



The Politics of Food

11th Annual Conference of the Weston A Price Foundation, Philadelphia, US

Gill Jacobs

I first came across the Weston A. Price Foundation (WAPF) on the net some five years ago. What I discovered forced me to sit up and take notice. It was one of those moments where you think: this is so obvious why didn't I think of it before, especially if like me you studied anthropology?

The Weston A. Price Foundation is a nonprofit US charity founded in 1999 to disseminate the research of nutrition pioneer Dr. Weston Price, whose studies of isolated non-industrialised peoples established the parameters of human health and determined the optimum characteristics of human diets. Dr. Price's research demonstrated that humans achieve perfect physical form and perfect health generation after generation only when they consume nutrient-dense whole foods and the vital fat-soluble activators found exclusively in animal fats.¹

Looking at the photographs Dr Price had taken of non-industrialised peoples, before the introduction of a Western diet, things suddenly fell into place. Wide jaws, and uncrowded perfect teeth give plenty of room for neural pathways to the brain. Once a western diet was introduced facial structures became narrower and teeth more crowded, with inevitable consequences to health.



Photos © Price-Polkingger Nutrition Foundation, www.price-polkingger.org

I had never been taken in by the 'low fat is healthy' government diktat. I used my eyes, when in France, and their high protein, high animal fat diet, with cheeses and salad dressings did not seem to result in childhood obesity or overweight adults. My daughter's vegetarian lifestyle coincided with polycystic ovaries. She started menstruating again when she changed her diet to eat eggs, meat and fish, and animal fats.



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So I did not need to be convinced. Other people do, of course, and I concede that they are right when they say that different people need more or less protein than others. It's usually beliefs about cruelty which dictate vegetarian and vegan food choices. But our Bambification of the animal world misses the point of our interdependence. Isolated non-industrialised societies don't have choice. On the other hand we can define ourselves by the fact that we do have choice to eat 'new' industrialised foods instead of what our grandparents ate.

In parts of the world where fruit or vegetables are limited, as in Alaska, how do we explain that diets as much as 80% fat did not result in heart attacks or shortened lives?

On a trip to the US I bought *Nourishing Traditions: The Cookbook that Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats*, by Sally Fallon Morrell, the President of WAPF. It



US Government Official Diet – designed to promote the products of commodity agriculture?²

contains the message that animal fats and cholesterol are not villains but vital factors in the diet, necessary for normal growth, proper function of the brain and nervous system, protection from disease and optimum energy levels. But it wasn't until Sally came to London last year to deliver her message that I started to use the book. Raw milk was bought from the farmer's market and turned into kefir, organ meats featured much more (Native American Indians threw the muscle meat to the dogs, and saved the organ meat for themselves), and chicken carcasses and fish bones were simmered into broths, helping overall to remineralise my body, along with fermented cod liver oil to up Vitamin D and A in an absorbable way. Homemade sauerkraut is now a regular feature of my meals!

So it's not a surprise that last November saw me checking in to the WAPF national convention in Philadelphia, along with 1,500 others. Local groups are organised as chapters, and apart from ordinary members flying in for a feast of talks and networking, there were a large number of farmers, including many local Amish and Mennonite farmers.

All these farmers farm sustainably, raising pasture fed cattle and/or raw milk, often struggling to survive against a state bureaucracy that favours chemicalised large scale food production. WAPF has set up a Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defence Fund to protect farmers from armed raids in some states. Advice to farmers is to install cameras at home to film gun toting officers who may turn up in the middle of the night.

The forthcoming film *Farmageddon*, shown at the conference, tells the story of a mother whose son healed from allergies and asthma after consuming raw milk, and pastured farm foods. It showed how food co-ops and private clubs mushroomed to access these foods, and how state and local governments often responded in an aggressive way.

I chatted over lunch to one beef farmer who gave a farmer friend \$7,000 to reinstall milking equipment, after it had

been confiscated and destroyed by officials, because he produced raw milk. The gift was to get him up and running immediately, so that he would not be without an income, or lose his nerve.

One of the most useful panel discussions was on Effective Food Activism, on how to harness the power of social media to promote educational messages about wholesome traditional foods. A number of highly successful food bloggers talked about how to inspire others to cook traditional foods, and how to push further for change in the American diet.

