

*"In Boldness Is Genius"*  
Goethe

# Job Sharing for Beginners

a short guide for Euro MPs

by

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## **Discussion Draft**

for internal use by EU '99 valberedningen  
Miljöpartiet de Gröna

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**Stockholm, Sweden**

**14th November 1998**

**Let The People Sing**

You speak as if all this activity - this making and selling and buying and possessing of useful articles - were an end in itself and not merely a means to an end. It is good that we should all have as many bowls and ashtrays as we need. But it is not of the highest importance. It is not important at all.

Civilisation is something more than producing and owning *things*....I have an ashtray. Good! I have four ashtrays. Still better, for my friends may come to see me. But do I want fifty ashtrays? No. And above all I do not want fifty ashtrays and *no* friends, eh?

We must be certain what civilisation is. To me it seems an affair of the mind and the spirit. Where the mind is growing in knowledge and wisdom and the spirit is like a clear flame, there is civilisation.

Man is certainly a maker and user of things, but if he is no more than that he is still only man and not yet civilised man. So we must ask ourselves if all this activity and ingenuity of yours is helping the mind to grow in wisdom and the spirit to burn like a clear flame.

And here I may remind you that the social insects, the bees and ants and termites whose communities have existed unchanged for more than a hundred million years, we are told, appear to have solved their problems of production and consumption and have nothing to learn from our economists.

We do not know how existence appears to an ant or a termite, which may enjoy ecstasies quite unknown to us, but we cannot help feeling that their failure, as a species, is complete, that the world spirit lost interest in them millions and millions of years ago, whereas there is still a chance, just a chance, for ourselves.

Now among the ends, which seem to us to justify our lower activities, are the creation and the appreciation of music, to which the making and selling of bowls and ash-trays, no matter how ingeniously produced, must serve merely as a means. Music nourishes the mind and the spirit. It is the expression of the struggling deity within us.

Here in this town the people are fortunate enough to possess a large and well-constructed hall of their own, where they can create and enjoy the noble art of music. But I have been told that you wish to take this hall away from them, to use it as a means of selling more bowls and ash-trays.

If that is true, then civilisation here in Dunbury is not moving forward but going backward, returning to a new kind of barbarism, filled with machines and swift transport, synthetic bowls and ash-trays, but nevertheless a barbarism.

You may tell me that the people have stopped using the Hall. And it may be true that they're not as keen on music as they used to be. But why? Because your world, with its clamorous and exacting machines and its organisation of mechanical little tasks, is draining away their spirit of initiative, making them passive in their leisure instead of active and creative.

They drift from the work factory to the amusement factory. Instead of music there is now the strange horrible sound of the cinema organ or the barbaric din of the jazz bands, both of which play on the nerves and do nothing for the heart, the mind, the spirit.

You may also tell me that the choice is between this and a museum for a set of West Dunbury snobs and that it's better for everybody that the old hall should be advertising your goods and serving a useful purpose. With that I might agree. There is nothing wrong with museums in their place. But no museum is necessary here. Too much of England is a museum. A life divided between museums and factories is not good. But that is not the choice.

At the back of your minds is still the old economic heresy, the idea that men are primarily producers and consumers, and are only real human beings in what you call their spare time. You do not believe that of everybody. Nobody ever did. You believe it of those you employ but not of those who employ you.

The great, the privileged, the wealthy have never seen themselves as part of economic man. That is why so many of them cling to medieval trappings, to show that they still move in the feudal, pre-economic world. They insist upon living on another level.

First to some extent in America and now in Russia, they thought to bring justice and equality into the world by removing this class, by making all men the economic man of the theorists. But it is equity in the wrong direction. It is bolting the door on the outside. We should aim at making all men great, privileged, and wealthy, raising them all to the level of the richest.

And I am not thinking in terms of goods and services. I am thinking of the inward style of life, of how a man thinks of himself. I am not only putting the smokers before the ash-trays in importance, but I am thinking of what it is that brings the smokers together. And in the world of the mind and the spirit it is possible for all to be great, privileged, and wealthy.

If *you* enjoy a Beethoven symphony you do not take away from but add to *my* enjoyment of it. And life on this level is not something to be tolerated if there happens to be time for it after the serious business of the world has been done. It *is* the serious business of the world - this life of beauty, wisdom and love - and we only make things and buy and sell them in order to sustain the real life. All men know this deep in their heart.

The coarsest sailor, hurrying ashore to get drunk in the lowest brothel, is still hungering for beauty, wisdom and love. All men know this deep in their hearts, and when those who refuse to listen to what is deep in their hearts, those with busy metallic little brains, tell them it is not so, then men cannot help feeling frustrated and in despair, and in their frustration and despair they become violent and cruel.

And that is why the world you have made is horrible now with violence and cruelty. Its roots are frustration and despair. Its fruits are violence, cruelty and anguish.

And the bowls and cups you sell - the bowls and cups for whose sake you would destroy music and liberty and happiness of the common people - may soon be running with blood and tears.

