

21. The End is Freedom

(With acknowledgements to the late Dr F. McEachran)¹

It was urged at the beginning of this book that nothing less than a revolution in thought about the world situation in its economic aspects will save humanity from a descent into final chaos.

Whether the argument presented throughout these pages in support of this proposition is acceptable or otherwise is something only the reader can decide for himself. Doubtless there are those who will label it 'utopian' or 'unrealistic'; but what are the *realities* of the present world situation? What are the alternatives facing mankind at this point in the last quarter of the 20th century? Even Toffler, in his *Future Shock*² admirably setting out the probabilities, can offer little hope of salvation except by an almost convulsive psychological adjustment to conditions, to an inherent and inevitable kinesis beyond man's power to correct or prevent. (From a recent review of his latest work, *The Echo-spasm Report*, one gathers that he now considers we are in a situation unique in man's history. And he deplors what he calls 'Econo-think', which is apparently his term for the isolated, fragmented approach to economic 'problems' by the professional economists. His solution would appear to lie in some form of supra-national world government, a proposition hardly likely to inspire optimism in the face of man's manifest inability to govern himself and the general breakdown of political order.)

It seems only too clear that the alternatives are (1) accelerated drift towards totalitarian government under the mounting assaults of communist doctrines, enforced by violence, fed by the justifiable outrage of those still the victims of exploitation by the wielders of power through the modern system of mercantilism — called by Marxists 'imperialism' and 'neo-colonialism'; (2) destruction of twentieth century civilization by a third world war sparked by a combination of desperation, race-hatred, suppression of minorities and conflict over scarce natural resources; or (3) a world-wide willingness to adopt, in letter as in spirit, the principles on which the dream of United Nations was founded and, on the part of individual nations, adoption of the proposals put forward in this book.

Frantz Fanon said it, in part, for us in his *The Wretched of the Earth*: "The fundamental duel which seemed to be that between colonialism and anti-colonialism . . . is already losing some of its importance. What counts today, the question which is looming on the horizon, is the need for a re-distribution of wealth. Humanity must reply to this question or be shaken to pieces by it."³

The crux of the matter is the method by which to achieve this end. Firstly,

the need is for, not so much a re-distribution of wealth as elimination of the obstacles to the *natural* distribution of wealth. Not the creation of costly and soulless machinery, manipulated by hordes of bureaucrats, to make arbitrary allocations of the wealth by punitive methods, after it has found its way into the hands of the privileged and the powerful. Nor, as Fallon, in the agony of his reaction to the horrors and brutalities of colonialism, advocates as the only way to relieve the desperation of exploited peoples, by repaying violence with violence (for the only end to this is continuing violence and disillusionment).

The great word of this age is *liberation*; it is the battlecry of the guerillas, and it is echoed by the pampered youth of the 'free' nations as a condition of psychological release from imagined bondage, just as it is the inspiration of the more intelligent 'drop-outs' from modern urban living. It is also the slogan of the Marxist, used to justify espousal of suppression of the natural instinct towards freedom — the terrible paradox of communist ideology.

The true liberation of which the world stands in need is the liberation of thought from the ideologies that battle for men's minds. Arthur Koestler, in his book *The Ghost in the Machine*, has a profound comment pertinent to this theme: "I do not mean to belittle the value of law-abiding routines, they lend coherence and stability to behaviour and structural order to thought. But when the challenge exceeds a critical limit, adaptive routines are no longer sufficient. The world moves on and new facts arise, creating problems which cannot be solved within the conventional frames of reference, by applying to them the accepted rules of the game. Then the crisis is on, with its desperate search for a remedy, the unorthodox improvisation which will lead to the new synthesis." And he says elsewhere: "To undo a mental habit sanctioned by dogma or tradition one has to overcome powerful intellectual and emotional obstacles. I mean not only the inertial forces of society: the primary locus of resistance against heretical novelty is inside the skull of the individual who conceives it . . . to unlearn is more difficult than to learn."⁴

What should be sought is not the 'unorthodox improvisation'; this is the search in which the world is still desperately engaged with decreasing hope of success. What should be sought is that true synthesis that lies at the heart of man's own nature, seen in the paradox of unity in diversity, in man's natural instinct towards co-operative action through competition in a state of true freedom. The condition which Adam Smith so accurately described in *The Wealth of Nations*: "The natural effort of every individual to better his condition, when suffered to exert itself with freedom and security, is so powerful a principle that it is alone, and without assistance, not only capable of carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity, but of surmounting a hundred impertinent obstructions with which the folly of human laws too often encumbers its operations."

