

For Young Battlers

by Colin Ball.

brothers,
'the magic of the market',
sisters listen,
to exchange and lend is its addiction.
religious, yet reified spectral of abstractions,
'the bewitched distorted and upside down world'
handles it all.
is absurd,
there is no alternative?

otherwise,
austerities that kill is your bitter pill.
They'll buy a cheap Greek isle,
enslave you all while,
markets live like Homer's Greek gods.

The 'City Farm kids', those emotionally troubled young battlers had been unemployed, abused and neglected, some disowned and homeless, self-harming fifteen to eighteen year olds.

Daniel*, the big 17 year old boy's gauche demeanour often drew ridicule, his poor articulation compensated by violent verbal and physical outbursts that gave insight as to how he must have learnt to survive.

Mark proudly showed off the ghastly line of scars crossing his abdomen, from a fall onto ironwork fencing in a drunken sprawl. Homeless, discovered sleeping in the farm shed, false address in his work application.

Janice with her small frail persona, curly haired, freckled and 15, desirous and hungry for love and attention, some respect, falls for equally frail and desperate Robby. A baby was made.

Kyall died a few years later of Aids.

Yet Kathryn had two children to African men, attended university, taught in Africa, became a nurse and married the doctor, father of one her children. She built in an area that lets her kids

experience their other culture amongst recent African arrivals, where it is securer from the overt racism in the broader social environment.

All those calamitous young people and their attendant damaged psyches were products of history. And the others, Charlotte, Joey, Aaron, Jack, Jane, Yvonne, what about them?

It was South Australia's one hundred and fiftieth year, a Jubilee. To celebrate state Labour had decided to do something about levels of school and training disengagement and youth unemployment. In 1986 the Hindmarsh City Farm (Incorporated) site development project commenced with these young people as workers in a brave and exciting experiment in youth work and community development. The funding from the Office of Youth and Employment Jubilee Youth Employment Programme was \$100k, a significant amount in that day if not now, but this only covered wages, trainers and administration for nine months.

As temporary tenants on an acre or so of a filled pughole surface in Green St. Brompton, an area of Hindmarsh Town in Adelaide South Australia, we had tenuous few other resources aside from enthusiasm. Pugholes were deep red clay pits dug initially by the hands of small family 'entrepreneurial' landholders, in their backyards behind their equally small workers' two roomed cottages, for brickmaking in colonial Adelaide. Some of the first European inhabitants squatted in bark huts in the north parklands ("Buffalo Row") as Surveyor General Colonel William Light had resigned and the surveying team was understaffed, due to the Colonial Office's instructions to keep Treasury's expenditure to the most minimal. Fiscal minimum at all cost, even to eventuating in homeless investors seeking titles.

On May 12th 1838 the Governor, John Hindmarsh selected section 353 as his entitlement in accepting the 'onerous task' of governance of the new colony. The 134 acres cost him 73 pounds. He sold this within weeks to persons' (so called artisans and tradesmen) intent upon subdivision into 200 half acre lots, thus adding to the speculation in land pricing that had arisen in the colony basically at settlement, which further contributed also to soaring rental prices. Hence the initiation of what became Hindmarsh Village, then Town quite contrary to the essence of the Wakefieldian Plan of 'systematic colonisation' inherent in the theorising of the colonisers' intent.

Coincidentally, or otherwise after Governor John Hindmarsh's May 19th order to remove the squatters, the more financially independent redeployed to Hindmarsh and later to Bowden adjacent the parklands in the new Town of Hindmarsh and to Brompton, some to dwell in dugouts in the sides of the gullies that dissected that indigenous terrain. These were a half acre allotments at six pounds, twelve shillings and sixpence which enticed those with means. Digging was not novel to them and exploitation of the 'excellent soil for brick-making', the deep red clay deposits in the alluvial fan of *Karra wirra-parri*, the timeless, river of the Red Gum forest – the River Torrens, was the land speculators' spin. By the 1890's this cottage industry had become mechanised with steam overtaking the horse as power source, the introduction of pug mixing machines, wire cutting devices and the Hoffman kiln. Larger brickyards expanded absorbing smaller family concerns, at the same time congregating workforces and industrial production processes. The complementing local workforce sold

only its labour as brick making and handling was man powered, skilful hard yakka, was weather prone, hot and dangerous.

