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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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DOCUMENT 1-1001/82

REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Regional Policy
and Regional Planning

on the problems of urban concentration in the Community

Rapporteur: Mr W. GRIFFITHS

On 3 November 1981 the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Miss Hooper on inner city problems (Doc. 1-399/81) to the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment for its opinion pursuant to Rule 49 of the Rules of Procedure.

On 13 October 1981 the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Pearce on the economic and social problems of Merseyside (Doc. 1-556/81/rev.) to the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning as the committee responsible pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure.

On 21 January 1982 the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution by Mr Griffiths and others on the problems of conurbations in the Community (Doc. 1-909/81) to the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment for its opinion pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure.

On 13 September 1982, the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Lord Bethell and others on the regeneration of certain areas of London (Doc. 1-507/82/rev.) to the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment for its opinion pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure.

On 11 October 1982, the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Diligent and others on special emergency aid and an economic and social rescue programme for the Roubaix-Tourcoing conurbation (Doc. 1-636/82) to the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment for opinions pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure.

On 14 October 1982 the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Kyrkos on Community action on behalf of regions of Athens affected by severe problems (Doc. 1-735/82) to the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning as the committee responsible and to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection and the Committee on Budgets for their opinions pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure.

On 15 November 1982, the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Ms Quin and Mr Griffiths on regional disparities at the level of social infrastructure (Doc. 1-776/82) to the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment for its opinion pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure.

On 26 November 1981, the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning decided to draw up a report on the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs Hooper and appointed Mr Griffiths rapporteur.

The committee considered the draft report at its meetings of 18/19 October and 3 November 1982 and at its meeting of 26 November 1982 adopted the motion for a resolution by 10 votes to none with three abstentions.

The following took part in the vote : Mr De Pasquale, chairman, Mr Griffiths, rapporteur; Mr Cardia (deputizing for Mr Kyrkos); Mr Gendebien; Mr Harris, Mr Hutton, Mr Kellett-Bowman, Mr Muntingh (deputizing for Mr Glinne); Mr Nikolaou, Mr Pöttering; Mr J.D. Taylor, Mr Von der Vring and Mr Ziagas (deputizing for Mr Puletto).

The opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment is attached.

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Opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment

The Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the problem of urban concentration in the Community.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Miss HOOPER on inner-city problems (Doc. 1-399/81),
- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr GRIFFITHS and others on the problems of conurbations in the Community (Doc. 1-909/81),
- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Ms QUIN and Mr GRIFFITHS on regional disparities at the level of social infrastructure (Doc. 1-766/82)
- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr L. KYRKOS on Community action on behalf of the regions of Athens affected by severe problems (Doc. 1-735/82);
- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr PEARCE on the economic and social problems of Merseyside (Doc. 1-556/81/rev.),
- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Lord BETHELL and others on the regeneration of certain inner areas of London (Doc. 1-507/82/rev.),
- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr DILIGENT and others on special emergency aid and an economic and social rescue programme for the Roubaix-Tourcoing conurbation (Doc. 1-636/82).
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning (Doc. 1-1001/82),

- (a) aware that the disparity in prosperity between the peripheral regions of Europe and the urban concentrations is steadily increasing,
- (b) recognizing that the migration of the active population from the peripheral regions to the industrial conurbations weakens the development potential of the peripheral regions and seriously overburdens the infrastructure in the industrial conurbations,
- (c) concerned that excessive economic activity in conurbations leads to greater burdens, particularly on the social infrastructure, whereby central and local government must affect additional expenditure, although the quality of life of the people living there remains inadequate, with consequent accommodation, education and health problems, youth unemployment, vandalism, chaotic traffic conditions, etc.,
- (d) fearing that insufficient account has been taken so far of the direct connection between the dynamic force and power of attraction of urban concentrations and the relative backwardness of assisted areas and peripheral regions,
- (e) aware that a small number of major cities in the Community area are threatened with economic and social impoverishment and the decline of their inner areas, in addition to the excessive burden on their infrastructure,
- (f) recognizing that the problems facing the various cities of Europe are different in degree, quality and kind and must therefore be tackled in different ways,
- (g) recognizing that the decline of the centres of major cities leads to urban spread and the loss of the agricultural land and green belts around the cities,
- (h) recognising that the Community has taken limited steps to have local authorities recognized as official partners in discussions on cities and regional development;
- (i) recognizing the limited activity of the European Investment Bank in financing programmes to rehabilitate run down urban areas;

1. Calls on the Commission to carry out studies into the financial and social effects and the environment protection costs arising from the over-development of urban concentrations;
2. Calls on the Commission to evaluate the losses in development potential in the peripheral regions and the assisted areas arising from the migration in particular of the active population from these Community areas to the conurbations;
3. Calls on the Commission to assess the point at which the advantages of economic concentration in large conurbations are outweighed by the disadvantages of excessive burdens on infrastructure, etc.,
4. Calls on the Commission to assess the scale and structure of inter-regional mobile investment capital and suggest ways this can be more positively encouraged to go to the disadvantaged regions;
5. Regards the regeneration of the inner cities affected by chronic impoverishment in some of the Member States as one of the objectives to be pursued within the framework of the Community's regional policy;
6. Regrets that there are insufficient financial resources available in the non-quota section of the ERDF to assist in this task of regeneration in those cities which are not in areas designated for ERDF assistance;
7. Calls on the Commission to investigate the impact of new transport and communications technologies and 'social infrastructure' provision on the choice of location made by business and industry;
8. Calls on the Commission to develop integrated action programmes for inner city areas in assisted regions in consultation with Member States and municipal authorities;
9. Calls on the Commission to strengthen links between the Directorate-Generals of Regional Policy, Social Affairs and the Environment so that the Commission can produce guidelines for action in cities and deprived urban concentrations ensuring that all resources are coordinated, and programmes regularly reviewed as to their effectiveness;

