

## **Agenda 21: 'Sustainable development' or Media Smoke and Mirrors**

by Richard Cooper

Agenda 21, the plan for 'sustainable development' the pragmatic, reasonable sounding United Nations (UN) blueprint for the twenty first century. The amply documented project is commonly known through the media as 'sustainable development'. But very few have read the original document or know of the full impact of the Agenda. What exactly and whom exactly does this expression and indeed the Agenda serve? Have we failed to become critically aware of the full import of its political background? Quite possibly, for a small amount of research reveals the development of this idea from its beginnings in Stockholm in 1972,<sup>1</sup> through the Rio Earth Summit in 1992<sup>2</sup> to the Executive Orders of Presidents Bush and Clinton.<sup>3</sup> Good summaries of the Agenda and its implications are to be found on YouTube (the video-sharing website) and the UN website. After reading of its global reach, a brief search of my own local council website (Basel City Council) reveals an eight point plan for the implementation of 'ecological' plans and initiatives. This is perhaps the strongest testimony to the far-reaching power of this global plan, the fact that unwittingly Agenda 21 has superseded national sovereign democratic debate.

We see with Agenda 21 a 'blueprint' for a global society of the twenty first century. This template comprises of three areas, Ecology, Social Equity, and Economy. Essentially this template facilitates the global redistribution of wealth and subordination of national sovereignty to global governance in response to what The Club of Rome<sup>4</sup> called a 'manufactured threat'. That manufactured threat being ecological disaster, which necessitates the systemic analysis of all areas of life, under global governance and under the pretence of unquestioning devotion to the ideology of global ecology. Power lies in the hands of the super-rich. The proposed structures and ideology conjures memories of Orwell's' 1984, or the Soviet Union. However, such 'horror' scenarios need a more updated version of collectivist ideology. This has therefore been given a 'New age' spiritual outer veneer. A sense of democracy and ecology and spirituality through consumption provides the perfect ideology for modern sensibilities. What the Agenda outlines is a society bound to an omnipotent financial structure. It is the formulated domination of the economic sphere over the political and cultural. Agenda 21 thus presents a hollow, mirror image of the free relation between the economic, political and cultural spheres of Rudolf Steiner's Three Fold Social Order.

One of the central thinkers to the ideology behind Agenda 21 is the French Jesuit theologian and scientist Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) . 'Gaia' 'Mother Earth' needs us! 'Gaia' was the concept developed by Chardin to combine with his idea of a returning Cosmic Christ as mankind awakens to global consciousness. His culmination point of spiritual awakening is here! But it is an Earth Goddess and a Cosmic Christ fitting to the worldview behind Agenda 21. How better to support a drive toward world government to the benefit of an elite than to have people demand it with passionate idealism. How perverse that Gene-tech giant Monsanto should find common purpose with this 'green' Agenda, and how revealing that a leading advocate of Agenda 21, Maurice Strong,<sup>5</sup> should embody the spiritual, political and financial objectives of Agenda 21. Strong, from his earliest days, had a deep interest in and fascination for China and has been going to China for more than 40 years in various capacities – personal, United Nations, World Bank and business. China being a country at the forefront of forced transfer of populations from the country to urban, high-density 'hubs', and in that sense an important test case for the objectives outlined in Agenda 21. Interestingly Strong identifies the last two thousand years of Judaeo Christian culture as being the greatest contribution towards the world's present ecological predicament. He advocates a return to pagan times, expressing a desire for pagan 'spirituality'.