Among the obstacles to which Smith refers — and which amount to political intrusions into the economic sphere — government itself is one of

the greatest. Donald A. Schon, in his *Beyond the Stable State*⁵, has a fascinating chapter, called 'Government as a Learning System', in which he describes the inherent inability of government to do more than "offer a facade of progress and problem-solving . . . It tends to be true of government, as of philosophy, that old questions are not answered — they only go out of fashion."⁶ He writes of "government agencies in which individuals of high intelligence and great dedication, whose only means of persisting in work on problems they judge to be of national importance is a kind of guerilla warfare through which this work is either bootlegged, hidden, or re-cast continually to meet the perceived requirements of new temporary (political) chiefs . . . It sometimes appears to an outside observer that the Federal (U.S.) Government contains many extremely intelligent, highly dedicated, experienced individuals who work long hours over long periods of time cancelling one another out."^{6a}

Schon's observations are applicable of course to any and every system of government, as it is known and functions throughout the civilized world. The cause is the inherent conflict between the natural instinct of man to co-operate in the solving of his (production) problems with the built-in incentives of political systems towards the exploitation of public problems for personal ends. Just as the members of a bureaucracy tend to resist any process or idea which is considered inimical to their security and status, so within the system of political warfare by which the machinery of government is organized and manipulated there persists the tendency towards the maintenance of the facade to screen the interests of personal ambition.

Among other writers Schon refers to in his book is Emil Fackenheim, author of *Metaphysics and Historicity*, from which he takes the following passage: "The first (of three contemporary attitudes) is what may be called *sceptical paralysis*. Here historical self-consciousness has led to two results: to the insight that wherever there has been a great purpose there has been a great faith. Hence there is paralysis which recognises itself as paralysis and preaches doom. Then there is what may be called *pragmatic make-believe*. Here . . . (man) falls to pretending to believe that a pretended might do the work of an actual faith. But it cannot . . . When men truly suffer from this contradiction they may seek escape in the most ominous form of modern spiritual life: *ideological fanaticism* . . . ideology asserts itself absolutely . . . it knows itself to be not truth but one specific product of history . . . Hence, unlike faith, ideology must by its very nature become fanatical . . . Ideology can achieve certainty only by *making* itself true."⁷

The world of the 1970's reflects only too well the barrenness and the fanaticism of ideological conflict, in which man stands on the brink of self-destruction, engaged in a kind of 'masochism tango'.⁸

Evidence of the need to seek release from this dance of death is to be seen in the instinctive 'opting out' of the young, their refusal to engage in the disastrous charade and to seek the satisfaction of simplified desires in

community living, in the discovery of actual pleasure in a return to a more elemental life-style. There is a wisdom and a hope in this which could save the world from its slide to disaster. This wisdom and hope lie behind all the sometimes puerile manifestations of the 'protest' movement, of the 'peace' demonstrations, of the pseudo-spiritual 'Aquarian Age' of a tentative puritanism and the revivalist cult of the modern troubador.

What must be sought and held is the essential strength and persistence of the *individual man*, in opposition to ideology which treats man as a will-less phenomenon at the mercy of natural forces instead of the creator and manipulator who, through co-operation with nature, builds and preserves his kingdom.

As a frontispiece to their book *Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism (Vol. 1)* Professors Wheelright and Buckley, use a quotation from Karl Marx's preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, which concludes with these words: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness."⁹ This belief is the key to the Marxist ideology. It is the sanction for the resort to violence and the abandonment of reason for the pseudo-liberation which at present convulses the world.

The terrible nexus of poverty and violence must be broken soon if the world is not to descend into a new Dark Age which could be the grave of mankind. But the way to break it is not by the urging of retributive violence of desperate men, by the exchange of poverty for the mental and physical wasteland of the communist state, or by the intellectual calisthenics of Marxist professors. The only way to break it is by the destruction of political power and privilege and the adoption of true freedom and a recognition of and co-operation with the natural economic law.

The desperate condition of the world today demands a revolution, not of arms and slogans and the manoeuvring of masses of bewildered men at the order of mindless fanaticism, but a revolution of thought, a freeing of thought from the shiboleths of the (comparatively recent) past, a *resort to reason* instead of emotional substitutes for it. The design of this revolution has been attempted in this present book, and perhaps a summary of its content may now be appropriate.

THE NATURAL CONDITION OF MAN IS TO BE FREE

"If the world of free spirits is the desirable world, it can never be achieved through the state, nor through force of arms, nor through socialism, nor through UNO, nor through any pattern imposed by human means on a power basis. There is no way of forcing men to be free and happy, and there never will be. All that men can do for their fellow men is to remove the artificial shackles that fetter them and allow them to act in whatever way they think fit, subject only to the necessity nature imposes." F. McEachran: *Freedom - the Only End*.¹⁰

THE ECONOMY IS THE SOCIETY OPERATING IN THE SPHERE OF MATERIAL THINGS, AND IN A STATE OF FREEDOM IT ACHIEVES ITS AIM OF SUSTAINING LIFE IN THE MARKET THROUGH THE FREE EXCHANGE OF PRODUCTS.

“The mainspring of economic life (on which all spiritual life ultimately depends) is simplicity itself. It consists of free individuals, freely co-operating with each other on the background of natural necessity, i.e., the need to live, which is the general necessity running through nature. There is no other necessity but this. All others are sporadic and particular.”¹¹

ECONOMICS — THAT IS THE TRUE POLITICAL ECONOMY, NOT THE PSEUDO-SCIENCE OF ‘MODERN ECONOMICS’ — IS THE STUDY OF THE LAWS OF THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH. IT HAS, AS SUCH, NOTHING TO DO WITH POLITICS, WHICH IT RECOGNISES AS A SEPARATE DISCIPLINE, RELATED ONLY IN THE SENSE THAT IT ALSO IS CONCERNED WITH HUMAN BEHAVIOUR.