10. Calls on the Commission to establish an advisory body with representation from the European Parliament, Commission, and the municipal authorities organized through the Council of European Municipalities and the International Union of Local Authorities) to meet regularly to discuss urban problems, explore solutions and the progress of programmes to overcome them;
11. Calls on the Commission:
 - (a) to extend to other cities and deprived urban concentrations in assisted regions 'integrated programmes', particularly where there are local initiatives to overcome economic and social depression;
 - (b) to develop a 'non-quota' proposal for the urban renewal and growth of cities and urban concentrations within assisted regions;
 - (c) to contribute towards a research and experience programme to allow small scale initiatives which are considered to be of value across the Community;
 - (d) in the event of a significant increase in the size of the ERDF to develop a 'non-quota' proposal for the urban renewal of cities and deprived urban concentrations in the Community as a whole;
12. Calls on the Commission to promote, through the European Investment Bank, financial programmes comprising interest subsidies in order to improve living conditions in the rundown areas of big cities.
13. Calls on the Commission to draw up a report on current provisions governing health care in the disadvantaged regions and deprived inner city areas of the EEC with a view to evaluating the possible correlation between the existence of poor standards of health care and the traditional indicators of regional underdevelopment.
14. Instructs its President to forward this motion for a resolution and explanatory statement to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT1. Introduction

1. The number of Community citizens living in major conurbations in Europe increases from year to year and at present amounts to approximately 20%. There are wide fluctuations within the Community. For example, in Belgium some 11% of the inhabitants live in cities of this type, in the United Kingdom 28% and in the Federal Republic as many as 31%¹.

The social problems connected with demographic concentration also vary widely from Member State to Member State. Riots and protest movements have so far occurred mainly in those Member States with the highest urban population density.

3. Urban demographic concentration goes hand in hand with economic concentration, especially in the tertiary sector.

That gives rise to additional financial, social and environment protection costs in conurbations which are borne by central and local government, although estimates of these additional costs vary according to the methods, criterion and time period in any particular urban study.

4. The substantial public funds invested in the social infrastructure of the conurbations have so far been unable to prevent a steady decline in the quality of life in urban concentrations. This trend is unlikely to change in the near future.

5. Despite a recognizable reverse trend (back to the land), the economic attractiveness of large urban concentrations in Europe remains constant for employees and, in particular, for investors. Here too, this trend will continue in the foreseeable future, at least until supplementary measures are taken.

6. The rural areas, and in particular the peripheral regions of the Community, are weakened by this phenomenon in two respects: they lose the dynamic part of

¹ for comparison: Denmark 28%, France 19%, Netherlands 16%, Italy 13%

their population which migrates to the cities, and are thus deprived of part of their future socio-economic development potential.

7. The traditional regional policy pursued so far by the Member States and the Community has largely concentrated on granting aid to the less-favoured rural areas and to areas with declining industries.

Only the first steps of a systematic policy of aid to cities in need or urban renewal have been taken. Integrated development programmes, such as those drawn up for Naples and Belfast, are a step in the right direction but are not yet an integral part of Community regional policy or even of national government economic policies.

8. To date, only France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have pursued a policy of directing the economic and population development of urban concentrations. However, the methods used in these Member States to direct regional investment vary so widely that there is little point in drawing comparisons between them. The instruments used to direct investment in conurbations include :

- administrative permits,
- fiscal disincentives, and
- project-based control.

At Community level, although the deglomeration policies of the various Member States have been thoroughly highlighted¹ the possibilities of a Community regional control policy are analysed in no more than a superficial manner and against the background of the Community's current economic crisis.

9. A number of cities in the Community, such as Liverpool, Belfast, Glasgow, Lille-Roubaix, Liege, Dortmund, etc., are suffering from structural problems caused by excessive dependence on declining industries (iron and steel), shipbuilding, textiles, etc.,)

¹ See Commission of the European Communities, Deglomeration policies in the European Community, a comparative study, Regional Policy series, No. 18 (1980)

2. Possibilities for a deglomeration policy in the Community

10. The disparity in prosperity and economic activity in the Community increases steadily from year to year¹. This process, which allows incomes in urban concentrations to rise at an ever increasing rate so that the disparity between them and those in the peripheral regions of the Community necessarily increases, seems irresistible.

11. The conventional regional policies pursued by the Member States and the Community have at best been able to slow down the regional concentration of investment, production and incomes but not bring it to a halt.

12. The dynamic centres of economic development are in the Community's urban concentrations and not in its assisted regions which are characterized either by a dominant agricultural sector or by declining industrial sectors. It appears that the problem facing the assisted areas is not their own backwardness but the powerful attraction and immense dynamic force of the conurbations located in the central areas of the Community.

13. The growth of great conurbations goes hand in hand with industrialization. Industrial and service undertakings and public authorities have caused the spatial concentration of economic activity by their choice of location and/or their investment decisions.

14. In contrast to the traditional theory that undertakings decide on their location largely on the grounds of cost, today a multitude of factors such as access to information, good communications and 'social infrastructure' are of importance. They are at the root of the great attractiveness of the major agglomerations.

15. In the interest of a more effective regional policy - which should no longer be regarded as a method of patching up an unsuccessful industrial policy - the Commission is therefore urged to investigate the impact of new transport and communication technologies and 'social infrastructure' provision on undertakings' choice of location.

¹ See 'The Influence of Peripheral and Central Locations on the Relative Development of Regions' (Centrality, peripherality and EEC Regional Development Study financed by the Commission and the UK Department of Industry)

3. Advantages and disadvantages of agglomerations

16. Large conurbations offer advantages to their inhabitants, but there are of course, also disadvantages. The effect of these advantages and disadvantages on the various social groups is not the same.

17. Advantages for investors include :

- availability of suitable labour, and
- direct and rapid contacts with suppliers, customers, authorities, banks, etc.,

The employee enjoys the following advantages in a conurbation :

- greater choice of jobs,
- better opportunity for training and
- a comparatively higher income.

As a rule, the inhabitants of conurbations suffer adverse effects :

- deteriorating quality of life as a result of atmospheric pollution (e.g., in Athens), traffic noises, traffic jams, lack of suitable living space and
- high living costs, partly as a result of higher rents and higher prices for consumer goods, etc.,

Central and local government - i.e., the taxpayer - must pay more to overcome the disadvantages caused by conurbations.

- Increased expenditure on extensions to the (permanently overburdened) urban transport infrastructure. Because of the high cost of land, increased capacity for local urban transport (underground railways, tunnels, bridges, etc.,) can only be achieved at excessive financial cost. The construction of one kilometre of an underground railway costs roughly as much as 150 km of highway in a flat peripheral region of the Community.
- Increased expenditure on investment in social infrastructure (training, hospitals, leisure facilities, etc.,).

- increased expenditure on public safety, since the crime rate is comparatively higher in conurbations.

