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The road to utopia a study of John Stuart Mill's social thought

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CHAPTER 7

Epilogue

In the previous chapters I have only criticized Mill's views when I thought it would help to explain them. I have tried to explain Mill's views on his own terms and the success or failure of this study should be judged in the light of this attempt. Should we stop here? There is always a good argument for detachment in an academic study, but does Mill not provoke us to make a more personal comment? If you think of Mill as a gentle liberal and 'rather an old woman' there may be no reason for this.¹ Mill, however, was a radical with a definite view of what should (and would) happen to society in the future. His prophecy has not come true, yet many of his views remain topical. Mill provokes; at least he has provoked me to compare his ethical pre-conceptions with my own anticipations of the future.

This chapter has been called an epilogue rather than a conclusion, because this comparison can only provide some personal answers, accepted by some, rejected by others. In the following pages I shall discuss three propositions which are derived from Mill's thought. Because they represent central issues in his thought my comment can only be provisional. In discussing them in the light of actual problems I can only touch on these problems and cannot deal with them in a systematic manner. Nevertheless I hope that the reader will justify my attempt at illustrating the topical aspects of Mill's social thought. The more so, because a discussion of these propositions leads up to the important question whether we should be on the road to Utopia. In my opinion we owe Mill an answer to this question. I hope that my personal and provisional answer may provide a fitting end to this study.

The three propositions are:

1. *Liberty of action and thought will activate moral progress, because it allows a creative minority to experiment with a new Art of Living.*²
2. *'what is economically needed is a better distribution, of which one indispensable means is a stricter restraint on population'*³
3. *A better organisation of society cannot be achieved without the moral improvement of its members.*

1. The first proposition was discussed in chapter two and in subsequent chapters we have seen how it determined the character of Mill's elitism. This proposition rests on two assumptions. In the first place that the existence of an élite is an irreducible fact of social life. The truth of this assumption may be granted, but if we want to make a criticism of Mill's proposition in this respect, it is that he paid too much attention to the vulnerability of the élite and too little attention to other groups of men. Mill saw a nonconformist élite as the victim of an intolerant and conformist multitude. In our type of society there is more reason to draw attention to a situation where a creative minority dominates the multitude.

The second assumption is that it is possible to reach an impartial judgment of social problems and that the creative minority is particularly fitted to make this judgment, because it is not influenced by political or economic interests. It is this assumption in particular which must be critically examined in the light of our present day experience, before we can know whether intellectual freedom will automatically further the common good.

Our economic system has a great need for the bright and the creative, and intellectuals may easily become instruments of technocratic power and hurt the interests of the less gifted. Industrial societies have a great demand for highly skilled workers and education has become the predominant factor in social mobility. There is still a great demand for unskilled and semi-skilled work, but the demand may diminish if we are to have computerized industries. Will these workers be fit for the new jobs which can be offered to them? Or do we have to reckon with the fact that (say) 20% of the potential labour force can eat, but no longer work, and that the future will bring a new version of the *panem et circenses*? Michael Young has described a utopia where everyone is rewarded according to his talents. It is the type of society in which if you are young and talented you will get very far, and if you are old or mediocre you are a second class citizen. A second class citizen will not be bullied in the enlightened atmosphere of 'meritocracy', he will be patronized.⁴

Some years ago a Leyden-team of sociologists undertook a study of the problem why Dutch working class children are so little represented in secondary schools and universities. Van Heek, the leader of the team, offers efficiency and social justice as reasons for justifying this research. He writes: 'The significance of an efficient flow in education is not only accentuated by the principle of justice, but also by social necessity: the necessity

to use the existing potential of talents as efficiently as is possible.'⁵ Will these principles — social justice and efficiency — suffice in the present situation? *The Rise of the Meritocracy* is a social satire and Van Heek may be right when he remarks that there need be no fear for meritocracy yet.⁶ What if the recommendations of Van Heek and his team will solve the problem they set out to study? Suppose we can select the talented children from all the different backgrounds with maximal efficiency? Then we can expect the formation of an immutable social arrangement based on the degree of education an individual will get. In such an arrangement the danger is imminent that the bright will exploit the dull. A situation which will promote efficiency but hardly social justice. This is a somewhat far-fetched speculation, but it may help us to treat the plea for equal educational opportunities for everyone with care. Or rather we should see this plea in the light of equality and justice.