The most interesting delegate I met was one of the speakers, Anore Jones. She lived with the Inupiat in NW Alaska for 23 years, from the sixties to the eighties, raising a family and foraging for food with an Inupiat woman, whilst their husbands commercially fished. Her book on fish is free to download.³ She described a feeling of increased energy and warmth when she ate frozen fish, straight from the 'freezer' (a hole in the ground), and the central role in the diet of fat, from seals, and from fish. Seal liver and berry ice-cream was a particular favourite for dessert! For one whole year there was nothing to eat but caribou.

Inupiat wisdom describes the relationship between hunter and hunted. The hunter in connecting energetically with the caribou has the feeling that they present themselves to be killed, in times of imminent starvation, as part of the cycle of life. No wonder gratitude is embedded in such cultures, and a deep connection with the animal world. We ignore our own survival needs, when we choose chemicalised industrially produced 'health foods', such as soya milk and harmful vegetable oils. Rarely stretched to the point of hunger, or responsibility for gathering the food ourselves, we become fodder for the large corporations pushing these new 'foods' as healthy.

At this point I hear the cries of protest. The romanticism of looking backwards at small scale traditional societies. How can we feed the billions now able to afford meat, and stay true to the collective food wisdom from the past? Aren't the fish stocks running out? Some of the answers to these concerns were addressed by well known Virginia farmer Jo Salatin, who held the keynote spot before the banquet on Saturday night.

On a foundation of Christian principles, Salatin has built a farming ecosystem where cows, pigs, chickens, turkeys, and rabbits interact ecologically in a way that goes beyond conservation. The cattle graze different areas of pasture every day. Then chickens pick through the same fields, eating bugs and spreading cow manure before going back to mobile coops to lay their eggs.

The farm's pigs generate fertiliser by rooting around the floor of the barn, lured by sweet corn into aerating the mix of hay, cow manure, and wood chips. The finished compost is spread on fields. This process not only takes almost nothing out of the environment, it puts nutrients back in. The goal is to capture solar energy, via biomass in the form of grass.

'We believe that the farm should be building 'forgiveness' into the ecosystem which is one that can better handle drought, flood, disease, pestilence. The first goal is to get people to appreciate that how we farm is a moral question. Once you get to that point, then you can actually discuss: What is a moral farm? What is a moral way to raise a chicken?' Needless to say he received a standing ovation.

So aside from the talks, how was the food? Amazing, when you consider the numbers. Hotel chefs had to work alongside WAPF cooks to produce food thoroughly in tune with WAPF principles.

Breakfast included grass-fed beef broth, or pastured chicken bone broth, and super soaked porridge with cream or butter (you need the animal fats to release the minerals in

the oats). The Saturday Banquet had raw milk flowing as freely as the wine. (So aren't most of us dairy intolerant? Well, not if it's raw.) The mountains of butter were so far removed from individual pats as to be shocking to any English sense of portion control.

Such excess, in a world of shortage, has to be put in the context of a celebration of good healthful food, against the forces outside which demonise and deny. And after all sharing a conference with donor farmer participants has to have its advantages!

Apart from what the Foundation says, what does it do? One of its most moving campaigns is its lawsuit against the state of Illinois, which for seven years has fed its prisoners soy protein instead of meat. The governor's justification for replacing meat and cheese with soy protein was financial. However, it may be relevant that the main supplier of soy products to the Illinois prisons made substantial contributions to the Governor's election campaign. WAPF has documented the health problems that the prisoners are now facing, after the prisoners approached them for help.⁵

Whatever your stance on animal products, soya beans and vegan diets, it's not hard to support WAPF's overriding principle which holds that modern technology should be harnessed as a servant to the wise and nurturing traditions of our ancestors rather than used as a force destructive to the environment and human health.

Further information: The WAPF London Chapter put on a conference in the UK in March 2011. A video of it should be available soon. Go to <http://www.meetup.com/westonaprice-london/> click on the drop down menu More, and under Files you can scroll down to Sally Fallon's presentation at the 2010 London conference. Also highly recommended, as an example of the WAPF diet in action against advanced cancer, under the same menu, is an interview with Jerry Brunetti, a speaker at both the Philadelphia and London conference, and cancer survivor twelve years after being given six months to live.

