

Dear Iphigenia,

This is the second letter to describe more specifically the events of the past year relating to the community of Delrow.

Did you manage to discuss any of these things with your father; did he have an open ear? Will his friends the trustees listen to him? Or will they simply be even more determined to carry on regardless with their preparations? It is of the utmost importance that we make some sort of breakthrough in understanding; find some common ground. If their hearts are hardened they will reject such words as I have to offer, and this letter will be even more open to a charge of defamation. After all, I am relating events, which have caused the Camphill co-workers to leave Delrow.

However, I do hope this will be seen as the opposite of defamation, and that this letter is evidence that my aim is to support, even defend Camphill Village Trust (CVT), despite being highly critical of what I consider fundamental mistakes and deviations in its actions. I will try to champion the 'Camphill' in CVT, the 'Village' in CVT and the 'Trust' in CVT. If CVT fears this as defamation, then so be it. As I said when introducing my first letter, so long as CVT retains the name of Camphill this is a matter of honour and duty. It is this that I wish to uphold for CVT.

I would also welcome any aspect of this letter, as an insider's point of view, to be published in *CVT News*. It is an honest and heartfelt report on behalf of the majority of stakeholders, and I hope it is a realistic presentation that may help to give a balanced picture of what is now happening in the CVT centres.

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PART TWO

Delrow Time-line 2013–2014: a co-worker's viewpoint

July 3rd 2014 saw the 50th anniversary of Delrow. Praise and gratitude poured in from everywhere: from the chair of CVT, the Mayor of Hertsmere, representatives of Hertfordshire Mental Health and Learning Disability Team, representatives from other Camphill centres, and from residents, parents and co-workers alike. It was a grand occasion of recognition and achievement. Our organisation was unique in the cultural landscape and we were strong, healthy and happy. We were being congratulated by CVT that we were operating with a financial surplus, and that we were a 'preferred provider'. A series of Ways to Quality (WtQ) audits brought major improvements to the community, and WtQ regarded Delrow as being transparent, dynamic and a beacon of good practice.

One year later, all Camphill co-workers had left or had decided to leave. Two remained who had been working closely with CVT from the start and, after a couple of ups and downs, job descriptions have now been created for them to ensure that they can be

employed. A third co-worker decided to stay on for the sake of some residents and volunteers to help bridge the period of transition.

Background

Over the years prior to this we had heard disquieting reports about events in other CVT communities, for instance that for various reasons the Croft Community, Larchfield Community and St Albans were all losing coworkers fast under CVT authority. We in Delrow were too busy with our own affairs, congratulating ourselves and believing that this could never happen to us (indeed, we heard reassuring remarks from the CEO), so most of us still thought the CVT executive had a genuine interest in supporting and retaining co-workers who carried and practiced Camphill life.

At that time some of our senior co-workers were actively supporting CVT — for instance by going to Botton during its first crisis with CVT as part of a group that tried to persuade Botton to comply with CVT and dissuade it from pursuing its wish to de-merge. We were too preoccupied to see what was really going on, and we always gave CVT the benefit of the doubt, our internal manager, especially, having great faith in the CEO. This was despite the very mixed reports we were hearing from other centres.

CVT Co-worker Forums

What is said here about the Co-worker Forum meetings is mainly from the point of view of the co-workers' disorientation, which is not to say that the meetings were not well run, bad or inefficient from the perspective of dealing with business. Initially, CVT communities had held their meetings in London on a monthly basis. These were meetings of internal managers without CVT involvement. Then, in early 2011 an employed advisor took part (himself an ex-co-worker and ex-CQC inspector), to help the communities through the thicket of bureaucratic legalities they had to deal with.

By the summer of 2011, the CVT executive chaired the meetings and arranged the agenda. The CEO was liked, respected, trusted, and enthusiastic. He proposed that since the meeting wasn't getting through its business, it should be extended to a two day working session, and the chance should be taken to stay in and be hosted by the communities; a chance to see the communities, eat together, have working suppers, engage in artistic activities and study the anthroposophical background of the ethos of Camphill. The co-workers very much welcomed this initiative and were hopeful.

By now there were more employed managers than Camphill co-workers at these meetings. Many found the time commitment too great, but agreed to try. However, at the first of these meetings held in Delrow not a single employed manager actually stayed in the community, preferring rather to decamp to a local hotel. This was not in the spirit of the original proposal.

Distressing reports of the meetings were given regarding attitudes and comments made about co-workers. These sarcastic and derogatory remarks depressed the co-worker representatives who often came back feeling humiliated and shocked at the disrespect and contempt shown towards the status of the co-worker. The impression was that co-workers were something to be laughed at or jeered. But why? Was it at their commitment or their non-professionalism? It even seemed as if a co-worker leaving the community was something to be proud of! There was much comment on 'the non-viability of the co-worker model'. This was countered by a co-worker pointing out that these critics were themselves standing on the shoulders of the co-worker model!

