

(OUR) TECHNICAL, ETHICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITIESIN PUBLIC HEALTH.

OR

PUBLIC HEALTH: THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY, ETHICS AND
IDEOLOGY.

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Introduction

The topic of the above title has vividly interested the author for many years and prompted him to systematically clip and save an array of written materials on this topic. An initial mass of interesting points of view direct, indirectly related to these matters, coming from very diverse sources, were gathered so that it made sense to arrange the materials in a coherent way for publication.

The materials are here presented under 6 headings as an informal, non-systematic review of the literature on the ethical, ideological and political implications of public health. The materials should bring some light to the major issues at the center of this universal discussion that is at the very base of our daily work as health professionals.*

*The 6 subtopics chosen are the following:...

*Some of the same materials inspired a previous article by the author entitled "Ethics, Ideology and Nutrition" that was published in Food Policy in 1982 (1).

- I. Science: Its political, ideological and ethical implications.
- II. The Scientist as a promoter of status quo or social change.
- III. Economic power, political power and poverty. - Attitudes towards poverty.
- IV. Where do liberal public health workers stand? A need for another commitment.
- V. A critical look at our professions and ourselves.
- VI. The future challenge.

1. Science: its political, ideological and ethical implications.

1. Every age is dominated by what Foucault calls an "episteme" - a way of conceiving and perceiving the world, which brings certain features of existence into visibility and blurs or conceals others. If we are to understand history, then, we must come to terms with the episteme of each age. In it we will find the interplay between knowledge and power. (2)
2. All science is ultimately a search for meaning, but what that consists of varies from one person to another. (3)
3. Western scholarship is a fiction, a representation, a closed system, one that has developed according to its own rules. These rules have subdivided the experience of a whole area into neat categories convenient to scholarly classification - though not necessarily conducive to a better understanding of the subject. . . . (4)
4. Human events, like physical events, can be viewed at many levels of abstraction, each providing a window on the world. To restrict our view to a single window is to invite partial truths. Half-truths can be dangerous; they can frighten and subdue the uninitiated while legitimizing the interpreters, deforming the moral discourse. (5)

5. Whether a certain development in a society is interpreted as harmful or beneficial depends on one's theoretical position and one's class interests. To understand and to change any social situation requires a knowledge not only of the internal dynamics of the situation, but also of the nature of the macrosystem which provides parameters for the situation. (6) We have to learn to look at totalities, rather than fragments of reality. (7)
6. What counts as a fact depends on the concepts you use, on the question you ask. There is no neutral terminology. There are really no wholly neutral facts. All describing is classifying according to some conceptual scheme. . . . Motives are not just private states of mind, but patterns in everybody's life, many of which are directly observable to other people. We cannot say what somebody is doing until we know why he does it. Man can neither understand his nature nor his behavior until he understands his motives. (8)
7. We are often more interested in answering questions of fact not involving values, than answering factual questions about values. (9)
8. The intellect divides the indivisible - thought from feeling, form from content - but such dichotomies do not exist in nature; ambivalence is part of our nature, else we would not have developed a morality. . . . Asking different kinds of questions produces quite different kinds of answers. Slicing the world in different directions reveals different

patterns. How you see it depends on how you slice it. All you have to remember is that there's more than one way to cut it. (8)

9. It is well and good to question (what we see around us); but, in so doing, are we using the right question? That is, do we not obfuscate the problem by avoiding the real issue which is one of political power? (10)
10. We are taught that science is completely opposite from religion: Religion obtains knowledge by revelation and confirms it by faith; science obtains knowledge by observation and confirms it by replication. In this idealized view, a scientist can observe anything at all, write it and submit it to a scientific journal. The journal sends the article to several scientists for review and, if they agree the findings are interesting and the observations competent and accurate, the article is published. Other scientists read the article and try to replicate the experiment. If a number of them succeed, the new finding is accepted. Most scientists believe science works this way. But sociologists, historians of science and just plain people are beginning to notice how differently it works in practice. (11)
11. Thomas Aquinas held that a man cannot hold a truth by faith and by reason at the same time. If he believes by faith, it is because reason has failed to show him the way. If he believes by reason, he has no need for faith.

Since Galileo could not prove by reason that the cosmos was suncentered, then as a true son of the church he would let the question remain open to be decided by faith.

12. Unlike academic achievement, intellectual development cannot be separated from moral development. The connection between morality and the sciences may appear indirect, but I do not see how a deeply prejudiced person could be a good research scholar. . . . The importance of the moral factor is more obvious when it comes to the social sciences and philosophy. In these disciplines, morality - who you are and where you stand - must make a difference. . . . I do not want intellectual development to stunt moral growth; they must travel hand in hand. . . . How does one deal with poverty around the world if by our behavior we abet those who favor an elitist and authoritarian view of society and see left wing subversion in every attempt to change the way people have been treated unjustly? . . . Whether we like it or not, what we are morally depends on the choices we make, the things we actually do. And what we teach honestly and convincingly depends on what we are. (13)
13. When people who hold the fate of (health) in their hands make fine distinctions, semantics become statements of policy. Words have always been ideology and ideology has been policy. It, therefore, becomes important to take a close look at our moral rights, our needs and our moral duties. Are these three also interlocked with political alternatives? What do we really mean by moral right? Is subjective conviction all