References

1. Weston A. Price, MS., D.D.S., F.A.G.D. (1939) 'Nutrition and Physical Degeneration: A Comparison of Primitive and Modern Diets and Their Effects' http://journeytoforever.org/farm_library/price/pricetoc.html for free download of the book
2. For an examination of the evidence for the Food Pyramid go to: <http://westonaprice.org/abcs-of-nutrition/1950-comments-on-the-usda-dietary-guidelines.html>
3. <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/fisreportdetail.cfm?fisrep=21>. Click on Northwest Arctic and then on *Iqaliuch Niginaqtuat, Fish That We Eat*.
4. <http://permaculture.tv/christian-libertarian-environmentalist-capitalist-farmer-joe-salatin-on-perennial-polyculture-at-polyface-farm/>
5. <http://westonaprice.org/soy-alert/1624.html>

Gill Jacobs is a health writer, having written books on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Candidiasis. Alongside her passion for food as the base of health, balance and connection to others, she runs her own business in Low Level Laser Light, Light for Health. She is currently writing a book about new trends in food choices, including vegetarianism. She is also an active member of the Transition Movement, in her local area of NW London, as well as a member of the London Chapter of the Weston A Price Foundation.

Towards an Integral World-View: Inner and Outer

9-11 July 2010, at Shirrell Heath, Hampshire

Jean Hardy

This Annual General meeting was in a most comfortable and enjoyable setting – a modern adaptation, well done, of a historic Lutyens Edwardian house with attractive bedrooms and pleasing food, all close to hand. The conference felt very well contained there.

The theme of an integrated world-view, the specific topic of **David Lorimer's** presentation, was strongly related to SMN's own searching for a renewed vision at this present time of uncertainty in society at all levels. This particular gathering was the 22nd Annual Meeting, the first being in 1989 at Dartington, and the change the organisation was set up to achieve in the 70s and 80s – a softening of boundaries between hard science and a sense of the mystery beyond science and medicine – is now part of common currency in the twenty-first century. What are we looking for now?

One initiative, now on its way to completion, was developed last year, and is in the shape of a considerable and exciting looking book, *A New Renaissance: Transforming Science, Spirit and Society*, which was launched at an event at Queen Mary College, University of London, on the 6th November, edited by David Lorimer and Oliver Robinson, with many well-known authors. At the same time, and in the same spirit, much stronger links are being formed with sister organisations all searching a 'more balanced, more sustainable, more unified, more empathic worldview, accepting that change in behavior only occurs in tandem with a change in consciousness', as John Clarke put it in his report as Chair of Directors.

A very fascinating development from this is, hopefully, a collaborative website shared with these sympathetic organisations (such as Resurgence, Soil Association, New Economics Foundation) which will facilitate cooperation, assisted by a shared calendar of events. The aim is that all these organisations retain their philosophical base – but all become more active in society in the initiation of change.

The weekend began with a ceremony handing over the Chairmanship from **John Clarke**, who has been a major force in these initiatives in his three years as Chair, to **Bernard Carr**, in a rather moving ceremony conducted by **Peter Fenwick** at the beginning of the first evening. **Anne Baring's** splendid talk, on the Cosmos and Feminine brought us right into the changes of emphasis we could hope to see in this new worldview which could move from the Wastelands of which we are already so aware with the industrialisation, climate change and wars of the last two hundred years, with her strong sense of the potentiality of the human spirit.

'It is inconceivable', Anne has said on her website, 'that our extraordinary species, which has taken so many billion years to come to conscious awareness, should destroy itself and lay waste to the Earth through ignorance of the divinity in which we dwell and which dwells in us'. The masculine energy of this time needs to be balanced by the feminine values of heart, and capacity to care, which are potentially



present in all. She acknowledged this energy particularly in the woman who gave us some of the first warnings of ecological danger in 1962: Rachel Carson in her book *Silent Spring*. Anne's talk was illustrated by her beautiful images on the screen.

