

A photograph of an older man with a grey beard and glasses, identified as Peter Krause, sitting on a grassy lawn. He is leaning against the trunk of a large, leafy tree. He is wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt, light-colored trousers, and dark sneakers with colorful striped socks. The background is a lush green landscape with more trees and foliage. The image is used as a book cover.

Peter Krause

A Life Shaped by Permaculture

Declan Kennedy | A Biography

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Translation: Elisa Graf, Steyerberg

Production: Neopubli GmbH, Berlin

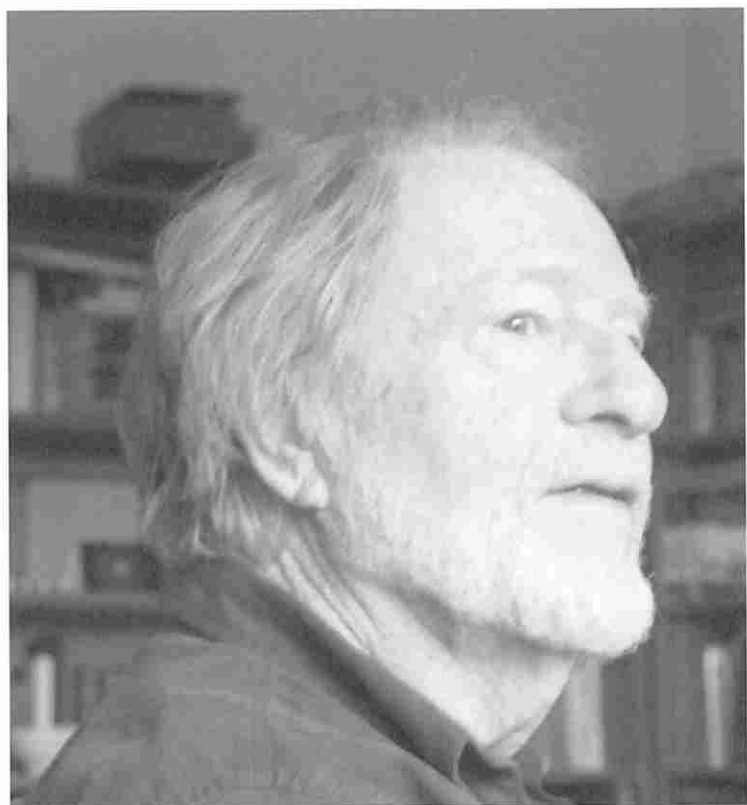
ISBN: (see back cover)

Behold, I live. Out of what? Neither childhood nor
future grows less . . . Overabounding existence
Proceeds from my heart.

(Rainer Maria Rilke)

Every man is more than just himself; he also
represents the unique, the very special and always
significant and remarkable point at which the world's
phenomena intersect, only once in this way, and never
again. That is why every man's story is important,
eternal, sacred; that is why every man, as long as he
lives and fulfills the will of nature, is wondrous, and
worthy of consideration. In each individual the spirit
has become flesh, in each man the creation suffers,
within each one a redeemer is nailed to the cross.

(Hermann Hesse)



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"I look at the world, (observation is an important part of ecology), and see that things are getting worse. Although there are many options, we don't express our individual potential enough. We've created everything to be efficient, upholding an educational system that adapts to the existing world. So much so, that companies are practically taking over schools and colleges, deciding what is taught. But I believe in miracles. Every human being is a miracle. You are one, I am one, with all the cells in our body. They all work together so that we are reasonably healthy. What an amazing system! What a great design!"

On the way

Evening had come. The train rumbled through the landscape along the transit route from West Germany, through the GDR to West Berlin. Declan gazed out of the window, letting his thoughts wander. The trees were showing the first signs of spring, as they do in May. What a gorgeous day it was!

The sun set over the rolling fields, as it did every day. Slowly night fell. Two guards passed the corridor in front of the train compartment, and peered with customary sternness into the compartment. Stupid bureaucracy... This menacing conduct intended only to intimidate passengers. Sad... No, ridiculous! In fact, there was a certain humor in it. One could only grin.

Declan patiently endured the familiar questions about the destination and the purpose of the journey. He knew the procedure well. In the previous few months he had often traveled back and forth between Kassel and Berlin. He'd always been a bit nervous on the outward journey, trying to prepare as best he could for the upcoming meetings in Kassel. And on his way back to Berlin, he summed up whether he had come

any closer to his goal. But today? Today, there was nothing left to consider in the usual manner. It was over. The plan had failed. There was no doubt about that now.

Declan had taken up the idea of applying to be the new president of the University of Kassel, a suggestion made by the union of education. In contrast to the Technical University of Berlin (TU Berlin), the college in Kassel was still young. Only ten years before, in 1971, Ludwig-Ferdinand von Friedeburg had founded it, as Hessian Minister of Culture. Over the previous three years, Declan's position in Berlin had become increasingly more difficult for him. During his time as vice president, the school had entered a period of downsizing. Everyone was under pressure. Kassel could have meant salvation. New creative possibilities. A breath of fresh air. But just a few hours before, these hopes had been dashed. The dream was over.

Margrit would probably already know. Someone would have called her. Still, Declan worried about what was to come. Margrit had become more and more concerned about the burdens Declan was forced to endure at TU Berlin. Both wanted a change, both hoped that it would work in Kassel, especially since Margrit's family lived in this Hessian town. Margrit knew Kassel well. What should he tell her?

What's more, a guest was waiting for him. Today of all

days! Margrit and Declan had looked forward to this visit. They had heard a lot about Bill Mollison, and as well this new idea that he and his colleague, David Holmgren, called "Permaculture."

If it had been possible, Declan would have postponed the visit, as today he was in no mood to play host to a guest. He would have preferred to be alone with Margrit, but the visit had been planned and prepared for a long time, and the plans couldn't be changed.

In recent weeks he and Margrit had prepared a lecture tour for Mollison. Margrit had heard about this new idea called Permaculture from a colleague, who had been to Australia and had there met Mollison and Holmgren. At the same time, the Canadian entrepreneur and former Secretary General of the UN Conference on the Environment and Humanity, Maurice Strong, had written a letter to Declan asking if he could organize lectures for Mollison in Germany. It could not have been mere coincidence that through these different angles that both Margrit and Declan had been made aware of Mollison.

So Declan had sought out resources, to finance the lecture tour. Trusting his reputation, The British Council in Berlin agreed to participate, also making their library available to host a lecture. The poster was adorned with a photo of the Tower Bridge in London, as a symbol of enduring culture. Declan had to chuckle about this too. But now, nearly all the lectu-

res had been cancelled, because the peace movement was preoccupied with the looming threat posed by the installation of medium-range nuclear missiles. Among the population, there was no room for new ecological ideas.

The plans for Kassel had been a failure. Almost all of Mollison's lectures had been canceled. And soon the train would arrive in Berlin. So what could he do?

The otherwise happy Declan had come downright close to a mid-life crisis. It could not have been worse than on this evening in May, 1981. "To stride along spaces joyously," as Hermann Hesse once wrote in a poem, is not so effortless in some of life's moments. Declan was in such a moment now. Nevertheless, only when it's really dark, can you see the stars! Or, as Thornton Wilder once said: "Everything will work out in the end, and if it doesn't work out, it's not the end."

"I said to myself that, so far, I had mastered everything in my life, and that I would succeed now - no matter what. I arrived in Berlin about ten or eleven in the evening."

Margrit was waiting for him on the platform, and at home was Bill Mollison. From this moment on, everything would change.

"We should trust children to know what they need. We should create the space and the environment so that they can get it when they need it. Does a child possess less wisdom than an acorn? The acorn knows how to grow into a big tree – and does so. All our children have the potential to grow as tall and strong as an oak tree - even taller, even stronger."

Development I
Arriving

In the fifth century, Patrick of Ireland was captured as a young man by slave hunters in the Roman province of Brittany and deported to Hibernia (the Classical Latin name for the island of Ireland.) As a shepherd, he experienced the rough nature of the island, before managing to escape to Gaul. It was there that he was ordained a monk and a priest. In a vision, he heard the call of the Irish, and returned to the island, as Bishop, appointed by the Pope. Then followed the first golden age of Ireland, with the founding of numerous monasteries and schools, until the year 800, when the Vikings' raids spread fear and terror. Patrick, who illustrated the divine trinity with a shamrock, remains unforgotten, to this day.

In Ireland nothing is very far from the coast. The climate is harsh, the wind blows wherever it wants! A traveller once noticed that it was only here that he had come to really know what a tree is. Sometimes one notices a single tree, sometimes a few clustered together. They are exposed to wind and rain, sometimes storms. So they have to assert themselves - must firmly anchor themselves in the earth to be able to defy the elements. And in a sense it is no different

for the people of Ireland.

The history of Ireland has never been peaceful. Again and again, it has demanded determination, fortitude, and a strong spirit from its people. They've had to assert themselves through famines and many struggles for freedom. It's what distinguishes them.

From the 16th century, Ireland was completely under English rule. During this time, the land belonged to landowners who made tenants of the Irish farmers. Most of what they cultivated on small plots of only a few acres of land, in particular grain and meat, was sent appropriated by England as rent. There was not much left for their own survival. Thus the potato, which is easy to grow, became a staple food in large Irish families. This crop survived until the middle of the 19th century, until a pathogen that induces potato rot arrived from North America, causing catastrophic starvation, which claimed the lives of many Irish people. The fact that British authorities deliberately delayed and hindered measures to contain the tragedy, greatly contributed to the rise of anti-British resentment, which eventually escalated into violence.

In the aftermath of the Easter Uprising of 1916, a bloody civil war was waged between 1919 and 1921 by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) against the British government and led to the establishment of the Irish Free State, the forerunner of the Republic. However, the country still saw no peace, because the treaty of

December 1921 for the Free State included only 26 of the 32 Irish counties, heralding the partition of the island. Moreover, there was still a constitutional link with the British royal family, with many of Ireland's people actually in favour of it. A new war, the Irish Civil War, between the supporters and the opponents of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, broke out, claiming hundreds of victims by 1923. Declan's father was wounded in this war, before he fled to America, persecuted by the English as a rebel.

"My mother had smuggled him through England and brought him to Southampton on a ship to America. A year later she had managed to come over to America herself, where she was taken in by distant relatives in San Francisco. And then my parents got married in Palo Alto. That was in June, 1924."

In the following seven years, three sons and one daughter were born to the married Kennedy couple, before they all returned to Ireland in 1931. They came to Mount Merrion, a small suburb of Dublin.

"They had found a temporary house on a hill, in the small town of Howth, east of Dublin. My mother was pregnant when she fell down the long outdoor staircase. It injured the brother who was born before me. He was always sickly. The nuns were good surgeons, so he's still alive today. He's 85 years old now and still does everything himself."

Here, on the east coast of Ireland, his father eventually built a house, where the large family lived for the next ten years.

"The house was one of a kind, because it was modeled after a Californian house. My father designed it and built it together with friends. It was called 'Palo Alto' after the town where my parents were married. The property had no fence, just a very low wall and a patio, so my mother could sit outside and enjoy the sun without anyone seeing her."

After his brother, John O'Loughin, saw the first light of day in December 1932, Declan arrived on the 24th of July, 1934.

"I was the only redheaded child among eight siblings. My mother's sister, Una O'Loughlin, was also the only redhead in her family."

The individuality of every human being becomes more or less apparent in childhood. Declan was a sunny child. Actually, he wanted to be a girl, put on a little dress and dance gleefully on the garden wall.

"This side of me is not strictly feminine, but more a nurturing, a 'caring'."

His parents left him free to grow up on his own, hardly raising him at all. If anyone, it was his older brothers who did that. He therefore didn't find it par-

ticularly difficult, later in life to break away from his parents, who had never forced anything on him, to go his own way in life.

"My mother was a dietician and physiotherapist. That was pretty unusual in Dublin, for a girl from a good home. She had also cut her long hair short, and was a good swimmer and diver. My father was a civil engineer, primarily a structural engineer. In California, he had learned how one could express unusual ideas through the use of reinforced concrete. This composite building material was new at the time."

When Declan was four, he went to preschool, though he wasn't terribly excited about it.

"I didn't want to go to school at all because it bored me. This eternal repetition... When you say something, you've said it. Why was it necessary to endlessly repeat it? However, I had a very good start in a kind of Montessori school, where we children could create our own program every day. That was, as we'd say today, living in the here and now. As a child, you could shape your day yourself; find out what you wanted to learn."

But there were also other children and they teased Declan for his tenderness, unusual for a boy. This wasn't easy. Sometimes it ended in a brawl in which Declan sidestepped the fight, collapsing until his big brother would arrive to help him out of trouble.

And then, when Declan was just five years old, the war began. Food became scarce, because the neutral Irish sided with England and the Netherlands. The family fortunately were able to feed themselves almost entirely with the fruit and vegetables from their very own garden. His father had sold the house he had built himself, which had become too small, and with the proceeds he had purchased a large old building, which also had a tennis court that was quickly converted into a vegetable garden. It was here that Declan garnered vital experiences that were to shape him for the rest of his life.