18. The outcome of this is that :

- the main beneficiaries of the advantages offered by conurbations are the businesses and industries located there;
- the taxpayer bears the brunt of the disadvantages of conurbations in the form of increased expenditure, especially on transport infrastructure and social infrastructure. The consequences of this is that most major conurbations are heavily in debt.

19. Studies have demonstrated that in small towns per capita expenditure on current expenditure and public investment falls initially as the number of inhabitants increases, but then increases excessively in the case of medium-sized and fairly large cities.

The Commission is requested to assess the regional planning implications of this fact and to assess the population levels at which cities provide the best climate for economic development or that creating the problems and burdens that have become associated with large cities.

20. The current state of econometric knowledge prevents us from evaluating accurately the level of the additional infrastructure costs in urban concentrations which fall on the taxpayer. The same is true of expenditure arising from damage to health caused by the conditions in major conurbations.

We do however, have grounds for supposing that in all the Member States these costs are greater than the sum total of national and Community aid granted to support the assisted areas in the Community.

Nor can we calculate the point at which the advantages accruing to agglomerations in the form of reduced costs are offset by the disadvantages arising in the form of additional social costs.

21. The Commission is therefore urged to draw up a detailed analysis of the relationship between the financial gains and losses of agglomerations.

The appropriate conclusions for a future control policy for urban concentrations could then be drawn from the findings of this analysis.

4. Control policies

22. At present the Community does not have a policy designed to help the less-developed regions by reducing the competitive advantage enjoyed by industrial and post-industrial conurbations.

23. A control policy of this nature is pursued nationally in four Member States.

- in France, Agrément approval is required for investment in areas subject to control where the consequent extension of floorspace exceeds a set exemption limit.

In addition, a congestion-differentiated tax is levied on investment.

- In Italy, authorization approval is required for new or additional investment which exceeds a certain level in specific conurbations. Exemption from this rule may be obtained on payment of a tax equal to 25% of the investment costs.

- In the Netherlands, an authorization procedure applies to investment in excess of a certain level in the Rotterdam area. Once authorization has been granted, a tax may be levied on certain investments in this area.

- In the United Kingdom, undertakings must obtain authorization for investments exceeding a certain limit within the areas subject to control.

24. The other Member -states have no policies either to control the development of urban concentrations or to steer investment away from the agglomerations.

25. It should be pointed out at this juncture that the need for deglomeration policies is not identical in all the Member States.

This is particularly true of the Federal Republic of Germany which, unlike France or the United Kingdom, is not characterized by a macro-spatial division in its regional development but has a polycentric pattern of developed and less-developed regions closely adjacent to each other.

26. At Community level, however, we have grounds for describing the Community as displaying a definite pattern of developed and less-developed regions.

27. A band of agglomerations with corresponding development potential stretches from South-East England via North-East France including Paris, Belgium and the Netherlands to the Ruhr and along the Rhine as far as Mannheim. The Po Valley, including Turin and Milan, forms an isolated agglomeration centre.

28. The other Community regions are either 'intermediate regions' or peripheral regions in Community terms.

29. A Community control policy would have to be based on this conception of the Community's regional disparities.

30. The authors of a comparative analysis of deglomeration policies¹ undertaken for the Commission come to the conclusion that the establishment of a common control policy is not expedient at this juncture.

They justify their conclusions as follows :

- there is not enough internationally mobile investment capital for any appreciable long-distance transfer of investment.
- It is feared that investors would move from controlled regions to uncontrolled 'intermediate regions' instead of investing in the less-developed peripheral regions.
- The Community's low economic growth rate, which the authors feel is not likely to improve in the future, reduces the possibilities for a regional displacement policy.
- Future growth potential lies mainly in the tertiary sector (commerce and services, which as a rule cannot be transferred from urban concentrations to peripheral regions). The comparative growth potential of transferable industrial activities is very slight.

¹ Commission of the European Communities : Deglomeration policies in the European Community, A comparative study, Regional Policy Series No 18

² See 'The Influence of Peripheral and Central Locations on the Relative Development of Regions (Centrality, peripherality and EEC Regional Development Study approved by the Commission and the UK Department of Industry)

31. There can be no doubt that the effectiveness of an inter-regional redistribution policy is being curtailed by the current low economic growth rates.

The Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning takes the view that precisely this argument cannot justify the Commission's inactivity in the field of a Community deglomeration policy, particularly since more recent studies show that the peripheral regions are facing even more severe problems.

32. The degree of support given to the regions on a national and a Community scale has not proved sufficient to ensure balanced economic well being across the Community. It is, therefore, imperative that new or expanded initiatives are introduced to encourage the regional economies. The Cambridge study concluded thus in its summary. ('The Cambridge Study inaccessibility.' Page 23 of Summary)².

33. As emphasized in the deglomeration study drawn up on behalf of the Commission, there are certain types of investment which may be regarded as mobile on an inter-regional or international level (Chapter 6.5).

These are in particular industrial investments by private or state-owned undertakings.

34. The Commission is urged to examine the present and future scale - more so than it is now - and structure of such internationally mobile investment which could be positively encouraged in the direction of the regions. In this study, the Commission should take particular account of the scale of mobile investment by state-owned undertakings.

35. Accurate figures for this potential investment capital would provide evidence for the possible expediency of a control policy for agglomerations.

36. In this context it should be emphasized that the possible introduction of a control policy for certain types of investment in urban concentrations must not be seen as an isolated measure but as a supplementary measure to support

¹ Commission of the European Communities: Deglomeration policies in the European Community, A comparative study, Regional Policy series No 18

² See 'The Influence of Peripheral and Central Locations on the Relative Development of Regions' (Centrality, peripherality and EEC Regional Development Study approved by the Commission and the UK Department of Industry)

Community regional policy as part of the ERDF and as a means of reducing the pressure on infrastructure in urban concentrations. On no account could a deglomeration policy replace the existing national and Community regional policies.

5. Renewal of inner-city areas

37. Many cities in the Community are suffering from a decline, the causes of which are complicated and complex. An attempt will be made to identify some of these causes with a view to making a start on solving these problems.

38. One of the most basic features of these cities is the migration of industries from inner-city areas or their decline.

The characteristic feature of cities threatened with decline is that their industries flourished in the first dynamic phase of the industrial revolution in the middle of the last century but now belong to declining sectors (textile industry, shipbuilding, iron and steel, etc.,).

The need to replace them by relocating other sectors there was not recognized for a long time. It is now made more difficult by the fact that industrial zones in inner areas are inadequate or in need of renewal.