Next morning David spelled out more of the parameters of the Integral Worldview as it is developing. Worldviews are similar to the idea of paradigms, as we have known them since Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* of 1962, but far wider and more comprehensive. They have occurred throughout history and initiated particular periods of history – we tend to be most familiar with the 16/17th century changes of the European Renaissance, starting in Italy, for which we have comprehensive and vivid material. In this coming Integral Worldview, as in the others, much taken for granted human reality is changed, from intimate feelings about who we are, to the shape and content of all culture and our understanding of the universe. **Chris Lyons** added his GP's perspective with some interesting reflections on a shift from curing to caring in medicine.

The present movements are from a dualistic and rigid understanding of reality to a much more inclusive one which is more participatory, and could be understood as both/and rather than either/or. The masculine/feminine dichotomy is a fundamental example. All earlier and present cultures are gradually being acknowledged, including their spirituality. And the present separation of knowledge into disciplines is being softened and much more integrated. Integration is about the potential of the human spirit and a renewed sense of the earth.

Ian Wight's talk later in the day was interesting about this, as in his Canadian university there is a real attempt to integrate some professional disciplines, and to see these more in the light of the natural world.



My own talk on my new book *A Wiser Politics*, being published in Spring 2011, is certainly part of this movement towards a wider way of understanding politics. Political philosophy as it has developed over the last four hundred years in Europe is strong on order and competition, but misses out the feminine, the earth, indigenous wisdom, the spirit, and the child. My book attempts to incorporate these missing elements into what could be a wiser political world.

There were two other talks by psychiatrists, **Ulrich Kramer** and **Alan Sanderson**, giving explicit and shocking descriptions of the abuse of two small girls, and the way that modern medicine in the shape of psychiatry tries to heal their experience. There could hardly have been a more vivid illustration of the way that children can be treated by parents and worked with by professionals in our present society.

There was a very friendly feeling in this conference, and many members happily went on grappling with these ideas on Saturday afternoon, which had been offered to us as rest and relaxation!



Conference in Paradise

Chris Lyons

A Report on the week-long 'Life, the Universe and Everything' conference with **Paul Davies** at Frenchman's Cove, Jamaica, 14th-21st March 2011

Frenchman's Cove is forty five acres of lush, tropical woodland, replete with exotic birds and divided by a clear, slow flowing river, which ends at the sandy beach of a small rocky cove. When swimming in the river amongst the hundreds of fishes, and being quietly observed by the herons along the banks, I sometimes got the feeling that this must have been how it was in the Garden of Eden. There was one important difference though – there were no snakes here (to either tempt or bite) – the mongooses had seen to that.

The idyllic beauty of the spot has not been spoiled by the dozen or so visitors' villas which have been dotted around among the trees, many with beautiful cliff-top views. The main building on the site is the Great House. It was here that we held our meetings and here too that we breakfasted, whilst the birds fluttered around amongst the tables collecting crumbs as well as the occasional slice of unguarded toast.

Whilst this wasn't officially an SMN event, it was organised by members **Di Clift** and **Martin Redfern**, with assistance from **Louise Innes**, who meticulously took care of the day-to-day details and ensured we all had a good holiday. But of course we weren't there primarily for the sun and sea, but to soak up the knowledge and thoughts of physicist, **Paul Davies**, who spoke for two to three hours each morning on what scientists know about the universe; on what they don't know, but hope to find out; and on what they may never know. His talks were superb in both content and delivery - clearly formulated ideas, expressed in elegant sentences seemed to flow from him without effort. It was a great pleasure to be with someone who was not only a significant scientist, but who also had a good grasp of philosophy and the history of ideas.

Paul is the author of many popular books on science, but he focussed mostly on the material of *The Goldilocks Enigma*, though with some reference to his more recent *The Eerie Silence*. So we began with a review of how the universe

began – the Big Bang, Inflation and the Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation – as well as how it may end as it finally yields to the Second Law of Thermodynamics and heat death. But we quickly moved on to the mysterious fact that in a seemingly fundamental way the universe is bio-friendly – that many of its fundamental constants appear to be fine-tuned to allow for the emergence of life – not human life necessarily, or even intelligent life - just life. He out-lined many ways in which this could be addressed, but they fell into four main categories

It was either just a fluke and we are the happy winners of a cosmic lottery, or it wasn't a fluke and a grand theory will eventually explain why the laws of physics are just as they are and could not have been otherwise. Both of these seem implausible.