"You put a tiny little seed in the ground and parsnips, carrots, etc. grow. We also had a lot of cabbages and potatoes. A single potato becomes 25 or even 30 potatoes. The experience of such abundance was formative for me as a child."

The whole family of ten and a housekeeper were fed by the harvest of their own plantings. His father, who was mainly in charge of the garden, followed a well-developed instinct to create a polyculture vegetable garden. The plants did not grow in plots arranged in rows, but supportively with and through each other. Likewise, wild plants and weeds were not simply weeded, but spared and observed. Declan was out and about in the garden as often as possible. Nature interested him, but above all he wanted to be near to his father.

"I was always on his heels back then. My brothers and sisters weren't very interested in all this. I wasn't interested in the vegetables either, but in the connection with my father. I was the last of the five sons. My father was gone all day, and in the evening all eight children were there, and I had the feeling that I'd missed out. So I searched for my own way to get his affection and love. If I wanted to, I could always be in the garden, as there was always something to do. We used large granite rocks to store heat. The beds were laid out with plants between these rocks so that, for example, tomatoes, which were difficult to grow in Ireland, could ripen."

In addition to his meaningful experiences in the garden, Declan also learned practical skills as a child. The newly acquired house had no electricity, until the necessary power cables were laid alongside the existing gas pipelines.

"My brother had figured out how to lift the floorboards without breaking them. We used gas lamps by fitting incandescent bulbs into them. I have many such stories. That's how I became such a multitasker."

"The solution lies in the ecological problem itself. That's been my experience through over 50 years of work in various ecological fields. Looking over these experiences, I draw very positive conclusions from them, although I'm well aware that in parallel with our efforts at achieving sustainability, a lot of terrible things are also happening on this Earth. The underlying failures didn't come about because we didn't know what to do - no. They transpired because we set other priorities, economically and politically, ignoring what is ecologically necessary. Through our financial system, we allow a small, influential elite, motivated by power and greed to create disasters that affect us globally. Even though it appears that things are getting ultimately worse for humanity, our individual creativity is greater, much greater, so we will create a systemic change of consciousness on all levels, that will lead us into true joy and abundance. I have to admit that I'm an incorrigible optimist!"

Living permaculture I
An Encounter with Permaculture

When they first heard about Bill Mollison in the late 1970s, Declan and Margrit had already been searching, for many years - always with an open mind, meeting many interesting people along the way - for viable solutions to the creation of a meaningful, ecologically sensible lifestyle. Their interest was immediately roused. Mollison, they were told, had lived with the Australian aboriginals for many years before developing his "permaculture" system with David Holmgren. It coincided with the spirit of the age!

Since 1972, "The Limits to Growth," a report commissioned by the Club of Rome had triggered a worldwide sensation. An ecology movement began to develop. In Karlsruhe, West Germany, the Greens were founded in 1980, as a party in which the anti-nuclear and environmental forces, the peace movement and the left found a common platform. Ecologically-minded people are united by a vision of the world where lifestyles and economy are in harmony with nature. It was the same then. Nearly always, there's a certain longing that accompanies this vision, that stands in stark contrast to the prevailing way of life.

"We had the dream of a better world, a better environment, better and more beautiful city structures. What happened to that dream? Was it utopian? Is it no longer achievable? Is it forgotten? No, it's still there! There's a difference between need and greed, the exponential impossibility in our monetary system that gives little or no value to ecology. Let's just say the dream is still there - in all of us. And many contribute unknowingly, unflaggingly, and with much life energy to its realization."

Declan was first awakened to ecological principles by the book "Small is beautiful" by the British economist Ernst Friedrich Schumacher (1911 - 1977), published in 1973. He had received the book, as a gift from his father, a month later. Margrit and Declan had conversed with him about ecology and its relation to life, architecture and urban planning, so he'd thought the book might be of interest to his son. And he was absolutely right!

Schumacher, who had fled to England to escape the Nazis, had already in the early 1940s, proposed John Maynard Keynes's alternative to the Bretton Woods system, championed by the United States. His book "Small is beautiful" gave new expression to his criticism of the unsustainable world economy, and raised the question of the need to limit growth. Today, this makes it one of the forerunners of post-growth

economics. For Declan and Margrit, it pointed the way.

"We were both equally enthusiastic, and after reading it began altering our lifestyle and thinking. The book was written simply, but was nevertheless very comprehensive. The facts it outlined opened our eyes to both negative and positive possibilities. It was a parallel movement to the Club of Rome's 'Limits of Growth'."

Later, through Hans Peter and Sue Dürr, Declan and Margrit met Schuhmacher's widow, and became involved in the founding of the E.F. Schumacher-Gesellschaft, in Munich.

Long before his encounter with permaculture, Declan had already come across an approach very well suited to supporting his concern for holistic solutions, in Constantinos "Dinos" Doxiadis' concept of Ekistics. And then, he met Bill Mollison.

"Within half an hour of meeting him, I realized that I now had exactly what I had been looking for, the key to ecological integration. It was all part of what Dinos Doxiadis had taught me. I could now learn to expand on the concept of integrated planning from this Tasmanian man."

Mollison was a hot-tempered and highly individualistic

man. When Declan first met him, it was not a very warm May 1981, and he was walking, feet bare, in flip flops, wearing worn-out jeans, a nylon shirt and a tweed jacket. He radiated with energy and zest for life, smoked a lot, loved his whisky, and didn't miss a beat - giving the Kennedys immediate tips for their own garden. Declan and Margrit were thrilled!

"We felt we had prepared all our lives for this moment. Our daughter, Antja happened to be abroad at that time, so we were completely free. These days utterly transformed me!"

With this brief remark, noting his complete transformation by the encounter with Mollison and permaculture, Declan reveals a decisive turning point in his biography. From the background of his earliest life, full of preparatory stimuli, he strode through a door and into a new stage of his biography, in which all aspects of life flowed together, and which to this day, lays the foundation for a completely fresh, liberated mode of living. Declan had, in a way, become himself.

"My life has prepared me to recognize various things. For instance, there was this low-point when I didn't become president of the Gesamthochschule in Kassel. But the very next day, I met Bill Mollison. There could not have been a faster turnaround! I took the train back to Berlin, and Bill was already there. Margrit had picked him up at the train. So there was no time for depression."

Nevertheless, Declan was fully aware of the importance of this turning point, and he immediately recognized the value of what was now presented to him.

"Permaculture is a design system for agriculture and human settlements. It is also active and non-violent - or rather compassionate - communication with nature. It represents a fully awakened view of nature, as it produces food, shelter and happiness for the good of mankind and all sentient beings."

In 1978, Bill Mollison's and Davis Holmgren's book "Permaculture One" was published. Declan and Margrit read it with great enthusiasm. Here was a solution to all the problems, previously outlined in the book, "The Limits to Growth," that they had come to know in their work as architects over the previous decades, and that would continue into the future.

All but two of Bill Mollison's planned lectures were cancelled, so a surprising situation arose, in that Mollison was living with the Kennedys, but had no outside obligations. As Declan and Margrit had also completely freed up their schedules, Mollison was able to give them a private course in permaculture, rather than going on a lecture tour. As a result of this synchronous turn of events, everything was improvised and spontaneous.

"So Bill Mollison sat at our house and gave us a private course in permaculture. I recorded what he said using the answering machine as a recording device..."

Think about it - the first permaculture course in Germany was held with only two participants, and then imagine what that, in the long run, would make possible of achievement!

After ten days, the three travelled to Frankfurt to the GTZ (German Agency for Technical Cooperation) where Mollison gave his lecture on permaculture to just 20 attendees - and there had been 50 in the library of the British Council in Berlin, just days before. Such a seemingly small and inconspicuous beginning, to what has since developed so dynamically, up to today.

"Just 30 years ago the word 'permaculture' would have caused most Europeans to scratch their heads. The term 'permaculture' hardly existed. In the northern hemisphere of this planet only a few people had heard of it at that time. Today, although the word is not yet known in every household in Europe, it is used in many communities and now even in universities."

When the two weeks were over, Bill Mollison bid a heartfelt goodbye to the Kennedys. An important friendship had developed, and he pledged to come to Berlin as soon possible.

"Let's look at how we ourselves are built. We have countless millions of cells in our bodies, all different. Each cell is individual and therefore unique. And when we go into a medieval town, we see a lot of similar buildings, but they are never exactly the same. The angles are not the same, you have big and small windows, half-timbered walls. We find that pleasing because it corresponds to our own cellular structure."

Development II
Art, Music and Dance

On the emerald isle, nature and the elements are tightly interwoven. Wind and weather conjure up incessant change in the world, impossible to capture in words. Maybe that's why the Irish musical tradition is so distinctive? Fiddle, tin whistle and bodhrán - the Irish frame drum - are the characteristic instruments on which the music is performed, in a dreamy, or at times wild, style. Irish pub music is famous, as are the dances. The beauty of Ireland finds its expression in the music, and in dance conveys the pure joy of life!

Traditional Irish music has its roots in songs sung a capella. This music is often performed in many pubs through so-called TradSessions, where musicians with various instruments come together. This has led to the development of characteristic forms that have been preserved to this day. The fast played Reel, originally a Scottish folk dance, probably dates from the 16th century, as does the Jig. In these TradSessions, short pieces are often combined to form melodies that flow into each other.

Declan had recognized his musical talent early on. His parents supported and encouraged him in this. When

a so-called uncle moved from his house, the parents bought him a grand piano, for a small sum of money. Declan, who was only eight years old at the time, was thrilled!

"All at once, there was music in the house, and in the garden around it."

Declan was permitted to set up his own music room and began to play the piano, professionally. Through this, he developed his musicality, which at the same time opened up a completely different perception of the world for him. Later, as an architect, he was able to correlate this with his approach to design.

"With a violin, you can play one, at most two notes together. With a piano you can play ten notes simultaneously. An organ is even more complex, because you also play with your feet. Out of all possibilities, you can create a symphony. This is composition. And then someone composes like Mahler, another like Beethoven, yet everything is wonderfully harmonious. You can do the same with landscapes."

Music also played an important role in school. Every year an operetta, or another type of musical play was performed. So, Declan learned to sing.

As there were so many children at home, things had

to be well organized. When his father came home in the evening, every one of them wanted to tell him about the day's adventures. So, a special format was devised, in which each of the children in turn was allowed to tell their tale, but in as original a story as possible. These stories also had to include a certain amount of wordplay, so the children had to think about the content of their presentation hours in advance. Then, in the circle with their father, the others were there to hand out both praise and blame...

"The others would say that they already knew it all, and that you could just forget it. So the siblings edited the story, so to speak. There were little dramas, full of tears, because you didn't feel taken seriously. Through this evening storytelling, all my brothers and sisters knew what I was up to. For instance, they learned from me what is meant by 'counterpoint'. And then at seven o'clock, everything would become quiet because the news was broadcast on the radio, which was right next to the big dining table."

Declan's father, who also could paint miniatures, had not only devised this roundtable storytelling to receive his children's daily reports - he also made special gifts for them at Easter. For each of the eight children, he would paint an Easter egg with details of their personal story, from the previous year. These eggs were thoroughly marvelled at - before they were broken and eaten. What a profound ritual!

The family life of the Kennedys was steeped in the Roman Catholic faith. This was the case for most Irish families. Declan and his brothers and sisters were therefore accepted as day students at a boarding school run by priests. His parents weren't required to pay fees for their children to attend, as the clergy were so impressed by the size of their the large family. Learning was not difficult for Declan - his preferences were music and maths. But in his own way, he designed his own personal learning path, taking his essential nature into account.

"In Ireland, the intermediate and the high school diplomas are given right after each other. I even took my secondary school leaving certificate twice, because I was so afraid of exams. I took it the first time to practice, and then the second time, got it right! In the second year of middle school, I discovered mathematics and music as my two main subjects. There were very good math teachers, but no one could give me music lessons, so I went to the music school in the city when I was thirteen years old. As music lessons were considered to be standard, they'd let me walk out of school with my penny for the tram. I always came home just before supper - before that I was a free man, in the city. I got deep into music. I took courses in composition and started composing. I especially wrote choral movements."

Things were too slow for Declan at school. He was often bored. He graduated from high school at the age of seventeen because he had twice skipped grades. In the years when he was able to wander the city on his way to music classes, his interest in urban design was awakened. This was due to a special architectural feature for which Dublin is famous.

"Dublin is a city of squares. There are these Georgian Squares, designed as one unit. The squares are bordered by houses that each have their own distinctive doors, and in the middle, enclosed by the houses, is the green. Architects have always taken the special character of the city into account, for example, when building anything new. Georgian was a very popular English cultural period, dating from the beginning of the 18th century to the 19th century. A Georgian square is formed by about twenty rather large houses on each side, which surround a green area, enclosed by a fence. Sometimes public, sometimes not, the green can also be a park through which one can walk. The green brings air to the city."