Mill regarded it as the mission of the creative minority to criticize existing social arrangements and to suggest better alternatives. The dilemma of a present day critic seems to be at first sight that he must choose between co-operation and protest, neither of which will make his criticism effective. It seems to me that the protesting critics who do not wish to take any responsibility for the economic and social system as we have it, do not make their task any easier by claiming too much. The postures and ideals of many radical thinkers today show nothing more than the alienation of the intellectual in our society. The legacy of the Romantics which is apparent in many radical critics has much to do with this alienation. 'Ideological individualism' (as Oerlemans calls it) was an attitude characteristic of the Romantics.⁷ In its pure and undiluted form it urges the individual to liberate himself from the shackles of society by dedicating himself to the pursuit of beauty and creation. Many radical critics have done nothing more than to socialize the claims of the Romantics. Have these critics asked themselves whether other people want freedom on the condition that the entire social fabric must be put in jeopardy in the interest of creative freedom? It may be of interest to note what is involved in this ideal of liberation by discussing H. Marcuse's *Essay on Liberation*.

In *An Essay on Liberation* Marcuse writes that man must find 'a new sensibility' which will turn the production of quantity into the production of quality. The satisfaction of our material needs is no longer our principal problem. 'What is now at stake are the needs themselves. At this stage, the question is no longer: how can the individual satisfy his own needs without hurting others, but rather: how can he satisfy his needs without hur-

ting himself, without reproducing, through his aspirations and satisfactions, his dependence on an exploitative apparatus which, in satisfying his needs, perpetuates his servitude?'⁸ We must learn to liberate our consciousness from the exploitative forms of science and technology. Then we will effect the 'Emergence of a new Reality Principle: under which a new sensibility and a desublimated scientific intelligence would combine in the creation of an *aesthetic ethos*.'⁹ If we accept this ethos we shall be able — through the mastery of form over content — to have a world of quality instead of one of quantity. 'Form is the negation, the mastery of disorder, violence, suffering, even when it presents disorder, violence, suffering. This triumph of art is achieved by subjecting the content to the aesthetic order.'¹⁰ This subjection of content to form is the supreme goal, and only when this goal is fulfilled shall man be free. 'The concept of the primary initial institutions of liberation is familiar enough and concrete enough: collective ownership, collective control and planning of the means of production and distribution. This is the foundation, a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the alternative: it would make possible the usage of all available resources for the abolition of poverty, which is the prerequisite for the turn from quantity into quality: the creation of a reality in accordance with the new sensitivity and the new consciousness.'¹¹

What impossible demands on man are made in the interests of Utopia. A utopia on Marcuse's conditions can only become possible when all men become creative artists and philosophers. But the majority of men has no creative imagination. The average man is content to accept the life which is offered to him. Supposing there was a collective control and planning of the means of production and distribution who would control these means? The new aesthetes, I presume. Then one would have new spiritual despots, who would base their program on their prejudice against vulgarity. They would not be able to transform their aesthetic ethos into a new bond of solidarity between men, for the majority of men would not accept this ethos. It is all very well to write that 'Production would be redirected. . . to the creation of areas of withdrawal rather than massive fun and relaxation.'¹² But people like massive fun and relaxation. To say that they are manipulated and exploited because they like it is simple arrogance. The danger of this spiritual despotism is not very real. The danger is more that this type of criticism will create a climate which is unfavourable for necessary reform.