In one of the London meetings, during a discussion of finance in relation to administering and implementing Steiner's fundamental social law, it was stated clearly by both CEO and head of HR that although the Memorandum and Articles of the charity state that the principles of Rudolf Steiner should be followed, these could easily be changed if need be. This reveals CVT's position of self-empowerment; Steiner precepts are 'to be applied where appropriate'.

Suspicion and disparagement of what was going on in the other CVT communities was at times very aggressive, such as the CEO's statement: "we're going to have it out with them" in the October Forum (2011). What followed were major review programs set up to gain access to and control the communities.

Stepping Stones

This was a process through which CVT could survey the full spectrum of all areas of life in the communities. This was followed by...

In Control/Groundswell

In Control/Groundswell (IC/GS) were contracted to carry out an expensive audit, with the fortuitous result that this appeared to give CVT a further mandate for its management control of the communities.

In Delrow, our visitor from IC/GS came for just a day. She spent the morning looking round the community, had lunch in one of the houses and spent the afternoon in the Delrow Meeting telling us she thought we were doing everything perfectly well, before leaving at 4.00 pm. After this, Delrow began receiving mixed messages from the CEO regarding our future management structure. We felt insecure but were lulled into anticipating a benign goodwill from the executive; our impression was that because we were doing well we would be left alone to run our own affairs. However, we were soon to be surprised.

Great Interactions: August 2012

This is a programme devised by Macintyre, a company that operates Care Homes and promotes the methods and concepts derived from that field. As a programme that trains

carers in best practice when dealing with 'clients', this course was brought in to reform our ways.

All the Delrow Management Group members had to attend, but after a four-day introductory course the Delrow Meeting decided unanimously that it was puerile and inconsistent with our approach and decided not to pursue the course any further. Although this was stated openly in the presence of CVT HR manager, there was no discussion, no questions as to what alternatives might be appropriate, or what Camphill trainings might be suitable or could be adapted and developed. In short, there was no consideration or endorsement of any induction based on Camphill foundations, simply a silent disregard and blanket implementation of Macintyre's Great Interactions methodology.

At the time this was quite a humiliation for us. We were told that if we didn't comply with Great Interactions we would not be allowed to carry on with our work.

Rapid Personality Questionnaire

Also at this time a so-called 'rapid personality questionnaire' was introduced which had to be used for all recruitment. For many co-workers this was as offensive and humiliating as the above. A prospective couple that had many years of Camphill experience and wanted to join Delrow soon abandoned their application in face of the bureaucratic hurdles they had to surmount and being boxed into personality types.

Learning to Lead

This was introduced as a programme to ensure that we were providing our 'clients' with choice, and to give them the opportunity to run their own projects. Very soon office staff were interviewing the clients (residents), with pages of drawings depicting the many things they could be doing. Office staff are not really in a position to help much except to suggest and encourage the ticking of boxes. Besides, the clients are already busy in workshops three days a week; they participate in adult learning which offers projects and artistic activities two days of the week; they may go out to various activities in the evenings, and at weekends they often go shopping or on excursions; attending sports, concerts, theatre, services or church etc. In addition to all this they also need their free time to keep excess pressure off themselves. In the Delrow context, nearly all of Learning to Lead is so unreal that only one resident during the year actually put on a show — with lots of support — while another group has been busy for a year planning a charity stall. Nevertheless, all this still has to be done in order to 'prove' that we are not neglecting or heedless of our residents.

CVT Strategy

During the later years of the Forum meetings CEO, OM and HR had no difficulty instigating these programs and policies. The Forums mostly comprised their staff, managers recruited

from the State and business fields to run the communities; professionals who had scant idea what Camphill stood for or how it worked, and who were employed to bring about the 'necessary' transformation of Camphill into a conventionally-structured care system. To them it must all have seemed very appropriate and contemporary. There was no induction or training programme to introduce these managers to Camphill ideas or modes of working. Their attitude towards co-workers and their manner was disparaging, and the co-workers themselves only realised slowly how they were being upstaged and outmaneuvered. Those communities, which were most vulnerable, and those which were struggling in some way or other, were the first to be made to conform to the new precepts and structures of power.

The design, method and programmes of the strategy must have been in place from the beginning. On the one hand CVT always claimed its organisation had to be uniform and standardised, but on the other hand was saying to those co-workers and parents who were beginning to voice worries and doubts, that CVT would not become monolithic and promised differentiation and localisation which heartened — and disarmed — the co-workers. So it took a long time before many co-workers became disillusioned, discovering that these promises were empty words. Only slowly did they realise that everything, which gave them, their identity had in reality already been taken from them, long before they woke up to the fact.