Our universe is just one of a possibly infinite number of worlds making up a Multiverse, and the physical laws vary between them. Most would be hostile to life. We inevitably find ourselves in one of the small minority which can support

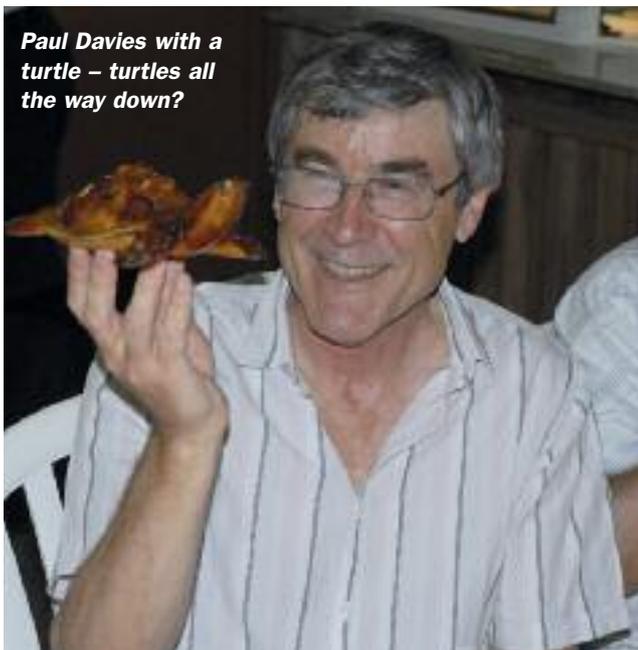




life. This works, but invoking infinities leads to absurdities, not to mention a lot of redundant, invisible real estate.

The universe was created in a purposeful manner by God or a god or some transcendent creative force. This then leads to the question of how the god was created, which is usually answered in terms the creator being a *necessary* being. But it still has to be shown that a *necessary* creator can be reconciled with a contingent universe, and also that it is different from and superior to a *necessary* universe.

The fourth alternative, and that preferred by Paul Davies himself, is that of a self-explaining universe – one in which the observer and the laws of physics explain each other. He takes the bio-friendly issue a big stage further here and attempts to show how the Universe is not only configured to permit life, but intelligent life that can discover how it all works. To achieve this he argues that the laws of physics must be understood to be not eternally-existing in a Platonic realm, but as arising from within the universe itself and, like it, to be mutable. But it also requires backward causation loops. These are more difficult to explain, though he argues that quantum theory seems to sometimes allow for them. A major obstacle though would seem to be Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem, and indeed Paul himself in an earlier book (*The Mind of God*) wrote 'the search for a closed logical scheme that provides a complete and self-consistent explanation is doomed to failure.' We discussed why he



Paul Davies with a turtle – turtles all the way down?



thought that Gödel was no longer such a problem, but at this point my own understanding unfortunately petered out.

Paul's talks were not the only ones that stretched our minds though. In the late afternoons we had contributions from members of our group. **Jim Lyons** discussed his ideas of how the world is made up of energy waves that can be affected by mind and intention, and can be detected by dowsing. **John Emmett**, a physicist turned Methodist minister, gave a talk titled 'Quantum Physics and Trinitarian Theology', and **David Gordon**, alluding to Paul Davies' book title, spoke on 'How gravity made the Universe safe for Goldilocks'

So we had plenty to stimulate our minds, but there was also plenty of time to play. Lunches were served at a little café at the beach, and in the afternoons we explored the local beauty spots. We swam in the Blue Lagoon, went down the Rio Grande river on bamboo rafts and took a little boat trip under some torrential waterfalls. In the evenings we ate at restaurants in and around Port Antonio, or sang and partied at Di's villa. A memorable night was sitting on the beach in front of a bonfire, while a live calypso band (The Jolly Boys) played in the back ground.

I got a favorable impression of the Jamaican people who were friendly but not subservient. I saw poverty, but not extreme poverty – the people seemed well-fed, and on a Sunday morning, well-dressed. I never felt myself to be in any danger, though, of course, we were far from Kingston.

One regret though! I didn't get to eat ackee - ackee and salt-fish, the traditional Jamaican breakfast. Maybe a reason for going back.

Dr. Chris Lyons is a GP who is also Treasurer of the Network.