there is to the concept of moral right? Obviously not, for otherwise any thief who honestly believes that because he has had a deprived childhood or because he has been wronged by society he has a right to help himself to a piece of someone else's property thinking that that would be morally right. And a Robin Hood who robs the rich to give to the poor, would be doubly right. The subjective conviction that one is in the right gives one the inner strength to do what one is doing. That is an important thing in itself. But for such a subjective conviction to become a moral right, it also has to obtain the sanction of others, even if not necessarily most or even all of them. Such a sanction may convert a Robin Hood from a highway robber into a social rebel, a terrorist into a freedom fighter. A subjective claim can become a recognized moral and legal right by external sanction. But there is another limit to any moral right which determines to what extent it will be sanctioned - its possible conflict with another moral right. When such a conflict arises, the sanction for one right against the other depends, in terms of morality and justice, on what claim is considered the stronger, the more urgent, the less injurious to the other. In terms of political reality it depends on whose claim can muster more support based on the real interests of those who have the power to grant the sanction or to deny it. These lines represent the extent of the moral and legal right the world is prepared to accept. However much we may regret it, the world never accepts more. Not only do the relative weights of conflicting moral claims change - political power

interests also change. The question is, what sanction, moral, legal and political one can get for any new position. . . Morally, might is not right. Politically, it often is. Perhaps if we have the might, our subjective belief that we are doing no wrong would in time receive the sanction of some and of time itself, if not on moral grounds then on the grounds of hard-nosed self-interest. But not only do we not have the might, not only do we not have the power to rally support, and not only does time work against us, but the very attempt to rely on our moral strength may lead to disaster. It may be good rhetoric to say that we need no one's confirmation of our rights, that we shall in all likelihood again win morally, but politically, however, it may bleed us to death. The question is not our right to fight (hunger and malnutrition, for example) but how - and that, unfortunately, can not easily be imposed unilaterally. To (malnutrition) we have a supreme moral claim, sanctioned by the entire world. For the alternative, the claim to (structural social changes) we have no universal sanction. (Charity), therefore, is obscurantism, because it really means no solution. (14)

14. To be human is to be a moral agent, able to choose freely amongst alternatives and to engage in consequential action. Moral questions arise as we consider how we ought to act in respect of others . . . The moral values we draw upon in choosing are themselves the product of collective life . . . Moral values are consensual, and actions based on them are said to be legitimate . . . It is clear, however, that the

moral code of a community also legitimized established relations of power. An instrument of domination in the hands of the ruling class, it is not only an integrative but an alienating force; it renders exploitation of the people easier . . . Neither moral nor political, the market's powers are purely instrumental, relating means to given ends.

. . . By responding more and more to the logic of markets, communities are reduced to the functional requirements of livelihood, while the roles and moral obligations of citizens are dismissed as irrelevant and even detrimental to the uninhibited pursuit of pleasure . . . A system that has no place for a majority of the people has lost the moral authority to prescribe what should be done . . . It is by participating in the political life of a community that we acquire a sense of who we are. It is through political discourse that a needs-oriented economy comes into being.

. The right to equal access to such discourse is the radicals' demand. (15)

15. We often find ourselves accepting or supporting "ethically neutral" although "value biased" premises. In the name of scientific analysis, unemployment, malnutrition and poverty are often perpetuated through the impersonal mechanisms of economic policy and of the market. (16)

16. In "the way things areness", society makes disprivilege look right, creating, in marxist terms, false consciousness. Things are "explained away", therefore, economics books, for instance, are books of ideology. Ideology is the way society

explains itself; it is therefore filled with myths. (17)

17. Economics inevitably blends ideology and science. So much so that many non-economists . . . see more ideology there than science. (18)

II. The Scientist as a promoter of status-quo or social change.

18. "Are intellectuals a class apart, responsible only to their own inner urges, and a vision of man's need that goes beyond the daily struggle and even defies it? Are they duty bound to immerse themselves in their society to articulate conscience and its context? Or are they natural leaders, destined not only to provide the ideas that shape society but also to make sure that they are implimented? . . . Here is Jean-Paul Sartre, arguing the obligation of political engagement and action as the true test of values." (19).

19. An honest man must back the revolution as long as his conscience allows him, but once it deteriorates into bureaucracy or worse, he must stand up and denounce it. There is no escape from his role. The intellectual's purpose in this turbulent century must be one of fidelity and criticism . . . I think that faithfulness is essential: you can't leave a group whenever you feel like it, whenever you don't agree with its political policies one hundred percent. If you belong to it you ought to stick with it as long as you can, or at least until the situation becomes impossible. But you must always remember that the role of an

intellectual is to emphasize the principles of the revolution. And if those principles are not respected, then the intellectual has a duty to speak out and say so. Fidelity and criticism. It's no easy task, I assure you, but we have to fulfill that difficult role nonetheless, as best we can. (20)

20. Intellectuals bend the rules of discourse to suit their own interests; they argue for what they want to believe. . . . Determinist theories consistently tend to provide a justification of the status-quo and of existing privileges for certain groups according to class, race or sex. The judgement of a work of science depends on whether it conforms to the political convictions of the judges, who are self-appointed. (8)

21. (Scientists) in higher education in America help reproduce the class system with their right hand and it's hard to keep the left hand free to foster critical intelligence. We are not independent intellectuals floating somewhere above the economic system; we're part of it. (21)

22. These scientists of western scholarship are simply guilty of bad scholarship, which could be improved (and be made truthful) if only they would reform their method and expunge their false preconceptions. Few scholars can resist the pressures on them of the scholarly tradition in which they work. (4)