The last example from this catalogue of CVT Forums was a key event in one of the autumn meetings held at Delrow. The afternoon agenda was set aside to discuss and examine 'The Fundamental Social Law'; this being a basic tenet of the communities' social and economic way of working, and Michael Luxford was invited to facilitate the discussion. At the last minute it was aborted and work on this essential has never been taken up, as far as I know, after that stillborn attempt although considering the circumstances since it was probably irrelevant even then. At the time this might have been a disappointment for co-workers, but it was not yet fully apparent how unwelcome, embarrassing and incongruous such a theme would be to the strategy of CVT. Eventually, artistic and study activity in the Forums dwindled and meetings reverted to being shorter, and not always in London because of travelling factors.

Nevertheless, in the meantime all seemed well in Delrow and we felt at the top of our profession. But after the summer lull things changed very quickly.

First Suspension

On the 5th of September 2013 our co-worker acting manager was suspended. This occurred in much the same way as had happened to a number of other leading figures elsewhere, much respected and loved in their communities, who suddenly had to leave, humiliated, traumatised, bereft and silenced.

Suspension is shrouded in mystery since we are not allowed to know or discuss the misconduct, but it is then superseded by what seems to us a far greater misdeed, perpetrated against an individual who is no longer welcome in CVT. There are recommended ways to investigate a complaint and control the process, but it seems that the CVT hierarchy manipulates it at will.

The investigation dragged on for months — a usual CVT practice — despite all the exaggerated platitudes that everything is going as fast as it possibly can; that it is a ‘neutral act’, and that it is all for one’s own good.

The community suffered a dark and dispiriting time. There has been no admission of guilt, no explanation, no clearing of names. In the meantime our manager packed his bags, determined never to set foot in Delrow again no matter what. He is now well settled in the same line of work but outside of CVT.

The Effect of Suspension

This event left the community much weakened, not just representationally and politically, but also inwardly. Those most effusive in their sympathies were to be trusted least. We were not allowed to live with the truth but with a pretense; we had to go on as if nothing had happened, although we were deeply wounded. We were not to even mention the subject although everyone knew more than they were meant to know. We had to lie to ourselves, lie to each other, and learn to love even though we were filled with anger, hatred and despair. We had to trust even in the midst of betrayal, and all the time we knew we were being watched — those who had reported us, where would they stop? It was a living nightmare of shadows and suspicions conjured by the machinations of a system we all hated, except that is, for those few still held in its thrall.

Resignation and Promotion

After this the human balance in the community was utterly raw and open. Those who were previously more reserved began to assert themselves, while others withdrew.

On September 8th, AA resigned as Domiciliary Care Manager and OM then immediately proposed XX as the replacement. Those present at the meeting agreed, although XX had declared the previous weekend that she would probably leave the community. Much confusion followed. For instance, XX started employing people where only a short while before the Delrow Meeting group had struggled to reach a decision to engage a new workshop leader. Late at night co-workers received an email from YY complaining to them that they didn’t seem to realise that XX was their manager and that they must behave accordingly. Co-workers were often taken by surprise, not knowing how, when or why decisions were being made like this, and felt overridden. They soon began to realise that both XX and YY had a hot line to CVT, particularly to HR, reporting on and obtaining advice and instruction on a whole array of matters concerning Delrow’s internal affairs. YY was already

our HR lead person and he began making remarks such as 'the Delrow Meeting would become irrelevant in a short while', or that 'guest volunteers would no longer be able to provide the contract', or that 'Great Interactions would be the basis of the Foundation Course for guest volunteers'. Such statements were slipped out unexpectedly and were unnerving. Where did all this come from?

Of course, this was simply the new style CVT in action, but at that stage co-workers had no idea what was really going on. HR was more or less mentoring XX through what for her must have been a difficult time. It was also unnerving that despite refusing earlier offers of hospitality by the community claiming that it was improper because it would compromise her, HR now stayed overnight in XX's house in Delrow during the period of AA's investigation. This and many other things created insecurity in the community, which felt increasingly destabilised. The Delrow Meeting was slowly losing ground and gradually the co-workers became deeply demoralised.

General Manager Announced

On October 2nd an extraordinary Delrow Meeting was called, ostensibly to hear a report on a recent CQC inspection, but it was none of that. Instead, the OM declared that Delrow would soon have an employed General Manager and a Care and Support Manager.