The substitution of a moral by an aesthetic judgment is very common among members of the creative minority. Confronted by the vulgarity of

the modern world, moved by visions of harmony and beauty many intellectuals and artists experience a certain distaste for the world in which they have to live. It so happens that I share this distaste with them. We must, however, recognize this attitude for what it is: the expression of the *particular* interest of a minority who wants to explore new visions and new knowledge. Hence its members claim the right for the mind to explore new and exciting areas. I am not convinced that the majority of men share this interest. Man is a conservative being that is not interested in originality and novelty for its own sake. Of the majority of men remains true what Durkheim wrote: 'Ainsi, il n'est pas vrai que l'activité humaine puisse être affranchie de tout frein. Il n'est rien au monde qui puisse jouir d'un tel privilège. Car tout être, étant partie de l'univers, est relatif au reste de l'univers; sa nature et la manière dont il la manifeste ne dépendent donc pas seulement de lui-même, mais des autres êtres qui, par suite, le contiennent et le règlent.'¹³ No man is free from society, and the majority of men do not want to be free from society. They want freedom, but not anomic freedom. The creative minority can escape from society into the spiritual world. Or it can try to dictate new norms to society. It is not susceptible to the danger of anomy. This is not so for other men. Change can easily disrupt their established ways of life. Whether it is a change of opinion or of material conditions they tend to be the victims of change.

The conclusion to be drawn from these arguments is that Mill's proposition that intellectual freedom will automatically serve the cause of progress cannot be accepted. There is too close a link between the particular interest of the minority in change and the technical change to which industrial society is subjected. The intellectual and the artist can claim liberty as a natural right, like everybody else, and when his activities are hurtful to the common good he must be prepared to accept a curtailment of his liberty of action and thought, like everybody else.¹⁴

What then should the creative minority do? Should its members accept the developments they disapprove of? Far from it. They have the right to pursue their particular interests (like everybody else), and, moreover, they can claim in some respects an arbitral role. I agree with Cowling that the creative minority should not try to back its slogans with the authority of social science. But he goes too far when he maintains that social science can offer no advice of general validity to society.

It is difficult to see how a modern industrial society can be run without the help of social science. About the nature of economics Marshall wrote:

'It is not a body of concrete truth, but an engine for the discovery of concrete truth.'¹⁵ And the same can be said about social science in general. It can help to translate the ends about which a certain consensus has been reached in the political process into the results that are aimed at. Precisely because the 'invisible hand' has not been very efficient in constituting harmony between the unintentional effects of human actions, social science can be an important instrument for helping to restore the broken line between intention and result.¹⁶ In this sense it can promote the common good.

Should we not go a step further? There is no case, in my opinion, for absolute moral relativism. Mill wrote in the beginning of *Utilitarianism* that there is not 'any school of thought which refuses to admit that the influence of actions on happiness is a most material and even predominant consideration in many of the details of morals, however unwilling to acknowledge it as the fundamental principle of morality, and the source of moral obligation. I might go much further, and say that to all those *à priori* [sic] moralists who deem it necessary to argue at all, utilitarian arguments are indispensable.'¹⁷ It is hard to dismiss this as a specimen of his ruthless propaganda. If you deny that moral considerations have anything to do with human happiness you are reduced to a rather eccentric position. If on the contrary you admit that the happiness of all members of society is an end in life you open the door to practical recommendations on how to further the cause of happiness and you are even bound to criticize attitudes and actions which seriously impair the happiness of certain individuals or groups.

There is no felicific calculus by which we can compute the happiness of one individual against the happiness of another, but it would be against common sense to deny that there are some requirements without which the happiness of the greatest number becomes impossible. Should we not qualify Cowling's criticism and allow for minimal and maximal requirements for the common good and say that utilitarian considerations of some validity can only be admitted in relation to the minimal requirements? Should we not say that there is a case for 'piecemeal social engineering' when it brings about a better fulfilment of these minimal requirements?