23. Although (moralists' views) carry an ideological debate with the culture that breeds them, they never confront that culture with another ideology. . . . with political possibilities that are new or challenging. For without challenging the ideology many of them find abhorrent, they only perpetuate the passivity that has become their central image. (22)

24. Intellectual liberation is difficult to achieve, since many of us are prisoners of our own past training and somebody else's thought. (23)

25. (We often use) statistical illusions devised by academic elites which do not fit any real-world cases anywhere in the world. (23A)

26. Measuring poverty in detail can often be a substitute for, or an excuse for not acting in respect of perfectly visible needs. (24)

27. Factor analysis has often led to the cardinal error in reasoning of confusing correlation with cause. (25)

28. Too many economists and too many international organizations are seeking to take the politics out of political economy and the decision making process to avoid discord or conflict. . . . Many, if not most, aspects of life should never be decided by the economists' yardstick only. The abolition of slavery or child labor laws certainly never would have passed a cost-benefit test. (12)

29. Institutional compartmentalization has separated political from economic analyses . . . resulting in a passive reluctance to call a cat a cat. (26)
30. There is a tendency . . . to stop the analysis where "politics" begins, with formulations like: "this, however, is a political question". Of course, that is where the analysis very often should start . . . Our task is not merely to reflect the world, but to do something about it, . . . A goal which is not at the same time a process, becomes a dogma . . . It is the "principle of (recognizing and acting promptly at the) ripe time" that mainly differentiates the politician from the theoretician. (27)
31. Why do the attempts to be comprehensive not achieve the expected results? The complex nature of the problem (of health) complicates policy making . . . The essence of the problem transcends its interdisciplinary nature. Comprehensiveness cannot be obtained by achieving all-inclusiveness of the part, but by creating a philosophy into which all parts mesh. The development of such a philosophy has been avoided because it automatically raises larger issues about the direction of society and challenges the current system . . . The essence of the matter is the need for new philosophies, methodologies and processes which help us work towards a society inspired by a different world view. We need tactics, but first we need innovative strategies. It is necessary to pass from the state of critique to (concrete action) . . . Tactics must be

- shifted from a defensive position to one that offers positive choices . . . A positive strategy will be most effective if efforts are made to go beyond the political goal of obtaining the lowest common denominator . . . that only serves to alleviate guilt feelings. (28)
32. We need not retreat into helpless passivity, watching a biological and social system deteriorate. We can alter trends and avert catastrophes if we recognize and exercise our own power to make a difference . . . We all carry around with us a bag of unexamined credos, and this unexamined life is what comes under pressure when we are faced with decisions. (29)
33. One of the greatest challenges facing humanity today is the challenge to meet the fundamental needs of the mass of human population . . . Research, even applied has acquired an elitist character, with little or no relevance to our concern for the needs of the people. (30)
34. From the effectiveness point of view, international and national (public health) meetings have too often become exercises in futility, organized and chaired by the same conservative groups year after year. (31)
35. In turning away from roles to goals, we health professionals could leave behind academicism and begin to look at real people and their needs. (32)

36. Basic needs are very important as political programs. Meeting basic needs will in most countries hardly require any new knowledge or any new hard technology. However, it will require political solutions which are likely to have a number of technological inputs. But the political solutions are not dependent on first making the technological input available. (33)

37. Basic Human Needs focus on five clusters (not limited to material needs):

1. Basic personal consumer goods: food, clothing, housing and furnishing.
2. Universal access to basic services: education (adult and child), pure water, preventive and curative health, environmental sanitation, communications, and legal services.
3. The right to productive employment.
4. An infrastructure (physical, human, technical, institutional) to produce goods and services.
5. Mass participation in decision making and review.

Not everyone who says "Basic Needs" supports the above strategic conceptualization. The Roman emperors provided "bread and circuses" for the masses; authoritarian regimes present modern variants, e.g., "football stadia and black beans", "basketball courts and rice". Basic needs defined in material terms, delivered by a bureaucracy and planned by an elite can create client groups, demobilize mass groups and create new patterns of dependence, examples of this being

Brazil and South Korea Devoid of a clear ideological orientation, Basic Human Needs do not clarify but mystify, they do not mobilize but manipulate. Technocratic basic needs models assume that the problems are largely management gaps within the decision-making groups together with the lack of ability to grasp opportunities by the poor. (24)

38. Clearly there is no easy or short-term solution to the syndrome of underdevelopment, of which health is an important indicator. The perniciousness of the statistical approach is that it has so many non-solutions built in masquerading as answers. The most serious of these is the implication that salvation lies in obtaining for the LDCs those features of richer countries - doctors, hospitals and staff, field services, equipment and a rich pharmacopeia of drugs - which ostensibly ensure health and long life. (34)

39. Disease is not the consequence of a lack of health services, and the provision of primary health care alone will not bring about better health. Ultimately, levels of health, nutritional status, and living standards are determined by national development strategies and the international economic order. (35)

40. (Public Health) plans, while ideologically committed to greater equity, do not contain interventions conducive to attaining such objectives. (36)

41. At the global level, the international organizations divide the world into countries burdened by chronic diseases (cancer, heart disease) and those suffering from communicable diseases (parasitic and infectious diseases like malaria and tuberculosis). This North/South dicotomy breaks down as soon as one asks about the impact of social inequalities or health or the health effects of economic and political policy. (35)