The most famous of the Georgian squares were built between 1750 and 1830. The thirty-year construction period of Merrion Square, for instance, began in 1762. The park was designed with an enclosure of a double row of trees, with contoured grass areas and winding paths. In 1930 the park was bought by the Catholic Church for the construction of a cathedral, but it was never built. In 1974, the five-hectare area

was finally transferred from the church to the Dublin Corporation so that it could be used as a public park.

"The Georgian Squares form a very good part of the conception of the city still today. I used to like going there and really enjoyed it. I often went for walks in the city, altering my route from the railway to the music school, again and again, to discover something new. On my way to the music school, I'd encounter three squares and the whole government district - that was once the seat of the Duke of Leinster. Next door are the National Library and the Academy of Fine Arts. In Dublin, everything is somehow intertwined, not seperate."

On his wanderings through Dublin, Declan likely also encountered St. Stephen's Green. This square is noteworthy for its role in the Irish rebellion against the British. Reportedly, in 1916, when the Irish citizen army clashed with the British army in a wild shootout, a break in the hostilities was observed, to allow the park keeper to feed the ducks...

The Kennedy family home was always open to guests, who would come for a variety of occasions and amusements. Declan began dancing at that time, and grew better and better, until eventually he was taking part in national competitions and winning medals.

"Every Friday afternoon Irish dances for children were practiced in the large billiard room, and after

dinner Céilí dances for adults. We children were allowed to participate, otherwise we were all in bed at eight or nine o'clock, at the latest. Even back then I never missed a dance, despite the fact that Irish folk dances are quite exhausting - 16 handed Reel (the origin of American Square Dance), Jigs and Hornpipe as single dances, with a lot of footwork (the origin of River Dance or Lords of the Dance). Anyway, the dances were so exhausting that in between, someone always had to perform a song, a poem or a limerick. It could also be a short pantomime, or I would play my newest piece on the piano. I did this even as a child, when I could still barely play an octave with one hand. My pieces have always been classical - by Beethoven, deFallia, Liszt, Debussy, Rubenstein, Dvorak, The Fields of Athenry, or by my favourite composer Chopin. When I was seventeen years old, I was nearly ready to perform concerts. And at first, I actually wanted to continue in this direction. My parents always gave me a lot of support and this has clearly shaped me: Everything is possible!"

The Kennedy children each pursued very different professional paths.

"One brother of mine became a priest. Another an aircraft mechanic. One sister became a teacher who worked with spastic patients. My brother Donnaca was the only one drafted for military service, because he returned to America too soon. Afterwards, he opened a boat rental business in Ireland, with old re-

refurbished boats. Another brother became a printer. One sister became an art weaver. The youngest became a hotel manager. This whole range of talents surrounded me every day as a child. And so nothing was too much; it was all tried and done."

After graduating from secondary school and before attending university, Declan continued to practice music intensively, learn conducting - and dance. As a pianist at fashion shows and parties, he was even able to earn some money.

" Any careful assessment of the environment has its deficits. And if these are precisely defined, they most likely contain the answer in themselves. If we consider our problems as essential components of our individual and collective learning processes, we can even see the positive benefits in them. The bigger the problem, the bigger the opportunity for change. The Chinese character for 'crisis' contains both the characters for danger and opportunity. Our role as architects and planners, businessmen and farmers is not to make a financial profit by (over) using natural resources, but to turn an existing problem into an opportunity that creates more balance, harmony and sustainability".

Living Permakultur II
Australia

In Declan's childhood and youth there had been many beautiful and enriching experiences. In the years that followed, he was able to devote a great deal of his time to training and professional activities. The impressions from the early years of his life always affected him and aroused talents that continued to unfold over the years. Ultimately, he developed a consistently eco-conscious attitude, which shaped his life and work. Along the way, he enjoyed many supportive encounters with people from whom he learned a lot, or whom he - as a teacher at various universities - encouraged, on their pathway to learning.

All of this was not only apparent in his outer expression, but also in a deep inner spiritual dimension. It had always been present in Declan's life; he had worked on it intensively after his departure from the Catholic faith, but it had ripened even further in the period before the turning point - his discovery of permaculture.

"At well over 40 years old, I'd given up all my efforts at success and decided to let the divine guide me."

With this, he approached his destiny with the requisite openness of heart, and the current of life was now able to lead him to new shores.

Following his first visit to Germany, Bill Mollison had only just returned to Australia when the news reached him that he was to receive the Right Livelihood Award, the "Alternative Nobel Prize", in November. When Declan heard this, he immediately invited Mollison back to Berlin. He didn't want to miss this opportunity. This time, he reserved the large auditorium of the TU Berlin for a lecture.

At the end of the 1970s, Journalist Jakob von Uexküll, who was deeply troubled by global poverty and environmental degradation, proposed that the categories "overcoming poverty" and "ecology" be added to the Nobel Prize. The committee rejected his proposal, referencing its statutes, so Uexküll established the Right Livelihood Award. To finance the prize money, he sold valuable items from his stamp collection.

The prize was first awarded in 1980 and Bill Mollison was the fourth person to receive it, a year later. So it happened that he was swiftly able to fulfill the promise he made in spring to return to Germany for a visit. In the autumn of 1981, on his way to Stockholm, he visited Declan and Margrit for the second time. The decision to reserve the large auditorium proved most opportune, as roughly 500 people attended the

three-hour lecture on permaculture.

After the successful event, Declan and Margrit traveled to see Bill Mollison in Australia, to tour various permaculture projects. They also took part in a permaculture design course in Stanley, a small town on Tasmania's northwest coast, where Bill Mollison lived on the edge of a wetland, in his mother's remote home.

During their first five-month trip to Australia - Declan had taken time off for a research semester - they also met David Holmgren, who at the time worked in a landscape planning office. Since the mid-1970s, he had worked with Bill Mollison on the idea of permaculture.

"At that time David had just met his wife Su Dennett, who was then pregnant. That's why he told Bill to go into the world, to spread the idea of permaculture. David was keen to gain some concrete experience in his work during this time, to try out and document whether and how what they had previously thought up was effective. The plan was for them to write their next book together, seven to ten years later. Some people still think that Bill Mollison is the sole inventor of permaculture. But that's not true. Many basic permaculture ideas came from David Holmgren."

Holmgren had already become an environmental activist as a teenager. He met Bill Mollison while cam-

paigning against a planned dam project. Both were interested in Aboriginal agriculture, which, in contrast to modern agriculture had stood the test of time. Out of this interest, their idea of permaculture had progressively evolved. On the way there, they looked around, studying old traditions and methods. Among other influences, the ideas of the Japanese microbiologist and farmer Masanobu Fukuoka (1913 - 2008) provided fertile inspiration for the development of permaculture. Fukuoka had developed "No-work Gardening" and had promoted ploughless rice cultivation. By combining a wide variety of plants, he enhanced the ecological balance, and naturally enriched the soil with nutrients.

When David holmgren visited Declan and Margrit at the Lebensgarten ecovillage in Steyerberg, Germany, he was still travelling around the world to spread the ideals of Permaculture. As the topic of CO2 pollution came increasingly into the discourse, David chose to reduced his travel. Today he mainly teaches through webinars and only participates in worldwide permaculture conferences via the internet.

In the province of Hepburn, in the Australian state of Victoria, rich in mineral springs, David cultivates a two hectare piece of land - the appropriate size for permaculture - called "Melliodora". Through this project, he continues to gain hands-on experience and provides two families and a few others with healthy food. In his current work of expanding the principles

of permaculture to other fields, he's applying the ideas of permaculture to the field of architecture. This is, of course, of particular interest to Declan.

"A major problem we'll have to face in the future is the fact that worldwide, many single-family homes weren't built to be energy-efficient. These date from the 1970s and 1980s. At that time, the houses were built to be lightweight, which poses major problems in terms of energy use. David deals with this challenge in his new book 'RetroSuburbia', which he wrote together with his son Oliver and his assistants. He himself says that there is no possibility of transposing the ideas presented, as the examples come mainly from his Victoria region in Australia, and not everything can be universally applied to all countries and regions of the world. The book was published by Beck Lowe and Ian Lillington. Ian had met David many years before when he came to Australia as a student. Since then, they have taught several Permaculture Design Courses together."

Before their departure back to Germany in spring 1982, Declan, Margrit and Bill Mollison decided to organize a permaculture design course in Germany. Mollison promised to return to Berlin for this purpose. A few months later, the first official permaculture design course in Europe took place, at Glienicke Castle in West Berlin, from the 18th of July to the 2nd of August 1982, attended by 25 people from 14 countries. Already for this course, Declan took part as

an instructor.

On his second visit to Australia in 1983, Declan received his Permaculture Designer Diploma. At that time Bill Mollison asked him to become his representative in Europe. As he was already very well connected and had links to financially powerful people with ecological sense, Declan agreed. So he started, teaching the first permaculture design course (PDC), twice over the period of a year, in seventeen European countries and in Brazil. Thus, he played a major role in the spread of permaculture worldwide.

Not only was Declan representing the idea of permaculture through his courses. He became more himself, an effective presence, in every interaction. From this point on, the whole wealth of experience he had gathered - the artistic nature and spiritual depth of his work - was brought to bear in connection with this new, major theme. When he explains the role of edge zones, he still refers to Dee Hock's example, which he greatly admires.

By the end of the 1960s, every tenth US bank was operating its own credit card program. Networking the various systems proved to be an increasingly difficult task, but was finally taken on by Californian bank manager Dee Ward Hock (b.1929). His revolutionary approach asked if and how" in the midst

of a growing epidemic of institutional failure" an organization could be understood and managed as a living system. His research into these processes finally led to the establishment of the VISA card as a globally standardized credit card. Dee Hock created the new term "chaordic organization" ("chaord": combining "chaos" and "order") for the resulting system.

"Among the indigenous peoples, we find many examples of the fact that the structures on which their communities are based do not reflect symmetrical, organized patterns. Dee Hock speaks of chaordic patterns that originate at the edge zones. I came to know about this phenomenon through the ideas of the Japanese Hara or Chinese Chi, and the 'transparency to transcendence' of Karlfried Graf Dürckheim - but also through Eugen Kogon, who I found to be an extraordinary professor, during my studies in Darmstadt."

When such concepts are applied, in contemplating the world around us, nature appears in a different light. It becomes "essential " in the truest sense of the word. Declan describes it like this:

"The essence of nature is abundance. Nature is generous. Not because it pleases itself in being generous, but because it is so, in its essence. Nature lets everyone share in its wealth. This has always been the case - unless a person, a group or a country has cut itself off, separated themselves from it, by not expect-

ting enough or by taking too much. This separation has been brought about by laws, social rules and regulations - over hundreds of years - until we had totally forgotten our roots. If we question these regulations, and if many people succeed at taking matters into their own hands and improving their relationship with nature, for example through the establishment of eco-villages, or through permaculture, civic participation in ecological urban renewal, or similar conscious action, it would immediately improve the provision and distribution of food and shelter for all people on our planet. In order to do this, we have to work out our plans in harmony with nature and its everlasting abundance. I see two possibilities for utilizing this natural abundance: in the ecovillage movement and in permaculture design."

"In it's own way, nature is inherently efficient; never maximizing anything in one place, but always in the scope of a larger context. Nature does not create monocultures, like we do with factories and industrialization. Instead, we should optimize the total yield, i.e. get away from the individual yields, because it is wrong to want to maximize them. The point is to promote the whole, in other words to create conditions in which the individual can thrive. This can be applied to all areas of life."

Development III
Studies Begin | Relocation to
Darmstadt

His school days were over. The next stage of life welcomed Declan, while still young in years.

"I've done almost everything in my life at a young age. I graduated high school at seventeen - that's how it started. I wasn't a brilliant guy, though I always managed to get things just right."

He'd been able to develop a number of special talents because his parents and teachers had left him free. Music and mathematics had particularly captivated him. The latter, because it enabled him to develop his practical, logical and above all, solution-oriented thinking. In 1952, he began his studies in architecture. As his father, could not study architecture himself, this fulfilled a wish that one of his sons would take this route. Declan's artistic talents in music and dance were not the only things he brought to his studies; he could also draw. This talent had even generated an extra income, as Declan drew caricatures of the guests in pubs, which he immediately sold for a small price. This helped to finance his studies.

As part of their studies, the young students were given a basic education in the history of architecture. Declan thus developed a deep love for Greek culture that would later play an important role in his life.

"In the first year of my architecture studies, which focused on history, I got deeper and deeper into my interest in urban design. My first design was for a monument commemorating the liberation of Ireland, to be built with Doric or Corinthian columns. The design was drawn in indian ink, showing all the fluting and its shadows. Later, while continuing my studies in Germany, I discovered that this type of rendering wasn't done."

Declan's father worked as an independent structural engineer. He pioneered new approaches to the problems of his day, and was a strong advocate for steel-reinforced concrete.