The trouble with this argument is of course what should be regarded as minimal requirements. Liberty, equality, security and a due regard for the dignity of the individual seem to me essential requirements for human happiness. But then again it is possible to give these requirements a min-

imal and a maximal interpretation. The definition becomes a bit easier to formulate if we regard these requirements as interdependent: too much equality for instance tends to encroach on liberty. And we can specify the requirements in the following sense: liberty means the greatest measure of personal freedom compatible with the administration of society, equality means first of all equal opportunities, equal political rights and equal justice, and security means security against violence, unemployment, the consequences of illness and the security of personal property. As far as human dignity is concerned the requirement must be maintained in a maximal sense. A human being, whatever his race, sex or social position should be free from discrimination and exploitation, free from all pressures which reduce him or her to a mere object.

In short, Mill's proposition is in the interest of the creative minority and must be rejected as a general truth. Nonetheless the minority can play an important role in promoting the common good, if it interprets the common good in the terms of the needs of all men. The creative minority does not have to choose between co-operation with technocracy and ineffectual protest against it. Its role is to study the effects of human action and to translate these into terms of moral choice. It can tell its fellow citizens what they must do to make their interests in harmony with the common good. The choice itself is part of the political process. In the political process it is entitled to defend its particular interest, but its role as arbiter and adviser ends there. I know this view implies a minimal faith in man as a rational being that can learn to see the connexion between his self-interest and the common good. Whoever doubts this should not turn to Mill as a mentor.

My criticism of Mill's proposition does not seriously impair the value of his message to us. The principle of 'higher' utility should be regarded with distrust, but it did not lead Mill to confuse matters of taste with matters of common concern. And his enthusiasm for noble aspirations had an important positive effect on his social thought, viz. it helped to extend the range of his interests and thus increased the relevance of his thought for our generation. This becomes evident from the second and third proposition.

2. The adoption of the proposition that what we need is a better distribution and a stricter restraint of population, and its implementation by legislation certainly would have negative effects on the rate of economic growth. A static population would mean that the expanding economy would neither have the labourers nor the consumers to sustain expansion.

Automatization may to some extent solve the problem of a lack of labourers, but I doubt whether it will solve it altogether. And in Mill's time there was no question of that. Of course the growth of population cannot be stopped overnight, and a diminishing rate of growth might be an incentive to mechanization which at least in the beginning would ensure the same rate of economic growth as before. Would there not come a time however, when eventually the dwindling rate of population growth would start to act as a brake on economic development? A more equal distribution of property would bring new consumers into the market, and this would have been particularly true for Mill's lifetime. Whether a subsequent increase in demand would be able to replace the demand which automatically increases when the population grows is questionable. And distribution would have a negative effect of its own on economic growth. A drastic (and effective!) redistribution of property might impair the spirit of commercial enterprise. On this matter Mill wrote: 'No doubt, persons have occasionally exerted themselves more strenuously to acquire a fortune from the hope of founding a family in perpetuity; but the mischiefs to society of such perpetuities outweigh the value of this incentive to exertion, and the incentives in the case of those who have the opportunity of making large fortunes are strong enough without it.'¹⁸ Mill was here discussing his proposal for a stiff law of inheritance. We have other means of redistribution at our disposal which will certainly undermine the incentive to earn large incomes. We can increase our taxes on capital and income for instance.

It was much easier for Mill than it is for us to accept the implication of his proposition. Mill was certain that the growth of the population would slow down economic growth anyway. We have learnt that this is not the case. The production of material goods has increased much faster than the population (in the industrial countries that is to say). In fact the increase of material goods since the second world war has been so sensational that the feeling could arise that we were finally entering that economic Eldorado (to quote an expression Keynes used for the world before the war of 1914) where no one needs fear starvation and unemployment and where everyone can expect moderate comfort as his due.

In this situation of spectacular economic growth (das Wirtschaftswunder) the conclusion seemed obvious that material goods could be brought within the reach of everyone. With the help of economic growth a better distribution of wealth could be effected without conflict and with the prospect of greater social harmony in the future. The prospect seemed breathtaking. Pen wrote on this matter: '... growth is a better general means of

allaying the ancient conflict between rich and poor than large-scale and harsh redistribution. . . . A simple calculation shows that drastic redistribution operations — for instance lopping off the excess over the average income of the top 10 per cent of the recipients of income — would provide the average man with an extra income of about 20 per cent; the same effect would be achieved in, say, seven years of uninterrupted growth. There are not enough people to make the operation worthwhile.¹⁹ A more equal distribution we must have, but only in the course of economic growth. One step further and you can say that measures for a better distribution must not endanger future economic growth. This has become the argument of practical politics and we should realize that it means that economic growth has become the overriding end of society.

