

# Chapter 13

## HUMAN RIGHTS, JUSTICE

The famous United Nations Declaration of Human Rights represented an admirable and comprehensive code of conduct for mankind. If it had been respected globally over recent decades, we would not have witnessed the terrible wide-ranging assaults on humanity described in Part One. These assaults have been mounted worldwide, by elites sustained by their money system - capitalism. Alternative World would supplant that system, and thus clear the field for the establishment and consolidation of the full range of human rights everywhere.

### Rights of individuals

The following more important rights listed in the UN Declaration, Articles 3 to 21, would all be confirmed by the introduction of Alternative World: the right to life, liberty and security of the person, the right to equality, freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association; Freedom of movement and residence, freedom from arbitrary arrest, exile, detention, torture and slavery; freedom from arbitrary interference in privacy, family, home or correspondence; the right to participate in government. All these rights would be brought to life and given real meaning: for instance, in the latter case, over and above it being a right, every citizen would be actively encouraged, and expected, to play his/her part in all levels of government (as explained in Chapter 10).

Similarly, the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights listed in Articles 22 to 27 of the UN Declaration would also be fully implemented, including the following: the right to social security; the right to work; the right to rest and leisure; the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, including food, clothing, housing and medical care; the right to education. Again Alternative World would provide an added dimension to these rights. For example, 'work', which could have many meanings, would be firmly defined as a normal, expected, societal activity in a context of total equality.

### Justice among citizens

In today's world citizens' attitudes to society can be defined as 'battening down the hatches' in regard to private property, looking the other way and hoping not to get involved in regard to wrong-doing in public, and leaving it to the police to sort out misdeeds of all kinds, usually without success. In fact, both today's police and judiciary have become increasingly fallible and unpopular, and represent little more than alibis for societies' failures to organise themselves equably. Furthermore, both judiciaries and police forces are often staffed and controlled by discredited and usually harsh elites.

In Alternative World, the elimination of money, private property and weapons would bring about fundamental changes for the better in human relationships. *Above all, primitive instincts, such as 'What I have I hold', would be replaced by a cooperative sense of shared responsibility for all aspects of living - engendered by human equality and the common ownership of everything except small personal belongings.* A totally fresh approach would be based on the concept of 'society looking after itself' in the light of centuries-old morality relating to generally good behaviour. This natural morality, instinctive for the great majority of mankind unless distorted by evil influences, is in fact enshrined in the tenets of the world's great religions.

Thus the attitude of the vast majority of citizens would become one of valuing and caring for every part of their jointly-owned environments. Every citizen's instinctive outlook would be to watch out for potential 'slippage' by fellow humans into wrongdoing of any kind. In these ways, damage to or deterioration of environments would be minimised, and many minor or worse crimes prevented before they occurred.

To emphasise its determination that every member of society should be answerable only to themselves and each other, Alternative World would not maintain either police or judiciary.

The only arbiters of human behaviour would be the local representative councils, which, being constantly replenished by random selection, would be held in the same esteem as the well-tryed jury systems of today. The importance of 'popular participation' even in today's context was underlined by one of the few open-minded and well-respected UK judges, Lord Scarman, when writing an obituary tribute to another, Lord Devlin:

It was basic to his thinking that the true criterion of sound law was whether or not it achieved justice. He saw justice not as some legal concept to be defined by lawyers, but as a requirement set by society which the law must meet. At the end of the day, society - that is to say the opinion of ordinary men and women - should decide what is or is not just.<sup>4</sup>

A form of society akin to that of Alternative World was envisaged in the 1887 prophetic novel, by the US writer Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000-1887*, in which he wrote:

We have next to no legislation - we have nothing to make laws about. Our society's fundamental principles settle for all time the strifes and misunderstandings which in your day called for legislation. Fully 99 percent of laws then concerned the definition and protection of private property, and the relations of buyers and sellers, neither of which now exist beyond personal belongings. With no private property to speak of, no business disputes, no real estate to divide nor debts to collect, there remains no civil business for lawyers. Defendants in criminal cases pleading guilty are punished, those pleading not guilty are still tried. Law as a special science is obsolete; it was a system of casuistry which the elaborate artificiality of the old order required to interpret it; everything touching the relations of men to one another is now much simpler.<sup>5</sup>

The whole new range of circumstances in Alternative World would eliminate practically all temptations and opportunities for wrongdoing. More positively, it would make universally available both long term education, and numerous opportunities for cultural and physical activities, which would provide the best antidotes to any criminal tendencies. However, whenever any forms of crime were committed, it would be the responsibility of those present at, or with knowledge of, the incidents, to make 'citizen arrests', obtain statements from witnesses, and take the culprit before the local council of representatives. Since these councils would consist of some 50 full-time members, they could well appoint a 'sub-committee' of 10 or 12 jurors as quickly as possible, while memories were still fresh, to hear the evidence. Those brought before such juries could depend on being considered innocent until proved guilty. In the event of guilt, the death penalty would never be an option, and every effort would be made to minimise both the number and duration of incarcerations. Preferably, alternative, non-custodial sentences would be imposed. These could include exposure to ridicule by fellow citizens or workmates by inclusion of portrait photographs in 'rogues galleries', or simple fines in the form of subtraction of points from the culprit's personal account within the citizen computer.