

## THE CLUB OF ROME - WHAT AFTER 1977?

(A Summary Analysis of the Views of the Members)

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1. As part of his long information letter to members of the Club, dated 4th March 1977, Aurelio Peccei posed a number of questions as to future structures and activities. The Executive Committee, at a meeting held in Paris on 25th May invited us to summarize the views of the members as to future activities, as contained in their answers. At the same time Maurice Guernier and Hugo Thiemann were asked to present an analysis of opinions as to membership, structure, etc.

2. About half of the members have responded to the questionnaire, some in considerable detail, others more generally and responses are still coming in. In reality, the spread of reaction is considerably greater than 50%, since some members of the Executive Committee had, at an earlier date, written quite detailed views as to the future activities of the Club. Furthermore, the letter from Professor Oshima, following a discussion of the Japanese Members, represented their collective view. In addition, the New Zealand Association for the Club (despite the fact that we have no member from that country) submitted a useful letter. A few suggestions by individual members of national associations are also included in this note.

3. Only a small proportion of the replies followed Aurelio's questionnaire, question by question, but those which did so, gave a unanimous affirmative to the first two questions, namely:

Has the Club of Rome accomplished a useful function? and  
Should it continue to exist?

Amongst the general reactions of the other letters there were none which indicated a feeling that the experiment had been a failure or, that its original mission being completed, it should now be discontinued. Moreover there was a general consensus, explicit and implicit, that the unstructured nature of the Club should be retained and that its central concern should continue to be the elucidation of the world problématique together with the task of informing (and hopefully enlightening) decision-makers and the general public of the nature, interactions and probable consequences of the problématique. Indeed some advocated "a return to the original concern about the problématique", presumably hinting that some of our recent work had diverged somewhat. It was generally felt that the Club should remain unofficial in its attitudes and activities; it should complement the efforts of governments and international organizations through the inculcation of a greater understanding of the dangers and difficulties ahead, shocking them at times, if necessary, into a reappraisal of policies or strategies. Its members should retain their individual independence and, in no case act as the mouthpiece of governments.

4. Several members stressed that the Club should not become a broker of research projects, appropriate essentially to the Specialized Agencies and other bodies and we imagine that the majority would be in agreement with this. Nevertheless one member recommends that the Club should examine "how to restore public confidence in science and technology, without which we cannot build the world we want". Others are slightly on guard against a too technocratic slant in our work (however enlightened that might be). With regard to the launching of research projects as such, the Club might with advantage consider how it could cooperate with IFIAS (The International Federation of Institutes of Advanced Study) which is devoted to the stimulation of multidisciplinary research on long term world problems. Although the Club has absolutely no formal relationship with IFIAS, there is indeed an exceptionally favourable situation for cooperation as a consequence of a very considerable overlap of personalities. This is a matter which will be examined at Stockholm at a joint meeting of the Club of Rome's Excom with the IFIAS Board of Trustees.

5. There was a great deal of interest expressed in the Malitza project on "Innovative and Prospective Learning for Man and Society", and a recognition by some that serious attention must be given through the educational system, country by country or region by region, to secure a basic understanding on the part of a new generation, of the nature and workings of the problématique.

6. While several members mentioned the desirability, especially at this point of the Club's evolution, of making possible deeper discussion amongst the members, of the Club's activities and future stance, there was no expressed demand for discussions of the various Reports to the Club of Rome, leading either to consensus or stated disagreement - a subject which has come up from time to time at Excom meetings.

7. There was some support for the suggestion by Maurice Guernier, that the Club should issue an annual memorandum on the world situation, somewhat similar to the present intention of the CADMOS Group of Denis de Rougemont, which is, of course essentially restricted to Europe.

#### Suggestions for Future Work

8. A very large number of suggestions have come forward, mostly in the form of general themes; many of these are interrelated or partially cover the same ground. In the paragraphs which follow, the attempt is made to display these as representatively as possible, but in view of the vagueness of some, the list is not comprehensive. No attempt has been made to place the various suggestions in any order of priority.