Dismissal of the Delrow LMC

On the 16th October an extraordinary meeting of our Local Management Council was called, the members not knowing what was in store for them. When all Council members were present they were summarily dismissed! There was no ceremony to honour the fifty years over which the LMC had served Camphill in Delrow; no presentation in gratitude of the selfless work these friends had given who now sat around the table with unbelieving eyes. Everyone in the room was stunned as the CVT executive left abruptly after this announcement.

During that time the OM was in Delrow nearly every week. He worked with the Delrow Group and the Care and Support Meeting, creating a new structure of management groups. He seemed emphatic that he did not want Delrow to 'haemorrhage co-workers', and that co-workers would have a role in the future management of the community alongside the appointed manager.

Parents' Meeting

In November, co-workers and a group of parents felt they needed to bring together the larger body of parents to discuss the radical changes and their inevitable consequences that seemed to occur almost by the day. It was intended that the meeting would be arranged and chaired by parents, with contributions from co-workers. However, CVT soon got wind of this

and the OM attended what was still the Delrow Meeting when this parents' meeting was being prepared. He was politely told that he might not be invited but his reply ('I think I might be needed') was the prelude to his active participation and planning of the event, to the relief of very few! Thus on 17th November the seating arrangement was: at the front an imposing panel comprising OM, CEO, the chairperson representing the parents and XX representing the community, facing the parents and co-workers.

The CEO's presentation was of course grandiose and the tone of the contributions was reassuring, confident that CVT was on top of things — until OM spoke. He put Delrow in its place, saying it was not well regarded by its funders, that there was no waiting list, and that it would have difficulty obtaining new referrals. At this point our secretary left the hall because despite being responsible for these matters she had not been consulted and knew that what was being said did not match the facts. It was humiliating for the co-workers sitting in the back rows to hear so much bad news for the first time in public, which did not accord with their understanding of the situation, but they had no opportunity to raise questions. If they were so bad, why was this not brought to the Delrow Meeting first? Our co-worker representative also spoke, but sadly very little of what she said was believed by the rest of us. No other co-worker was asked to contribute, or had the opportunity to comment, and it was only towards the end of the meeting that one or two of the parents had a chance to question what was being presented to them.

Since that meeting, parents and guardians of Delrow residents have gained a powerful voice as stakeholders, well informed and highly articulate in defending the kind of community they had chosen for their relatives. Most of them had had hard, often long, battles in the public sector to obtain a placement in Delrow, so it is ironic to say the least, that they must now challenge the trustees, the very guarantors of the Camphill they initially fought so hard for.

General Manager Selection

Well before Advent that year, CVT presented us with three candidates, which they had sifted from those who had applied for the job of Delrow Manager. We were allowed to meet each of these for twenty minutes and then give our decision or recommendation. We chose the third candidate because she was the only one who wasn't telling us how she could best reform us according to the latest system or management model they had learnt in business or care sector trainings, or in other special studies. She showed a little more humility and said she would like to get to know us, join our meetings and see how we do things. She also said she had studied Rudolf Steiner in her university days and knew about Camphill. This already sounded much better, as the other two obviously had no idea of this. HR raised her eyebrows, but our choice was upheld.

Most of us were relieved and in our enthusiasm we suggested a kind of induction retreat or some time working with her to get to know her and for her to get to know what Camphill life

is like, even proposing she live in for a couple of days. This was soon quashed by the OM (evidently a mad idea from his point of view) as he insisted she would be far too vulnerable for such exposure and would first need to establish her own regime. We had already been told that CVT couldn't afford such things as Camphill retreats or days away spent studying, which in earlier times had been our most effective means of rejuvenating our work and life. The idea was dropped.

The new Delrow Manager arrived on the 14th of February. She has certainly tried her level best and is as kind and accommodating as she can possibly be to everyone.

Here I confess I am not able to express myself objectively, at least not sufficiently to relate this chapter fairly, and have had to erase several attempts. From my perspective anyone in a managerial role, however kind or considerate, is doomed to fail. Either the community fails or the manager fails. To describe personal aspects of the absurdity of someone in that position is unkind and unfair on my part. I also acknowledge my own fury and frustration at being confronted with the process and events that took place. These comments are therefore not directed at the person appointed, but at his/her function and position. My feelings of outrage make it impossible for me to report in an impartial way so I will leave it for a later time. For now, a few comments.

The Dilemma of Being a Camphill Manager

Being a manager in CVT is uncomfortable. It is uncomfortable to be caught on the horns of a dilemma between the dizzy heights of a rung, whether higher or lower, on the ladder of command, or else be one among equals with one's feet on the ground.

We would like to help managers and treat them as friends (as once suggested by the OM), but we also know that from his standpoint it's the last thing he would agree to. In the OM's view it would be detrimental because managers are too vulnerable. Vulnerable?! Yes, think about that!