The consequence is that many inner-city areas are disfigured by an industrial waste land that requires considerable financial expenditure before it can be utilized for specific purposes.

39. The accommodation built while the industrialization process was going on no longer corresponds to general living standards. In the absence of any planning, industrial and residential zones grew up side-by-side, and in some cases were not kept separate.

In this century, industrial decline and the lack of facilities have turned many of these residential areas into slums.

40. In addition, in a number of Member States trends in property owning resulted in house occupants being deprived of any incentive to maintain the fabric of their rented accommodation. New population patterns have emerged because of the emigration of the young active population and the immigration of foreign workers, in particular from the former colonies.

41. As a result of these developments, we find in the Community today residential areas in urban concentrations characterized by the following features :

- excessively high unemployment levels,
- elderly population,
- immigration of underprivileged workers from the peripheral regions of Europe and the former colonies,
- excessively old property which is inadequate and in some cases unfit for human habitation, with rents so low that the owner frequently has no incentive to maintain the property,
- racial conflicts, brought about mainly by deprivation and alienation, particularly in a time of recession,
- expressions of anger in the form of riots and rebellions against any form of authority which is regarded by those involved as being responsible for the social conditions.

42. Examples of this trend may be seen in the following cities : Liverpool, London, Glasgow, Belfast, Roubaix-Tourcoing, Berlin, Naples, etc.,

The problems in individual cities and Member States may be assessed differently according to the various historical conditions, but as a rule the cause of the problem is identical.

43. In this context it is important to note that the cities affected by the decline of specific parts of their centres generally have a certain amount of planning and financial independence (the United Kingdom, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy) but inadequate resources to tackle their problems successfully.

44. The Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning recognizes that the Commission has already tackled two cases of inner-city problems as part of the 'integrated actions' of the ERDF (Belfast and Naples).

45. The Commission should maintain its efforts to develop truly 'integrated actions' to assist cities with inner city problems and national governments should take positive steps to ensure that financial allocations from the Community should be spent fully and 'additionally' in the cities concerned.

46. It would undoubtedly help if the links already developed in the Commission between, in particular, the Directorate-General for Regional Policy and the Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Employment were strengthened and a small group established to develop guidelines for action in cities to ensure that all resources are coordinated and used sensibly, and that regular reviews of their effectiveness take place.

47. It might be possible, under the aegis of the European Parliament's Regional Policy and Planning Committee to establish an advisory body meeting twice a year with representation from the European Parliament, Commission and the cities (organized through the Council of European Municipalities and the International Union of Local Authorities) to discuss urban problems and the progress of programmes to overcome them.

48. It is extremely difficult at a time of severe financial stringency (unfortunately) to recommend the creation of a new Fund on the eligibility of all cities with inner city problems for the ERDF. If the ERDF was much larger and its Non-quota section the major part of the Fund, then it would be possible to contemplate the latter step. As it is, the best practical hope is to recommend.

- (a) the extension of integrated programmes to other cities in assisted regions, particularly where there is firm evidence of local initiatives, to overcome economic and social depression;
- (b) the development of a Non-quota 'Inner City' programme for cities in assisted regions;
- (c) a Commission backed research and experimental programme to allow for small-scale initiatives which are felt to be of value across the Community.

6. Conclusions

49. The Cambridge study has thus demonstrated conclusively, with the aid of considerable evidence, that the European Community's central and peripheral regions differ markedly in their economic structure, performance and evolution. In particular, it has identified a complex of inter-related economic characteristics which in combination render the inhabitants and firms of the Community's peripheral regions - in Italy, France, the United Kingdom

and Ireland - economically significantly disadvantaged, relative to their counterparts in central regions, Substantially higher aggregate and youth unemployment rates, a growing concentration of unemployed young workers, lower output and regional income per head and per employee, proportionally fewer job opportunities in manufacturing and producer services, with a corresponding greater dependence on agriculture and consumer services, unfavourable and deteriorating manufacturing structures, a general bias towards economic activities which are declining or growing only slowly at the Community level, increasing relative inaccessibility to economic activity because of faster growth in central regions - all these have been clearly identified as highly undesirable characteristics of the Community's peripheral economies. Even apparent relative improvements in peripheral job opportunities and female activity rates are related in this study to growth of possibly marginal consumer services as an alternative to even higher unemployment, or to the filtering-down to certain peripheral regions of older, traditional manufacturing industries whose long-term prospects are likely to be poor.

50. The study thus concludes that while other factors such as differences in national economic performance undoubtedly play some part, relative peripherality and inaccessibility at the Community-wide level does constitute an underlying determinant of the periphery's poor economic performance. In addition, therefore, to any specific national or EEC policies which might be addressed to particular aspects of the peripherality syndrome of economic disadvantage, such as exceptional and rising youth unemployment, or poor and deteriorating manufacturing structures, policies do need to be developed towards offsetting in some way the long-term underlying handicap of marked - and widening - relative peripheral inaccessibility.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Document 1-399/81)
tabled by Miss HOOPER
for entry in the register pursuant to
Rule 49 of the Rules of Procedure
on Inner City Problems

The European Parliament,

- deploring the extent of the violence, destruction and vandalism seen in recent riots in Liverpool, London and Manchester,
 - dismayed that this appears to represent an organized programme of civil disobedience capitalizing on the unemployment problems which affect in particular young people without work experience,
 - concerned at the breakdown in respect for responsible authority as represented by the police force,
1. Calls upon the Commission to give priority to finding solutions for the underlying problems, and to considering in particular needs of inner city black spot areas in formulating new criteria and priorities for the European Regional Development Fund and for the Social Fund and in laying down criteria for the Environment Fund;
 2. Urges the Commission to follow up discussions held in conjunction with the International Union of Local Authorities at the Conference on Inner City Problems held in Liverpool in November 1979 (which highlighted common problems throughout Europe in this respect) by producing an action programme for consideration by Parliament;
 3. Instructs the President to forward this resolution to the Commission at the earliest opportunity.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Document 1-909/81)

tabled by Mr GRIFFITHS, Mrs HOOPER, Mr POTTERING, Mrs BOOT,
Mr Von der VRING, Mr GENDEBIEN and Mrs FUILLET
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure on the
problems of conurbations in the Community