Pen writes quite rightly that in their incomes-policy 'socialism and liberalism have drawn closer together in their economic ideas'. (ibid.) He means that liberals and socialists have agreed that a sudden and harsh redistribution will not do. What he writes is true in another sense. While the liberals have become more like socialists because they accept government intervention in the economy, the socialists have become more like liberals because they have come to accept the liberal conception of economic growth. In this conception economic growth is seen as a process of beneficial accumulation. The idea that it is better to have more material wealth appeals to common sense and cannot be called specifically liberal. Attached, however, to the idea of beneficial accumulation is the concept of 'countervailing power' and this concept betrays its liberal ancestry.²⁰ According to this concept the conflicts which inevitably occur in the course of the economic process are or rather can be smoothed out, because they counteract each other and thereby create an equilibrium of interests in society. The concept has become even more popular in recent times when people recognized that a fair amount of government intervention was needed to keep the economic machinery in the best possible condition. The government itself has become a countervailing power. It is only a matter of historical justice that it was the liberal Keynes who found the recipe for this mixture of government guidance and *laissez faire*.

It is understandable that Keynes' recipe appealed to men of sober judgment and social conscience. When we manage to make the economy function under optimal conditions we thereby create — according to the conception of economic growth we have just discussed — a climate favourable to social reform. Economic growth ensures that the aims of industrial efficiency and social justice are identical.

fects should be included in our conception of economic growth, these are the effects which have escaped the counterbalance of powers and on these effects we should rivet our attention, if we want to avoid that change will go beyond anybody's capacity for change.

Why should we want economic growth anyway given these prospects? Mill asked the question, and we must — I think — ask the question again. The practical value of this question is that it can help us to reject economic growth as an end in itself. This means that we must consider a scheme of redistribution on its own merits and redistribution becomes an important issue if we decide to include measures against pollution in the cost price of certain products. We must avoid a situation where certain products can only be bought by the rich, like cars for instance. The counterpart of a curtailment of economic growth in the interest of social welfare is a redistribution of the national income. In this sense Mill's proposition is of direct value to our society.

When we are planning for the future, redistribution of resources between rich and poor countries is an even more important issue than redistribution of the wealth within an industrial country. A situation where the rich countries are growing richer and the poor countries comparatively poorer is not conducive to world peace. And peace we must have if humanity is to survive. A redistribution of resources will not bring about peace, but it is an important condition for it.

There is no reason to be optimistic about the economic achievement of the developing countries in the first development decade, 1960-1970. Experts have computed that the rate of growth for developing countries reached the five per cent level at the end of this decade. This average rate conceals, however, considerable differences between the achievements of the developing countries. Moreover, the population has increased at an average of 2.5% a year, thus nearly ruling out the surplus created by economic growth.²⁴ At the same time the industrial economies were growing faster, thereby widening the gap between rich and poor countries. The prospects for the second development decade are not very auspicious. The 1968 UNCTAD-conference in New Delhi ended in an impasse. The only clear promise to be extorted from the rich countries was that they agreed that as from a certain date they would reserve one per cent of their national income for aid to developing countries. Two reports have been published with definite view as to *when* this should take place in the second development decade. The 'Pearson-report' recommends that the devel-

oped countries should increase their resource transfers to a minimum of one per cent of their Gross National Product 'in no case later than 1975'. Official development assistance should reach a level of 0.70 per cent around 1975, and 'in no case later than in 1980'.²⁵ The 'Tinbergen-report' is more radical in its recommendations: the target date for the transfer of one percent must be 1972 of which 0.75 per cent must be financed out of public sources. Towards 1975 0.80 per cent of the transfers must have the nature of a grant.²⁶ Carrière and Verburg have qualified the first report as the feasible and the second report as the desirable one.²⁷ Both qualifications may be questioned. At the moment there is not much chance that the recommendations of the Pearson-report will be fulfilled by the rich countries. This report contains apart from the advice on the level of transfer also a recommendation of a gradual reduction of tariff-barriers. Nor is there any indication that the recommendations of the Tinbergen-report represent the maximum possible effort of the developed countries and will adequately help to reduce the problems of the developing countries.