A manager functions if he is 'enthroned', i.e. removed, untouchable, authoritative, his directives adhered to. His job and status is inexorably linked to the rising and falling chains of an administration derived from an authority that is beyond our control, beyond our jurisdiction, outside our influence, and yet at the same time without us the chain would have no meaning and no usage. Hence the system of dependence and vulnerability must be maintained.

The power through which this system upheld is employment. The chain is oiled by hot drops of ambition and cold drops of humiliation. This is achieved through wage dependency, incentives and penalties. Perfect exploitation. What comes toward the co-worker from this system is utterly and completely alien to the realities he tries to live with. In other words, it interferes and destroys the parameters in which he is working.

The azure of a manager's sky is a dome of blueprint directives handed down by a peevish God.

The co-worker wakes to the cry of his fellow man, brings him to the light and the wind of the world, or to the warmth of the heart, not to tracts of legislation, policies and procedures. When his heart perceives the fall into suffering, helpless and vulnerable, in too much dark or too much light, in too much pain or too much ecstasy, he reaches out into that manifestation, that void, and follows the commandments his conscience teaches. His heart's fire will burn away all obeisance to the lesser gods of authority, their political correctness and paper propriety.

A co-worker is a novitiate in a school of the mysteries of the will. His eyes must learn to see, his ears to hear and his hands to deal with whatever comes to meet him in an eye that looks askance, in a voice that has no speech, in a head bowed down. The teaching and the life arises out of devotion to the need that he must awaken to.

A manager might be tolerated despite his training and instructions derived from a system with a different world view, a different image of what the human being is, and a system of methods and techniques, classifications and schemes alien to the realities of our experience and striving, but a co-worker should be free to choose whether or not he wishes to undergo the conditioning these imply, for example, Great Interactions.

A co-worker is engaged with the gestures and conditions of life more as an art than as a science or business. Science and business may and should serve, but not stamp themselves on the way we live with our friends and their needs. Nor should they influence unduly the way of life that has evolved to meet these realities. The spontaneity and sensibility required of this humanity will be an anomaly to an administration desperate to achieve conformity and control.

Camphill life is a complete immersion in life's wholeness just as an infant is; as an old man in his rocking chair is; as birth and death are, as an adult in the prime of life is. These should not be discriminated against simply for not being consistent with the service, or integrated into definitions of the delivery of contract.

A manager might say "What fantastic co-workers; why not agree with them?", but then he must take off his shoes and stop stamping. Either he loses his job, or he loses his co-workers.

One cannot be chosen for Camphill life through qualification, dress code or glib speech. One cannot choose this life without first knowing there is a threshold to cross, yet one also cannot know its reality without first entering these waters to discover whether one can, or is willing to, swim in them.

This is the heart of the dilemma — communities cannot survive without good management.

The Good Manager

Communities lack relevance and cannot be meaningful without the support and representation that a good manager can offer. In fact, the good manager must not only take off his shoes but also his suit in order to know if he can (or wants to) swim in these waters. He must know of this threshold before he can be a representative, can represent the Camphill Movement to the wider world, to thousands of people, to all manner of groups, organisations and authorities that directly and indirectly create the life blood of a community. The community is the heart, yet it is only a tiny organ by comparison, vulnerable and fragile. The good manager helps bring health and vitality to the life functions of this flowing in and out between the heart and the periphery. The good manager in today's world is a great and necessary blessing, for without him a community is too tender and unprotected, too liable to its own physical, emotional and financial vulnerabilities. Without the good manager a community easily stagnates and becomes a backwater.

The way of the good manager cannot be taught: it is experiential; the open heart, the open secret, the open wound, shoes in hand. It is the way of Camphill.

A poor manager leads to a poor community forced to conform to the imperative to make all conform. What peril for a manager to break out of the dead husk of these certainties in order to enter the seed with its ungovernable potential! A rash madness to dwell in the incompatibility of two paradigms at variance with one another!

We are bound to the sickness of a system that puts control and compliance above freedom and initiative; a system that can only drag the community into subservience and determines its every move. Once caught there is no escaping all the emergencies, real or imagined, that threaten a system consumed by urgency, driven from crisis to crisis — shadows chasing shadows without confronting reality.

It is a Sisyphean toil up a mountain without ever reaching that which is important, the summit overview and being overawed by its grandeur — to be given the meaning and significance of one's situation from the experience of awe.

Hence emergencies themselves become an addiction; anything to avoid the real labour of thinking and of what thought can perceive — anything to find an expedient to escape the enormity of living in the question of what is important. It means leaving behind the prescriptions of the abstract so as to fathom meaning in an imagination, an inspiration, an intuition.

