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The Second Law Study Group has been talking about the future of the state of North Carolina now for several sessions. Last month Noel Dunavent who is the project person for NC 2000, a study initiated "by Governor Jim Hunt to prepare North Carolina for the 21st century — Chaired by UNC President William Friday, the Commission will be considering actions we can take now to shape the North Carolina we want in the year 2000." Dunavent reviewed the structure of the Commission and outlined how it is approaching the work before it. A good deal of the discussion revolved around the subject of industrialization, the creation of a million new jobs by year 2000 and what that might entail in terms of population change, environmental change, quality of life change. As you must know the Second Law group starts thinking about any subject from a base position that the earth is the primary consideration, meaning the earth as composed of all its creatures including humans, all the geography, all the water, air, soil, plants, sunshine, and surrounding cosmos. So we come to thinking about the future in those terms whereas the establishment which makes policy and draws up expectations thinks in terms of existing conditions and how to extend them. There is very little drive on the part of persons whose lives are comfortable to bring about change, except in those aspects which threaten the prolongation of that comfortable state. The thing that drives the Governor to seek industrial growth in North Carolina is the need for North Carolinians to have money in their pockets, to have jobs which produce income. State Senator Gerry Hancock said to a group of us one day, "North Carolina is dirt poor. New jobs is the name of the game and that takes precedence over most everything else." He was defending the establishment of a microelectronics industry at the time and reflected an attitude that permeates thinking at all levels, it seems to me. We asked Dunavent if that attitude permeates the NC 2000 Commission and he said it did not. The Commission is open to input from all sources and will give everyone full opportunity to present a case; which is what the Second Law group ought to get started with doing.

It is possible that the future of North Carolina may be more affected by the ideas of Myles Horton than by anyone else. Myles Horton is a Tennessee hillbilly, and an earth-shaker, who started up Highlander, an adult folk school, in 1932. Bill Moyers did a program on Myles Horton a year ago and Horton talked to a pot-luck supper crowd in Chapel Hill last Monday night. Highlander is in eastern Tennessee and it specializes in workshops where people with problems come and find other people with the same problems, and there talk among themselves and find out that their own thinking is just as valid as anyone else's, and after going over it with each other come to approaches on how to solve the problems. They learn from each other and they discover that if they are to take control of their lives in some meaningful way it will have to be as a result of their own concerted actions. Poor people learn that they have ability, that they have dignity, that they have brains, and that they have power, and they go back to their communities resolved to transmit these ideas. The issues are always the same—alienation, powerlessness, dehumanization, poverty.

Highlander has played an important role in labor relations in the South, in the coal mines and in the textile mills. Highlander was an important element in supporting the civil rights movement of the fifties and sixties, and today Highlander is active in studying the problems of Appalachia, where 70 percent of the people are poverty stricken and absentees own most of the land. (The parallels between Appalachia and El Salvador are striking)

The future of North Carolina and maybe the future of the country is going to be shaped by what happens to poor people. When the Governor goes all over the world recruiting industry, his stated purpose is to find jobs for North Carolinians. He fears widespread unemployment and the misery and unrest that results from people not having jobs or income. Whether his strategy is going to have the desired result is a matter of doubt with some. These doubts go to whether industry will locate where the unemployment is, what skill levels will be required, whether newcomers will get the jobs, what sacrifices will be called for in terms of utilities, water, power, roads, housing, congestion, and whether the jobs will be short or long term. The Sylvania experience in Smithfield is a painful reminder that industry comes and goes in response to something called the bottom line. North Carolinians have to be paid more than Mexicans, Taiwanese, Koreans, and Phillipinos. Stockholders are not concerned with local human survival and the profit of the stockholder controls management decisions.

The Miles Horton or Highlander approach to what to do about the poor might be different than that of the Governor. And there is an outfit in Chapel Hill, modeled on Highlander, Twin Streams Education Center, which believes that poor people can take charge of their lives, and has a couple of instances to show where they have done so. A worker owned sewing company called the Worker-Owned Sewing Company is making a go of it in Windsor, NC, and a bakery in New Bern is making a valiant effort to survive under worker management. I will carry more on Wes Hare and the Twin Streams Education Center in the next circular. It may be that important new solutions for the poor are developing. If that is so then the future of North Carolina may be put back in the hands of plain North Carolinians, and taken out of the hands of stockholders and the money makers.

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Talking about the future in another framwork, Chuck Korte will discuss the book The Resettling of America on the 27th, next Tuesday evening at 5:30. I haven't talked with him on just how he is going to cover the subject, but what that book does is to portray several communities and how they seek to solve the problem of living, in a context of human fullfillment. More and more there is a movement to try to escape the money economy, the consumer mode, the possession-centered life style. So come and talk with us Tuesday.

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June 29th - 5:50 p.m.: I will try to get Wes Hare and talk about Twin Streams.