Under these circumstances the advice that we must make a maximal growth-effort ourselves in order to help the poor countries seems to me positively harmful. In a comment on the Pearson-report Jolly has computed that even with the proposals the report puts forward *'the gap will continue to increase to three or four times its present absolute size* by the end of the century. It may even widen relatively'.²⁸ If the developed countries try to grow as fast as they can, the problem of the rich and the poor countries will be aggravated. At the same time a measure of scepticism is appropriate as to whether in such a situation of hectic growth the rich countries will forget their minor problems in the interest of global social security. Again Mill's proposition is relevant here. Economic growth must not become an end in itself. Schemes for the redistribution of resources or a revision of the division of labour on an international scale must be considered in the light of the minimal requirements of the common good. This may well mean that we will have to take measures which will slow down economic growth in the developed countries.

The value of Mill's proposition is that it forces us to take a second look at economic growth as an end in itself. This means that we must judge the effects of economic growth in the light of the minimal requirements of the common good and try to avoid these effects when they are clearly opposed to these requirements. Even when this means a slowing down of economic growth. It is easier for the individual than for a nation to give up the

rat-race of competition. The connexion between the arms-race and economic growth constitutes a formidable problem.²⁹ It is small solace to know that if the two super-powers cannot end the arms-race and if we (meaning the rest of the world) cannot end our little escalations and proliferations there is no need to discuss any other problems. The problem of humanity will end with a great bang and that will be the end of it. Let us be wildly optimistic for a moment and assume that the problem of global and national security can be solved. Then one problem still remains: our economy must continue to expand to create jobs for our growing population. This brings us to the second part of Mill's proposition.

The population problem in present-day industrial societies is different from that of Mill's time. It is not starvation but overcrowding which confronts us. When we think of pollution we have a vision of smoking factory chimneys. But the urban sprawl in the countryside, the washing-machines, the cars, the organic and inorganic refuse which results from the density of our population constitutes another and perhaps even more serious threat to our physical surroundings. In a country like the Netherlands the time is not far off when we will have to succeed in keeping the population static at all costs. The population problem is a fair illustration of the type of moral choice with which we are confronted. In the course of industrial change people have learnt, by and large, to plan their families. The birth rate has fallen quite considerably in all industrial countries, but so has the death rate. At the moment a Dutch couple which has decided to take a third child will contribute to the growth of the population if their decision is not counteracted by the wish of a great number of other people to have only two children. The counterbalancing effects of change have had a beneficial influence on the behaviour of man, but the effects have not been efficient enough. And the effects may even become counterproductive when a great number of people decide to have a third child rather than to have a fourth car. Then you would have a 'baby-boom'. The solution of our population problem must be made a matter of conscious moral choice. I am convinced that if we manage to stop the growth of our population this will slow down economic growth. It may also mean that we will be in a much better position for dealing with the ill-effects of economic growth. Those who do believe that we cannot stop economic growth nor control the ill-effects may prefer to look at Mill's proposition in this light.

3. The last proposition is that a better arrangement of society cannot be made without the moral improvement of its members.