"When he suggested that concrete should be reinforced with steel, everyone said he was crazy."

The use of concrete as a building material has a long history. In today's Turkey, lime mortar has been used as a binding agent for thousands of years. The Egyptians used burnt lime for the construction of the pyramids, and the Romans with their aqueducts and the huge dome of the Pantheon demonstrated the possibilities of this building material. But it was not until the 18th century that the modern use of concrete

began, and in the 20th century it was increasingly used to meet the challenges and demands of modern architecture. The extremely hard building material, when dried, offered not only the possibility of designing bridges and buildings that could withstand high static loads, from liquid to solid, but also artistically designed structures that were previously not possible to build.

"I always thought of my father as a thwarted architect because there were no architectural schools in Ireland at that time. His younger brother Tom was able to do it, a few years later. I mean that I always thought it was his wish, that I become an architect. I was his last son, and the other sons hadn't done it. I resisted it for a long time, until I found out that I actually wanted to do urban design. It's not about the buildings, but how the buildings interrelate."

Declan, as he says in retrospect, had evolved from mathematics to music, "...whose frequencies can be applied to nature."

In this lies the intention that all our designs work not against, but with nature, an approach that Declan has developed over the years and decades of his work. For the time being, however, there were other challenges to meet. His father, having exhausted himself with overwork, suffered a massive nervous breakdown in 1955, necessitating a extended hospital stay. So, with the support of his father's first employee, Declan took

over his office.

"Suddenly, I was doing structural engineering, although I really wanted to build cities."

The collapse of his father's health had further consequences for Declan, insofar as he now had to get by without the financial support of his parents. Although he was able to live at home, he had to find opportunities to earn the necessary extra income, which affected his studies. "I could always earn some money with dancing and music in the evenings. I didn't pass my intermediate diploma the first time, because I was doing too many other things."

The year 1958 brought a breakthrough. Declan had arranged with two friends to travel to the European mainland, during the semester break. They hitchhiked to Dover first and then decided that they would determine their destination by whatever port the first available ferry was heading to. If it went to Calais, France was the target, if it went to Ostend, they would travel further to Germany.

"We were hitchhiking, but couldn't get a lift all together, so we got separated. In this way, two of us went to Germany, one to France. Six weeks later we reunited in the Black Forest. The other two went back home afterwards, and I travelled further on my own. I came to Munich for the Oktoberfest and met a young man, who was an architectural student. He showed

me Munich on his BMW Isetta, an original, two-seater scooter, but strangely enough not a tour of buildings, but urban squares. I then realized that what I had been wanting to study was this "urban design" that I couldn't exactly define: Staedtbau"

The two of them talked about where in Germany it was possible to study urban design, and for the first time, Declan considered leaving Ireland to study elsewhere. This marked a turning point.

"After that, I only returned to Ireland to finish the third year. I had meanwhile found out that I could continue my studies in Berlin or Darmstadt, with a combination of Architecture and Urban Design ."

"Good design concepts have their basis in spiritually oriented compassion for the planet, for the environment, and for people. They bring with them a deep moral and ethical perspective. This produces a new design, a new aesthetic expression. We don't need to look for it. We have it already in the principles of permaculture - only often hidden. It's just a matter of bringing more flexibility and clarity to our efforts."

Living Permaculture III
In the Here and Now

Any special knowledge and ability is best preserved in a broad general education. Diversity in knowledge and ability increases the chance that specific knowledge can be used effectively in a particular situation. The sought-after solution communicates itself more readily to the intuition of those who are broadly educated, because they are awake to their surroundings, from the centre to the periphery. This is one of Declan's most outstanding features.

Already in the first decades of his life, he had benefited from a wide-ranging education, thanks to the blessings of his destiny. His father in the vegetable garden, the devotion of his older brothers, the religious upbringing, the brilliant creative elements of his family life, as well as his schooling in a spiritual setting - all shaped the landscape of his childhood and youth. In it, his special inclination towards mathematics and music could blossom, enabling him to experience the beauty of pure, natural order. Even his exuberance for dance can be considered an expression of his experience of beauty; the perfect order of the world's blueprints, extending to the movements of his body.

On his way to music lessons, one could say “as a side effect” the Georgian Squares helped him to see how well-composed architecture effects an original urban space. Long before he could clearly articulate it, Declan had already experienced that at it’s best, there is a profound correlation between architecture and music.

His earthly life had begun in Ireland, but time and again he became aware of impressions from other realms. After his father's breakdown, it was necessary for him to earn a living, while still in college. In 1959, he was offered an opportunity to work as an excavation assistant at the north German Viking settlement of Haithabu. Excavations of the southern part and the core of the settlement had just begun. Located in what is now Schleswig-Holstein, on the Baltic Sea fjord of Schlei, Haithabu was, from the 8th to the 11th century, a flourishing trading town of the Danish Vikings - and the main hub for their long-distance trade between Scandinavia and Western Europe. Since its destruction in a great fire, the site had remained unexplored for nine hundred years, thus yielding important archaeological finds that provided valuable information about the former inhabitants' way of life. For the first time, the question arose as to what methods the Vikings would have used, to ensure food security for this small settlement's many inhabitants. A question to which permaculture has quite centrally devoted itself.

Declan still remembers today that during his excavations he had marveled at the quality of the compost topsoil - many years later he realized that the Vikings had probably also produced Terra Preta to improve the quality of the soil - and how he had recovered from the rubble the green leaves of a Mediterranean plant, which immediately crumbled into dust, as it came into contact with the air.

Yet it was not only the immersion in archaeological research and the associated very practical study of early forms of settlement that were decisive in Declan's future path. Another side to his participation in the excavations was the awakening of impressions of a former life that he had led among the Vikings. Had fate led him precisely to this place, to grant this experience?

Also significant was the contact and relationship with Greek culture, which played an important role not only in Declan's but also in Margrit's life. Following his first encounters with Greek architecture during his studies, Declan made many journeys to Greece, together with Margrit.

During his time as scientific assistant to Professor Rolf Romero in Darmstadt, Romero had suggested a study trip to Greece. No sooner said than done!

"I learned to do research through Rolf Romero. Up until then, I had only been a designer."

Margrit had received money to cover her travel expenses from her father. After a long train ride, Declan and Margrit finally reached Athens, which they then began to explore on the following day, a national holiday. There they met a couple, who went with them in their car. They passed the Acropolis and reached Piraeus, one of Athens's most historic ports. The impact was powerful!

A characteristic feature of classical Greek architecture is the way in which a temple was designed in relationship to its natural surroundings, using elements of nature, becoming an "organism" itself. The building is part of the landscape, not a foreign object in the natural space surrounding it. Moreover, the ancient Greek culture exhibited a pronounced feeling for rhythm and harmony, whether in the art of language, in music and dance, or in architecture. It all moved Declan deeply. As in Haithabu, it was as if an earlier time was dawning upon Declan's present.

Many years later, Declan visited the ancient Greek sanctuary and Oracle of Dodona near the village of Dodoni on the Ionian Sea. It was there that he intuited that he should buy a house in Greece. He and Margrit did in fact accomplish this a few months later, acquiring an old captain's house on the island of Hydra.

"Between 1978 and 1992, we were there at least three to four times a year. It always took me at least three weeks to really recover. The first week allowed me to free myself from everyday life and all its problems. When we went to Hydra, we always did something special. A meditation, a course, dreams, all things that had more to do with our inner being. At the same time we recovered physically, went swimming, hiking and so on. When we were there, we were away from everything. We didn't care what happened in the world, in Germany or in our office. We had people there who helped us. One was Robert Browning. Two Greeks, whom we knew from the Ekistics period, often came - we always had people around us, with whom we could exchange ideas."

Among the many inspiring visitors was Alexander Wittkowsky, President of TU Berlin at the time, who had worked to ensure that Declan had become Vice President of TU Berlin. Professor of Industrial Economics and (later) Environmental Policy Udo Ernst Simonis, with whom Declan was associated in a research project at the time, also came to Hydra, to work with Declan. He was accompanied by his wife, the SPD politician Heide Simonis, who later became leader of Schleswig-Holstein. Declan and Margrit were friends with both of them for many years.

At some point, the time came that Hydra expanded from an intimate artist colony to a suburb of Athens. A ferry service was set up with a speedboat, the "Flying

Dolphin," making it more convenient to get to the island from Athens/Pireaus. The number of visitors steadily increased, eventually flooding the town of 2,000 inhabitants with up to 10,000 tourists, in peak season.

"A radical wave of change came over the island, of which we also played a part. We contributed to the greening of the local government. There was plenty to do, for example, to deal with the water that was brought from the mainland by ships, polluting the quality of the island's own water supply. There was even a time when we gave serious thought to leaving Berlin to start a permaculture project there."

Hydra could well have become the center of the Kennedy's life, but for Declan's health concerns - he couldn't tolerate much sunlight due to a skin condition - that's why he argued against it.

Permaculture simply cannot be applied without the experience of a living relationship with a place, and its natural environment. Declan was already rooted in his perception of this fact, before he met Bill Mollison. He knew that all good design results from working with - not against - nature. Many experiences had brought him insights that led him to know this. The impressions from Haithabu and Greece had most certainly nurtured this awareness. All had worked in

him to cultivate a special inner attitude.

"Each element and each living being supports the other. This, for me, is a spiritual statement. Spirit is in everything. It's "Interbeing", which simply means that we're all one!"

Declan also brings this inner attitude of fellowship to those he meets. To him, everything constitutes part of a living coherence, which he experiences on a deep level. When we sat together to work on this book, he spoke very personally of this dimension:

"We're all soulmates. This also includes the idea of reincarnation. We both have met before in another life, because otherwise we would not have been able to come into such deep connection with each other so quickly. We can say it's wonderful, even if we're not sure what it is. We say it's wonderful because it brought us together. One can actually call it love!"

In today's world, of course, one has to consider not only the inner aspects of permaculture, but also the ever-increasing spread of its practical applications. Thanks in particular to the efforts of Declan and Margrit, the Australian-born idea was transplanted to European conditions, and thereafter to North and South America..

"Permaculture is already an integral part of the city and regional planning of many modern societies. It

ranges from the movement known as 'urban guerilla gardening' to the planned use of uncultivated land in urban areas. There are especially examples of this in countries under stress, as a result of our global system of financial manipulation, such as Greece, Ireland and Kenya. According to permaculture, sustainable design is the key to the ecological renewal of cities. Sustainable models of architecture, agriculture and settlements are being developed around the world, to balance our give and take of the Earth and its inhabitants. They will improve the lives of all species, reduce fear and insecurity, and create peace and hope for the future. A permaculture system restores the cyclical production and decomposition processes of nature. It stores rainwater and solar energy, uses them sparingly and effectively, improves the fertility of the earth and recycles the waste of living beings as a raw material for the next stages of use. It arranges plants and animals in such a way that the least possible human intervention is required to meet their needs. In this system people do not see themselves as masters of a short-term exploitation of the earth, but as the administrators of a system that evolved long before them and will continue to exist long after them".

"I've always been happy! I'd have a problem trying to remember when I wasn't happy. I've had my ups and downs, my challenges too, oh yeah. But I've never been unhappy. I'm not only happy, I've also spread happiness and have been very lucky, too. The two words in German are the same - 'happy' and 'luck'. I've been very lucky in my life! When I had decided on a direction, a lot of positive effects always followed."

Development IV
Happiness in love and life

The thought of their son in West-Berlin caused Declan's parents considerable concern. They vividly recalled the 1948-1949 Airlift that was set up and operated by Western Allied aircraft to provide food for the isolated city of Berlin. So Declan decided on Darmstadt.

In the Martinsviertel, one of the oldest districts of the city, he found an old farmer's wife from whom he could rent a former dairy as a place to live. And because he took over the regular cleaning of the outhouse, he was rewarded three times a day with half a bottle of fresh milk. Martinsviertel has long been a district devoted to urban agriculture. At times pigs ran in the streets, which is why the district was called the "Watzeviertel".

"I wanted to go to the "Technische Hochschule" Darmstadt because it was smaller than the TU Berlin. There I got to know several professors personally. I went to their houses, and I even gave Ernst Neufert English lessons."

It was undoubtedly one of the most lucky and forma-

tive coincidences that Declan was able to come so close to this highly respected architect. Ernst Neufert (1900 - 1986) was educated at the Bauhaus, and while on a study trip met Antoni Gaudi, whose former beneficiaries were in Germany. Neufert worked under Walter Gropius as a leading figure in one of the most renowned architectural firms of the Weimar Republik, a position that launched his own career. In the following years he had designed numerous well-known buildings in his own style, before being appointed professor at the Technical University of Darmstadt in 1946. He is particularly well known for his book "Bauentwurfslehre".

Declan had another formative encounter with the publicist, sociologist and political scientist Eugen Kogon (1903 - 1987), a Christian and avowed opponent of National Socialism who had been imprisoned for several years in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

After leaving Ireland, Declan had parted with his Catholic faith, and set out in search of a new spiritual relationship to the world and to life.