9. There were relatively few suggestions concerning modelling, and, somewhat surprisingly, no suggestions with regard to the development and use of the Pestel/Mesarovic technique, which, after all is one of the most important of the present initiatives of the Club. One member, while

expressing full confidence in the potentialities of this model, warns against an exclusive identification of the part of the Club, to the exclusion of interesting alternatives.

10. One member proposes a revised model of the Limits, adding that it would be interesting to do this in view of the fact that the Club "now accepts growth as a premise of economic and social development" --which indicates the persistence of misconceptions as to our original attitudes to growth. A "Limits to Growth Revisited after the Energy Crisis", would, of course be very revealing. Yet another member feels that it would be of value if the model technique could be used to establish the relative positions of various nations, twenty, fifty or a hundred years from now in various fields such as health, education, etc.

11. A number of suggestions came forward with regard to the population problem, possibly a report on demographic prospects, in view of the fact, well stated, that despite much concern with the topic, "its issues become diluted with other current and prospective problems" --the problématique rears its head again.

12. There would, indeed, seem to be a need for the Club to discuss its attitude towards population growth, especially in relation to other factors, for example the carrying capacity of the countries on the Southern edge of the Sahara in face of the steady advance of the desert. There is room for comprehensive studies on the carrying capacity of other regions along lines recently worked out in Australia.

13. A further consequence of demographic change which demands analysis, is that of employment, and this was recently discussed by Excom. For countries with a quickly growing population and already suffering from unemployment and underemployment, this is a fundamental issue, in the light of which policies for industrialisation and technology transfer may require reappraisal. For advanced, industrial countries nearing zero population growth and hence facing an increasing average age, the demands on health and welfare systems will have to be foreseen well in advance and the fact that the productive work force will be a much smaller proportion of the total population than hitherto and have to provide the resources for maintenance of already high standards of living (presumably) will have a considerable influence on industrial policies, the need to optimize the use of skills, attitudes towards science and technological policies, productivity and the like.

14. Other suggestions which relate to industry include one for a study of the effect of the acceptance of a New International Economic Order, somewhat along RIO lines, on the industrial policies and possibilities of the presently industrialized countries. A further suggestion, recently also discussed at Excom, is for a study of the future of private enterprise, although nobody has raised the issue of the future role of the transnational enterprises as such. Study of industrial motivation, national and international was also raised.

15. Two proposals, made on previous occasions, should not be forgotten as being central to the interests of the Club. The first of these is a study of future requirements for capital and how these might be met. This has, of course immediate relevance to the possible evaluation of the capital which would be necessary if Hermann Kahn's next 200 years were to be achieved. We all agree that such a study would be important; the problem is to find the outstanding man capable and anxious to undertake it. The second basic need is for an examination of existing and possible power structures. While some members of the Club feel that it is only realistic to assume that the nation state will continue to be the fundamental unit of negotiation in the foreseeable future, others would question whether a Club such as ours should accept this. It might, indeed, be useful to study the extent to which a de facto frittering away of national sovereignty has already taken place and is likely to take place in the foreseeable future, in countries of different type and how global imperatives might force the abdication of areas of such sovereignty voluntarily, if threats to mankind as a whole are to be overcome.

16. Many members touch on economic aspects, for instance on the need to study the transitional needs of moving towards a post- or para-industrial society. Another proposal is for a study in depth of the alternative patterns of development of Western Europe, while yet another suggests a study of the performance of the European Common Market. There are also several suggestions with regard to the need for changes in life style and for

a reduction in the consumption of individuals in the so-called developed countries. The most radical suggestion, however, and perhaps the most obvious comes from a member of the Canadian Association for the Club, who argues the need for a new "Economics of Society". In such a system, it is claimed, the assumptions of society are entered in the form of their economic consequences and subject, of course, to constraints such as those of people, land, capital, technology and other resources. There is certainly a growing feeling that classical economics cannot answer the questions of contemporary society and that a new socio-economic approach is necessary.