The European Parliament,

- whereas the disparity in wealth between the peripheral regions of Europe and the conurbations is steadily widening,
 - whereas the migration of the active section of the population from the peripheral regions to industrial conurbations is sapping the development potential of the peripheral regions, alienating migrant workers from their homes and families, and seriously overloading the infrastructure of the conurbations,
 - concerned at the fact that severe overloading of the social infrastructure, in particular in the conurbations, is an additional burden on the public purse without always providing an adequate quality of life for the inhabitants of those areas (housing shortages, youth unemployment, vandalism, traffic congestion, etc.),
 - disturbed at the fact that sufficient account has not yet been taken of the direct connection between the dynamism and attraction of the conurbations and the relative backwardness of the peripheral regions,
1. Call upon the Commission to consider whether, to a greater extent than is the case today, a common regional policy dealing with those of larger conurbations in the regions of the Community suffering from increasing industrial decline might be desirable, to deal with such problems as social infrastructure, inner-city renewal, campaign against youth unemployment, etc.;
 2. Calls upon the Commission to consider whether a general Community policy of deglomeration might in fact produce a partial redirection of investment from conurbations to the less-favoured peripheral areas, and whether this might lessen in the long run the load on the conurbations and strengthen the peripheral regions, while recognizing the needs of conurbations in decline or with special problems;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission of the European Communities.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Document 1-766/82)
tabled by Ms QUIN and Mr GRIFFITHS
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure on
regional disparities at the level of social infrastructure

The European Parliament,

- A - having regard to the serious disparities which exist between regions in terms of social infrastructure, particularly as regards the provision of medicinal facilities,
 - B - whereas deprived urban areas are also especially affected by this problem,
 - C - whereas the lack in a given region of hospitals and suitably qualified doctors and nurses inevitably accentuates disparities between death and birth rates in the various regions of the EEC,
 - D - whereas inadequate standards of health care and medical facilities may be an important factor in industries or individuals ceasing to live or work in the regions affected,
1. Undertakes to examine the manner in which the criteria applicable to social infrastructure under the ERDF could be modified with a view to reducing regional disparities between provisions and standards governing health care and thereby furthering industrial and regional development;
 2. Requests the Commission to draw up a report on current provisions governing health care in the regions and deprived inner-city areas of the EEC with a view to evaluating the possible correlation between the existence of poor standards of health care and the traditional indicators of regional under-development.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Document 1-735/82)

tabled by Mr KYRKOS pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure
on Community action on behalf of regions of Athens
affected by severe problems

The European Parliament,

- A. reaffirming its express commitment with regard to the economic convergence of the wealthy and poor regions of the Community,
- B. whereas poverty is not a problem confined to the peripheral regions but is also associated with the decay, inertia and poor living conditions existing within urban centres,
- C. having regard to the motions for resolutions tabled by Miss HOOPER (Doc. 1-399/81) and Mr GRIFFITHS (Doc. 1-909/81) on the problems of conurbations within the Community,
- D. whereas the way in which Greece has developed has led to the concentration in the region of Athens of 34.59% of the population, 47.3% of private investments, 48.81% of jobs in industry and 73.42% of industrial undertakings with more than 100 employees with the result that certain areas are affected by severe problems caused by pollution, the random development of industrial and artisanal activity, the siting of industry in unsuitable areas - particularly in residential areas - the existence of low quality housing and major deficiencies in the technical and, above all, social infrastructure,
- E. having regard to the enormous economic problem with respect to changing living conditions (environmental decay, traffic congestion, chaotic town-planning, absence of an efficient social infrastructure for restructuring and reorganizing production potential and restoring the ecological balance in a large number of the regions of Athens),
- F. having regard to the Commission's proposal, as expressed in the Commission's communication to the Council and in its reply to the Greek memorandum, for a joint study together with the Greek Government with a view to utilizing Community financial resources more appropriately in the region of Athens giving particular attention to the problem of pollution,

1. Calls on the commission

- to carry out at the earliest opportunity a study into the areas affected by problems in the wider region of Athens in cooperation with the competent authorities at local and national level and with any organizations that wish to take part with a view to estimating the size of the problem and drawing up priorities for action,

- to formulate within six months, also in cooperation with the competent authorities, concrete proposals with a view to financing a programme to relocate and reestablish undertakings, close their sites and expropriate existing open spaces; to finance public housing programmes in the region or to relocate inhabitants of the region elsewhere; to finance social construction programmes and programmes to construct multi-story buildings rather than artisanal buildings, in which the craft industry can be concentrated so that employment in particular can be safeguarded thereby preventing the region from being dominated by parasitic tertiary activities;

2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council of Ministers and the Greek Government.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 1-556/81/rev.)

tabled by Mr PEARCE

on behalf of the European Democratic Group

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on the economic and social problems of Merseyside

The European Parliament,

- noting that, although very large sums of public money have, over the years, been expended in the Merseyside area to aid economic recovery, severe economic and social problems remain;
 - believing that public funds could be used more effectively;
 - whilst wanting to see Community criteria established for the provision of European Regional Development Fund assistance, believes that individual treatment is required for the particular problems of certain areas;
1. Urges the Commission to produce within six months an in depth analysis of the economy of the Merseyside area, indicating ways in which the economy may be developed and how public funds could most usefully be applied, paying particular attention to :
 - (i) the long-run historical, geographical, economic and political factors which have led to the area's industrial decline, including more recently the effects of EEC membership, changes in industrial structure, technology and working methods and the relationship between local circumstances and the wider national economy,
 - (ii) the area's reputation as regards industrial relations,
 - (iii) the effects of over-centralization of government in the United Kingdom and the consequent drift of financial, political, industrial and administrative decision-making to London,

- (iv) the contributions which local government and other local organizations could make to the area's recovery,
- (v) the appropriateness of existing schemes to aid industry and commerce in the area,
- (vi) identification of those economic activities which would appear likely to be successful in the area and the steps that would need to be taken to favour them;

2. Instructs the President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 1-507/82/rev.)
tabled by Lord BETHELL, Mr MOORHOUSE, Mr HORD, Mr TYRRELL,
Dame Shelagh ROBERTS, Sir Brandon RHYS WILLIAMS, Mr MARSHALL
and Sir David NICOLSON
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure
on the regeneration of certain inner areas of London