"As a student, I listened to what the different religious traditions had to say. I noticed that each group felt that only they were right. So what was wrong? I came up with the idea that everyone is right in their own setting, including me in mine. With this conviction I got into huge debates with my eldest brother, who

was already on his way to becoming a priest."

Arriving in Darmstadt with these ideas in mind, he soon attended lectures by Kogon.

"He inspired me so much that I immediately bought a book from him, although I actually had no money for it. It was about building a new society, a society that Kogon believed should combine Christianity and socialism."

Declan earned his living by working various jobs. This included teaching English at the Benedict School, where he had developed his own teaching method. Instead of teaching head-on, he played games with his participants.

"I didn't need a lot of preparation, I just went in, because I was always good at playing games."

The management of the school was thrilled!

In 1959, Declan had the most important encounter of his life. It was during the winter semester, at the Architecture Department's Christmas dance, that he danced with Margrit for the first time.

"I thought, what a talented dancer! But she was so shy that she wanted to dance things like the Twist, the Charleston, Rock'n Roll and so on, only in private. She soon saw things differently..."

Fate would have it that Declan had made friends with a fellow student, Richard Michael, who invited him to visit him in Kassel during the Christmas season. Miraculously, Richard lived in the very neighborhood that Margrit's parents lived!

"So I was suddenly only two houses away from her for a whole week."

The lives of Declan and Margrit appeared to be running straight towards each other, and between them, the two immediately felt a deep spiritual kinship. Declan radiated his *joie de vivre* wherever he went in those days.

"In normal life, I'm a bit of an actor, too. That's why I've been on stage a lot. The woman at the Academic International Office at the TH Darmstadt always fetched me when she wanted to have a good party!"

At one point, however, as he sat together with Margrit during a preparatory seminar for an excursion to Vienna, he was embarrassed to realize that, in keeping with the custom of the time, he couldn't even invite her to dinner - he didn't have enough money. So Margrit suggested that the two of them go Dutch: each paid for themselves, yet they spent their time together!

For the excursion to Vienna they finally set off as a group of twenty students and two professors.

"I thought that I could just forget my desire to be with Margrit. She was surrounded by other students who all spoke good German. Language was very important to Margrit. She was very precise with her language, and she also displayed a certain wit. And there I was, not really speaking German..."

But the situation changed!

"By the time we got to Vienna, it was clear that Margrit wanted to sit next to me on the bus. We were two centimeters off the ground ... We had a total crush on each other... Everybody laughed about it. The professor made a joke of sitting down on my seat next to Margrit, so that we couldn't get too close."

Declan found his own way of solving the problem of not being able to afford a date with Margrit, because of his tight finances. With portrait-caricatures, he drew and sold in pubs, he earned the necessary money. And with that, he had rescued his free time with Margrit!

"We went to the Burg Theater, did everything we possibly could. Then we danced until two in the morning in the open-air Burg Park. But we always showed up for breakfast at eight or half past eight. I don't know how we kept this up... There was a special energy! It was already clear to both of us that we wanted to spend our lives together."

Soon after, on 17 December 1960, about a year after getting to know each other, they became engaged at a Christmas party hosted by Prof. Romero's office. For both of them, being together was the beginning of a new, free and self-determined life, although each of them came from very different backgrounds. Declan from a large Roman Catholic family, and Margrit a Protestant family of entrepreneurs. They made their way to Ireland to get to know Declan's family. Upon a visit to the Benedictine Abbey of Glenstal, Margrit considered adopting the Catholic faith. A monk, with whom she discussed her intention to convert, gave some unusual and illuminating advice:

"Jean-José asked Margrit if she was already familiar with her own personal religion?
And he advised her to connect with that first, before committing to anything else."

From then on, Declan and Margrit began to explore all sorts of spiritual directions. Sometimes they'd talk about it all night, until dawn. They felt a resonance with this essential theme of life.

"The study of spirituality has accompanied us throughout our life together. For example the 'Conversations with God' by Neale Donald Walsch. We read all nine channeled books and were very impressed by the clarity and openness of God in them."

Only half a year after their engagement, Declan and Margrit were married on 4 April 1961. It was an Easter Monday and the ceremony took place in the church "Mary Queen of Peace" in Kassel, which the couple had chosen because of its original architecture. The church had been completed only two years before. The building was made from the rubble of the Kassel city centre from World War II, and concrete.

In October, half a year after the wedding, Antja was born. From then on, there were three Kennedys.

"We were very, very happy!"

"Vision is a spiritual reality, because all things that exist in our world live first in spirit. The concept comes first, followed by the physical, which is denser matter. When you question your prejudices, you realize that they are false judgments. This expands the abilities of your consciousness. A wall, for example, is then no longer a wall, only a piece of moving, vibrating consciousness. Everything visualized can be brought into our physical reality. You should know that there is immense power in visualization."

Living Permaculture IV
In the ecovillage
and in the wide world

For fourteen years, from 1972 to 1986, Declan taught at the TU Berlin, after which he took an initial five-year leave of absence. Eventually he realized that his time there was finished.

"I had become a different man, occupying myself with spiritual healing and such. My colleagues from back then either didn't manage to retire at all, or they died shortly afterwards. That was probably because they had tried to do their office-work and teaching side by side."

Meanwhile another important turning point had occurred in Declan's and Margrit's life, because they met Christian Benzin in June 1985. At the time, he was involved in a project that immediately attracted Declan's and Margrit's attention: the establishment of a community in Steyerberg, Lower Saxony.

"First, after twelve years of urban experience, we wanted to implement an ecological model in rural areas, because most of the projects located here are limited to organic farming and energy conservation or the use of alternative energy sources. At that time, a

wholistic combination of ecological ideas was seen as more necessary in rural than even in urban areas. Secondly, Steyerberg offered greater independence from state and municipal "support" (or paternalism). Thirdly, we had seen too many ecology projects suffocating in the bog of social conflicts. So the 'spiritual' objective, in addition to the 'ecological' one, in Steyerberg seemed to us to be an important opportunity to test a different way of interacting with people - and also between people and nature".

In Steyerberg stood a decaying settlement that had been built at the end of the 1930s, as a quarter for forced laborers in a National Socialist ammunition factory. Since the end of the Second World War, and various other "uses", the site and its houses had not been occupied for a long time. Christian Benzin's family had finally acquired it, intending to establish holiday homes for city dwellers, in need of recreation. After these plans had not succeeded, the idea of establishing an ecovillage was born. Declan and Margrit joined half a year after the formation of the founding committee.

"We immediately realized that this was the direction we wanted to go. Then Christian invited everyone to Steyerberg and over eighty people came. Margrit went alone. Until then she had always followed me from one country to the next, but now I wanted to reverse that. This time, when we voluntarily gave up our place of residence to live in a community, she was

to make the decision and then she even picked out the two houses that we now live in. It all happened very quickly. Two or three weeks later Christian invited me to come because I had said that I wanted to have a few hectares of land for my permaculture experiments. He drove me around in his red Mercedes and Margrit walked with a few others. When we came back to the only usable house at that time, we were surprised to find that we had both discovered the same property. The following day, the mayor told us that this property was for sale. Again, the universe had guided us..."

The move from Berlin took place in October 1985. In the preceding months, Declan had made some initial renovations. At that time, only seven families were living in Lebensgarten, but by 1986 there were already fifty people. The Kennedys stipulated that a permaculture project be allowed.

"The community grew. Many chose to live in Lebensgarten because of the permaculture. Others came, mainly from the Bremen and Berlin area, purely in search of community life."

Until his leave of absence began, Declan was commuting between Berlin and Steyerberg over an entire semester. The number of interested people coming to visit Lebensgarten continued to rise.

"People hung notes on the doors of the houses, an-

nouncing that they were interested in that house. Then, at times, there were serious negotiations between two parties. Or some people didn't come back, so others were able to take over the house. Thus we finally came together. In 1986, the association was founded, and a short time later Margrit and I developed the original permaculture area, which was a clearing in the forest, then located about half a kilometer from the village square."

Work on the Kennedy's house also progressed. Declan handled the major modifications, while Margrit rounded out the renovations with her flair for taste and subtlety. Walking through Lebensgarten today, you'll find a beautiful, lovingly designed settlement that no longer reflects the state it was in when the courageous first Lebensgärtner began their work. And this work was not only done on the surface, but also on the internal foundations of the community.

"The most important 'spiritual' principle, that makes living together in 'Lebensgarten Steyerberg' practically possible, is the realization that the world or reality outside ourselves is our mirror, and that, therefore, all problems we have with this reality, with other people as well as physical, economic and social structures, are always also challenges that we have to overcome within ourselves. We are not victims, but co-creators of our lives, taking full responsibility for everything we do and experience. Naturally, this spiritual attitude has a whole series of practical con-

consequences for our everyday dealings with each other, and with the resources we need to live."

In this sense, living together is not a trivial undertaking. It requires a good portion of attentiveness and willingness to give care above and beyond the usual level. And so Declan and Margrit discovered that "...this work on ourselves and with the group cost us at least as much time and energy, as the work we did on the permaculture project".

Two years before his move to Lebensgarten, during his second visit to Australia, Declan received his diploma as a permaculture designer and was asked by Bill Mollison to be his representative in Europe. Through his friendly association with Ross (1938) and Hildur (1942 - 2015) Jackson, a wealthy Canadian-Danish couple who had made their fortune on currency speculation, Declan was able to secure initial funding for his new post teaching permaculture. The Jacksons wanted to use their money to support meaningful ecological purposes, for which they had founded the GaiaTrust in Denmark and England. In doing so, they first supported the spread of permaculture, and later also the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN).

Now Declan was in a position to conduct the first two permaculture courses in another European country.

Thereafter, the initiative was to be funded through its own resources. The plan was successful and Declan's courses soon took place in seventeen European countries and also in Brazil.

"I was traveling a lot, always on the road. It was hard on our marriage... After we moved to Steyerberg in 1985, I reduced my travel somewhat."

Max Lindegger, a Swiss engineering draftsman, who was the first to receive his diploma as a permaculture designer from Mollison and Holmgren in Australia, visited Berlin. He was impressed by the work Declan and his colleagues were doing as part of an association, and advised that the work of this association be understood as that of an institute. Declan then brought this "Permaculture Institute" with him when he moved to Steyerberg.

"The idea of permaculture spread like wildfire throughout the environmental movement. There were more and more requests for courses. Before I ran such a course, I would prepare the whole thing over two months. And I was on the phone an awful lot. My God, the bills! The phone bills were unbelievable..."

Not only did Declan's travel activities in Europe and worldwide exhaust his own strength, but they also complicated his life with Margrit. The social dynamics at the Permaculture Institute were also increasingly strained. Consequently, in 1989 Declan retired from

his responsibility for the Institute, which was no longer located at Lebensgarten, but wandered from one place to another for many years.

In the mid-1980s, Declan and Margrit joined forces with four other landscape planning offices to build the Umwelt-Kultur-Park in Gross-Barop, south of Dortmund. The project was laid out on a 12-hectare plot of formerly arable land, as a counterbalance to the university buildings. The park serves both as a recreation and educational area and as a place for the reintroduction of wild plants and animals, thus fulfilling an important purpose in the nature conservation program of the region affected by structural change. In keeping with the principles of permaculture, the site includes a variety of different zones, ranging from intensively tended gardens and orchards to natural areas that, after initial planting, remain entirely uncultivated.

"A crucial factor for the promotion of environmentally conscious practices is the concrete clarity of onsite examples, where ecologically sensible technologies can demonstrate their practicality in everyday life. Sophisticated examples that require extensive professional tours are only suited to specialists. The Umwelt-Kultur-Park is right on our doorstep. The public have the opportunity to consult with local experts on specialized subjects, take new ideas with them and 'experience' solutions.

His marriage to Margrit was a great source of happiness for Declan, and based on a deep understanding and loving affection.

"Margrit and I didn't have the usual sweet love affair. Instead, we discussed a lot. We debated really intense themes - for example while we ate pizza..."

In the early years of Declan's travel activity, Margrit was often alone in Steyerberg with the rebuilding and renovation. She suffered from the fact that the new home was not becoming pretty and cozy quickly enough. Even in makeshift situations, in which they had sometimes lived before, she had always sought to create a beautiful atmosphere with few resources.

"I enjoyed that, of course. She was speaking to a part of me that I'd always known. It was also the case in my family that my mother always had to have the right dishes. It had to be just right. We had only silver cutlery. Although we had no money, everything was always very beautiful and tastefully arranged. Margrit had that kind of thing too, in her own way. It was just her aesthetic. Margrit was the perfect partner for me because I could create the big splash while she understood the beauty in detail."

A good marriage is based not only on how close the couple feel to one another, but also on their understanding, with the utmost clarity, of the conditions, experiences and goals of their coexistence.