*J.B.Priestley (1939)*

*Professor Ernst Kronak's plea to the United Plastics board in East Dunbury in 'Let The People Sing' (pps 189-199)*

### **What's The Big Idea?**

The policy of the *Swedish Green Party* is to encourage a reduction in working hours. The arithmetic is not complicated. If six people working 40 hours a week cut their hours to 30 hours a week, then two more people can have a job. The 240 hours of work are done by 8 people instead of 6. Reduce the hours to 20 a week instead of 40 or 30 and the policy is no longer 'reducing Working Hours' but 'Sharing A Job'. Each of the original 6 jobs is being done by 2 people and 12 people have jobs instead of 6.

There are many ways to Job Share. The hours do not have to be shared equally. Or those 12 people with 6 jobs could decide to get 50% more work done one week by working 30 hours that week instead of 20 hours a week. That way 360 hours of work would get done (12 people x 30 hours) instead of 240 hours (6x40, 8x30 or 12x20).

Economists talk glibly of scarcity. Knowledge obeys the new economic laws of increasing returns unlike the diminishing returns of industrial production. The most wide-spread scarce commodity is the individual's life time. There are 112 waking hours in a living week (7x16)...and 96 (6x16) with a Biblical day of rest. There is considerable competition for this scarce resource. What do people do all week with their 100 hours of God-given time?

Conventional thinking sees job sharing in terms of two similar people doing the same job but at different times of the day, week, month or year...one middle-aged mother replacing another on a *Volvo* 'production area' at the end of a shift, for instance. But with just 20 or 30 hours a week of job-work would take on a broader richer meaning within the job-work-world.

Time-freedoms would find themselves being used profitably to transfer skills, knowledge and experience by way of apprenticeship; to improve effectiveness by devoting time to developing consensus for policies and ideas; and to enhance the mood and environment in the job-work-place by being there to provide kindness and mutual support when another person needed it.

A 52 year-old grandfather job-sharing as a Euro MP with a 25-year old pregnant mother is a fundamentally different idea to two strangers passing in a rest room between shifts. These two unique individuals would each devote their skills, knowledge, and experience and dedicate their people networks to achieving the ends their shared job was created for.

Some will argue that job sharing will result in the work expanding to meet the time available for it...the famous *Parkinson's Law*...with more filing, more paper shuffling and more memos for everybody else to reply to. But Professor Parkinson studied large bureaucratic organisations. His real point was that size matters, as the good professor's close friend Professor Leopold Kohr, had been pointing out throughout his academic life with such concepts as 'circles of leisure' and 'skyscraper economics'. Two people are not a large organisation. In groups of a dozen or less there are increasing and not diminishing returns to time.

Two good, conscientious, hard-working Euro job-sharing MPs would choose to use their new time-freedoms to produce good work for the benefit of their constituents, their party colleagues and their fellow Euro MPs. Here are some examples:

**Constituents:** talking to constituents and finding out what they really want instead of what you think they want and improving the efficiency of your dialogues by taking the trouble to do such things as learning HTML so you can build your own web site and produce a regular 3-weekly interactive web-publication for them.

**Party Colleagues:** researching the issues being voting on so that interested members of the party can involve themselves and develop consensus positions or identify areas and subjects where there are divergent points of view.

**Fellow Euro MPs:** working within the parliament to create coalitions with other parties and with other Euro MPs and improving the implementation of policy.

### Is It Allowed?

Swedish Law permits citizens of any member state of the *European Union* to stand as a candidate for election as a Swedish representative to the *Strasbourg Assembly*. Similar laws have been passed by other European parliaments. Perhaps the most prominent foreigner in the 1999 Strasbourg elections will be the former student leader from the barricades of 1968 Paris, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a German national who has been invited back into French politics by the French Greens to lead their party list.

Elections to the *Strasbourg Assembly* take place every five years at the same time throughout the *European Union*. The previous Euroelection was in June 1994 and the next election is on Sunday 13th June 1999. Sweden had its own EU election on 17th September 1995 after joining the EU in 1995. Turn-out at the election was 42%...half the 80-90% normal in Swedish parliamentary elections.

At the 1995 election, Sweden was a single undivided constituency and elected 22 of the 626 members of the *Strasbourg Parliament*, four from Miljöpartiet de Gröna...Per Gahrton (55), Inger Schörling (52), Ulf Holm (29) and MaLou Lindholm (51). The four *Swedish Green Party* Euro MPs are affiliated to the *Green Group in the European Parliament*...one of eight political groupings...which with 28 members from nine countries represents 4.4% of votes.

The statutes and directives that have emanated from Brussels would fill up several book-cases. Nobody has the faintest idea what the small print contains. The legality of this avalanche of directives and the extent to which it might be binding upon citizens of the member countries of the *European Union* is extremely uncertain. Even when parliaments have passed laws seeking to give these statutes and directives the status of law within their borders, the right of these parliaments to do so can be questioned.