III. Economic Power, Political Power and Poverty

42. To an economist, it is greed, not love that makes the world go round. While the world's religions condemn avarice as a deplorable vice, the world's economists exalt it as a cardinal virtue. Unlike priests, economists know that avarice is useful in understanding some of the major issues in today's economy. Avarice is the opposite of the weather. Everyone talks about the weather, but no one does anything about it. No one talks about avarice, but everyone does a great deal about it, and that is why economists believe that greed makes the world go round. (37)

43. Economic injustice is not an accident. It springs from the very nature of capitalism. When profit governs the day-to-day decisions of business, the effect on the ordinary person will inevitably be considered secondary. Policy can not be governed by the profit motive and by love thy neighbor at the same time. Under liberal capitalism the most that can be hoped for are a few compromises. These alleviate some misery, but those underfed and underprivileged millions are

still among us, suffering. (38)

44. The egalitarian pronouncements of the political leadership come handy as a smokescreen to promote the interests of the privileged classes who control the levers of political power. (39)

45. An induced commitment to justice is shakier than a genuine one, be the former "bribed into" by voluntary agencies or others, or "frightened into" by the threat of political unrest. (40)

46. In the long run, philosophical (ideological) considerations may prove as potent as economic considerations when the aim is to achieve relevant and durable solutions. (42)

47. While we say that as a democracy we have no ideology, in the communist sense, Marxists do not agree; Marx and Lenin taught that economics motivate and control policy in capitalist nations. (41) On the other hand, arguments against Marxism speak of a lack of freedom in "totalitarian regimes". The answer to that is that for Marxists the freedom from hunger and disease and other social evils is more important than freedom of expression which they view as a bourgeois value devoid of sincerity. (42)

48. There's a very effective kind of ideological control in the U.S., managed by politicians, media lords, capitalists, and mainstream American intellectuals. This system of thought control restricts how we perceive ourselves, the alternatives

we can imagine, our understanding of the rest of the world, and most importantly, it prevents any major ideological changes from taking place in the U.S. The United States political discourse and debate has often been less diversified even than in certain fascist countries, Franco's Spain, for example. We do not have significant Marxist or Socialist journalism in the U.S., and they may well enliven debate. Capitalism, albeit modified and socialized, is our way of economic life, and we're indoctrinated to it. (42)

49. The French have intellectual superstars because they care passionately about new ideas, while most Americans are still trying to get comfortable with the work of our last genuine intellectual: Thomas Jefferson. We have not, as an educated people, begun to assimilate the ideas of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud that underlie most current European thought. And this makes it extraordinarily difficult for us. (2)

50. Without a more sophisticated analytical framework capable of accounting for macro-economic impacts, the public-policy decisions based on the result of a micro-economic benefit-cost analysis can be undesirable. If public-policy makers have additional objectives they would like to consider in making investment decisions, such as equity and distributional considerations, then it becomes necessary to incorporate them into the analysis. (43)

51. Planners and other bureaucrats do what they are told by their political masters. (44)
52. Given the current state of economic art, mathematical cost-benefit analyses are about as neutral as voter literacy tests in the Old South. They are often ideological documents designed to prove preconceived notions. Or, as a Library of Congress review has said of them "they tend to support the vested interests of the sponsor of the estimate or to fit the hypothesis of the individual making the estimate". (45)
53. The poorest are the same everywhere. They are poor primarily because their needs are not central to the political priorities of governments. (46)
54. The poor cannot translate their needs into effective demand in the only terms that the market understands: cash. (47)
55. The institutions which create growth are not neutral as to its distribution. . . The concept of market demand mocks poverty or plainly ignores it as the poor have very little purchasing power. Market demand should be substituted by national consumption and production targets on the basis of minimum human needs. Development must be redefined as a selective attack on the worst forms of poverty. Development must be measured as the level of needs-satisfaction of the poorest 40%. Let us take care of our poverty and let GNP take care of itself. (23)

56. The Establishment is not those people who hold and exercise power as such. It is the people who create and sustain the climate of assumptions and opinions within which power is exercised by those who do hold it by election or appointment. (48)

57. In any society, the dominant groups are the ones with the most to hide about the way society works. (49)

58. Was there ever any domination which did not appear natural to those who possessed it? (50) The Establishment is a pretty clumsy monitor of morality. (51)

59. Sympathy with the victims of historical processes and skepticism about the victors' claims, provide essential safeguards against being taken in by the dominant mythology. A scholar who tries to be objective needs these feelings as part of his working equipment. (49)

60. Policy is of necessity a more general tool than research and covers a much broader set of interactions. Therefore, the danger exists that policy could be based on mythology. (52)

61. The politically disengaged scientific community frequently answers that not enough information is yet available to make definitive assessments of the interaction of different variables. The next response is, then, a call for more research. . . This argument is advanced even though absolute proof is an impossible goal. Political and economic opponents of any advocated changes are of course, happy to

espouse the scientist's argument. . . that proof is not yet adequate, definite or sufficiently general to create policy. (52)

62. Scientists ignore the mechanisms of economic/military/political power and how such power was achieved. It takes more than a myth to conquer half the world. But continually ignoring economic necessity subtly condemns (public health professionals) both to seeking economists' approval and to feeling traitorous for doing so. (53)

63. Morality is one of the forms of social consciousness. It changes with each change of social order. The ruling class imposes its morality and puts it into practice in accord with its historical class interests. . . Politics, science, morality, art and religion are forms of ideology. There are only two ideologies: bourgeois and socialist; humanity has not elaborated a "third" ideology. (Lenin) (54)