In this regard, Declan and Margrit had been given an important suggestion by Margaret Mead (1901 - 1978). At the end of an Ecistics conference in Athens, 1963, Declan met the US anthropologist who was one of the most staunch representatives of cultural relativism of the 20th century. With her studies on sexuality in the 1960s and 1970s, she had also emerged as a pioneer of the sexual revolution.

"We had adopted her idea to make a new pre-nuptial agreement every ten years. For this purpose, we'd take two weeks off every ten years, in April. Then we'd talk about ourselves to figure out how we would go on for the next ten years. We'd talk with each other for hours and hours, looking over together our points of view and how we could bring our concerns together. The first time we did this was in 1971, before I came back to Germany. On a tram in New Orleans, I told Margrit that ten years had passed and that we should now draw up a new contract. Margrit asked what we then should change, at which point I said that we should not get in each other's way so much. And then she asked what I was referring to, to my job, to my family, to sexual issues or some other thing? And that's when I replied: No! In the morning before breakfast! We laughed heartily, and for a long time... But then we really implemented it. It always took Margrit a long time to wake up in the morning, but then she was fully there. I, on the other hand, would get up and do everything more or less automatically. So we agreed that I'd prepare breakfast

while Margrit could do this and that. At that point, she knew she had to let me do it in peace. During that period, I also took care of Antja, seeing that she got to school and such. Then we had our breakfast in full harmony, because we could each live according to our own rhythm."

At the end of the 1980s Margrit published the book "Interest and Inflation Free Money without Interest and Inflation" ("Geld ohne Zinsen zin und Inflation"). Initially self-published, first in English, six months later in German, the book quickly saw many further editions and was translated eventually into 26 languages. Margrit had thus succeeded in laying the foundation for international recognition as an expert in interest-free, complementary currency systems.

During this time she was asked to apply as a professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Hanover, which was not at all easy for her. In the previous years she had applied for professorship at various universities, but had only finished second on the proposed list each time. Now, too, the task proved difficult.

Margrit was on the shortlist of nominations for the chair, but was once again not in first place. Helga Schuchardt (1939), a non-partisan Lower Saxon Minister for Science and Art from 1990 to 1998, came to the rescue. Those ranked ahead of Margrit, all men, had no doctorate, unlike Margrit. We should treat men

and women equally! So why wasn't Margrit in first place on the list?

The minister demanded an adjustment, which put Margrit in second place.

"Then, to learn more about Margrit, the minister called five renowned architects in Germany. And they all spoke very highly of her! So, through the minister's intervention, Margrit was appointed a professor in 1991 ."

The reunification of Germany in 1989 brought with it a new field of activity for Declan, as many municipalities in former East Germany were interested in the subject of ecology. As a result, numerous plans for land use and development were drawn up, and so Declan, in order not to have to enlarge his own planning office too much, collaborated with the "Archy Nova" office in Bietigheim, and with the architect Joachim Eble in Tübingen.

"After this turning point in history, it was time to unite ecology with participation. I found it easy to combine permaculture with this task. Take the first principle of permaculture, 'observe and integrate', this is something most planners don't do. They come up with their solutions without having really observed things beforehand. They recognize the problems to be solved,

but they don't see the positive side to them. In Scotland and America I learned (by doing) what it means to participate. You don't get to participation through theory, only through action, because otherwise it's only manipulation. For the small town of Hohenstein near Dresden, for example, we drew up an entire zoning plan, in some cases even development plans. The most important thing was linking the new part of the city with the old part, with a park. Some sections of the park already existed, we just had to redesign it a bit. We developed the concept for this in participation with the local people."

The idea of permaculture had meanwhile been well received. Now Declan was busy with the question of how to make this idea easier to understand for ordinary people. Permaculture literature grew - Declan organized seven translations for Bill Mollison alone, which were then distributed worldwide through various publishers.

In 1989 David Gershon and Bessie Schadee, of the USA and the Netherlands, initiated the Global Action Plan (GAP). To this day, its aim is to apply the subject of ecology, in a variety of ways, to the very practical, everyday aspects of life. Conscious behaviour on a small scale should be understood as contributing to major changes. From 1989 to 1994 Declan was involved in coordinating for GAP, in Germany.

"In line with the plan, there were neighbourhood eco-teams that focused each month on a sustainability issue. So electricity, garbage, water, consumption and so on. That's what they did over six months. Later the idea was taken up by Marilyn Mehlmann from Sweden, which gave rise to the Empowerment Institute".

It is evident, by the spread of GAP, that the ecology movement, with all its facets, has become increasingly internationally networked, since the 1980s. Marilyn Mehlmann (1939), a Swedish-based activist who had previously worked as a product developer at IBM, became Secretary General of GAP in 1995, and was active in Europe, the USA, Asia and South Africa.

Like Declan, with his commitment to permaculture, she contributed significantly to the worldwide spread of ecological concepts for everyday life. .

The non-profit foundation "Gaia Trust" set up by Ross and Hildur Jackson had already, in the year of its foundation, financed the study "EcoVillages and Sustainable Communities" by Robert and Diane Gilman (1991). The Gilmans had already been working intensively, in the 1970s and 1980s, on the concept of the eco-settlement as a possible model of sustainability and had thus given an important impulse for the establishment of the "Global Ecovillage Network" (GEN).

A year after the launch of the Ecovillage Information Service in 1994, the first international conference of ecovillage members entitled "Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities for the 21st Century" was held in Findhorn, Scotland, to launch the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). Declan was elected to the founding board.

"At GEN, we outlined the four pillars of Ecology, Economy, Social Affairs and WorldView that we then brought to the world. The Jacksons didn't just donate money and then expect a report on the funded projects, they themselves were active collaborators."

When in June 1996 the second United Nations Conference on Housing and Settlement (HABITAT II) was held in Istanbul, GEN was already represented there, with its own information stand. An original idea was implemented for this, which in subsequent years - to this day - has continues to have an impact.

"While the international secretariat of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) was preparing for the UN Conference, a Scottish woman living in Denmark, Heidi Wrighton, prepared the graphics for the GEN stand at the NGO Forum, held at the University of Istanbul. This was the beginning of an immense flutter of a butterfly. To this day, when one of the GEN board members attend international meetings, people come and say, 'Oh, you're part of that group that had the stand with the straw bale wall, were circle dancing,

and had this beautiful butterfly all around it'. The idea of transformation from cocoon to butterfly still accompanies our efforts to transform a mind-set of consumption into a new awareness of sustainability, in all aspects of human settlements. We exchange information between settlements and ecovillages, and spread the word about more than 4000 demonstration sites to a growing number of people around the world. The butterfly flies from the various ideas, to education, ecology, spirituality, eco-business development and eco-tourism. It also spreads its colourfulness from one ecovillage to another. This can now be learned at Ecovillage Design Education (EDE), which offers a four-week intensive course in many parts of the world."

A "Community Self-Assessment System" was developed (www.ecovillage.org), in order to determine when and according to which criteria an ecovillage can be designated as such. The significance of such a tool lies, among other things, in its potential to raise awareness about the environmental dimension of models and measures - something that Declan has been exploring for decades.

"Apart from the many measures that make up good ecovillage design, one factor seems to stand out more than others, and its absence is very conspicuous - and that is 'relative density'. This is particularly evident in Australia, but also in other parts of the world, where land is available for exploitation and destruction. One

might think that the 'ecological movement' would try to counter the widespread growth trend of the middle of the 20th century. On the contrary, many intentional communities that emerged out of the famous Rainbow Festival in Nimbin in 1973 have considered the ideal to be "distance". A distance from the nearest house, where a view of the neighbour was considered undesirable, was sought and identified, in the vicinity of a village - in contrast to the bourgeois urban and suburban areas of Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne."

The network of ecovillages grew rapidly. At first, mainly intentional communities joined the network, later also traditional villages and village movements followed, largely from Africa and Asia. In 2001, GEN was granted consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. GEN now has offices in the five global regions of Europe, Africa, Oceania and Asia, North America and South America, and has grown to around 10000 member communities and projects worldwide. What they all have in common is the desire to further develop their projects and society in a conscious and participatory manner in the four sustainability dimensions of ecology, economy, social affairs and culture.

Declan served on the GEN board until 1999, when he handed over his responsibilities to others for health reasons.

"At that time I already had the first four exhausting

years of GEN behind me. I was Founding Chairman and represented GEN at the UN in Nairobi and New York, which required me to travel even more than I already did. Then a foundation gave me enough money to hire a young woman to support me - Agnieszka Komoch. She spoke seven languages. Wonderful! But I was suffering from a burnout and my skin disease was spreading even more. So I retired from GEN's organization group. My duties were taken over by the Italian Lucilla Borrio, and May East, a Brazilian who had lived in Scotland for many years. May took over the United Nations piece in particular, because she knew many languages. Linda Joseph, an American from Colorado took over the more content-related things that had to do with the Community Self-Assessment System. All three are more or less present today, for example in GEN Elders who meet every two months in an advisory capacity on ZOOM."

Declan, who had been enthusiastically committed to GEN from the very beginning, was however already busy with the question of how, and whether it was even possible, to reach broad sections of the population with ecological concepts. Could ecological building principles be applied starting "from the top," instead of always from the grass roots?

"To answer these questions, a group of us conducted research for the European Academy for Urban Envi-

ronment in Berlin, in which we studied examples of ecological settlement projects in six European countries. It's documented in our book *Designing Ecological Settlements*."

This book, co-published by Declan and Margrit, illustrates many examples of the successful top-down development of ecological housing. One such example is the garden city of Puchenau in Linz, Austria, planned by Roland Rainer (1910 - 2004), and built in three phases, between 1963 and 2000. Important ecological features, like energy efficiency, solar-powered hot water or garden courtyards and green areas, were all incorporated. Simple measures proved very effective.

Another of the projects described, a settlement built in Tübingen by the architects Eble and Sambeth, was designed entirely according to the structures of an old neighboring village.

"The houses were built entirely from sustainable building materials. Residents were given space for private gardens alongside semi-public and public green spaces. There are many places where people meet, children play and community life takes place. The rainwater and waste water moves through the community in 'flow forms'. Children can play with it and explore the secrets of moving water, its color and sound, its power and adaptability."

While respecting the contributions made by many people and the enthusiasm for ecological ideas, Declan has never turned a blind eye to the dire situation into which we, as a human community, have fallen deeper and deeper. This awareness results in a sense of responsibility that must increasingly determine our actions in the future.

"We are no longer innocent as in the days of our youth. Since then, violence and human alienation, meaningless work and unemployment have continued to rise in many cities. We must ask ourselves whether technology has undermined our collective wisdom. We should wonder whether compound interest has undermined our collective wealth, in bringing it swiftly into the hands of a privileged few? We can't ignore the facts!"

The best way to prepare future generations to live responsibly is to provide them with a good education, and as it is easier for young people to adopt ecologically sustainable lifestyles, Declan was keen to consider establishing his own training facilities.

"In 1998 there was a meeting in Denmark, in North Jutland. There were all kinds of people there having to do with lectures, workshops and so on, talking to each other about the new idea 'Gaia Education'. At that time we were already of the opinion that we would turn it into a university at some point. Liora Adler, a US American who had spent her whole life in South

America, was there. After the meeting she met Andrew Langford - who was responsible for spreading Permaculture in England, and had told her about our project. Both had a lot of experience in 'Action Learning' and 'Action Research'. In 2004 the two of them made the decision to start Gaia University. But they didn't involve the others enough, so there was a real argument with the GEN people. I somehow fell between two stools, as I was active in both groups."

Declan, who did not want to start a new, larger project after his burnout, had nevertheless offered to use his contacts to help put together a worldwide advisory board.

"Keep in mind that they didn't want to have professors, only advisors, who were located all over the world. The aim was to make it possible to study anywhere in the world, through an online course of study and regional nodes. Within three months, I was able to enlist 85 people. In 2006 there was an Advisory Board meeting here in Lebensgarten, attended by about 45 of these people, from all over the world."

This led to the founding of Gaia University Germany. It wasn't long before Declan encountered the familiar antagonistic patterns that prevent the new, by clinging to the old. In this case it was the German Rectors' Conference and the State of Lower Saxony who, shocked by the new foundation, responded with a lawsuit. They threatened a fine of a 250,000 euros,

to put an end to the initiative.

What to do? The project had already been in progress for two years. At the opening ceremony the then mayor had joyfully announced that Steyerberg had now become a university town, and there were already 20 graduates who had successfully completed their studies.

"The statement of claim also included a legal instruction in which, it could be seen, the official indicated ways of arguing against it. Through Margrit, I came into contact with a man in the Ministry of Education and Research who had just retired, and offered to help us. In the end, we were successful because he was able to refute all the Ministry's objections. For example, the Ministry had reproached us for not having asked the Rectors' Conference, before starting. But this was based on a law that was passed after we had started. That's the kind of thing he discovered. In a nutshell, we managed to avoid the danger, but were forced to call ourselves an academy instead of a university."