“The units in physics are expected to obey not the laws of a state, but the laws of nature, and that must be equally true of economics if it is a science. A state can do a lot of things to the study of physics; but one thing it cannot do is to alter the laws of physics; and another thing it cannot do is to alter the laws of economics, although it may try to. We do not, after all, talk of special physical laws operating in England but not in Russia, nor of a biology that works one way there and another way here. Exactly the same must be true of the science of economics.”¹²

GOVERNMENT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE OPERATION OF THE ECONOMY OTHER THAN TO PRESERVE IT THROUGH JUSTICE BETWEEN THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY. ‘MANAGEMENT’ OF THE ECONOMY IS AN ANACHRONISM, A MYTH BASED ON IGNORANCE OF THE NATURAL LAW, AND ON THE DETERMINATION OF SOME MEN TO DOMINATE OTHERS IN THE MARKET AND TO MANIPULATE CONDITIONS IN THEIR INTERESTS ALONE.

“The socialists and communists attack the bourgeois society precisely on the point that the capitalist *laissez faire* philosophy presupposes an anti-social man who works for himself alone, not for society; produces for profit, not for use; and creates anarchy instead of well-planned ‘order’. This is so completely a misunderstanding of what the natural order and *laissez faire* imply that it might well make the angels weep. Capitalist man co-operates as much as any other man. Secondly, profit is the same as utility, in the sense that exchange is pointless unless it benefits the parties who exchange, and this benefit is precisely the profit. Finally, the chaos that accompanied *laissez faire* in the 19th century was not due to

private enterprise nor to private property, which are grounded in nature, but to the tremendous blockage which the liberal state never removed and indeed never understood.”¹³

THE SOCIETY PRODUCES ITS OWN REVENUE THROUGH THE OPERATION OF THE NATURAL LAWS OF ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION, I.E. WAGES AND INTEREST TO PERSONS FOR LABOUR AND THE INVESTMENT OF CAPITAL, AND TO THE STATE RENT — THE SURPLUS PRODUCT. TAXATION, THEREFORE, IS A FORM OF PILLAGE INFLICTED BY THOSE WITH THE POLITICAL POWER TO MANIPULATE THE STATE SYSTEM FOR THE PRESERVATION OF PRIVILEGE. THE ROBBERY OF TAXATION REQUIRES THE COMPENSATION OF ITS VICTIMS THROUGH THE CREATION OF THE ‘WELFARE STATE’, AN ANAESTHETIC TO DULL THE PAIN OF THE BLOOD-LETTING.

“No one denies, of course, that in present conditions the state must perforce help the victim, and by means of ‘free’ education, ‘free’ welfare services, subsidies, and so on, preserve a semblance of normal life. The flaw lies in the fact that as people have been robbed of the rent of land, and of part of wages, by the very powers that the state represents, the state is giving back only a part — and no big part either — of the total plunder. More than that — and this is the metaphysical pathos — it is teaching the people that power can be good and generous, and that wealth socialised through a bureaucratic centre and redistributed is the means of establishing social justice. Because of this development — into which monopoly has been forced by the very growth of its own enormity — people have ceased to believe in human freedom and appeal to power instead, which they fondly believe they can control through the ballot.”¹⁴

Let McEachran have the final word:

“In the end, it is philosophy we are considering, not economics. In the order of being, economics comes first, but in the order of value, philosophy. I am spurring men, not to revolution but to evolution. History cannot be hurried. Philosophers are needed who will work slowly but surely towards an end that is not near but remote, and yet one that will come only if they work towards it. There must be such philosophers in the world.”¹⁵

The end, however, may be less remote than he suggests. If it is not soon at least recognised and striven for, its dreadful alternative will descend upon us like the Deluge and a thousand years of bondage and misery and blind wandering in the wilderness will be the lot of the tribes of mankind before a fresh start is attempted by the survivors.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 21.

1. Author of *Freedom - the Only End*: Johnson Publications Ltd., London, 1966.
2. *Future Shock* by Alvin Toffler: Pan Books Ltd., London, 1971.
3. *The Wretched of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon; Penguin Books, 1967.
4. *The Ghost in the Machine* by Arthur Koestler; Pan Books Ltd., London, 1970. p.197 and p.179.
5. *Beyond the Stable State* by Donald A. Schon; Pelican Books, 1973.
6. *Ibid.* p.133
- 6a. *Ibid.* p.154.
7. *Ibid.* p.225 (notes).
8. With acknowledgements to Tom Lehrer, entertainer of genius.
9. *Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism (Vol. 1)* by E. T. Wheelright and Ken Buckley; Australian and New Zealand Book Company, Sydney, 1975.
10. *Freedom - the Only End* by F. McEachran.
11. *Ibid.* p.64.
12. *Ibid.* p.123.
13. *Ibid.* p.73.
14. *Ibid.* p.72
15. *Ibid.* pp.125/6.