To be able to achieve political effectiveness on a local level, globally, you need political clout. Who has that clout and how are Agenda 21's central ecological premises scientifically backed up? Firstly the UN has the clout and the financial elite has the necessary directing role. Secondly the initiative bypasses democratic exchange under 'emergency conditions' (professed imminent world-wide ecological disaster). Thirdly, Agenda 21 links to an ecological movement that can only be said to be mystical in its views of reality. One world government with worship of 'Mother Earth' freely espoused and enshrined in laws passed without public consultation and critical political discussion. The scientific views of some of Agenda 21's leading supporting companies, on the other hand, prove persistently controversial. The fields of genetic engineering and human technological interaction (Transhumanism) consistently bring up ethical questions. Wider scientific and political debate would discredit and question the hidden motives not only behind Agenda 21 but also the UN. It should not surprise us that the discussion of scientific ethics has taken a backseat to high capitalism.



Agenda 21 is permeated by 'buzzwords'. These can help mould public discussion and divert criticism from the economic interests that drive the science. They can also help drive discussion and engineer change through public engagement in the debate, again better known as 'change management'. How can one possibly question 'sustainable development'? Is that not a simple common sense aim? Unquestioning acceptance by an uninformed public enables the implementation of the Agenda's objectives: distribution of contracts for the division of land, resources, settlement and funding for education and cultural initiatives. These are neither 'environmental' nor 'sustainable', but rather are friendly buzzwords that serve to optimise profit and promote ideology. These contracts are distributed to powerful conglomerates, able to competitively outbid smaller commercial firms. The 'Wildlands Project' in the US is a case in point, whose plan is to return three huge swathes of land in the US to wilderness, to prohibit human habitation and relocate vast numbers to urban mass 'green' 'sustainable' dwellings. The Wildlands Project was introduced under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity Plan to Restore Biodiversity in the United States in 1991. This plan was a proposal to set 50% of North America aside to protect Biodiversity from Human Influence. Though this idea was introduced to the public more widely during the same year as the introduction of Agenda 21, they are two separate projects. The Convention on Biological Diversity has three main objectives:

1. The conservation of biological diversity.
2. The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity.
3. The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

Wider democratic public debate of the scientific principles and financial interests behind the project and its links to the UN has not taken place. Resettlement of the people that live in these areas and the additional housing required provide huge potential profit for the building contractors (government approved), and later the agricultural concerns that can receive the contracts for the use of designated lands. This process has started in California with understandable public resistance, but little mainstream media coverage. This is neither capitalism nor a socialist command economy, but a mixture of the two.

The potential profit for government-affiliated contractors is enormous. Mass-market agriculture, mass vaccinations, the carbon tax and weather engineering are examples of initiatives from industries eager to implement new technologies and public systems. Furthermore, the need to idealistically justify this is equally demanding and further justifies public 'education' initiatives. The concept of 'saving the planet' through large-scale public projects must continually take precedence above moral and ethical concerns. To get to grips with the downright 'wacky' ideas proposed in the Agenda 21 project is intellectually challenging. One has only to read that golf, cars and air conditioning are unsustainable and one dismisses the plans as incredulous. But these ideas have been passed into law around the globe. These ideas have become part of policy in countries throughout the world. The plans are unwittingly implemented on a local level with UN funding and so called 'grass roots' initiatives from the public. A truly open discussion of the plans would bring considerable resistance, hence the need for extensive 'public relations'. This is the true political reality of our times, a reality shaped by media and NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations) and social policy, behind which stands the interests of high finance.

Did the public at large sleep through the transfer of national sovereign powers to all-powerful regional and global authorities in the 1980s and 1990s? NATO the UN and the EU increasingly came to dominate world affairs through the 1990s, but the ideals of a United Europe and Anglo-American leadership have a far earlier historical precedent in the British Empire. Outer colonial independence belies an internal economic interdependence. Post 1945 geopolitical thinking became affiliated with a large number of think tanks, foundations and academic institutions, no longer only the gentlemen's clubs and secret societies. Did we notice when new laws were brought in in the US with direct parallels to the national socialist and soviet socialist Agendas? The study of mass psychology and the technologies available for its influence have increased exponentially since then. Do we dismiss those descriptions of Guantanamo Bay, infringement of civil liberties and the spin around the 'War on Terror', or do we see the parallels to the mass propaganda methods in the two world wars and after?