The depression of the 1890's took its toll on those workers. The growth of kilns also took toll on the 'Peachey Belt' to the north of Adelaide in an area that the suburbs of Salisbury and Elizabeth now occupy. It was a forest, mainly of peppermint gum, ten miles long and averaging three miles wide. Being across flat country and so reasonably transportable to Adelaide, it was rendered vulnerable to the axemen who came regularly to deplete it of its biomass for fencing and firewood. The Hoffman kilns of Hindmarsh would have consumed their fair share one can imagine. In the process also depleting 'Peachey Belt' of its fauna and the indigenous *Kaurna* people who for millennium had roved upon it.

In the early twentieth century Hallets Brickworks purchased the few remaining yards into a considerable brickmaking enterprise, expanding production timely to meet the building boom in the 1910's and again in the twenties. By the thirties the Hindmarsh Council was acquiring depleted pits and many worked out pugholes were filled in haphazardly with 'rubbish', and unregulated over decades became toxic sites. Green St. pughole in Brompton was capped off roughly with a hard fill of crushed clay subsoils. When we came on site Mt Kalatzsis' goats had been in residence for quite a few years and reluctantly goat farming in Brompton ceased. With no budget for materials we straightened old nails with hammers to build our front fence, no paper receipts required thanks. Teaching survival skills in our programme started with compost making and organic soil building, like (Lady) Eve Balfour. We applied a whole system design method called permaculture and made plans for an urban farm modelled on the CERES Project in Brunswick, Melbourne.

The garden and nursery teams moved by hand, truckloads of imported topsoil donated by Truran's Earthmovers and spread it over the garden sites. These young people learnt how to grow food and to work with their minds and hands. It was great that they were paid award rates. We helped them to unionise and had the privilege to teach them about peoples' rights and the law, about cooperation and respect of others' differences. We addressed their most immediate and pressing needs if they allowed us to such as health, relationships, housing, offending issues, food and financial management. The farm media team on behalf of the future, waxed lyrically in the local community press *'The Hindmarsh Pughole'* about their projects' hopes.

*When the Springtime rolls round, there'll be life in the ground.
Small shrubs, tiny seedlings and trees,
With sweat and with care, we will clean up the air,
And plant lots of flowers for bees.*

*And perhaps by the sun, or by the light of the moon,
When a spirit of Kaurna glides past,
It might listen and sigh, "Oh sweet land of mine,
They are treating you properly – at last."*

One day Council workers and machines delivered maybe several tons of topsoil from their nearby depot off of Coglin Street, and dumped it at 17 Green Street, our address. The costed details of \$1000 revealed in the Town Works Manager report evoked outrage in one Councillor Ray English (Hindmarsh Ward) of the Hindmarsh Council. Councillor English addressed the Council on the City Farm, submitting her full text to the *Hindmarsh Pughole* (Issue 40, September 1986), a free newspaper produced by the Bowden Brompton Community Centre. Councillor English stated,

“It does not seem right to me that some people can come into our Town with grandiose ideas and expect assistance to be handed down to them. They to my knowledge have contributed nothing to the Town. I understand a few vegetables were grown at the Brompton Catholic School (Immaculate Heart of Mary Primary School ed). Who received the benefit there apart from the do gooders I do not know. Growing vegetables isn’t difficult for any-one with even a limited intelligence.

The so called farm is on land which though pughole could have been eventually used for housing. I am surprised that a group so avid in wanting housing has not seized upon this land for building purposes.