64. The "bourgeoisie" is too often left undefined, but its characteristics, are clear. Its ideology is based entirely upon commerce. Its morality has a rhetoric of retaliation based upon book-keeping. Qualitative values are excluded in favor of the quantitative. Its rationality is simplistic. It negates all that is different from itself. It is diabolical. It acts as if it were part of nature itself, and it is imperial. . . Everything in everyday life, from our films to our cooking is dependent upon the notions the bourgeoisie make us have. The bourgeoisie succeeds in its

conquest by infiltrating everyday life with myth. Modern myths justify and enforce the power of the bourgeoisie by presenting it as a natural force. But such myths are insidious; they may appear innocent, but in fact, have a stronghold upon our life. (55)

65. Consolatory nonsense seems to me a fair definition of myth . . . Myth deals in false universals, to dull the pain of particular circumstances. (56)
66. Classes are not defined in terms of categories of occupations, but in terms of social relations of control over investments, decision making, other people's work and one's own work. (12)

Attitudes Towards Poverty

67. No government can do everything. To govern is to choose. But poverty will persist and grow if the choice too often favors the peripheral extravagance over the critical need . . . Get the services to the poor and the poor to the services . . . Even in those LDCs that have enjoyed rapid growth, the poorest income groups have not shared in it equitably; their incomes have risen only one third as fast as the national average . . . No government wants to perpetuate poverty. But not all governments are persuaded they can do something about it. (37)

68. The crucial test of ethics is who defines who is functioning as a true social change agent. Without clear definition, without structured accountability the search for the true innovator can be the excuse for inquisitorial behavior . . . Many people believe that scientists' psychic energy is so powerful it transforms all around it. The question is: how can this gathered energy confront the Pentagon, Exxon or any other political or economic institution? What is missing, then, is urgent political strategy. (53)
69. Respect is denied to the weak more quickly than it is withheld from the strong; the display of power alone will permit one to practice a superior brand of ethics. Once this principle is established on the individual level, it requires little imagination to apply it to nations. (57)
70. The American acceptance of the established ways has an important consequence. It leads to a belief that those with wealth and power - even if inherited - deserve their good fortune. If the rules are fair - and they do not question that they are - those who make their way must deserve what they have amassed. But a corollary of the acceptance of good fortunes is the acceptance of bad fortune. A man who is poor deserves to be poor - he must not have tried hard enough; perhaps if he had worked harder, he might have inherited something . . . Abroad, we doubt that poor nations really deserve our assistance. They must not have tried hard enough, or, had they looked harder, they might have found oil . . . This American attitude towards the permanently poor

is confused with our attitude towards the temporarily afflicted; those faced with sudden disaster. No nation is more generous than the U.S. Yet, this generosity is only a natural extension of this same American vision. Victims of disaster cannot be held responsible for their plight. This being so, any poor nation should not only be grateful, but permanently beholden to us for any aid, because it should be recognized that the receiving nation really does not deserve the money. (58)

71. The U.S. is at its best in foreign scientific and technological programs when it treats foreigners like colleagues and not like wards. The "ugly American" has too often been a patronizing U.S. expert. (59) A new relationship between the developed countries and the underdeveloped countries is needed. Not one of self-sacrifice and charity, but one of solidarity that leads to harmonize their own changing needs with the aspirations of the underdeveloped countries. (12)

72. Moralists will send money to a distant Mother Theresa but ignore the poor and scorned only a few blocks away. "We can look with anger and contempt on the selfishness of the rich in Calcutta who let the poor starve, but how about our own responsibilities for conditions here in the ghetto of our own cities? Are we ourselves perhaps guilty? It is an unpleasant question. Better to think of the poor in Calcutta." The big difficulty arises from the traditional attitudes of the American people. We are afraid of radical

change. How to reduce our fear - transform our cowardice, really - is a mystery that no one has figured out. (38)

73. One can conceive of no greater mistake than that of trying to make charity do the work of justice. (60)

74. If Americans don't get smarter about themselves and the world, someday they are going to get hurt by what they don't know. (61)

75. (The public is separated from reality) by the barriers of class, race and ethnic prejudice, along with political and economic naivete. (62)

76. Radical social change does not drop out of the sky. It is the result of the play of social forces. (63)

IV. Where Do Liberal Public Health Workers Stand? A Need for Another Commitment.

77. Unless philosophically (ideologically) inclined, people are content to take life as it comes when things go reasonably well, preferring to evade the troublesome question of life's purpose or meaning . . . In times of trouble, however, the problem . . . forces itself on our awareness. The greater the hardship we experience, the more pressing the question becomes for us. (64) Mankind has no collective memory. (12)

78. A large slice of contemporary society derives its well-being from expertise and position in large complex organizations. Scientist, engineers, technicians and intellectuals are restless, dissatisfied and critical and urgently in need of an ideology. But they are also doing quite nicely: they have a vested interest in the status-quo . . . And what is the ideology to be? Just a vague consensus for equal opportunity, but not for an egalitarianism which ends up with equal shares of everything for everybody . . . it emphasizes morality and fundamental values and is good at exposing unintended consequences of well-meant measures . . . This is downright dangerous . . . this position has evolved into an independent force threatening to give legitimacy to an oligarchy condition where essential conditions are made by corporate elites, where great inequalities are rationalized and where democracy becomes an occasional, ritual . . . (65)
79. (Liberals) are committed to stability as the prerequisite for justice, rather than the other way around . . . Their work is of high quality. They have connections in the Establishment. They address fundamental questions. They are literate. They are a new cast of experts (technocrats), and "reform-professionals", yet "stability professionals" might do equally well, or, perhaps "policy-professionals" would be the most neutral and suitable description. (65)