A friendly critic reading the manuscript of this study while it was still in *statu nascendi* was unpleasantly struck by Mill's insistence on moral reform, moral progress and the superiority of altruism. This insistence on moral ideals would be at the expense of political action. Generally speaking the danger may be granted, but if we only think of the fact that Mill urged the working class to seek political action it is clear that *he* did not succumb to it. I think we should make a different objection against his view of moral progress. Egoism and altruism are too neatly separated in his view. In his effort to remain realistic Mill kept the stern individualistic utilitarianism which he inherited intact and planted his altruistic higher feelings on top of it. This meant that he had a blind spot for social problems susceptible for ad hoc reform. And in our present situation it is difficult to see how you can change an egoistic morality into an altruistic morality. The members of industrial societies may be said to understand their self-interest nowadays. A competitive society where every pressure group has to watch its interests and has to bargain for them does not create an atmosphere conducive to improvement of ties of solidarity beyond these groups. And in another sense Mill's view of moral progress does not help us. For while we must extend the range of our sympathies we also must keep our interests in sight. To suggest that in order to make new and unaccustomed moral choices we must sacrifice part of our interests seems impracticable. We must learn to see these moral choices as belonging to interests which transcend our interests, as we have conceived them before.

These objections must be granted. Yet Mill's view contains an element of special merit. Altruism may be rather a silly word, but it draws attention to the fact that we must make a special moral effort to extend our range of sympathies. Take the aid to developing countries. In a vague general way it may be said that aid should be given in the interest of world peace. It is very difficult to argue the case that the aid is really in the interest of the developed countries. These countries are becoming more self-sufficient and more powerful every day, the effects of aid are uncertain and will only work in favour of global security in the long run. Why should they not ignore the poverty and hunger of the Third World? This is a shortsighted view, but it takes a special effort and a keen sense of human values to see the link between our sympathies and our interests in this case. And there is another element which is very valuable in Mill's view. Mill insisted that the new moral choices must be translated into norms which are accepted by every member of society (even when he disobeys them). Take the population problem. If we are to relinquish the process of muddling through which we have adopted so far, we must have a clear norm which says that

it is anti-social to have more than a certain number of children. Reading an interview with a worthy member of Dutch society I was struck by his saying that he never had any trouble with his eight children, because his was a family which stuck to the rules. He could not have said this if there was a norm against large families. The only alternative to creating new norms, to creating a new consensus is bureaucratic control when the population problem becomes really pressing. We have already enough bureaucratic control in our lives. I would rather plead for the creation of a new consensus with which we can meet new situations.

Great men will be criticized, small men will be ignored. I hope my criticism of Mill's propositions will be seen as a tribute to his greatness. I believe that our social criticism should be radical and sound, and in both respects Mill sets an example. One question still remains to be answered: Do we need to plan for Utopia? I believe that we have no alternative, if we wish to fulfil the requirements of the common good. While we find ourselves in unprecedented situations we must plan our moral objectives, we must know for ourselves in what kind of society we want to live in the future. We shall never reach Utopia. A frightfully dull place to live in anyway. But we must plan for it.

NOTES CHAPTER 7.

- 1 G. Catlin: *The Story of the Political Philosophers*, pp. 402-3.
- 2 Mill never used the term 'creative minority'. As I have explained, his idea of an élite as a Spiritual Power is vague and diffuse. I have stressed one of the qualities of the Spiritual Power (viz. creativity), because I believe there is a potential conflict of interests between the creative and the non-creative. In any other sense my idea of an élite is — within the scope of the discussion of the first proposition — as vague and as diffuse as Mill's.
- 3 *Principles*, Coll. Works III, book IV, ch. 6, p. 755.
- 4 M. Young: *The Rise of the Meritocracy, 1870-2033*.
- 5 F. van Heek: 'Het Verborgen Talent', *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, afd. Letterkunde, n.s. vol. 31, no. 4, p. 5 (my translation).
- 6 Van Heek, o.c. p. 19, He makes a distinction between ready fitness for school and potential fitness. His conclusion is that there are no reserves of ready fitness among working class children, but he suggests that there is a potential fitness which is left unused.
- 7 J. W. Oerlemans: *Autoriteit en Vrijheid, 1800-1914*, p. 10.
- 8 H. Marcuse: *An Essay on Liberation*, p. 4.
- 9 *ibid.* p. 24.
- 10 *ibid.* p. 43.
- 11 *ibid.* p. 87.