate, by natural selection, those of our species who cannot adapt to these stresses and strains and **that a race of stress-resistant superhumans will develop.**

They would, however, still need the ability to maintain control over the ever faster changes created by computerised progress and to adapt to new living conditions.

I am not optimistic about the ultimate survival of humanity through such evolution. To maintain control over the continuously increasing data of new information the human mind would have to develop within a very short space of time at a rate tremendously faster than it has in the past. The new superhumans would have to survive the results of air, water and food pollution and the pressures from the ever-increasing population, as well as rebellion from the uneducable multitudes who cannot be employed in a complex technological society. These supermen must also have the adaptability to survive the after-effects of a nuclear war. And the greatest difficulty **is** to survive nuclear radiation together with our complex technology, delicate computers and robots.

FAILING THIS POSSIBILITY — we are back to the problems which we face now. The solution, as I see it, is: **LIVE WITHIN OUR ADAPTIVE LIMITATIONS.** WE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON SOLVING OUR EXISTING PROBLEMS without blindly rushing forward into the unknown.

("Reculer pour mieux sauter")

We need, at this point of time, a breathing space in order to withdraw, consolidate and plan a programme of balanced progress, thus avoiding the accumulation of unsolved problems which could destroy us.

Without such consolidation and evaluation of what serves our interests of balanced happiness, we resign ourselves to the role of blind puppets of the forces of technology and progress. We must then allow that, instead of being our tools and means to achieve human aims, machines, computers, robots, drugs etc. will become our masters in the name of indiscriminate progress.

How do we slow down the speed of progress?

Personally: Reduce the rush; do less; buy less; reduce the needs, the cost, the time for maintaining and servicing activities, possessions. **Buy time** in which to enjoy, evaluate and rest, to reduce the strains and stresses, **to cure** the ulcers and solve basic problems.

For the community: Educate ourselves to want first to solve basic problems: health insurance before fashions; research before consumption; social re-organisation before space exploration.

(2) Enforce Responsibilities.

Crash programmes must be undertaken to investigate the implications and side effects of social (government) activity.

Social direction must be related to the needs of individual happiness. Social direction is misused if it aims to enforce conformity, restrictions or privileges to please the beliefs of some groups and to promote sectional interests.

The only controls which should be retained are those which safeguard the individual from harm.

Return to the individual the responsibility for his actions and choices (to buy TV or life assurance first; education or more comforts etc.). Make the individual aware that **his indiscriminate choices create the conditions** in which we live, and give the direction by which progress develops in the future.

The community should only **control the harm which individual activity (progress) may cause to others** (the community) **by enforcing responsibility for such damage** (pollution, safety etc.) instead of directing development which is always serving

the interests of one group at the cost of others (subsidies, tariffs, price or wage control).

Once the individual knows that he is responsible and has to pay for the road toll, pollution, education and health, **the priorities of his choices will be better thought out.** He will be likely to spend firstly on the vital needs and genuine satisfactions and his need for compensating, escapist, "conspicuous" consumption — the great driving force behind "indiscriminate progress" — will decrease.