The Council, I understand has granted five years freedom from rating and that could mean fifty or sixty thousand dollars for which our older established rate-payers must make up.

Now that a number of rate-payers are asked to pay considerably more this year for rates and also that this Council is struggling to get by with less and less money coming in, I think it would be amoral to give assistance to a group as yet untried and who do not seem to be able to get out and do some hard yakka themselves to show that they have the guts to stand on their own two feet.

I attended Melva Greenshields Kindergarten meeting today. They are a proven group aiming at training out Town’s children. They too need money. They are having a trading table and a do-nut drive and a stall at the mud follies. The R.D.N.S., Red Cross, Hospital Auxillary and church groups get out and help themselves in a similar way.

I heard someone from the farm say that when these young people, 15 or 19 of them, finish their six months, the project will run itself with a caretaker group. I cannot see how a band-aid assistance is helping anyone other than those who manage to wangle grants from the government.”

Councillor English’s knowledge, understandings and reliance on hearsay did not counter that kids eat vegetables, (Immaculate Heart of Mary’s Catholic School Garden predated Stephanie Alexander’s Kitchen Garden Foundation), that the falling rate base was due to the destruction and loss of many homes, and in excess of seven thousand residents over several decades of Council presided-over neglect, and state government misplaced, and misspent planning. She was not disposed to ‘do gooders’, not into grandiose ideas that she did not understand, nor see any value in. Or the fact that some of the *Mud Follies* activities (a local Jubilee project highlighting the history of brickmaking in South Australia) were held at the Hindmarsh City

Farm, particularly one involving a busload of severely disabled young folk who came to experiment in making mud bricks. When one such youth experienced an epileptic fit whilst stomping mud, her carer held everyone back and called for a hose to wash her charge down as she flailed about on the ground. What can you say to that, as such was the state of care and response to fitting in the muddy outdoors at that time it seemed?

What sort of attitude underlays Councillor English's comments? A nineteenth century religiosity, an unfortunate archaic South Australian trait inherited perhaps from such founding ideals as discussed by historian Douglas Pike? Pike posits in *Paradise of Dissent* that many colonists migrated to South Australia as dissenters against the dominant religion of the Church of England, but also for civil society and an equal opportunity in life. Is this the 'fair go' mate? The city of churches that followed had its fair share of Presbyterians, Methodists, Wesleyans and other religious Dissenters. Unsurprisingly these were the views held by many of the officers of the South Australian Company that was set upon a commercial project to profit from selling stolen land, by promoting emigration. Could the attitude of these nineteenth capitalists of the 1830's have been stern, unforgiving, compassionless, Calvinistic to its core, cemented in the mean spirit of individualism, self-interest and penny pinching parsimony?

The fate of pugholes like those of young people in the 1980's and even more so now, were considered inconsequential but eventually of course, troublesome. At first abandoned by private owners and eventually cast into a state government morass of unrequited ambitious planning, the much maligned housing-destruction of the Metropolitan Adelaide Transport Study (MATS Plan) and the North South corridor. These were USA designed raised roads, and switchovers posed to shadow above Adelaide's most un-venerated, un-celebrated and historically its first suburb, working class Hindmarsh Town. This state of affairs bred confusion in local government, discontent within industry and development circles and in due course to a different social dissent from residents and other 'urban troublemakers'.

Unattended clay pits became wild and dangerous places, unofficial adventure playgrounds, then abused toxic sites predisposed to dependence on expensive public cost rehabilitation, when the 'market' called for redevelopment. Whereas poorly attended children risk becoming maladjusted young people prone to social, economic and ill health including foremost mental health and all its deprivations, if not also similarly addressed with public resources. And to this question of address; how ought it be? The medical model in pathologising problems by individualising issues, reducing and atomising these to narrow analysis' of personal failings, and by case working the 'client' are attempts at engineering social solutions. Such attempts to 'normalise' are not incomparable to rehabilitating, or engineering toxic sites and are mechanistic. Instead, community capacity building which is a community development process encompassing a whole system (re)design process that is inclusive, has the potential to increase human well-being and health.