Some legal theorists argue that the various union treaties give the *European Court* the ultimate right to determine the legality of any law in any European member states. However this Luxembourg court is not a court of law but a political court and it bases its judgements not on legal arguments but on whether a particular edict furthers the cause of union. The court's legitimacy has been challenged in several countries, including the UK, Germany and Denmark. And it will be challenged again.

In the United Kingdom there are further complications and these are mirrored in other countries. For a start the inhabitants of the United Kingdom are not citizens of the *European Union* but subjects of the Queen of England. Also common law takes precedence over all other legal codes with nothing decreed by one parliament being binding upon any future parliament. Furthermore in *English Common Law* a jury can dismiss a case and free a defendant if they consider a law to be unjust.

So in answer to the question: Is Job-sharing allowed for a Euro MP's job, the only reply is that nobody has the faintest idea. If a test of its legality is made, then it will be politically authorised, the campaigns for and against it will be politically motivated and any judgement will be politically determined. Any ruling will be subject to appeal. Any law can be repealed. And in many cases prosecutions will be dismissed either by judges or by juries.

Should it be desirable to determine whether or not Swedish Euro MPs should share jobs, then *We The People* should insist that the principle of subsidiarity...which was crucial to the passage of the *Maastricht Treaty* in many parliaments...be applied in accordance with the spirit of the treaty and the social contracts made with *We The People* in each member state. Currently the wording of the treaties seeks to make legal the exact reverse of the common understanding of the term subsidiarity.

On this basis it is a matter for the Swedish parliament to determine how the Swedish people are to be represented in the *Strasbourg Assembly*. The issue has never been raised in the *Swedish Parliament* and so no position has yet been taken on the question. In a sense, there is everything to play for because it is still principally a political and not a legal issue. Nonetheless there are legal precedents and analogies to be made which are of a legal nature and it is as well to set these out.

Holding property in common is not a novel idea. In marriage property is often held in common. In a limited company all assets are held in common by the shareholders. The right to cast a vote in the *Strasbourg Assembly* may also be regarded as common property that belongs to the constituents of the electoral district.

The voters lend it to their representatives for a period of five years and have every right to expect it back unaltered at the end of this time. In the interim, for the five year period between elections, their representatives

hold a fiduciary responsibility in the same way as a board of directors of a public company or a board of trustees for a pension fund.

The more interesting question though is not that of job sharing but how a corporation ever came to be given equality before the law with real people. Thomas Jefferson wanted to see the idea scrapped. If lawyers can cobble together rules like that then they should find it easy enough to provide appropriate legal status for two job-sharing Euro MPs.

Divorce law provides another example of joint property. Joint custody is often given to the children of a divorced marriage. In practice many different arrangements are possible and they all adequately meet these criteria. Some divorced parents share custody over the course of a week. At Mummy's place during the week. With Daddy at weekends. Others choose to divide custody between term-time and school holidays.

In principle there is little difference between sharing custody of a child and sharing the right to cast a vote. In the former case the interests of the child are paramount and in the latter, the interests of the inhabitants of an electoral district.

In practice there are enormous difficulties with the notion that any one Euro MP can adequately represent the interests of upward of half a million people. Job sharing has the advantage of halving the problem. But the problem is a problem of democracy and not one of job sharing. Only by sharing the job out among 300 representatives could we bring the scale of representation down below the maximum level of 30 000 permitted by the US constitution.

### How Does It Work?

There are only so many ways of listing people. Where there are job-share candidates as well as one-job candidates this will be quite clear from the list and voters will be able to decide whether they prefer a job-sharer to a one-jobber.

Indeed job-sharing could be seen as a logical extension of voting directly for the person to represent you...an innovation introduced in the Swedish Parliamentary elections this year. Instead of voters having to accept the official politician's view on 'one man one job' as the only way to represent their constituents, voters are able to choose between alternative ways of structuring the job. This is what it might look like to the voter:

#### Miljöpartiet de Gröna Valsedel EU'99

! NB. concept only !

- Per Gahrton (56)
- Birger Schlaug (47) / Maria Wetterström (26)
- Inger Schörling (53)
- Ulf Holm (30)
- MaLou Lindholm (52)
- Helena Shepherd (25) / William Shepherd (52)
- Elisabet Clinell (57) / Niklas Eriksson (22)
- Marianne Johansson (51) / Gunnar Lundell (24)
- Ulf Svensson (79) / Nicola Wachmeister (24)
- Berit Bergman (55) / Thorstein Bergman (27)
- Dan Andersson (42) / Thore Jonason (41)
- Kaysa Grytt (28) / Malena Jönsson (31)
- etc

! NB. concept only !

When I am asked how job sharing will work, what is meant is not what the list will look like, however, but how the work will be divided up. Yet this is rather like asking how a family organises the shopping and the cooking. The job of running the family household is a shared job and there are almost as many different ways of organising the job as there are different people with different skills and different abilities to do the work.