17. A number of the replies concern institutional arrangements.

There is the suggestion for example of an impartial review of the working of the United Nations system. More generally, however, it might be appropriate for the Club to study the general problem of the adequacy of existing institutional arrangements in facing up to the problématique. Nearly all our existing governmental structures were created for earlier, simpler times and have expanded in their range rather than modified to meet the new exigencies of government, making it difficult to foresee the interactions between sectoral policies, to tackle the longer term, fundamental problems under the pressure of more immediate and vote-catching issues and resulting in heavy bureaucratization which is increasingly resented by the people. After all, the raison d'être of the Club is to point out the need for change so difficult to achieve from inside an administration and hence one of our main lines might be to study and advocate institutional innovation towards an understanding of how to manage complexity, change and uncertainty, the



obvious need of our times.

18. Many members, very rightly, stress human aspects of the problématique, mainly, however, in rather general terms and with few concrete proposals. Thus it is said, "put more emphasis on educational, social and political change and less on method." In view of Aurelio's recent book "The Human Quality" and of our common groping towards a new humanism, this theme seems to us to demand deep consideration and discussion. The need is well expressed by one member who says, "the fundamental problem is human change at the personal and social levels. This presents great problems for the conduct of Club of Rome activities in the future. It was one thing to find a shared commitment and perspectives when we were focussed on the methods and substance represented by the computer studies. We think it will be something else indeed when we begin having to examine the 'nature of human nature' and of political-social processes. However, there is nothing to do but face up to these tasks. Somebody has to do so and the conventional, established interests cannot risk it. We of the Club of Rome are available to bear witness, to hold up the mirror, to model the very risks that other organizations must take if we are truly to face up to the problématique as it resides in each one of us and our groups as well as in the activities of the planet.

19. As already mentioned, this listing is by no means exhaustive. Other suggestions range from the desirability of accepting concern for the health process to the problems of excessive urbanism and the gigantic loss of food in the world.

20. One member suggested that the Club should create a clearing centre for information on the multifarious aspects of The Predicament of Mankind. While we doubt very much whether our catalytic non-organization should take on such a demanding and detailed task, it is for consideration whether we should attempt to persuade some other body to do so.

21. One member of the ExCom has suggested that given the relatively modest advances in the approach to the global problems of the "Predicament of Mankind", and the limited results of the various United Nations conferences held since 1972 (Environment, Stockholm; etc.) it would be appropriate for the Club of Rome to carry out an overall evaluation of what has been done, what are the failures and what should be done to bring together all the various approaches into a unified whole. Such an evaluation could be the subject-matter of a general conference of the Club of Rome to be held in 1979.

22. It is to be hoped that the meeting at Stockholm in September 1977 will provide an opportunity for discussion of some of these issues. Obviously they cannot all be discussed in detail, but general expressions of priority would help enormously. In particular, ideas concerning outstanding thinkers who might be willing to undertake specific studies would be helpful to Excom.

23. One other matter requires special discussion at Stockholm, namely, the relationship between the Club as such and some of the national associations, on the intellectual level. It is extremely encouraging to us to know that some of the associations are moving into an active phase with respect to research.

Some of the larger associations such as those in Australia, Canada, Japan and the United States could, no doubt, provide resources and skills for work which could complement and extend that of the main Club. Clearly some of the projects undertaken will concentrate on national and regional issues, but within the global framework which the philosophy of the Club of Rome implies. Other research projects may however deal more widely with facets of the problématique, or contribute to the development of methodology of general significance. While each association is, of course, completely free to select and implement its own programme, it would certainly be useful to each and to the main Club to know of proposals at an early stage. Furthermore the communication of the results of the work of local associations to the others would be immensely useful. Some of the smaller associations such as those of Finland and New Zealand could also make interesting contributions on specific questions.

24. In view of these new possibilities, it would be useful if representatives of each of the national associations would come to Stockholm, prepared to give an indication of present work and future possibilities.

25. Beyond the questions of research as such, the new activity of the national associations makes the Stockholm meeting a suitable occasion for a general discussion of the relationships of the associations to the Club and to each other.