The *Community Strategy Plan* of July 1984 (*Community Planning Group, Hindmarsh Residents Association and Urban Permaculture Consultants*) implanted permaculture thinking into an urban People's Plan. The *UPC in Sustainable Urban Renewal*, (1985, Social Impacts Publications) complemented residents' driven goals to oust industry from inner

urban Hindmarsh, to reclaim housing for traditionally low income workers and residents, to have amenities. It proposed greening the urban landscapes publicly and via cooperatives, by designing unique problematic sites (pugholes) to create integral urban neighbourhoods. These would develop local social and economic cohesion by applying communally accessible programs such as urban forestry, city farms, housing associations and shared spaces using ecological principles and earth building technology; neighbourhood centres and mini transport hubs that designed motor vehicles out, cottage industry, art and cultural activity spaces and recycling systems in, as well as educational, training and vocational development for young people and all others.

Tragically the Hindmarsh City Farm and permaculture project was filched in the early nineties by the regressive old culture of greedy individualism, a corruption in community group democracy where the legitimate membership were locked out and general meetings postponed. A process to replace legitimacy was prolonged, stalled by bureaucratic and government disinterest. Its legacy seemingly stolen the city farm morphed into the more modest and acceptable Bowden Brompton Community Garden. Defence of the original ideas, community space and permaculture failed here as government bided its time with the tenancy, awaiting the market and housing developers to move in and gentrify.

But Hindmarsh City Farm does have a legacy, applicable to sustainable urban renewal attempts today to improve living environments, the health, well-being and opportunities of urban inhabitants. The innovative thinking implied then and still possible now posit questions about power and inequity, about re-claiming access to public commons, also the historically stolen indigenous lands from the *Kaurna* people. This legacy challenges old paradigms, attitudes and ideologies and requires direct democracy.

City Farms are progressive conceptions that are community focussed. Like permaculture is simply not about organic gardening but whole system design for sustainability, urban farming is more than the name suggests. Yes things grow there in nurseries, community gardens, in wind and pollution barriers as native and exotic plant assemblages, as demonstrations and examples of edible landscaping and bee-scaping. Animals make it a true farm with poultry forage systems, aquaculture, wormiculture, perhaps a sheep or goat or two, dairy cows and equine activity for those inclined such as at Collingwood Children's Farm. But they are also creative collective responses to the madness of modernity, in providing first and foremost access to urban space to learn, a declining resource in today's privatised and corporate exclusivity, a place to be invoked into enquiry about hegemony and its opposite, heterodoxy and alternative ideas about energy, shelter and real foods, a space for critical thinking and analysis of society and its crisis ridden projectory. City farms represent a pedagogy of new cultural paradigms for post modernism. They are Pythagorean links capable of carrying the most useful and adaptive artefacts and cultural practices through the transitions needed towards possible human futures, from one decaying epoch to another more hopeful.

Ceres, a Roman Goddess derived after the Greek Goddess Demeter was kind and benevolent. Like a mother she loved, brought the gift of fertility and the harvest which rewarded, taught humans about growth, how to preserve and prepare grains, she the daily nurturer of common folk. The folks who chose this to be the name for their Community Environment Park back

in those early eighties though were most uncommon. For by accessing and securing a ten acre worked out bluestone quarry, on the corner Roberts and Stewarts Streets, adjacent the Merri Creek in East Brunswick has been a remarkable transposition into an urban farm, a community and education hub, an 'eco-oasis' just seven kilometres from Melbourne's heart.