In fact dividing up jobs is the normal way the work of the world is done. Division can be by task or it can be by responsibility. But this is usually the basic question, not the why or the when of the division. Why should it be any different for the work of a Euro MP?

Another example of sharing is the family or the household phone bill. Even in households where there are several people using the same phone, the bill gets paid and each individual contributes his or her share. How it gets done varies from household to household. Some sort it out once every three months around the kitchen table. Others wait until they are told how much they owe. There may be arguments and the phone bill has been known to split up households. But this is not what usually happens. Dividing up jobs is a perfectly normal way to behave. Sharing is what people do.

Take another example. Married couples and partners living together arrange their affairs in a hundred and one different ways. Some ways work better than others. Some work well for some people but cause nothing but trouble for others. Some men are happy sharing the woman's work and doing all the man's work. Other men regard the symmetric marriage as a rip-off and find other ways to do their half of the work...and keep the peace. In the household sector, cooperation is what most ordinary people do.

But having made one case for the defence, there is another less defensive case to be made for job sharing. This is the democratic case and in particular the case for direct democracy vs. representative democracy. Job sharing presents an interesting opportunity. It may be possible to apply democratic principles in a different manner.

With a string quartet or a rock band we usually know who is writing the tunes. And even though they may swap things around, there is still only one instrument being played by any one person at any particular time. Is this a model that we could adopt for our new democracy?

Because there is in fact a real problem of democracy. But it is a problem of size and it springs from the sheer imbecility of believing that 300 million people can meaningfully wield one five hundred thousandth of a vote each.

But perhaps something can be done about this? Perhaps decisions can become representative of the views of the people? Perhaps we should accept the idea that these five hundred thousand citizens are part of a voting realm and that the job of the king and queen who hold their vote in the Strasbourg Assembly in their hands is to discover the will of the people and act on it.

This is where the idea of parties comes in. The people are unlikely to want a referendum on every issue...although the Swiss affection for this device suggests it should be more widely used...but the party could be a surrogate for the voice of the people. Why not let the party decide how a Euro MP should cast his and her vote.

Perhaps we could go even further. Apart from the problem of democracy there is also a problem of personal integrity. What is the relationship between a representative, the policy of her party, her vote and her conscience? Perhaps with job sharing we have here a chance to square the circle? The *Swedish Green Party* could adopt a novel experiment with the voting of their Euro MPs.

Instead of the *Swedish Green Party's* Euro MPs getting together to coordinate their voting within the 28 strong *Green Group in the Strasbourg Assembly*, they could bring voting into the *Green Group* from their constituencies.

The policy could be for the party and the two job-sharing MPs to be in consensus for a vote to be cast for or against within the *Green Group*. If there is no consensus that particular vote counts as an abstention. This would allow for minority positions and allow for a richer texture to the democratic debate. And the issues could be shared around with different issues delegated to different couples.

Most democrats agree that the people should be asked where a bridge should be sited but few suggest that they should also be asked to vote on how the bridge is to be built. This is a job for the *Civil Engineers*. So there is a place for democratic decision and consensus and a place for expertise. Many democrats would argue that the people should be in agreement about which civil engineer they would like or in the process by which he is selected. So it is here.

On a complex issue there might then be 8 for, 11 against and 9 abstentions for instance. The voting of the *Green Group's* '28 block vote' in the light of this poll would then be more in the nature of a tactical question. This is a judgement issue and probably best left to the *Green Group's* own civil engineering experts.

Now what is being sketched here is not quite as off-the-wall as you might think. In many ways this is the way of the corporate world with its *Boards of Directors* and *Annual General Meetings*. Perhaps political governance and corporate governance are destined to converge?

And what about these opinion polls and focus groups that the Bill Clintons and Tony Blairs deploy nowadays? Some see them as cynical devices. But they could instead be seen as techniques for enhancing the democratic process. Why should the *Swedish Green Party* not do likewise? And there is no reason in principle why a weighting could not be used on the internal voting. *Miljöpartiet de Gröna's* Euro MP 8, *Grön Ungdom's* Euro MP 8, Constituency Party 8...of which the Party focus group wields 4. Why not?

How would the media react to all these shenanigans?

Their interest would come in one of two different forms. Firstly they would look for Clinton-Lewinsky situations. What we would seek to personalise, they could be counted on to glamorise or trivialise. The golden rule is for candidates not to misbehave and for the party to move in fast and strike miscreants off the list if they have to.

Secondly, although it has taken a long time, the media are now comfortable with the idea of two gender-balanced spokespersons instead of a party leader. The problem is that they will tend to put job-sharing *Euro MPs* in the same neat little box. This may not always be appropriate. But nonetheless we will have succeeded when the media start saying 'vive la difference'.

We will need to make the media comfortable with us. Where other parties give interviews...even ones around the kitchen table...our job sharers should invite serious journalists in for fireside chats.