" The Earth is the most wonderful thing ever invented. I see the world as a living being, as Gaia. She is female. She's 'Mother Earth', the planet. If I am open up to her, she'll give me everything. When she transforms the light of the sun, she even gives us energy. I have only to use my wisdom and experience as a human being, to build a system of well-being for myself. For that, I only have to be ready to accept the gift of Gaia and Father Sun and pass it on to others. You shouldn't want to keep the gift for yourself alone."

Development V
Family | Darmstadt,
Regensburg and Dundee

Declan and Margrit were a happy couple, especially because they knew that they had found each other. Nevertheless, as at the outset of any partnership, the next step was to connect their two respective families. Due to differences, this was not always easy.

"I was the wayfaring Irishman. The families were not introduced until the wedding. And they both knew we were pregnant." Margrit's father, an old school company and family patriarch, was however able to accept his daughter's great love when he understood that they were both serious and that the expected grandchild was born of love. Nevertheless, Margrit had in mind that which she had experienced of her parents' difficult relationship, and what she certainly didn't want for her own life.

"She was first a bit uncertain, because she didn't want to get into the same situation as her mother, of being dependent on a man. She had just received word that she'd been awarded a Fulbright scholarship to America. Due to the pregnancy, she had to turn it down! But I told her we'd get to America somehow..."

Margrit's father was worried Declan was marrying his daughter just for the money.

"I didn't have any money, I had talents, but I didn't have any savings. I never had any problems earning my money, but I couldn't save back then, I didn't have enough for that. So Margrit and I decided that before the wedding, we should draw up a legal contract for separation of property."

This was a sensible, pragmatic solution, and Declan felt well received by the family, although his father-in-law did not fully accept him until many years later, when he became a professor at the TU Berlin.

In the early 1960s, it was almost impossible for fathers to participate in the birth of their children. This was also the case at the city hospital in Darmstadt. Hardly had Margrit been admitted there to give birth, Declan was asked to leave again.

And then their daughter was there! Margrit and Declan were full of joy and happiness - and many of their fellow students came to congratulate them.

"If Antja hadn't had a few strands of red hair when she entered this world, it would have been difficult for the nurses and midwife to know who the father was. One male student after another, all between 21 and 23

years old, all exuberant and well dressed, as architects of the time were, came to the hospital to visit Margrit. Besides her, there were only four other women among the 60 men attending that semester. And as I was busy preparing for my six final oral exams, I only paid one visit every evening."

At that time, Declan was 27 and Margrit 21 years old. The lucky parents were intensively occupied with their studies - on the day of Antja's birth Declan had received the news that his architecturally drawn-up master design had been accepted for graduation - and he therefore didn't have an easy time coping with all the tasks at hand. Margrit's parents were a big help. Margrit took the baby with her to Kassel when she visited her parents, who also came to Darmstadt regularly on weekends.

"That was too much for me after a few months, because, during our studies, Margrit and I had only the weekends together."

The situation improved somewhat, when Margrit was offered the chance to suspend her studies for a whole year, which she spent in an intermediate internship at Declan's architecture office.

With two contracts, a construction plan for a lawyer's private residence and a feasibility study for an industrial site, Declan had become self-employed and set up an office in his own apartment. The lawyer was

an unreasonable client, and the feasibility study poorly paid. So Declan decided to return to the university to take up a post as a research assistant to the Chair of Design and Building History Rolf Romero.

But before that, Declan and Margrit planned to take a six-week holiday in Greece. Margrit's parents took care of Antja during this time. After a three-day train ride from Mainz to Athens they were there.

"In a land full of such important architectural and historical jewels... We were very impressed by the typical architecture of the Greek cities and villages, both on the mainland and on the islands. We sketched, and painted and painted... I also took quite a few black and white photographs, because color was far too expensive back then. In this way I was able to develop and print the photos in the size I wanted. It was early 1962. Many of these photographs, chosen for their clarity and quality, were included in an exhibition that was later shown in various locations in Germany, Scotland and Ireland".

It was a double stroke of good luck: The trip to Greece and the encounter with someone who had recognized Declan's talents and who would give him something for his future life.

Rolf Romero (1915 - 2002), who counted Paul Bonatz

and Paul Schmitthenner among his most important teachers, had worked in Konstanty Gutschow's office for several years following his studies, where he was intensively engaged with urban planning tasks. In 1942, he was drafted to serve in the military, and returned severely wounded. Throughout the 1950s, he dealt with the reconstruction of historically important buildings, before being appointed to the Technical University, Darmstadt, in 1959.

For Declan, Romero was the ideal teacher because he knew how to deal with urban development issues in the context of social change.

"As he had been disabled during the war, Professor Rolf Romero had been given considerable support. He realized I was interested in the history of urban spaces. That was a piece he didn't yet have as part of his repertoire. He was more interested in building techniques and styles. He commissioned Manfred Ott and myself as assistants for the history of urban development. I wasn't a sidekick like most tutors, but was involved in the content, which is what I really wanted to do! Rolf Romero was such an empathetic and sensitive person that already in the first few weeks he had identified what really interested me. He remained a good friend until he died in 2002. I visited him almost every year. He was a fantastic man! He was an all-rounder, and very wise, cosmopolitan, and far-seeing."

Declan held his position as scientific assistant at the TU Darmstadt until 1965. The position was actually a five year one, but after three years it continued at another location. Declan moved to Regensburg to work on urban renewal. This was an ambitious and well-financed project under the direction of Werner Hebebrand.

Professor Dr. h.c. Werner Hebebrand (1899 - 1966) had gained experience as a young architect through major urban development projects in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Since 1952, he'd made a name for himself as Hamburg's Chief Building Director. After his retirement in 1964, Hebebrand resumed work as a freelance architect and as director of the Regensburg Foundation's urban development seminar, and until his death, planned the preservation and renovation of the historic old town centre.

"Hebebrand had organized the necessary funds from the BDI (The Federation of German Industries). He had received millions for the project, in order to demonstrate how to deal with historic cities. This generally meant that the cities were to be largely freed of traffic. You always had to pay attention to the right yardstick. I remember that he always used the English word 'scale' for it, although English was not spoken otherwise."

Beside Werner Hebebrand and office manager Böhm, Declan made, as chief designer, "the third in a row."

This brought him very close to the greats of the time, among the entrepreneurs and managers of the BDI who met in some German city, every six weeks, to discuss the progress of this innovative seminar.

"Important people from industry would come, all interested in combining the new German culture with urban development. I met people you thought you couldn't get close to. But I got to know them at those meetings as people, sometimes as friends."

BDI not only gave money for the project, but also financed cultural events organised by Hebebrand's team, including Declan.

"Every second time, they came to Regensburg. Then we'd organize something cultural. For instance, we invited Eugen Jochum and his entire orchestra to Regensburg, because the industrialists had financed it. Our office was responsible for the organization of the concert in Regensburg. For the venue, we were given the large meeting room in the Town Hall, the renovation of which we had just completed, and which was opened with this concert."

Eugen Jochum (1902 - 1987) was not only a renowned conductor, but was also, in his day, one of Anton Bruckner's most respected interpreters. Later his daughter, Veronica Jochum von Moltke, was also invited to perform as a world-class pianist. Declan was thrilled to find that his professional life miraculously

complemented his interest in music. Soon they became friends, also because her husband, Wilhelm Viggo Friedrich Eduard "Willo" von Moltke, (a brother of Helmuth James Graf von Moltke - a member of the Kreisau Circle and resistance fighter), was a respected architect and urban planner. Together they wandered through the old town of Regensburg and discussed concepts for its redevelopment. Later, during their time in the USA, Declan and Margrit often visited Veronica and Willo. Through him, Declan was twice invited to give workshops at the prestigious Harvard Graduate School of Design, in Cambridge.

While Declan was working in Regensburg, Margrit completed her studies with a diploma (M.Sc.) in Architecture and Building Techniques and, for one year, worked part-time on research projects. Then, in 1967, the project to renovate the old town was completed with an exhibition, and it was time for another change of residence. Now came two and a half years in Dundee, Scotland for Declan, as "another step on the path from architect to holistic problem solver".

"We very consciously wanted to escape the conventional German lifestyle. Margrit said that I was always worse off in Germany because of the language. We always wanted the same opportunities for each other. I bought a house in Dundee and completely renovated it. The rooms were always too small for me. I like big rooms, so I knocked out some walls."

Declan taught Urban Design at the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, which later became a part of the University of Dundee. Here, too, he had a good connection with his students, who enthusiastically assisted him in the expansion and renovation of their house. The house was right by the water. Visiting friends would arrive by boat!

"From the house, we could see the reflections of light on the water. This was the reason I took out a wall between two rooms, so that the light could shine all the way through the house, especially in winter, into the north-facing kitchen. It was a two-story townhouse with rather high-ceilings. Antja had her bedroom and playroom in the built-out attic."

When Margrit arrived from Germany, the walls were not yet all plastered and there was only a makeshift kitchen on the ground floor. Declan had undertaken the rough construction work while Margrit, who later had a job at James Parr's planning office - not far from the house, now saw to all the finer details.

"Once I found an entire set of cabinets at the flea market. These cupboards that I thought I could use in the kitchen. Though I wasn't such a great carpenter... It brought Margrit real joy, as it turned out to be a very nice, cheerful kitchen, and we enjoyed it every day."

"Each one of us is an individualized expression of God. But we're not all the same; we work with free will to individually shape the way we live, produce food, care for the earth and for people. When we practice Fair Trade, we demonstrate true equality, our brotherhood and our divinity. We are all constantly striving for our original state - as are most people, within or outside the organized religions. We are indeed looking for the 'New Story'. I've come to the conclusion that permaculture in its broadest form provides us a model with which we can live and allowed us to design our lives and all that mess we had taken over from our immediate predecessors anew."

Living Permaculture V
The Theme of Money | Permaculture
in Lebensgarten

Once the idea of permaculture had entered their lives, Declan and Margrit discovered the theme of money. It became clear to them that in the monetary system there is a fundamental flaw that enables a massive redistribution process, from poor to rich, via interest and compound interest, and drives the entire system to inevitable collapse. During her time working for the International Building Exhibition in Berlin, Margrit was repeatedly confronted by the assertion that ecology and economy were incompatible, and she was finding herself more and more engrossed with this topic. She was quickly on her way to becoming an internationally recognized expert.

From the outset, she founded her expertise not only on critique of the system - which she presented with clear thinking and concise language - but also on her knowledge of possible solutions. And as had transpired for permaculture, a growing network on the theme of money evolved, linking people who could exchange viewpoints and potential solutions to the problems identified. From 1990, an annual conference on the topic of money was held at Lebensgarten.

"It started with a seminar for just over twenty participants and ended thirteen years later with 180 participants. In 2003, the point was reached where people said they wanted to put it into practice. Thus the 'Chiemgauer' was created at the Waldorf School Chiemgau in Prien, as a student project by high school teacher Christian Gelleri."

With Margrit's enthusiastic support, the successful regional currency project soon attracted widespread public attention. The positive impact on the region and the small and medium-sized enterprises involved could not be ignored. The next step was to ensure that this example become a model for other regional currencies. To this end, the non-profit Regiogeld e.V. was founded, for the promotion of regional currencies. That same year, Margrit and several of her colleagues also established MONNETA (short for "Money Network Alliance") as a semi-independent group within the non-profit association of Lebensgarten e.V..

"I contributed my networking skills from the Permaculture Institute and the Global Action Plan. For this, we drew up a contract for half a year, in which I was to set up the network for the regional money. There was a lot of work going on in parallel at that time, and today I have no idea how Margrit and I managed it all. But we had a fantastic secretary in Brigitte Berg who became a good friend. She only worked part-time, but was very supportive."

Declan and Margrit were striving to make an impact on the world. Both pursued their individual goals, conscious of the need to advance a collective cause. Margrit helped Declan to write letters and other texts correctly in German. Declan helped Margrit to spread her ideas on the money issue. He was often the first to hear her lectures, and his feedback enabled Margrit to ever more effectively refine them.

"Margrit had her office over in the other building, where the PaLS office is now located, and I had my office here in the house. She had only recently started working with a computer at age 63, but quickly got used to it. We were e-mailing back and forth between our offices. But then we'd let things go, until they could be discussed over lunch. That's what we did for years. Even from abroad, it worked this way. If Margrit got an idea during a seminar, she wrote me an email so I could think about it. One might think that it would be impossible to communicate so effectively, but it's just a matter of organization and priorities. It was wonderful because we always knew exactly what the other was doing."

Soon after Declan and Margrit moved from Berlin to Lebensgarten, they had purchased a nearby large piece of land to cultivate, according to the principles of permaculture. Primarily surrounded by a pine forest and with sandy soil, it presented a special chal-

lenge. In order to transform the forest into a polyculture, Declan had set up a tree nursery and planted deciduous trees between the conifers. And not just a few, but over time, 8000 of them! Work on the site provided the desired practical experience, but soon became too much, in view of the numerous other projects and tasks. It seemed the best solution was to transfer responsibility for the site to other hands.