Indeed we are all victims to the insidious WMD 'Weapons of Mass Distraction': Entertainment, consumption and Internet. Contemporary reality floods us with opportunities to 'switch off'; we are overwhelmed with information. The ability of global elites to pacify public thought or prevent popular spiritual and political awakening is unprecedented. What then results is a global society dominated by capital, strictly psychologically controlled. This in its turn facilitates a better functioning of the 'system'; we are all better consumers, to the benefit of a small elite. Francis Bacon's New Atlantis (1627) spoke of the philosopher kings of a technological utopia. Bacon was prophetic in his appreciation of the potential of the Enlightenment and scientific rationalism. However, in contemporary reality we see that the mass utopia is ruled by a culture saturated with 'idols' and thus denies access to means of self-enlightenment or true political engagement with history, and indeed the reality of that 'utopia'. Meanwhile the philosopher kings become the plutocratic elite, oligarchical systems beyond sovereign nation states.

One pertinent example of this historical reality is our popular appreciation of the sixties. The sixties are popularly hailed as a triumph for those values of sexual liberalism and political resistance. 'Turn on, tune in, and drop out', however, became its failing. Culture was able to pacify and 'dumb down' a generation often with the help of 'change agents' and clandestine CIA interventions. Outwardly the post war period was bereft of true wider political activity and the vacuum filled by Americanism, Militarism and Consumerism. Inwardly people in the sixties were, and many still are, increasingly seeking for the spiritual and thus are increasingly vulnerable to manipulation. An illustration of this uncomfortable reality would be Z. Brzezinski's assessment of the sixties. He describes in his book Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era. (1970), in an assessment of socialism in the 1960s, a 'failed generation of protestors', hippies, artists and thinkers unable to achieve any consensus of thought to resist a growing corporate military industrial complex.

This is often how the public is perceived by those working in government policy centres and think tanks. Individuals are seen as emotionally vulnerable pawns to social engineering projects in the service of big business. Because so much is omitted by the mainstream media, the modern world citizen needs to learn about this historical context. The work of think tanks, the Delphi technique<sup>6</sup> aka 'change management', Hegelian Dialectic<sup>7</sup> and the public 'presentation' of geopolitics are areas that need to be understood. The popular exclamation that people have little time or ability to read difficult texts is not only testimony to indoctrination contained in our medias. Underlying this exclamation is the simple fact that when I do not think for myself, another will do my thinking for me. There has been no lack of thought in relation to psychology in the twentieth century. These geopolitical and psychological areas of research and understanding are essential topics that should build on our understanding of the world post-World War One. 33 years from 1968 was exactly 2001. From 'the Summer of Love' to September 11th the repercussions of which can only be seen as a cause for alarm at a further descent into deception and manipulation of the public psyche.

Analysis and comment about sexual identity, entertainment and finance crisis, can be found at length in popular discussion, but comment on wider political realities often loses its way. These political realities that lie behind the façade are confusing only because of information overload. Precisely because information floods the internet, opinion is raised over knowledge, leaving the reader struggling for orientation and lacking a forum to educate himself. You might have thought that an initiative of law such as Agenda 21, implemented on a worldwide scale, might have received a bit more critical public debate over the last twenty years, but it is symptomatic of our times that the subjects of debate are those that centre on the individual and his integration into the world system. Deception occurs when the focus is rather on man's identity than on man's being. It is further consolidated when we no longer recognise the indoctrination that we suffer from. This has no lesser task than that of preparing us to see where ideas such as Rudolf Steiner's Three Fold Social Order could exist and respond to prevailing realities. Or,

perhaps, more individually how I choose to engage with my own karma within these cultural, political and economic contexts.