I revisited CERESs in June 2014, after last being there in 1986 with the Hindmarsh 'kids'. It was amazing to see incredible transformation that nearly thirty years has made. A vision realised. Firstly, in entering from Lee Street, what struck me was how a forest now obscured the factory tops over the other side of Merri Creek. A dam, a billabong like water feature lay below a beautiful plant nursery. Community gardens were laid out pre-Hippodamus the ancient Greek town planner, in a quadratic pattern minus the central square, and like the streets in nearby Fitzroy each plot was separated from the next by small lanes and high fences of all recycled manner and imagination encompassing each gardeners' individuality. On wandering with my teenage son we came across outdoor classrooms, a village green, a play space and amphitheatre, explored the compost system, saw cultural villages, a Bikeshed and workshop for recycling and repair, the café, market gardens, chook forages amongst orchards and native plantings, an organic market and meeting rooms, restaurant and bar, a visitor's centre and finally the energy park displaying solar and wind technologies. Of course the EcoHouse was still there. The experience reminded me of *Down to Earth Confest* villages that I had been to, where car-less infrastructure and shared social and ethical values combined to create spatial safety, energising and fulfilling activity.

Strikingly, CERES on that cold winter, blustery yet sunny day also abounded with school students roving through their education excursion program perhaps on global warming and climate change, water, plants, animals, shelter, ecology, urban agriculture, recycling, indigenous peoples or on sustainability. Coming to the end of their excursion they moved eagerly but sensitively, not trashing the place. Those "kids" from Hindmarsh twenty eight years ago would also be amazed, not at the lack of trashing, because they too understood 'collective ownership' and never trashed our farm, but at the transformation of this vision. That it is possible to have one, set goals, apply oneself and succeed. To not give up. I thought of those 'kids' whilst there and wondered how they were, particularly Janice and Robby and their child that I had never known.

In 1985 the Permaculture Association of South Australia proposed to the *Second Generation of Parklands* study a distribution of city farms within 'new generation' parklands, to surround the first in a wider radius into the suburban heartlands of metropolitan Adelaide. From the hills, across plain and to the sea, twining through residential and built up areas, industrial parks, commercial and other estates these 'parklands' would become a new forest and a commons with new entitlements. In its simplest this urban forest would be new lungs for a stifling South Australian summer, cool retreats for its inhabitants, dust filters for the hot driving north winds and habitat for animals. It would also provide horticultural and timber products, foods as it matured into an edible landscape, a source for right livelihoods that is, ecologically based employment. It would take an incredible cooperation between government, business and community, it would have to be a total collective responsibility. New Suburban Farms would be located fifteen kilometres apart, the distance a bullock dray could travel in a day. The proposition was rejected of course.

What has changed since? A lot but not much. There are several city farms in Australia and the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network exists. Many schools now run gardening and nutrition programs but CERES is still an oasis. Why aren't there more? At the same time the dominant economic, political and militaristic paradigms, the state of advanced monopoly capitalism that inexorably brings more war, more social inequality, ill-health, trauma and poverty to millions and more environmental destruction, is all too apparent to those who will see. As in Charles Dickens' time when Malthusian inspired Poor Laws were policy, Councillor English's attitudes are just as ubiquitous and prevailing today in our shrinking, old is new again world since Lords Abbott and Hockey's fake fiscal crisis and hence, the false austerity program imposed upon Australia. Mad monk allegiance to the neoliberal Institute of Public Affairs' seventy five point plan, and Murdoch's promulgation of its ill-liberal non virtues attempt to make sure of this. Increasing economic indicators of distress such as under and un-employment, small business failure and debt default reflect socially as increasing levels in domestic violence and child protection notifications, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, crime and in health concerns about obesity, diabetes, anxiety, depression and despair leading to violence and suicide.

Complementary to these signs of distress go mainstream media (msm) signals that victims are their own problem, or that refugees, Muslims, Indigenous people, greenies or others are threats to economic development and lifestyle, so that scapegoating, racism and bigotry can be let loose, further adding to the degeneration of social cohesion and the very conditions for social well-being. Radical strategies are needed now to counter this myopic future from overcoming society, if we want to retain an identity about fairness, social justice, access to health, education and social services and positive developmental opportunities for young people. The prevailing political economy and rightist cultural wars of Australia looks most likely to deliver just the opposite.