What are the qualities, the calibre necessary to break free of this? Who is so inwardly fortified, lit by such inner certitude, maturity and humility to be able to forge the outer circumstances from an inner perception of what meets them in the realities of community life?

To be simultaneously a slave of the law and creator of freedom — this is the dilemma of management. Bend the rules by all means, but if actions are not won from meditative intuition and conscience, then rules, laws and regulations will do more harm than good.

Hölderlin said:

“We must not disavow our nobility,
The impulse within us to form
The unformed after the fashion of the divine.”

Good management facilitates an aristocracy of the spirit, not of heritage, privilege or power.

However, the spontaneity and sensibility required to make this work is anathema to an administration that confirms itself by defining its own directives and controls, clinging to the imperative to make everything conform.

- Management functions through edict and sanction: community through intuition and initiative.
- Management acts through anonymous authority: community through a freely created imagination.
- Management is necessary in a factory or production collapses: management in a community causes alienation and the community collapses.

The symptoms? Poor managers locking their doors; files full of command directives, policies and reports; clocking each person coming and going; knowing that life out there would be much richer, freer and more creative without them!

There are those who relish this and have been successful in their ‘clean up’ job of eradicating the voluntary status of the co-worker, removing self-management, making our way of dealing with finance unworkable, and reducing the Camphill philosophy to a pale ‘ethos’. To a more sensitive and perceptive person the task is full of pitfalls and quandaries.

For co-workers, the advent of management brought anonymity, mistrust and surveillance. It infiltrated and strangled the community because community needs to be an open secret where anyone of goodwill can participate and learn.

Co-worker Exodus

The last months before the co-worker exodus in July 2014 saw the gradual dissolution of the Delrow Meeting. It became more and more farcical because any decision was null and void without a manager’s approval and confirmation. We were simply wasting our time.

But even without this factor the Delrow Meeting also showed how divided we had become.

An example. The Luxford family had been on sabbatical and Delrow was looking at what tasks they might take up on their return. A house community that needed co-ordinators was suggested, but both XX and YY objected that they didn't know 'the new way'; that it was too long since they had last run a house; that their approach was wrong, etc. At one stage the OM interfered, demanding that we do not communicate with the Luxfords over Delrow matters because on sabbatical 'one had to mind one's own business', or something to that effect.

Second and Third Suspensions

I won't burden this story with more such pettiness, but suffice to say it became apparent that there was no real homecoming or any meaningful work available to them. The Luxfords had been warned that they were coming back to a very different Delrow, but rather than harbour preconceptions they preferred not to know in order to remain unprejudiced and return with a positive attitude to support Delrow and its new management. It was their home after all, having been Camphill pioneers all their working life.

Then, as if to help precipitate their leaving, both were suspended in May and June for different reasons. Michael was punished for his involvement with the Association of Camphill Communities. Anticipating further consequences such as losing his transitional financial support he retreated and kept quiet. Jane received a suspension of convenience for a) supporting a volunteer co-worker when according to CVT rules she should have reported instead of supported the volunteer, and b) convenient because the manager wanted her to produce the St John's Play for the festival. Clearly, they were to be shown the door, but they spent a valiant five months offering their services, trying to be supportive, doing whatever they could, but slowly they were worn down until they realised there was nothing more they could offer, and that it was impossible to integrate in any real way with the new management ethos of CVT.

Fourth Suspension

The Bamfords have a similar story to tell, but as they are too modest to tell it (as also are the Luxfords), I will try to do so very briefly, although I can never do justice to their suffering. Like the Luxfords they were hopeful and positive towards management to the very end and were trying to find ways to work in positive roles for the future of Delrow. They offered themselves for various management tasks which they imagined would benefit Delrow best, but were rejected on financial grounds, and then observed how these same roles were reinvented and given to less qualified people.

Following a residents' 'Good Support Meeting' on the 1st of May, residents went about chanting 'no one will tell us what to do'. The next day Chas was suspended. Only on the 8th of September — four months later! — was the investigation dropped.

The Bamfords suffered the humiliation of the harshest suspension, and suffered the additional insult of having their private rooms unlocked without their permission during their absence and used by support workers for overnight stays. Also, numerous confidential, private papers and valuables were stolen from their rooms.

From the litany of abuse of these powers they had learnt that without robust legal advice they had not the slightest chance to vindicate themselves. Despite being nomads, not allowed to set foot in their own home or say goodbye to the residents with whom they had lived for nine years, they had their wits about them and after an enormous amount of work and good legal support their case has finally been dropped as 'unsubstantiated'. But even now they are still without house or home. Will CVT pick ever up the bill?

There has been no apology from CVT management which is apparently incapable of admitting that it might have got something wrong. It must be that the system doesn't allow managers to lose face.

Why Co-workers?