If candidates are professional and the couples well rehearsed, showing courtesy, kindness and genuine affection for each other while behaving democratically towards each other, it will rub off. We must walk our talk in our personal dealings with each other as Petra Kelly insisted in her book *Thinking Green*.

Finally, will it work for the voters themselves?

There are two legitimate causes for voters being concerned when they see a list with job sharers on it. Their first reaction is likely to be one of confusion. And with the electorate's current electoral time span, there may not be a chance for a second reaction. The vote may have been lost after the first. The idea will need to be tested in the pub. How does it play in Peoria?

But nonetheless ordinary people find nothing confusing in children having both a mother and a father. Nor do the children find it confusing having several different teachers. So it would seem it is the novelty rather than the idea that confuses.

The other concern is a reflection of the parlous state of democracy. We live in an age of specialisation. Many Swedes are content to limit their democratic involvement to voting once every five years. They see themselves as appointing somebody to do a specialist job of work. They will question why the *Swedish Green Party* cannot sort it all out among themselves. The only response to this is to argue that we believe in democracy and that one vote every five years is not our idea of democracy.

### **Is It A Good Idea?**

Job sharing is certainly an idea...but is it a good idea? If it is a good idea in general, is it a good idea in the particular case of a Euro MP? Is the time right or is the idea decades ahead of its time? Timing matters in politics. There is a tide in the affairs of men.

Moreover there are the political calculations. It may be a good idea for Sweden but is it good for the *Swedish Green Party*? Will it improve the party's chances in the June 1999 Strasbourg elections? Should this be any part of the calculation?

J.K. Galbraith in some autobiographical reflections pointed out that even though Adlai Stevenson was heavily defeated in his run for the US Presidency, his campaign was not a failure. He put forward policies and floated ideas that were taken up by other candidates in years to come...something candidates intent on victory seldom hazard.

However there are two excellent policy reasons why the *Swedish Green Party* should take up job sharing as their special issue in the June 1999 Strasbourg elections. *Future Work* and *Democracy* are two of the half a dozen or so issues that the *Swedish Green Party* would like to have on the agenda throughout the election.

And you cannot talk about work without bringing up the subject of money...which then touches on a third issue...the mad scramble to turn the whole of Europe into *Euroland* paying its bills (the good thing about a common currency) and having its money issued (the bad thing about a single currency) by grey eminences somewhere in the dark satanic vaults of the *Euroland Central Bank* (whoever they are...and wherever in cyberspace that might be).

In an election campaign, this setting of agendas can be critical to the outcome of the election. Sustainable economics is on message...but it will only get a hearing when it is called good food, good work and good money.

Sustainable economics may be the best programming language but 'the good life' is the user interface. What could be better than to give the idea an attractive (and biodegradable) packaging in the form of several (well-rehearsed) working couples...sharing their job.

And although in the immediate short-term, idleness is the problem and a shortage of jobs is one cause of the problem, it is the structure of work into jobs & careers and the quest for square pegs to fit all the round holes that underlies it.

But look a little deeper and it becomes clear that artificially dividing everybody's life into the three boxes of schooling, working and retiring is the start of the problem. If a society then seeks to issue money only as a wage to those with a job in the middle box then that society will crash sooner or later. Later is now here and brings us unfortunately into some very muddy waters.

It seems that when money is issued by a government and paid out to its poorer citizens as a social wage it is to be regarded as a very bad thing...tax payers' money, welfare spending etc. But when private corporations ladle out debt to a country's citizens this is to be regarded as a good thing...so good in fact that the same tax payers money is used from time to time to provide corporate welfare payments from the public purse to impoverished private banking companies. It is a strange world we live in. There is more.

If wages increase the cry from the boardroom barons is 'inflation!' When share prices sky-rocket their public relations people are quietly instructed to put the word out that wealth is being created. Very strange.

Meanwhile nobody must say a word about the private income distribution taking place behind our parliaments' backs as usury transfers vast quantities of wealth from the wage earning classes to the super-rich and their global casino economy with its transnational corporations, military industrial complexes and highly paid advertising agencies, accountants and clever clerks. Fact is stranger than fiction.

As for the long term, what needed to be said in 1939 when J.B. Priestley had his fictional professor address the board of *United Plastics* in East Dunbury (see preface) still needs saying 60 years later. What has to be rooted out is still the old economic heresy, the idea that men are primarily producers and consumers, and are only real human beings in what is called their spare time. There is not work time and spare time. There is just time.

The second policy reason why job sharing could be an election winner for the *Swedish Green Party* is because it goes to the heart of our ideas about democracy. The *European Union* tells us that it suffers from a democratic deficit. Now democratic deficits are to democracy what environmentalism is to ecology. Skilfully deployed job sharing can be used to raise the issues of democracy and its intellectual offshoots, representative democracy and direct democracy.

Once this subject is broached it does not take much ingenuity to move the conversation over to the notion that 300 million people represented by 600 Euro MPs is incompatible with any theory of representative democracy yet devised...it is a contradiction in terms.