80. (What we often see in liberals) is an excellent example of a depressing genre: powerful diagnosis joined to feeble therapy. (When making decisions) they often play zero-sum games in which losses and gains cancel out. (Poker is such a game . . .). However, once growth slows, it is much harder to play positive sum games in which everybody or almost everybody wins something. We are good at allocating gains but horrible at sharing out losses . . . All the players have acquired the capacity to stall indefinitely policies and changes they oppose. Organized interests can stall actions of general public merit . . . producers almost invariably defeat consumers because the stakes for them are much greater. Ideology and self-interest frequently clash. (66)
81. Much of what has been called liberalism in the last half century has been merely an accommodation to historical change - to circumstances. (It represents) a triumph of circumstance over ideology. Liberals, if sometimes reluctantly, make virtue of adjustment. Conservatives have a moral commitment to the past. that's why they are conservatives. What has been called liberalism in the past has, in fact, been a kind of adaptive pragmatism and much of what has been called conservatism combines hope with a romantic resistance to the achieved fact of historical change. (67)

82. No conservative thinker - not even Milton Friedman or Irving Kristol or Alexander Solzhenitsyn - has been fit to provide capitalism with a moral brain, a theology. And, without a creed, the future can look awfully bleak. As Daniel Bell has written: "Scarcely one intellectual figure has defended the sober, unheroic, prudential, let alone acquisitive, entrepreneurial or money-making pursuits of the bourgeois world". (68)

83. In the world that liberalism finally made, the world of the welfare-state and the multinational corporation, liberalism itself has become politically and intellectually bankrupt. Having overthrown feudalism and slavery and then outgrown its own personal and familial form, capitalism has evolved a new political ideology, welfare-liberalism, which absolves individuals of moral responsibility and treats them as victims of social circumstances. . . . Moralists, are out of fashion (and they tend to be grumpy). In either case, reformers with the best intentions condemn the lower class to a second rate education and thus help to perpetuate the inequalities they seek to abolish. In the name of egalitarianism, they preserve the most insidious form of elitism. (69)

84. In the liberal tradition of the West, individual rights are more than social ones, and civil and political freedoms are more important than economic ones. In marxist socialism, on the other hand, the rights to work and to minimal levels of nutrition and education outweigh personal freedoms, which are

limited by economic and social considerations. (70)

85. The disparity between what liberals say in public and what they do in private is the reason that it is so easy for young people to unmask the hypocrisy of liberal parents. (71)

86. To liberals, support from a liberal international environment is essential to alleviating poverty. They often are of the opinion that bureaucratic interventions are expensive and usually against the interest of the poor.

It is no surprise that liberals believe in the market and in competition. The market is to save the poor by slaying the elitist, inefficient monsters of bureaucratic regulation and incompetent, scheming landlords and businessmen who shelter behind them. Just how selective market rigging, to benefit the poor, is to be achieved is seldom analyzed or elaborated on by liberals. Access to urban services, irrigation, health and education are usually seen by liberals as not well handled by the market, although the emphasis on the latter two is based squarely on rising productivity to validate higher incomes.

Seldom do liberals see trade unions as valid market forces or as institutions to be backed.

Economic advocacy is perceived by liberals, if not as a branch of moral philosophy, at least as constrained by the elements of distributive justice. Liberalism has no operational political economy at its core. On the one hand,

it is abstractedly economic and on the other its desire to demonstrate mutual interest has resulted in expunging any real perception of the nature of political economic conflict perceived in interest-group or class terms. Unfortunately, the consequences of this are serious.

Even more striking is the so frequent lack of comprehension by liberals of transition to socialism strategies and practice (to the point of lack of mention). Algeria and even Yugoslavia are not taken to be seriously different from Brazil, South Korea or Taiwan in economic strategic or conquest of poverty terms. Very true, liberals cannot become advocates of bourgeois democratic revolutions let alone of transition to socialism. (72)

87. When I think of the left or leftists, I think of people who espouse equality as an absolute and who measure injustice by distribution of wealth . . . The right and the left do not occupy two extremes with a middle made up of liberals . . . Liberalism is another dimension altogether . . . It remains empty of standards, committed to everything and therefore to nothing. (73)

88. The problem with labels is not that when they are applied too soon or too loosely, they are, while not necessarily despicable, usually not to be trusted. By trying to encapsulate too much, they oversimplify or mislead . . . We often try too hard to pin down the presence of a new political consensus where, by our own admission, something a

lot less than a real consensus actually exists . . . i.e., we can tell in the greatest detail what these groups are opposed to or simply worried about. But when it comes to the question of what, in positive terms they stand for, answers are often a puzzle. (65)

89. The time has come, perhaps, to ask the question modern liberalism has always ducked: Why is the wealth of any "egalitarian" nation distributed so unjustly? The question itself sounds vaguely Marxists, which is one reason why welfare-state liberals have always ducked . . . The long march of liberal solutions to social injustice is evasive of the more fundamental questions about wealth and its gross maldistribution. The liberal mindset, honorable and well-intended, cannot confront the natural limits that always will stand in its way. In the final balance, the welfare-state cares best for the prosperous, not the poor. (74) In the U.S., because there is more or less enough to go around, the system can get away with less equity. (75)

90. The fashion of the times dictates that, even in countries that are not fully committed to general social development, (health and health programs) have become glamorous, popular subjects. Thus, one can see a political commitment to the "ideas of (health)" without commitment to deal with the concomitant problems. (76)