Young people and society need new role models that encourage behaviour that celebrities from sport, fashion and consumption, parading militarism, nationalism and shallow jingoism do not. The original Anzacs wanted a fair go for services rendered, not necessarily a national piss up and certainly not en-caped in flags. The Australian ex-soldier, now 'ecowarrior', Steve Cran has worked in some of the most distressed locations in Africa and with others in the United States and elsewhere. Working with villagers, men, women and children traumatised by war and famine and with US ex-servicemen discharged with damaged physical and mental health from waging war and facilitating malnutrition in Iraq and Afghanistan, abandoned by the US Department of Defen(s)e, asks them what they want. Africans need shelter, water and food, ex-soldiers want jobs and dignity. In the skills gained to make mud bricks for building earth and water works, in devising and constructing irrigation systems and food gardens, collecting mulch and building soil with composts they all get plenty of work. They also learn about simple technologies, become empowered by success; that basic things can be taken into their own hands, that by thinking out of the square and relying on their group or their fellow villagers, then positive outcomes become possible. Good ideas and facilitators produce cooperation, team work and develop collective outcomes.

People will see the need to stride out more and become active in local crisis zones as we don't have to go overseas, it is here. The industrially hollowing out suburban sprawls of

Elizabeth in the northern suburbs of Adelaide and down south from Tonsley Park to McLaren Vale, the western suburbs and regional centres like Murray Bridge, Whyalla and Port Augusta. The locations under duress, start there, engage your locals. Steve Cran's 'ecowarriors' are impressive as a means to harness castoff communities with the most minimal of resources, or government funds – the less bureaucracy the better in fact, the poorest are the happier without it.

There is and will be more unemployed youth, so Youth-Work caps on. There will be increasing ravages upon the environment, the working class, on its unions and representatives, upon renewable energies, degrading government services and punitive social control strategies applied across whole communities of Indigenous peoples, our workers, families with children, the elderly, refugees, disabled and other disadvantaged groups. False austerity is an economic war that will in turn create only more homelessness, domestic and social violence, more untreated illness and increasing levels of mental illnesses as our old economy and its attendant social cohesion unravels as they are beginning to right now. Ravages will progressively cascade down and degrade society and nature further. The destructive process is in flow with the current government's lies and its savage false austerity, its dispassionate and regressive social, environmental and economic policies.

The industrial and investment capital of transnational corporations aside from coal, gas, oil and minerals is moving away from Australia, creating significant economic and social distress in the most affected areas like Geelong, Portland and Elizabeth. The distress will have more than a trickling down effect. At the same time foreign investment capital is buying into our housing and property markets that adds little to local economies, but further marginalises locals from housing and range, and advancing so called 'free trade agreements' are set to increasingly ravage our economy. Read economy as people, free trade as doublespeak. Straight Economists will call this a 'necessary restructuring', the market 'correcting itself' as if such deifying of the market makes equilibrium theorising true whilst ignoring the growing mental angst that is descending upon whole communities. Not their field they'll say, - isn't that for social workers or families themselves, or psychologists, the police?

Bill Mollison, co-originator of permaculture, once told us scoldingly that a third world woman villager would readily adopt innovative suggestions for water management because life depended on it, whilst a Westerner like a non-indigenous Australian would think about the pros and cons while picking up a takeaway. We are a lot closer to scenarios of desperate times than we think. We are distracted and deluded by a monopolised and corporate media, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*, but the modern examples of casting off communities in places like Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Spain, Portugal and happening in Ukraine are foreboding. Australians will be treated no differently to Continentals. We have to think like that villager and get acting. At least we have warning of what to expect.