From here it is only a short distance to arguing that growth by division is the only sane way to bring the Baltic States into our western economic world. And the best way for this to happen would be to break up the EU so that we in Sweden can go our own way and get on with the really important business for us of forging ties with our neighbours by way of a confederation of Baltic states....working in a tapestry of problem-grappling 'supra-national' think-groups while sub-contracting 'convergent problems' for action.

But meanwhile the least we can try to do as a party is to halve the democratic deficit by making the decisions being made more truly representative. And if we wanted to go further, then one way of doing this would be to bring democracy in much earlier on in the process instead of trying to squeeze it in at the end of the political production line.

Instead of Euro MPs in Strasbourg rubber stamping what has been pre-determined elsewhere, each vote could be brought within the embrace of a process of democratic consensus seeking among the people who 'own' that vote. Job sharing could be an important first step in setting up such a process. One way in which this might work was mentioned in the previous section.

But what about the 'job-share ticket'. Who? Whom? *Grön Ungdom* is not a party within a party. This is in sharp contrast to their role in the other Swedish political parties. *Grön Ungdom* are not used and manipulated into positions and policies that suit the tactical power moves of factions higher up in the party hierarchy. *Grön Ungdom* is not there to teach obedience, discipline and 'real politics' to aspiring party politicians. And nor does *Grön Ungdom* run around with its own secret agendas. It believes in the same ideals and pursues the same



policies as the party as a whole. The *Swedish Green Party* is a democratic party in a way that puts all the other parties to shame...and there has recently been some academic research to confirm this.

No other Swedish political party would dare to put out a gender- and age-balanced list for the Strasbourg elections. Only the *Swedish Green Party* could possibly consider it. And so the *Swedish Green Party* is uniquely capable of gaining electoral mileage by doing so.

And in the musty corridors of Europe's imperial palaces? What a breath of fresh air it would be for them to feel the energy and hopes of young people countering the politburo mentality and the self-satisfied cynicism that currently prevails. Young people do things differently. They move differently. They react differently. They will be there to reap the rewards of their endeavours. These young *Swedish Green job-sharers* would thrust a dagger into the very heart of the careerism and ageism that is the bane of present-day European political culture...and a rose and a smile in the faces of the 'can't do's, won't do's and shan't do's. Other Euro MPs will be compelled to ask themselves the question. Who do I represent?

What a powerful statement all this will send to the Swedish electorate. Perhaps they will even begin to attend elections again...and believe in politics and their politicians? Is this too much to hope?

#### **What Will Others Say?**

##### **If it's not illegal now, we will make sure it soon will be.**

Who is we? Why does job sharing worry you so much? What are you afraid of?  
Do you fear losing your power to compel people to do your bidding?

##### **Not enough room in the debating chamber.**

No problem. One of us will agree to always stand out in the lobby. And while we're there, we'll have a chat with the lobbyists from Volvo, Siemens, Phillips, Olivetti, GEC, the French Farmers Union...there are so many...and their lawyers and PR people. Who knows? We might even learn a thing or two...all of us.

##### **Not enough office space:**

We'll put in another desk and share the office as well as the job.

##### **Twice as much travel expenses:**

We'll just claim what we spend...which will end up costing the taxpayer considerably less than other Euro MPs.

##### **Double use of library facilities etc.**

It will make a change to see them being used particularly as they are costing the tax payers an arm and a leg...and how much more sensible than the UK arrangement where dozens of American Monica Lewinskys are running around the parliament doing research for college credits in the United States.

##### **Not normal democratic practice**

Juries have alternates...and what is more democratic than twelve good men & true?  
The original idea was for the US President to job share with the Vice President.  
German Greens have applied the rotation principle successfully for a long time.  
MPs die, others resign, new MPs are elected to replace them at by-elections, so it is most unusual for voters not to be represented by different people from year to year.  
Most politicians present themselves as job sharing...with their wives. All that differentiates the George Bush/Barbara Bush ticket from the Bill Clinton/Hilary Clinton ticket is the way the labour is divided...between the job sharers themselves and between them and their entourages. Job sharing is not only democratic but very very normal.

##### **Young people are not old enough to be Euro MPs**

If they are old enough to vote, they are old enough to represent voters. Besides most of the world is under 25 so what could be more representative?

##### **At the end of the day there has to be individual responsibility**

So two senators for each state in the US is irresponsible?  
Look how top jobs and fat cat director salaries are shared around on company boards.  
Who decides how Euro MPs vote? Whose interests do they represent?

##### **Two people are much harder to corrupt than one**

Yes, we see your problem. But you'll find a way around it. Everyone has their price...or so you are always telling us.

### About The Article

This is the second of three articles...or perhaps the third of four if *Yes To A Nobler Europe* written in 1996 turns out to have been the first. The previous article, entitled *Trapped Agenda: Beyond The Referendum Party* was written in May 1998, a year after the party polled a miserly 3% in the 1997 British elections to the *Westminster Parliament*. In *Trapped Agenda* I argued that Sir James Goldsmith, who died of cancer in 1997, would not have sat on his hands and done nothing after the victory of Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson's *New Labour* in 1997.