The European Parliament,

- A. reaffirming its commitment to the idea of economic convergence between the Community's rich and poor areas,
 - B. conscious of the fact that the problem of poverty in the Community involves not only its rural areas, but also industrial decay and economic stagnation in the inner cities,
 - C. recognising the important contribution made by the Commission towards the alleviation of urban decay and poverty in the cities of the United Kingdom that fall within the designated Regional Development Areas,
 - D. concerned, however, by the fact that such funds are not available for certain inner areas of London, where industrial decline and long-term unemployment are catastrophic, since London does not fall within a Regional Development Area,
 - E. recognising that in certain parts of London there is tension among some ethnic communities, especially those who suffer most acutely from long-term unemployment,
1. Invites the Commission urgently to review its present guidelines, according to which aid from the Regional and Social funds is seldom available to the London area;
 2. Invites the Commission, having established new guidelines, to embark upon an imaginative scheme that will contribute to the regeneration of industrially depressed sections of the London area;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the EEC Commission and Council of Ministers.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr DILIGENT, Mr PFLIMLIN, Mr SEITLINGER, Mr SIMONNET, Mr CROUX, Mr VANDEWIELE, Mr BOURNIAS, Mr CHANTERIE, Mr ESTGEN, Mrs CASSANMAGNAGO CERRETTI, Mrs LENTZ-CORNETTE and Mr DIANA on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure on special emergency aid and an economic and social rescue programme for the Roubaix-Tourcoing conurbation

The European Parliament,

- A - having regard to the disastrous situation in the Roubaix-Tourcoing conurbation, which has been seriously affected by the economic crisis and by de-industrialization,
 - B - whereas a region with the highest level of unemployment in France coupled with growing insecurity may be regarded as a disaster-stricken region and is therefore entitled to Community solidarity,
 - C - whereas in the city of Roubaix alone, 32,000 of the 103,000 inhabitants are immigrants whose chances of finding employment in other sectors and of achieving social integration are extremely poor,
 - D - convinced that unless local, national and Community authorities intervene immediately increased economic and social tension will lead to an intolerable situation,
 - E - whereas 50,000 jobs have been lost in the textile industry over the past 20 years in the Roubaix-Tourcoing region alone,
1. Calls on the Commission to assign special emergency aid to the Roubaix-Tourcoing conurbation to improve living conditions in general and housing in particular;

2. Calls on the Commission and the Council to allocate some of the appropriations in the non-quota section of the ERDF as soon as possible to the modernization and restructuring of the region's textile industry, which is the main victim of the crisis and which constitutes the traditional mainstay of the region's economic activity;
3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Council.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT

Draftsman : Mrs V. SQUARCIALUPI

On 26 February 1982 the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment appointed Mrs Squarcialupi draftsman.

At its meeting of 24 June and 12 July 1982 it considered the draft opinion and adopted it with 9 votes in favour and 5 abstentions.

Present : Mr Papaefstratiou, chairman; Mr Peters, vice-chairman; Mrs Squarcialupi, draftsman; Mr Barbagli, Mr Calvez, Mrs Cassanmagnago-Cerretti, Mr Ceravolo, Mr Dido, Mr Duport, Mr Eisma, Mr Ghergo, Mr Kellett-Bowman (deputizing for Sir David Nicolson), Mrs Krouwel-Vlam (deputizing for Mr Horgan), Mr Lezzi (deputizing for Mrs Charzat), Mrs Maij-Weggen, Mr Patterson, Mr Protopapadakis (deputizing for Mr Brok) and Mrs Van Hemeldonck (deputizing for Mrs Salisch).

I. INTRODUCTION

I - THE TWO RESOLUTIONS ON WHICH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HAS DRAWN UP A REPORT

1. The Hooper resolution

1.1. The Hooper resolution on inner-city problems highlights the external aspect of violence and overlooks the fact that it is not the cause but the effect of urban imbalances. In other words, it does not tackle such causes of violence as the present unemployment situation, urban structures and services, production systems, the work/leisure time ratio, the quality of the environment or economic relations.

1.2 Instead, the resolution defines the violence that occurs in major cities as an organized programme of 'civil disobedience', which implies that it is a form of violence that can be prevented.

1.3 Lastly, the Hooper resolution calls for new methods of intervention by the European Regional Development Fund, the Social Fund and the Environment Fund.

1.4 The way in which the resolution is framed implies that there are two possible solutions to the problem:

- (a) an authoritarian and repressive approach, i.e. more police, harsher detention sentences, and preventive imprisonment;
- (b) a similar, more flexible approach based on social control exercised by institutions such as the school, the family, the church and the mass media in order to instil a sense of authority and acceptance of the present system of social relations and production.

2. The Griffiths resolution

2.1 The Griffiths resolution on the problems of conurbations in the Community tries to identify the possible causes of social and urban conflict: unemployment, immigration, disparities in wealth, the quality of life and a development model increasingly linked to a market economy.

2.2 The resolution calls on the Commission to consider whether a common regional policy dealing with conurbations in the regions of the Community suffering from increasing industrial decline might contribute to the solution of such problems as social infrastructures, inner-city renewal and youth unemployment.

2.3 It also calls on the Commission to devise a policy of decentralization towards the less-favoured peripheral areas in order to reduce pressure on the conurbations.

II. SOME ARGUMENTS THAT PROMPTED THE TWO RESOLUTIONS

3. Conurbations

3.1 The development model of the last thirty years has been characterized by heavy public and private investments that have favoured the larger conurbations and certain industrial sectors such as the steel and chemical industries. Having created tension between social groups, between town and country and between ethnic groups, this development model has now been abandoned.

3.2 We are now experiencing a rapid process of deindustrialization that is not aimed at restoring the balance of wealth, the proper use of resources and less environmental damage, but involves processes that serve vested interests such as:

- the transfer of the production of goods from the poorest areas of the European Community to developing countries which offer less resistance from the social and environmental point of view;
- a greater expansion of the financial, commercial, design, research and informatics sectors as well as an increased in tertiary activities in the wealthier towns which is increasingly turning them into centres for the exchange of technology and information as well as production centres.

3.3 This process can have the following effects:

- (a) production is more quickly concentrated in poorer areas and the same development model, characterized by industrial concentration, dormitory towns, pollution and social and environmental decline repeated;
- (b) the fact that production industries are situated far from conurbations means that the population of existing cities are left at the mercy of social welfare, the ageing process, self-reliance, mass unemployment, moonlighting and a single major industry. In Turin, for instance, a city with 1,100,000 inhabitants, production is concentrated almost exclusively in a single factory, Fiat;

- (c) only a few people have any possibility of training for other types of work in the informatics, managerial or commercial sectors, especially as many of them come from the agricultural sector;
- (d) many craft industries - often found in the old parts of the major towns - are doomed to disappear gradually although they could provide many young people with more personalized and creative work.