91. In trying to solve malnutrition, for example, agriculturists emphasize the need for agricultural extension and application of technology; monetarists see production incentives as the key to remedying distortions in relative prices; culturalists emphasize general education as the way to achieve motivation and overcome cultural barriers; and structuralists focus upon the contradictions of a class structured society that explain economic inequalities and malnutrition. (77)

92. Do (health) planners, program-officers, administrators, and advisors in fact have anything relevant to offer? . . . (Health professionals) cannot wait forever: many (health) advocates want to do something now, the danger being that they will become politicians and will run the risk of being persecuted. (78)

93. (Health) planning suffers greatly from the mystification of the issues involved through the language used - perhaps, it is a device used to disguise issues that are often politically hot, with a technical cover. (79)

94. Technocrats tend to dodge the moral issues of undernutrition: "we're afraid to confront the economists on nutritional issues, because they come down to moral questions and these are non-scientific and hard to grapple with. So we slide away from them". (75)

95. "More income and employment generation so that the poor can purchase the food they need": This approach appears more sensible even at the risk of putting a number of policy experts out of business. (78)

96. Predilection of (health professionals) for education interventions is the result of their adherence to a concept of society which derives from functionalist social theory. For the functionalists there are "practical difficulties" and "obstacles to desirable changes", but fortunately there are also "various services and/or facilities" to overcome them, so in the end everything will be fine. (Public health professional) face a double problem: To judge the objective oppressive constraint mechanism, and the subjective social, cultural and psychological reactions to them. A major activity the professionals should, then, be the analysis and exposure of the impact of those constraint mechanisms on health. (6).

97. The strategy of "life-style politics" for correcting the deficits in the diet of our population, by individually changing the food consumption patterns (diet) of individual persons, avoids the political question of why the individuals consume that diet in the way they do. Thus, it ignores the enormous power of the economic needs of specific corporate interests in determining that consumption. (80)

98. There is a total lack of social imagination among (public health professionals). They are in a period of rough and agonizing reappraisal if they are to contribute to a world that is changing with remarkable speed. It is incumbent upon them to make governments conscious of health and nutrition emphasizing that medical empires do not solve health problems and that the answer is not to be found in small projects or with a few experts running around. (81)

V. A Critical Look at our Professions and Ourselves.

99. We keep diagnosing the obvious and giving prognosis of a tragedy. We emphasize sectorial solutions, dealing with what is important and not with what is fundamental. Everything is important, but what is fundamental? Important is the help given to some needy groups, but fundamental is the promotion of a permanent structure of jobs; important is long term, but fundamental is NOW.

We keep projecting tendencies, of all what we do not want to be continued. Tendency is not destiny. The destiny is in our hands. . . . When dealing with the (health) problem it is important to act on the causes and on the effects. It is useless to take care of (the sick) while the causes (of ill health) are not solved. . . . There are two ways to act: One, is to propose steps to avoid those causes to happen, and second, is to help solve the already existing problems. The greatest waste in this latter task is time (bringing about a loss or a delay in the possibility of

implementing real solutions). Time wasted on diagnoses for checking easily verifiable tendencies; time wasted on excess methodology. . . . Decisions are delayed by a system without any synchronization with the speed of happenings. (82)

100. In matters of science that have implication for public policy, the politician or policy-maker often has to form an opinion based on what he hears from those who don't know anything about the subject and are viewing it from the outside and on what he hears from those who do know a great deal about the subject and are viewing it from the inside. (43)

101. All the elements needed to study malnutrition in its wider economic and political context are there (i.e. unequal distribution between the various sectors of society, the role of state and private interests and the conflicts between them), but authors continue, in spite of this, to discuss matters within the framework of cultural habits and ignorance. Their implicit social model (ideology) does not enable them to handle the complex of social and economic phenomena they themselves mention. (6)

102. The classless approach of sociological studies, for the most part, focus their analysis on the poor, not on the economic system that produces poverty. Thus, not paradoxically, most of the strategies for erradicating that poverty have been directed at the poor themselves, but not at the economic

system that produces that poverty. (80)

103. Problems are "solved" in an isolated and totally a-political way, because there is still a lack of understanding of what determinants are really important and how they need to be approached. (7)

104. Projects dreamed up in a social vacuum must play themselves out in the real world of injustice and conflict. (83) The objective consequences may turn out to be different from the subjective intent. (41) We need scientists who are strong and elastic enough to ask the right questions rather than sell the wrong answers. (84)

105. Intervention strategies can be classified in three categories according to the principles that govern them: Comprehensive strategies that are multidisciplinary in nature and call for multisectoral cooperation; Improvement strategies that "put the needed spare-parts to the sytem" by assuming that only some things can be changed NOW, and Transformation strategies that call for radical changes of the environment or the social system. (85)

106. What is the appropriate role of science in people's development in situations where exploitation and oppression are acute but room still exists for economic (technological) initiatives to improve the material status of the poor, at least up to a point? Many persons will deride such initiatives as "reformism". But can the masses be easily mobilized for exclusive political action for structural

change if space for economic improvement within the existing structure still exists? Should progressive forces stand aloof from such space and leave them to be filled by real reformists thereby distracting mass attention from the need for fundamental social change for a more sustained improvement of their lives? Or should a combination of economical and political mobilization be pursued? (86)

107. Ralph Nader can sometimes mobilize formidable coalitions generating a potentially irresistible "politics of outrage". But public indignation is difficult to sustain . . . it can be dissipated by token, merely symbolic responses and seldom transcends conventional ideological or political limits. (87)

108. There are two kinds of problems: reducible and irreducible. The difference between them is simple: reducible problems have clearly definable solutions while irreducible ones do not. You know when you've got the answer to a reducible problem - it fits like the right piece in a puzzle. But problems such as inequalities, disparity or injustice are irreducible, because their solutions are not fixable; this kind of problem generates only vague, complex and temporary solutions . . . The problem with development is that too often we are trying to find reducible solutions to irreducible problems. Thus technological advances are the answer to reducible problems, but many hoped they would solve the irreducible problems. Misjudgement of the kind of problem and type of solution actually compounds the problem.