Instead he would have opened a second front, built upon the analysis in his book *The Trap* and his experience of founding a new party. And I conjectured that this second front would have been a 'full policy party' that blended the politics of J.B. Priestley... 'the road not taken by the *British Labour Party*'; the deep conservatism of Quintin Hogg presented in '*The Case for Conservatism*'...the road not taken by the *Conservative Party*...and the thinking of *Real World* a new grouping of activists in the UK gathered around some of the founding members of the *UK Ecology Party*...the road not taken by the *British Green Party*.

John Papworth read the article and had this to say:

'*Trapped Agenda* does not fulfil its promise...such a pity your conclusion - to some brilliant and badly needed analysis - is so nebulous and fails to suggest any positive steps the reader might take.'

John Papworth went on to suggest that 'All Power to The Parish' might be one response:

'...perhaps a conference called on the basis of a draft statement of intent might serve? A statement suggesting, instead of joining a new national body, that people form among their friends a local community association as a self-governing building block - an association with the avowed intention of restoring local power to local people.'

John Papworth was right. The trouble was I had no instant 'policy response'...nor am I a believer in calling a war in a Hampstead drawing room, because my experience is that nobody shows up except the few that are frog-marched in.

Nonetheless John was right. I didn't know what to do...and this was obvious from the article. So I limited its circulation among Sir James' people to his elder brother Edward Goldsmith and passed a few copies around to colleagues in *cesc*, a policy group I started in 1994 with Anton Pinschhof.

In the Summer of 1998 I was in Gotland working with Connie Lindqvist on Academic Inn Books *Linnaeus Project* and took a week off from July 12-17 to sit in on Sweden's *Almedalveckan*...the traditional Swedish equivalent to America's New Hampshire Primaries...which kicked off their 1998 election campaigning season. This involved attending seminars and listening to the speeches and the 'live shows' put on by all the major political parties taking part in the elections two months later. It is incidentally an excellent model for 'citizen political education' that would translate well to 'county towns' throughout Europe.

The *Swedish Green Party* impressed me but they did not do well in the election. Instead there was a surge of support for the *Socialists* and the *Christian Democrats* who were better able to exploit the very weak position (following the stringencies and cut-backs of the 1990s) of the powerful *Swedish Social Democrats*. After the election I read furiously all the books written by Per Gahrton and Birger Schlaug, the *Swedish Green Party's* two principal political theorists and policy presenters and went through the party's policy documents with a fine tooth comb.

Quite remarkable! Here was Sir James' new party but started as a breakaway from the old *Swedish Liberal Party* in 1971. After being up and running for a quarter of a decade and making steady progress through local elections and national elections it entered the *European Assembly* in Strasbourg in 1995.

So in September 1998 I signed up and in November urged my newly adopted party to adopt *Job Sharing* as party policy for the 1999 European elections. This article *Job Sharing for Beginners* is the next article in the series.

The fourth article is unlikely to be written for a year or so. It is tentatively entitled *The New Conservatives*. It struck me that John Papworth's local associations would take upon themselves the character of the group that G.K. Chesterton gave fictional life to in 1904 in his *Napoleon of Notting Hill*.

'...this legend of an epic hour  
A child I dreamed, and dream it still,  
under the great grey water-tower  
That strikes the stars on Campden Hill.'

Now a national confederation of thousands and thousands of local napoleon parties could look remarkably like an invigorated *Conservative Party*...but with its membership drawn from a *Countryside Rally* rather than from the dining rooms of *The Savoy*.

The Tories polled as many votes in their 'landslide defeat' by Tony Blair's *New Labour* of 1997 as in their 'unexpected victory' under John Major in 1992 and have a core support in the UK matched only by the old *Swedish Farmers Party*...now *Centerpartiet* and a pale shadow of its former self. It may be possible for William Hague, the new leader of the *British Conservative Party*, to lead his *Conservative & Unionist Party* forward to Quintin Hogg's...and Edmund Burke's...conservatism. If onto this, William Hague's *New Tories* can graft the political philosophy of J.B. Priestley and the political activism of *Real World* then there will be no need to start up a new party in the UK.

These *New Conservatives* would put real meaning back into the word 'conservation' and would be the second party in Europe to find the keys to unlock Sir James Goldsmith's '*Trapped Agenda*'...after the *Swedish Green Party*.

The son of a former Liberal Lord, Sir Anthony Wedgewood-Benn, known to a whole political generation as *Old Labour's* Tony Benn, could then cross the aisle in the *House of Commons*, reclaim his title and defect from *New Labour* to take the *New Conservative Party* whip in a *New House of Elders*. And what a stir this would be.