4. Land management

4.1 At one time land management was in the hands of all those who used it. At most, those who went out to work, went to the local craft shop or the fields or woods. Today the craft shop and field have been replaced by factory and office and the workers are no longer required to manage the land. This task is entrusted to others, i.e. industrialists and tradesmen who construct buildings and leave their mark on certain areas although their interests are different from those of the population, or to the central and peripheral institutions on which infrastructures depend and which are incapable of interpreting the needs and requirements of the population.

4.2 For some years however the population and especially young people in ecological movements, have made a direct call for a different relationship between man and the environment and a new form of land management.

4.3 Part of the explanatory statement contained in the report by Mr Faure on rural development and regional imbalances¹, dealing with the major changes in living and housing styles and the imbalances between town and country, is annexed.

¹PE 72.970/fin. - Annex I

5. Young people

5.1 The violence mentioned in the Hooper resolution and the collective violence that has occurred in other European countries are alarming signs of the impatience of the young people.

5.2 After being the heroes of the sixties, young people have withdrawn in the face of the difficulty of bringing about the radical changes they want. Their protest now assumes other forms: above all, indifference to the institutions including refusal to vote or take advantage of the various opportunities offered by representative democracy, or gestures of protest such as vandalism, violence and even self-destruction through drug abuse.

5.3 We must therefore seek real projects for the future of the new generations and use their potential energy and culture instead of worrying about their behaviour. The proposal - perhaps somewhat utopian - for a 'Forum Humanum' contained in the book 'Centopagine per l'avvenire' (A hundred pages for the future) by Aurelio Peccei, the founder and President of the Club of Rome, a group of technocrats who intend to find a solution to the problems of the future, especially as regards the survival of the human species and protection of the environment¹, is annexed.

6. Decentralization and participation

6.1 The millions of urban dwellers can be governed only if they are involved in monitoring the changes that are taking place in the towns and in the management of urban services. The recommendation made at the Conference on Urban Revival held in Berlin by the Council of Europe in March 1980, was that the inhabitants should be able to influence decisions affecting the future of their town.

6.2 Today it seems impossible to bring about any changes with decisions taken only from above and without the participation of the people. Unless there is such participation, the popular base of the institutions is generally weakened. The decentralization processes in progress in various countries should have an authentic decision-making power and not serve merely as an alibi for decentralization and participation.

¹See Annex II

7. The family

7.1 The family too has been affected by urban contradictions and is often no longer able to have an identity because of the disorientation caused by changes within society, consumer conditioning, housing crises and inflexible work and leisure hours. It is also becoming more common for young people to want to leave the nuclear family and have a house and a lifestyle of their own.

7.2 Most political and cultural sectors have been very slow in analysing the evolution of the family. There is also a tendency to blame the crisis of society and the family on women who, by demanding emancipation and work, are apparently causing a breakdown in family ties and a loss of traditional values.

8. The consumer society

8.1 In the existing capitalist culture there is a constant search for new individual needs not so much in the interests of the individual as to maintain the present development model. This obviously occurs at the expense of collective consumption.

8.2 The problem should therefore be seen as the transition from a type of private consumption as at present to a type of collective consumption in order to satisfy the demand for goods and services and prevent any waste of money, raw materials or professional services. Although today it would be inconceivable to think of making some services communal, for instance several families using a washing machine and a deep freeze, this principle will have to be borne in mind in the future in view of the limited resources and the need to rationalize the advantages of progress.

9. Work

9.1 Whilst measures are being taken to eradicate unemployment as mentioned by Mr Jackson in the budget guidelines for 1983, action must be taken to seek and create new work values that take account of the needs of young people, their creativity and ability to assist in projects to develop and improve living and working conditions.

9.2 In the process, particular attention must be paid to new forms of work that are not based on the model of capitalist enterprise such as work and service cooperatives and to new types of activities that do not involve specialization in one of the many sectors of the present division of labour.

9.3 Internal mobility should therefore be seen differently in each country and in the Community; as cultural enrichment, an exchange of experiences and the possibility of job enrichment rather than as forced emigration.

10. Xenophobia

10.1 Multiracial and multicultural societies have replaced ethnically homogeneous societies in the conurbations. Where the immigration rate is particularly high, immigrants tend to occupy the dilapidated residential areas of the historical centres that have been abandoned by the native population following vast speculative building projects as in Brussels.

10.2 Not infrequently ghettos spring up and cases even arise of xenophobia as a result of unemployment and the fear that the immigrants will take jobs away from the native population when in fact the immigrants go wherever any unskilled and thus badly paid jobs are available that the native population no longer want.

11. Health protection

11.1 The concept of 'quality of life' cannot be better expressed than as the concept of 'health' as the state of maximum physical and mental well-being that enables man to develop himself to the full.

11.2 But life in badly organized towns leads to a series of urban pathological conditions such as circulatory and digestive diseases caused by a sedentary life-style, malnutrition, stress, respiratory and skin diseases caused by air and water pollution, and mental and nervous diseases caused by stress and noise.

11.3 Noise is of concern not only to workers in noisy production plants that cause incurable lesions in the auditory system, but also to all town dwellers including children. Subjection to noise even in places of leisure such as discotheques and amusement parks can lead to reduced efficiency and a level of distraction that can cause disastrous accidents.

12. Culture

12.1 The mass media, mass culture and common leisure areas and hours (school, work, amusements, week-end excursions, holidays) are all aspects of the urban culture that has tried to suppress individuality.

12.2 For some time, however, persistent attempts have been made to preserve the different cultures at national, regional and local level (as well as those common to different sex and age groups) by means of clubs, cultural and gastronomic events and shows.