(88)

109. When the world is messy, you fall back either on ideology or technique. Good young people respond to the seduction of technique. It's independent of experience and you don't have to know much. (89)
110. Technology is not the origin of change, but merely the means whereby society changes itself. By technology we mean not just tools and machines, but also skills and motivation. The wrong technologies are rapidly destroying any real community life. (90)
111. There are two kinds of revolution - technological and political. It is technology which is flattening differences around the world - cultures which took centuries to build and sustain can be transformed by "development" in a few decades. Technology dilutes and dissolves ideology While political revolutions are almost always successful in response to a felt need - more liberty, a different racial division, or simply more bread - technology invents needs and exports problems. Political revolutions always have motives - a why - such as grievances, and the need for redress. These are, as Jefferson told us, neither light nor transient, but involve a long train of abuses and usurpations Great technological changes, on the other hand, do not have a why. Technology, unlike politics, is irreversible. We may be able to develop a new strain of wheat and so cure starvation somewhere. But it may not be in our power to cure

injustice anywhere, even in our own country, much less in distant places. (91)

112. Better to change our order of thinking rather than trying to conquer (health) by the use of technology. Technology is basically improvisational. It treats the symptoms; it provides no lasting cures. Moreover, technology is part of the problem. New policies will require a patient and possibly painful reeducation of professional planners and public alike. (92)
113. The technocratic utopia is the most banal of all utopias. (93)
114. (With the typical technocratic solutions we end up with)
 . . . people who have more education and more health than they have power and economic resources. (27)
115. Technical pragmatism by men of good will can build national, regional and global strategies with no ideological content, appealing to all reasonable men and capable of being implemented. Technocrats shore up bits of dead polemics and lost faith with fragments wrenched from "incomplete" alternatives A pastiche is not a synthesis. If this is the best that the best applied thinkers of the international development establishment can produce, then indeed development thinking is a burnt out case wandering in a desert. Faith in technocratic platonic guardians leading gallant warriors in a global hierarchy of bureaucracies and universities to develop the world, remains unshaken. This

leads an outsider to see a picture of general harmony of interests. It also leads to incoherence and to capitalism not with a human face but with bleary eyes and a nagging headache. We need to drop the fallacy of this universal harmony of interests so that areas of real parallel interests, negotiable compromises and package deals can be identified and promoted. (94)

116. In Tanzania, for example, the pitfalls and challenges have been given ideological expression and offers of aid and certain private investments have been rejected because their consequences were held to be generally harmful. (95)

VI. The Future Challenge.

117. The challenge in our present world is not to maximize happiness (in practice interpreted as maximizing economic growth, GNP, or the quantity of goods), but to organize our society to minimize suffering. Human happiness is undefinable; human suffering is concrete (hunger, sickness, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, ignorance). (96)
118. Western civilization will not be judged so much on its vast accumulation of scientific knowledge, as on its trusteeship of that knowledge and its efficient application to the betterment of living. (97)

119. A program of conscientization directed at the scientific community might perhaps be undertaken as an initiative to apply science and technology to "another development". (30)
120. The role of science in raising mass consciousness is critical. It can generate a scientific attitude of inquiry among the masses so that they can move from fatalistic prejudices to a realization of their power to change reality in their favor. . . . Scientists can bring to the masses systematic knowledge of a wider social structure and its working, a knowledge that is critical in the choice of strategies for social change; bring to them knowledge of initiatives to change society taken elsewhere, so that they may learn from the experiences. (86)
121. The power of new ideas needs to be mobilized through the communications revolution which is upon us. New forms of learning, education, awareness creation and conscientization need to be pushed. (10)
122. Absolute poverty must be abolished wherever it exists. Relative poverty (dissatisfaction with one's relative position in the income pyramid) is truly important, but morally not important as a priority. Nobody should increase its affluence, until everybody has gotten its essentials. The affluent 640 million people in the world, must pay for the minimum income reforms. Appropriate channels for transferring the savings of the rich into income for the poor must be found. . . . This will require a new ethos, a

discouragement of consumerism. Experiences show that this cannot be done without a radical change in power relations. The moment a maximum is suggested, the existing power structure feels threatened. It is seldom difficult to agree about desirable minimums. (98)

123. Conflict is common where there are competing interests, therefore avoiding it is no solution. Conflict is not necessarily violence. Conflict is a necessary means to attain true dialogue with people in authority. The poor do not achieve this until they have shown they are no longer servile and afraid. They need to move from the culture of silence to a position of dignified persons. (99)

124. Development means liberation. Any action that gives the people more control of their own affairs is an action for development, even if it does not offer them better health or more bread. (100)

125. Build from the bottom up . . . if this doesn't take place one has social Darwinism: the ones who survive are the richest, the most powerful, the whitest and the malest". (101)

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Note: A number of the quotes from this reference list have been adapted to fit the text, but credit is always given to the source where they originated.

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