People like the Luxfords and Bamfords are Camphillers, people who have taken up the life of Camphill, and what they offer to residents and to their communities is not simply a good service or a good job, for they are not employees. They are highly qualified, cultivated people who bring and create a quality of culture that permeates every aspect of life, whether it is in the way they care for their houses, gardens, or the way they behave, speak, think, sing or make music. It is the beauty they create around them, the quality of their manners, their life's rhythms, their interests, their friends and relatives — indeed everything you might (or might not) think of is brought to bear for the general good of the community. The birth, childhood and maturing of their children; old age or deaths in the family, and all the festivals these entail — all this is shared with the destiny of those around them, the many who themselves would never have their own experience of these things. Through them this whole wonderful, miraculous life becomes accessible, comes closer, so close that many can suddenly experience themselves as surrogate uncles, nannies or grandmas in very secure, and at times sublime, moments. It is through dedicated co-workers that they can share life's ups and downs, its joys and tragedies, even if not always fully understood, but knowing they are part of the great web of family life.

All this... and co-workers are also cleaners, cooks, gardeners, drivers, maintenance men or ladies, office administrators, carers, therapists, artists, teachers, lecturers, management leaders and co-ordinators. And they might have still other professions in their backpacks. They often have a life-long experience and commitment to all aspects of the community.

- All this... and they are an inspiration to countless volunteers who are prepared to give a year or more for an experience of community, some of whom will become the future bearers of this unique way of life. These young people come and they go again, but their lives are touched by a flame they will never forget.
- All this... that many employed staff becomes not just workers but committed friends and supporters retaining deep personal connections.
- All this... that parents, guardians, social workers and people in many professional fields supporting Camphill's work become close colleagues.
- All this... yet being unconditional in their acceptance, simply living and sharing life, open to the potential of any situation, any emergency, any celebration, any time. They are integral partners in co-creating the goodwill that must be offered without limitation to build the substance and fabric of a community constellation of free individuals.
- All this... yet CVT still thinks it is cheaper or more expedient to demolish this co-worker model of living called Camphill?
- All this... yet CVT is determined blindly to interfere and put an end to the subtle and intricate human and natural ecology of a community that has taken two generations to create and build?
- All this... yet CVT still thinks it better to replace it with... what? No, not even a pale, sickly caricature of Camphill, but with something that bears no resemblance to the name it pretends to promote. A place where the staff and even its managers look at you askance if you mention Karl König or Rudolf Steiner, or anything about Camphill's background and what it stands for.

Does CVT really imagine that the poor, the literally poor, support workers will carry the cultural life of the community in their own free time; that employed workers will do so having no idea what this entails when they accepted the job, and having no one to show or lead them into the meaning of celebrating the festivals?

Does CVT really believe that employees will prioritise their place of work over their own home when it comes to celebrating community festivals or community events, or prioritise their work over their own free time?

The irony, the blatant absurdity of this, is that no Camphiller would even consider living and working under CVT in a centre such as Delrow has become over the past few months.

Questions of Despair

- Is the quality of life and the commitment of co-workers an affront to CVT trustees and managers?
- Is it envy? Is it outrage? Are the communities not good enough, or too good?
- Is the life in these communities beyond their comprehension, or do they feel left out and insecure?
- Is our level of professionalism so low that we shame them into such extreme measures?
- Are they threatened by criminality or amorality that they seek to discipline us?
- Are we too rich or too poor? Sometimes one, sometimes the other?
- Is it paranoia that drives their need to control every aspect of our lives?
- Is life-sharing and living with trust money guided by the fundamental social law a threat to them?
- How is it that, without even consulting co-workers, they can justify a remuneration system that guarantees for themselves top managerial positions and salaries?
- Does the kind of commitment it takes to be a co-worker appear so abhorrent, so appalling to them because it reflects back their own lack of preparedness to live such a life themselves?
- Do they think they can bribe or buy off the vocational co-worker?
- Is it a hatred or fear of the “spiritual” that is striven for by co-workers because they themselves are not able to serve it, or not prepared to partake in it, that makes them supercilious with such vengeance?
- How does CVT imagine a Camphill community can function without Camphill co-workers? And if not, how can it justify calling itself Camphill?
- Can it really be Camphill when even its managers look at you askance if you mention “Today, the 25th of September, is Dr König’s birthday”? Trivial perhaps, but telling.

These are questions we will live with for the rest of our lives, and they will meet us again when and if we are to take them up in future lives.

How foolish, how ignorant, and worst of all how hypocritical of CVT.