III CONCLUSIONS

13. The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment welcomes the two resolutions on the problems of conurbations in the Community which should be tackled as a matter of urgency in order to bring about greater and more balanced well-being and increased democratic stability;

14. Points out that the dissatisfaction apparent in urban areas that can take the form of acts of violence is a sign that, in addition to work, inflation controls and economic progress, the citizens want to have a greater say in the changes taking place in the cities and in urban social services;

15. Therefore calls on the committee responsible to include the following suggestions in its report:

(a) in large urban centres to pursue policies aimed more forcefully at social development, especially in areas where disparities and thus conflicts are occurring more and more frequently;

(b) to strike at the roots of unemployment, by changing the quality of work which can no longer be left at the mercy of free market fluctuations but must be guided and programmed with the help of those who are today on the fringe of the production process;

(c) to control the expansion and development of the tertiary sector as it determines the main changes in inner cities and urban areas and prevents citizens from continuing to live in the heart of the major towns;

(d) to develop the social services that allow the family to become involved in urban development discussions so that it does not become either a refuge from urban conflicts or the cause of degeneration;

(e) to review urban planning so that towns can be lived in and, as part of a larger plan, do not come into conflict with peripheral economies;

(f) to tackle the problem of restructuring peripheral areas and providing them with proper services and a policy that regards transport as a link between the structural elements of the area in order to control urban expansion;

(g) to protect agricultural areas around highly urbanized areas not as areas reserved for urban expansion but as active areas around which to plan;

(h) to seek in various ways the potential help of young people and of their various forms of expression and to channel their conflicts into a better understanding of future problems.

ANNEX I

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

I. The transformation in our way of life brought about by the population movement - the flight from the land and its corollary, overcrowded cities - is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable developments of our time. It has already had significant effects on the quality of life and is likely to pose serious threats to it in the near future.

This movement consists of a series of related and complementary developments:

- population transfer from what we call rural zones to urban centres and their immediate periphery,
- in these urban and suburban centres an excessive concentration of human groups built up in a restricted space, with very poor living conditions,
- at the same time, a tendency to the desertification of entire areas;
- survival becomes more difficult for scattered population units which suffer a gradual erosion of the foundations of their communities as administrative, educational, cultural and similar facilities disappear one by one. These residual populations are simultaneously affected psychologically by the uncertainty as to their own and their children's future in the locality where they live. Human beings naturally need a climate of stability, they have to be able to plan ahead on the basis of adequate and reliable information.

It is true that an inverse and to some extent compensatory movement may be observed from urban centres to the countryside, with the proliferation of secondary residences. City dwellers, oppressed by the artificiality and stress of their living and working conditions, aspire to the kind of double dichotomy of space and time. They spend their working days in a state of discontent, waiting for the merciful release provided by the weekend or a holiday; all too often they spend their adult life impatiently waiting for retirement, only to be disappointed in the end.

At the same time many people, and in particular workers of modest means, find themselves unable to take advantage of such a periodic physical displacement, and of this permanent psychological transfer. This gives rise to a frustration complex which aggravates the tension created by social inequalities. Even for those who do have the means, can such a dual existence, which may in fact lead to a dual identity, be regarded as satisfying? Is it really a happy philosophy to treat working days as a kind of limbo, the monotony of which has to be suffered whilst awaiting the signal of deliverance, which itself can be seen as no more than temporary? And is it justified to regard as a superior existence these hours devoted to 'rest and recreation, which come to an end before one has a chance to decide what to do with them and which are often no more than a kind of unwinding in vacuo, alternating with overwork in boredom?

Can we regard as genuine countryside regions where the link between the inhabitants and the natural environment, provided by normal family life, work and the crafts is broken ?

II. The situation we see is the outcome of a serious pathological disorder in our so-called progressive civilization. Over hundreds and even thousands of years, a slow, sometimes imperceptible evolution, occasionally arrested or reversed, produced a moderate expansion of urban areas. With the industrial revolution, which began in the United Kingdom in the 18th Century and then spread to the countries of continental Europe in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, large urban and industrial concentrations appeared on maps like enormous warts. However, even as recently as the second world war, most of the towns had been in existence for a long time and one could easily discern in them the basic town planning patterns described by historians.

It is during the last few decades that we have witnessed a headlong and haphazard acceleration of the historic movement from countryside to town. Little attempt to control or direct this movement has been made by the public authorities, whose efforts at town and country planning have been belated, inadequate and sometimes misguided. Thus, some countries sought to compensate what they regarded as the excessive development of one or more existing cities by establishing a number of new towns, without realising that they were merely exacerbating and multiplying the anomaly which they were trying to remedy.

This movement was not, however, by any means fatal, even if it was anarchical. It was produced by the employment situation, the towns being regarded as centres for recruitment despite the fact that it would have been perfectly feasible to decentralize recruitment and seek labour away from the urban areas. Account must also be taken of the low esteem in which maintenance of the rural way of life was held, and of the power of attraction of the towns, which were seen as having something special to offer by way of entertainment and other facilities. In fact, with the resources of today's world - transport, communications and so on - it should have been possible to compensate for the negative and frustrating aspects of country life as it is still sometimes depicted. Rural life was wrongly represented as inferior to town life, as if to do justice to the old adage from the troubled periods of the ancient world: vivunt rustici epulis urbanorum. For their part, the authorities concentrated their attention on urban centres and treated the problems of rural life with a kind of contempt, as if they were dealing with human anachronisms fated to disappear in the near future, whose useless life it would be tedious and pointless to prolong artificially.

III. This situation calls for sharp criticism and serious concern.

It is undoubtedly a paradox and inconsistent with a rational, reverential and conscientious conception of the destiny of the human species.

ANNEX II

From 'Cento pagine per l'avvenire' (100 pages for the future) by Aurelio Peccei

The project is simple and at the same time daring. The first step is the creation of a network of centres of research, discussion, debate and proposals on the future of humanity directed exclusively by young people. To be of interest to a wide variety of cultures and points of view, the centres will, as far as possible, have to be situated at various points of the globe. Their task will be to consider various alternative world societies which could realistically be constructed between now and the year 2000 or later, and to identify the policies, strategies and instruments that should be implemented to that end. The studies will be largely interdisciplinarian and should concentrate on all the most important aspects of social life - from values to political institutions, from the use of resources to relations with nature, from housing to the rights and duties of man, from economics to education, from social justice to security and quality of life.

The main object of the exercise is to ascertain what other types of future are possible and to propose exhaustive discussion on the subject. It is only right that, if they will accept it as I propose, the task of conducting the debate on such an important subject should be assigned to those most interested in the future, i.e. young people.

Indirectly another objective will also be attained. In other words we will discover how much our way of thinking and acting is false and inadequate and how it should be changed. Creating a better future means discovering a better way of being in order to survive and progress in a world that is changing before our very eyes. Again it is the young people that can best perceive what qualitative leap is needed in our values and behaviour and only they can put it into practice. They are flexible enough to change whereas older people are more fixed in their ways; they also have a whole active life before them in which to apply their new ideas or correct them as they go along, whereas older people have shorter time margins.