Psychological research has proved that group consensus has the potential to control the individual. Our media, on a global level, facilitate the ultimate censorship. But it is on a local level through our own interaction that we can choose to wake up or to sleep politically. Mainstream media thus provides a screen to critical and new ideas. In the West we live in a consumer utopia that seeks to suppress and undermine that bulwark of Judaeo Christian culture ‘individualism’. Our contemporary problems are not a lack of understanding, but a lack of perception of historical realities and awareness of the world economic, political structure. It is the spiritual ‘individualism’ championed by the greatest thinkers and artists of history enshrined in the laws of our democracies that is at stake. A society where economics, politics and culture can exist harmoniously without being compromised requires that we see where they are mixed. Locally this might mean the need to meet and educate one another to notice when these Agendas are funded and promoted in the local area, or to share strategies of spiritual awareness to the realities of indoctrination and the future scenarios before us.

The very real existence of an elite plutocracy, in the US more visibly, but also in the history of the twentieth century, should remind us of the dangers of passivity. The history of the twentieth century presents two vital areas [Richard: Not easy to see what these “two vital areas” are; could you restate them?] that have received too little willing engagement from the public at large. They both relate to perception of the world around us. Behind the scenes these areas have received a vast amount of attention because of the potential power they grant over the public psyche. Contemporary entertainment and advertising media and modern communication technologies have a sedative, narcotic function that works with and on our sentient body and soul. This blinds us to the importance of Biology and Cybernetics as scientific-philosophical worldviews. ‘Social Policy’ and the psychological control of mass populations is a subject of low public awareness. Once the feeling of being daunted by the scale of Agenda 21 has subsided, one can see that people need to find ways of asking questions about this Agenda and our society and how we are to individually respond to it. Furthermore, one sees the need for wider perspectives and a deeper understanding of our technechronic era.

#### **Endnotes:**

1. In 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm brought the industrialized and developing nations together to delineate the ‘rights’ of the human family to a healthy and productive environment. A series of such meetings followed, e.g. on the rights of people to adequate food, to sound housing, to safe water, to access to means of family planning. The recognition to revitalize humanity’s connection with Nature, led to the creation of global institutions within the UN system.
2. In June 1992, the first UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Rio Summit, Rio Conference, and Earth Summit, was held in Rio de Janeiro and adopted an Agenda for environment and development in the 21st Century – Agenda 21: A Programme of Action for Sustainable Development contains the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which recognizes each nation’s right to pursue social and economic progress and assigned to States the responsibility of adopting a model of sustainable development; and, the Statement of Forest Principles. Agreements were also reached on the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change.
3. More than 178 nations adopted Agenda 21 as official policy during a signing ceremony at the Earth Summit. US president George H.W. Bush signed the document for the US. In signing, each nation pledged to adopt the goals of Agenda 21. In 1995, President Bill Clinton, in compliance with Agenda 21, signed Executive Order #12858 to create the President’s Council on Sustainable Development in order to “harmonize” US environmental policy with UN directives as outlined in Agenda 21.
4. The Club of Rome was founded in 1968 as an informal association of independent leading personalities from politics, business and science, men and women who are long-term thinkers interested in contributing in a systemic interdisciplinary and holistic manner to a better world. The Club of Rome members share a common concern for the future of humanity and the planet.
5. Maurice Strong (1928–), Club of Rome member, devout Bahai, founder and first Secretary General of UN Environmental Programme (UNEP).

6. The Delphi method is a structured communication technique, originally developed as a systematic, interactive forecasting method which relies on a panel of experts answering questionnaires in two or more rounds. After each round, a facilitator provides an anonymous summary of the experts' forecasts from the previous round as well as the reasons they provided for their judgments. Thus, experts are encouraged to revise their earlier answers in light of the replies of other members of their panel. It is believed that during this process the range of the answers will decrease and the group will converge towards the "correct" answer.

7. Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a 19th century German philosopher, devised a particular dialectic or method of argument for resolving disagreements. His method of arriving at the truth by the exchange of logical arguments is a system of thought process still used to this day.

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