Resident or 'Client'

Who are the ones who come off second best? The CVT communities are now services doing something *for* rather than *with* their 'clients'. And everything is done 'in their best interest'. Most will adapt well and quickly. Nevertheless, many residents will sense, even if their room is paved with gold, that there is a real difference in their residency now, and will have noticed that great changes have taken place. It is simply not the same if the 'provider' turns his back and goes home, or if there is a constantly changing, rotating staff of shift-work personnel. Some may not be able to articulate this, but that is why they are here! They might show frustration or aggression towards some object, towards another person or against themselves, or the light in their eyes may simply die.

Mostly though, our residents are endowed with such generosity of spirit that what they want most of all is to please, and to be confirmed in our eyes by showing acceptance and gratitude. So it is very easy for us who are responsible for their 'best interests' to lead this in whatever way is convenient for us, and also to project our own ideas of 'normalisation' onto them. Most of the residents who have experienced the 'old Camphill way' will not of themselves be able to articulate their sense that they have come off a poor second best.

The Guest Volunteer

These are young people, usually taking a gap year between school and university out of youthful idealism, and they give of their best, selflessly. Although unprepared and unqualified, they are with few exceptions our best co-workers, best in many, many ways — best friends, companions, carers and examples to the residents. Each year a new window opens for us, a fresh experience of authentic adjustment to new life-experiences, relationships, tasks, boundaries and potential, bringing this rich variety of gifts and interests. But most of all it is the unconditional preparedness — however helpless and vulnerable, however capable and self-assured — with which a young person takes on to meet that moment of destiny when confronting a resident. That they are unqualified, unprejudiced and willing is the great gift to the resident. That they bring idealism, enthusiasm as well as challenges to house co-ordinators and workshop masters is the gift they bring to the community. They are also, it must be said, a lot of hard work for the long-term co-workers; hours and hours, through the days and seasons, everything has to be shown and taught anew through example and instruction. They need constant guidance, encouragement and boundaries. Trust and authority have to be exercised sensitively, and a consciousness of them held day and night, twelve months of the year. The gift of all this is the incredible friendships, partnerships and ways of shared working that develop, which often remain for life.

This is true for all concerned, volunteer, resident and long-term co-worker. There are very few exceptions when one or other has to leave through unsuitability, conflict, not being able to cope — whether the volunteer or the house co-ordinator — or if there is neglect. There

are many factors that make all this work because these are human qualities, understood very well in their way and appreciated by the resident. These are not the kind of factors that regulations, policies and procedures or pay structures can even approach. In fact, they are the kind of things that terrify CVT, and in consequence it tries to define and control. Officially, these young people are now deemed unfit for this kind of involvement. They have been forbidden to undertake the actual care work with residents, or take responsibility for them in any way; they are now merely allowed to befriend them. But otherwise they are encouraged to lay the tables, look after the flowers or do cleaning and household chores. In short, they are allowed to do the work that previously the residents themselves would have done!

Employed Staff and Workshop Masters

Last but not least, the final chapter of this sad story goes to honour the commitment of the employed staff and workshop masters. Theirs has been an essential and uplifting contribution to the life of Delrow. For some, like our maintenance man, Delrow had become a kind of second home, coming in and helping out at any time of day or night. They have built up long-lasting connections with residents and co-workers, seeing and carrying in their way all the ups and downs of the residents themselves and of the community. Always very circumspect, caring and tactful, they have created workshops that not only produce items that are useful and extremely artistic, but done in such a way that the work and sense of achievement is a source of pride for the residents, while at the same time the workshops are havens of enormous therapeutic value.

For them too this past year has been harrowing. Just how distressing the situation is at present is best heard in their own words:

“Here in Delrow things go from bad to worse, with constantly changing shift-workers in all houses. The latest, imminent threat is to the workshops and Adult Learning College. With the recent resignation of our weaving workshop co-ordinator, the job has been advertised at a revised salary which is in line with the team leaders in houses, about £10 per hour (see *CVT website*). This is slightly more than half the current rate paid to tutors and workshop co-ordinators. With a newly-appointed HR person soon in post for Delrow and St Albans everything points to an imminent restructuring of our job descriptions and salaries and the likelihood of widespread redundancies throughout Delrow. In view of the fact that the workshops and college are the last bastions of the Camphill ethos, it would appear that we are now coming to the end of things. Morale is very low and of course this is tragic for the residents.”

* * *

This was, this is, Camphill.

Many have had, and are having, Camphill taken from them —

Trying to accommodate, to orientate themselves,

Living in a CVT place, or having already left

The trials and achievements, the experiences

Which live and work on into the future

As more than memories of a rich and worthwhile life.

At heart though, a Camphiller knows he is homeless.

We are guests on this earth, visitors

Who will try to do the good

As the need comes;

We will give our hand to those we find

And to those who find us.

So are we at peace and grateful for what is,

And for what was.

Your brother,

Achilles