This *Conservative Party* could hold power at Westminster for a quarter of a century...working closely in the *Strasbourg Assembly* with the *Swedish Green Party*...originally a breakaway from the *Swedish Liberal Party*. Both parties would campaign with other clear-sighted politicians in Europe for a revival of a new liberalism that combined the traditional liberal ideas of accountable government (democracy), the rule of law and sound money with the new sustainable economic idea that not only does the land belong to the people but the people themselves belong to the land...in a deep spiritual sense... as children to their mother.

William Shepherd  
12th November 1998

### About The Author

William Shepherd was brought up in Oxleas Woods in South East London and is a UK citizen currently resident in Stockholm, Sweden and Rye, England. He was married to Ingrid Lundell from 1969 to 1984 and has two children, Linda (26) and Nicholas (23). Since 1993 his partner has been the Finnish artist Connie Lindqvist. He is bilingual in English & Swedish.

William Shepherd attended *Christ's Hospital* 'Bluecoat' school in Sussex, England from 1957-64, read engineering at *Churchill College, Cambridge University* from 1965-68, business economics at *Stockholm University* in 1971-72 and development economics at *Uppsala University* in 1974.

In the 1970s William Shepherd worked on *World Bank* feasibility studies in Africa and the Middle East and taught business and finance at the *University of East Africa* before returning to the UK to work under Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy integrating the British subsidiaries of an American transnational corporation with its European operations from 1975-1979.

In the 1980s William Shepherd lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Business assignments included a proposal to the *US Energy Department* on soft energy systems and a study of innovation and future shareholder value in high-tech/high-growth corporations for Smith Barney of Chicago. Following graduate studies at *MIT Sloan School* in industrial & economic dynamics, '*Energy - a Long Wave Perspective*', was published and papers on *Energy Flows, Energy Needs, Energy Policy & Energy Strategy* presented to the *1981 Convention of Eastern Economists* in Philadelphia.

In the 1980s William Shepherd taught organisation and human scale economics in Boston; created a course for teachers on the ecology of learning; and founded the *Human Scale Institute* with Dr. Edgar Klugman of Wheelock College and Anna Edey of *Solviva Gardens* on Martha's Vineyard. In 1988 William Shepherd moved to Canterbury, England and in 1989 authored a book on the future of European politics entitled *The Rise & Fall of The Swedish Green Party (1982-1997)*<sup>1</sup>. Publications were '*Education for a Virtuous Society; Birmingham as Number One; Green Houses or Blue Moon Waves* and *The Canterbury Papers*.

In the 1990s William Shepherd worked as publisher & editor of *The Cinque Ports Letter*, a weekly broadsheet designed for web distribution; created *The Private Papers of Crocodile Uppsala* and *The Return of The Ancient Mariner*; and wrote *The Troubadour Papers, The Wealth of Villagers* and articles and reviews written as a

<sup>1</sup> *The Rise & Fall of the Swedish Green Party (1982-1997)* by William Shepherd (Academic Inn Books, Canterbury, 1989, 100 pages, £4.95, ISBN 1 901478 00 8).

contributing editor to *Fourth World Review*, an unbroken 25-year record of principled opposition to the Maastricht Agenda. In 1990 it became the first political journal to publish Sir James Goldsmith's writings.

At the 1997 Westminster elections William Shepherd stood as the *Referendum Party Candidate* for Oldham West & Royton and had the dubious distinction of watching *New Labour's Environment Minister Michael Meacher* amass more votes than all the other candidates put together. In 1998 he joined *Miljöpartiet de Gröna*, the *Swedish Green Party* and in 1999 was a candidate for the party's list for the *Strasbourg Assembly* elections.

William Shepherd works in Stockholm with *Cultura Communications*, scriptwriting and marketing English soundtracks to Swedish film makers and in Rye as Secretary of *Academic Inn Books*, a loose-knit confederation of partnerships run by the authors & illustrators.

William Shepherd's academic base is at *Stockholm University* where he is studying European economic history and sustainable development in the Baltic region; researching large organisations, privatisation and information technology firms; and continuing his work with colleagues in Brittany, England and Sweden on monetary policy development for the European alternative movement and on political strategy for the *European Green Movement*.

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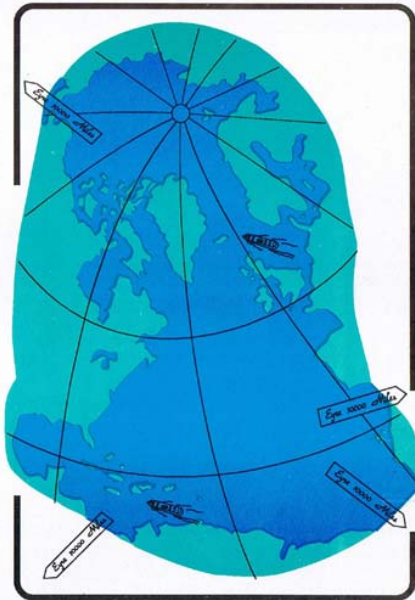
## The Rise and Fall of the Swedish Green Party

(1982-1997)

£4.95



By William Shepherd



Published by Academic Inn Books in 1990