A new paradigm struggling to arise is based on ecology not capitalist economics - a dead end, a literal killing thing - there is plenty of evidence. This new paradigm is an

antithesis to the current insane world system based on infinite economic growth attendant with its social inequalities and ecocidal trajectory.

A new paradigm contains real direct democracy, with inclusive participatory discussions about the problems of food and water security that is ultimately the type and amount of energy used to sustain a non-growth economy. E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* proposed ways for economics on small, localised sustainable scales by using appropriate technologies. Such an approach entails a participatory decision-making democracy, with manageable and inclusive processes. The emerging models are to be found in the progressive economies in South America. In Argentina workers have occupied economically abandoned industrial infrastructure like factories and made them profitable. Localised communal councils as exist in Venezuela exhibit how decisions are made directly and democratically on allocation of capital resources and the management of significant public revenues. Increasingly so as well in the backwaters of decaying industrialised centres such as in the United States where Geoff Lawton entices with his depiction of opportunity for sustainable water powered appropriate industry in rust belt Holyoke, Massachusetts, USA. Currently standing in the way of that seems insurmountable, the primacy of corporate private property. What could a future be if such means of production were in the hands of the producers, like the people of *Marinaleda* in the southern Sierra Sur Mountains of Spain with their worker and housing cooperatives, community assemblies and a local cash crop economy?

Smaller human scaled worker and consumer cooperatives, and permaculture strategies are both old and newer ideas that are significant contributions to this new paradigm. These positive objectives that have history, are locally feasible and achievable. The recent default of a significant Mondragon cooperative in the Basque region, *Fagor Electrodomésticos Group*, was because it became too big, entered the global white goods market and fell vulnerable to economic crisis in Spain. Smaller is better. The current disastrously failing system doesn't deliver. It's too big. Bottom up strategies are the answer, to change the model at local and community level by growing a social-environmental political-economy, by deepening participatory democracy in the immediate decisions that affect us like water, food, shelter and energy. The base of Maslow's needs-hierarchy is surely the commons of our freedom for if we cannot control these essentials we will be lost.

Real democracy requires cooperation around universally acquired ethics and values. It is the obvious social and political requirement of a whole system designed to care for the living earth, the peoples upon it and that understands the balancing required. We have to demand more democracy everywhere by pointing out its growing absence, as young people are not being offered a liveable future. The urban forest/city farm concept is a model premised for a future typified by hyper-expensive fossil fuels, a future that may have intentionally powered down to attempt to alleviate and cope with the most likely end run of a catastrophic climate. Or, as a society that has had no choice anyway, and that has been subjected to cascading economic, social, political and environmental cataclysms. The concepts of sustainability therefore are essential.

The fundamentals of classical economics that underlie current imperial politics, therefore of whole societies and cultures ultimately determines the social dynamics, well being and mental health of those population impressed upon. Cohesion and well-being would be more possible with physical production and social reproduction systems that are democratic, ecologically sane and socially useful. This is about which values ought to prevail, human or corporate? The debate about virtue is over.

Such a future is about all 'city farm kids', our children's children, all now and future young people from the entire human diversity of cultures for whom we must bequeath more than just hope. Is it revolutionary to want the de-carbonisation of economy, to adopt a non- growth ethic of earth stewardship, to transform moribund politic to focus on the needs of its most vulnerable constituents, a vulnerability extending now to the whole planet that we inhabit. We must collectively go beyond Pythagoras to engage the double crisis' of capitalism - and all of its woes - and catastrophic Global Warming to claim like Naomi Klein suggests, that

"We can create millions of living-wage jobs in public transit and in renewable energy, in reimagining our cities, we can improve our services, if we take this crisis seriously, if we engage in this battle of ideas."

It is past time to dissent loudly for the alternatives in this battle of ideas. We have to come out of our gardens, our workshops and places, out of our offices and classrooms to go out into our communities and do it. Change society.

*City Farm Kids names changed for confidentiality.