"From 1986 to 1990, I worked out there. But when I became active in the Global Ecovillage network, I realized that it was all too much for me. At that time I found a group of agricultural engineers in the Ruhr Valley who were running an organic herb project supported by a company called Herta-Wurst, owned by Karl Ludwig Schweisfurth, who had become a good friend of ours. These agricultural engineers moved directly from their shared flat in the middle of Herten into the construction trailers they had brought to the site. That was about the mid '90s. We then did a ritual for the handover, in which I took off my work clothes at a blazing campfire and burned them. I stood there naked at the fire, and then left the area 'forever' to symbolically show that I had left everything to them, though 'by chance' there was a tracksuit that I could put on... From then on I was a guest on the premises."

Nevertheless, the group that was now in charge of the site was soon confronted with conflicts and crises. This was likely due to the fact that they were trying to live a polyamorous lifestyle. This entails the option of

having multiple intimate relationships at the same time, among a group of people, calling into question the traditional, classical understanding of a partnership between two people.

"They lived a very laid-back life together, and neglected the work. Partnerships and marriages fell apart. Little by little a huge mountain of materials formed on the site, things they thought could be reused after recycling. They were soon overwhelmed by all this and at some point they told me that if they could, they would terminate the lease. Then they quit the project."

After this experience, and an interim where one young man tried to continue the already laid-out permaculture design, Declan offered the site for sale because he knew he would not be able to do the needed work. The decision was fiercely debated among Lebensgarten's community members.

"But I had to do it to save myself. Then Christoph Hatlapa, a founding member of Lebensgarten, had the idea that his existing Zen group could take over the site. And that is how it turned out. That was in 1999. Thus it became a mixture between Zen and Permaculture. Beautiful!"

As had happened with the first permaculture area, it

was a reminder that any new endeavor also generates discord, and fortunately Declan knew how to deal with it. He knows when to let go, when the time is right. This doesn't occur as simply an acceptable fact of life, but is rather an expression of a very conscious, spiritually sustained inner attitude.

He says of himself: "This is one of my best qualities, that I can let go of something well," and he adds that this consequently leads him to interpret even the most shocking of events as meaningful, as he states: " The sustainability of life on our planet - not only for human beings, but for all living beings - is of utmost importance. Even wars, which otherwise destroy so much, can in their consequences be seen as making way for new beginnings."

In these observations, he touches on the mystery of death and becoming, around which every human life revolves, and which also feature as the backdrop of social crises. This was Declan's experience right up to his partnership with Margrit: "We survived all our crises with our love. We had this strong love because we knew that we had known each other from several previous lives. As a Catholic it was of course unthinkable to see it that way, but I had to find my own way beyond the church."

In breaking away from the Catholic faith, Declan followed an inner desire to live a free, undogmatic spirituality that he did not find in the Church's tradi-

tional expression of faith. He was also led to this decision by very painful experiences: "I was a day pupil in a Catholic boarding school when I noticed a serious change in a fellow pupil. Something had happened to him that he didn't want to talk about, or could not... My parents wouldn't tell me about it either. Sexuality was never spoken of in our family, and the word homosexuality was completely frowned upon."

So, let go! Seek the emergence of the new in that which is passing! Embark on new paths! Sometimes crises in Declan's life were brought about by the inability or unwillingness of his fellow men to keep up with the swift pace of work to be done.

"People said that I often implemented things too quickly without talking them through. It was always a problem for me, as I wasn't good at waiting. I'm not very fond of meetings and long discussions. I encouraged such discussions, but if the decisions didn't come fast enough for me, I would just do it on my own"

Isn't it often the case that people who are particularly gifted at inspiring others, sometimes also have a polarizing effect? Especially those who, like Declan, are more anchored in the world of pure ideas than in the customs of diplomatic compromise?

"You can study creation to identify what it is meant to be, how it 'works'. Over the course of time, we humans have continually changed. Time and again, we've left out things, principles, that are important to the context of creation. Already in the 19th century, for example, people knew a lot about the mutual support that different plants provide each other. But we lost this knowledge, because it wasn't taken into account in the design we used to shape our world."

Development VI
Conflict of Faith, Spirituality,
Ekistics | Pittsburgh

When Declan left Ireland years before, he'd already parted ways with the Catholic faith. He didn't want to have anything to do with all the hypocrisy and balderdash anymore.

"I have always respected the faith of my family, they should do what they want. But I also wanted to go my way, believe what I wanted!"

His family, however, suspected that Margrit was the reason for his distance from Catholicism. The entire situation worsened when Declan, Margrit and their daughter travelled from Scotland to Ireland to visit their relatives. During this time, a child was born to Declan's brother Donnaca, and Declan was chosen to be the godfather. At the baptismal ceremony in the church he was expected to recite the Nicene Creed on behalf of the child - and this brought him to a crisis of conscience. How could he say the confessional prayer without being a believer? He wanted to run right out of the church!

"I saw that it would only cause me suffering if I remained in the church, and I said so. I then told my

brother, but didn't expect it to hurt him so much. He was very Catholic. The matter circulated in the family. I then explained in a letter that all this had to do with me alone, and not with Margrit. But that's what they still believed. Of course, there was some truth in it. Margrit and I discussed all this. She had also given up her Protestant faith. "Both of us have always spiritually sought a future without religion."

Once he had told his family that he'd not been living as a Catholic for several years, Declan received bitter letters from them, asking him why he had done this to his parents. But the visits home healed the wounds over time, and his parents, with maternal and paternal love, were finally able to accept Declan's decision .

Many years later, when Declan's godson Colm had grown up, he married a Shinto-practicing Japanese woman. So there were two ceremonies, a Shinto one in California and a Catholic one in Ireland. Margrit and Declan were invited, and there was a big discussion again. But then, Declan's sister asked him to perform spiritual healing for the Catholic priest, who was suffering from cancer.

"All this gave a certain reassurance. And the family thought I was just doing something else..."

Much changed in the 1960s. A spirit of transformation could be felt around the world, and finally led to the movement of 1968. Social conventions were questioned and changed. A new culture of living together dawned, as well as the idea that responsibility for the social and ecological conditions of the world was no longer just left to political decision-makers, but taken personally. In addition to the hippie movement, which flourished especially in the second half of the 1960s, the ecology movement came more and more into prominence. What had been cultivated as a niche movement since the beginning of the 20th century now influenced the thoughts and actions of a growing number of people.

The founding of the Findhorn Community in 1962, was a key event that would later play an important role in the lives of Declan and Margrit. Eileen (1917 - 2006) and Peter Caddy (1917 - 1994), together with their friend Dorothy MacLean (1920), had arrived at a dreary Scottish campsite in the fishing village of Findhorn, having lost their jobs and incomes due to a quarrel with their employer, a hotelier in the small town of Forres. Their spiritual experiences led them to establish a community dedicated to responsible, tolerant, and spiritually supported coexistence, which still exists today and has provided vital inspiration to the worldwide ecovillage movement.

In the early 1970s, the American, David Spangler (1945) lived in Findhorn for a while before returning

to the USA to publish his book "Revelation - The Birth of a New Age". This book, which quickly achieved worldwide circulation, coined the term "New Age" to describe a new era and a movement of change.

During his two and a half years in Scotland, Declan had increasingly devoted himself to the subject of ecology. He worked on it with his architectural and planning students.

"My last year in Scotland, the concept of ecology came to me. I had organized a conference called 'Human and Nature's Needs' with the students. We'd invited the band 'Deep Purple' for the party at the end of the conference. They were still just getting started, and performed for £30 a night. Then, after this conference, I spent a whole year talking to the students about ecology in architecture and urban planning. There were also a few special events, and we became well-known throughout Great Britain. At that time the topic of ecology was completely new to the public and was discussed very differently."

A few years earlier, while still in Darmstadt, he had met Constantinos A. Doxiadis.

"Doxiadis was a Greek who had earned a doctorate in Germany, shortly after the war. He then was responsible for resettlement of the Greeks who were returning from Asia Minor. Hundreds of thousands came back to their homeland. He said that they

couldn't be placed in barracks, but that new settlements and cities had to be built for them. Thus, in the 1950s, he had ensured that many beautiful apartments were built. They didn't give it a second thought! Everyone was given a decent apartment."

Doxiadis had invented what he called Ekistics, by which he meant the science of human settlement. This immediately appealed to Declan, because he'd noted that Doxiadis took a holistic approach to urban planning, so he visited him for a meeting. The two became close, and Doxiadis asked Declan to help publish the journal "Ekistics: The Problems and Science of Human Settlements". This resulted in a collaboration with the main editor Jacqueline Thyrrwhitt, an Englishwoman who mainly lived in Athens, and who Doxiadis had known from Harvard, and with Gwen Bell (1934). Bell holds a master's degree in urban and regional planning from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in Geography from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. She had since been appointed Professor of Urban Planning at the University of Pittsburgh. Later, in 1972, she moved to the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

The meeting with Gwen Bell enabled Declan to take a further important step on his life's path, as she organised a scholarship for him to study for a doctorate in Pittsburgh. And his introduction to Ekistics, including his work on publishing the magazine, brought Declan closer to the ideas he later

found in permaculture.

"Doxiadis had drawn a kind of network, where he had sorted all possible disciplines under five rubrics. Also all sizes from detached houses to cosmopolitan cities. For the magazine we obtained articles that we then edited. We were unable to ask the authors, who were all over the world, for permission, because there was no internet and no fax yet. We could only communicate with them by post and rather expensive phone calls. The magazine was published every two months. It was printed in Athens, but sent all over the world. We had great authors: Margaret Mead (USA), Barbara Ward (England), René Dubois (France), Buckminster Fuller (USA), Jean Gottmann (France), Erica Mann (Israel), Robert Mathews (Scotland), etc."

After a short time Declan had received an invitation as an assistant for urban planning, to come to Athens for a visit. Now he could travel there again.

"It was seen as part of my university education and research. But I was somewhat limited because the conference took place in the middle of the summer semester. I immersed myself in this world view, this holistic planning concept of "Ekistics", known to ecologists as "Ecumenopolis" -' with a view to the space in which people live, i.e. the house, the hamlet or the neighbourhood, the city, the metropolis, yes, the whole world of urbanised agglomerations. In another coordinate of the grid, the social, economic,

cultural and physical aspects are captured. In this way, the overlapping content of the various elements could be seen, easily defined and tracked as part of interdisciplinary research and planning within a single presentation. In addition, each representation included the three aspects of time - past, present and future, so that this grid could be represented in a three-dimensional manner."

Declan realized that the Ekistic Grid is an extremely powerful tool for analyzing cities.

"This analysis and planning method completely changed my thinking, completely knocked me over - gave me a new life, a new goal - where I could incorporate all the pieces I had collected through my studies. I worked with Doxiadis and Panagis Psoumopoulos at their settlement sites in Attica, Greece, and sometimes even in Asia Minor, but mostly with Jacqueline Tyrwhitt, a pioneer in urban design, and Gwen Bell. The co-operating academics and planners of the Ekistics Movement met every year in the first week of July on a ship in the Mediterranean Sea, holding deep discussions mornings and evenings. In the afternoon they would visit various archaeological sites. Jacqueline, Gwen and I drew up the minutes of these meetings every day, and then worked in an office on the ship to immediately publish them. Late evenings, there was a lot of Greek dancing on deck, which of course appealed to me. Every year this tour would end in Delos, the historic island off Mykonos,

with an 'Ekistics Declaration' in the ancient theatre. After the tour, a conference, open to the public, was held in Athens."

While teaching at Dundee, Declan had incorporated Ekistics theory into the physical and social analysis of the city which he'd conducted with his fourth and fifth year students.

"This was not only related to the earlier work of Patrick Geddes (Edinburgh), but also to the contemporary planning concepts of Robert Mathews and Percy Johnston Marshall in Edinburgh, who were also involved in the Ekistics movement. I met them many times during the month-long Ekistics meetings in Athens which had been held since July 1962. The analysis was based on the Ekistics grid, focusing on the human needs of the many unemployed and unrespected citizens housed in the poor neighborhoods of Dundee during the 19th century."

The work in Dundee had brought many new experiences and insights, and with the scholarship organised by Gwen Bell, Declan and Margrit were now able to move to Pittsburgh to study for a doctorate in Public and International Affairs.

"In Pittsburgh, ecology was also an issue for the city. For example, it was seen to that the very dirty water of the rivers be made clean again. I was an activist then. As soon as I arrived somewhere, I was already

fully involved in everything."

In Pittsburgh, Declan worked with Gwen Bell, IT planning expert Prof. Clark Rogers and Prof. Maurice Shapiro, who expanded his knowledge of epidemiology.

"I was a student and professor in the Urban Affairs Program, a joint project of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs and the Graduate School of Public Health. I was in this PhD program, but taught a course on 'The City' for the students of the Mid-Career-Womens'-Program (where Margrit later completed her Masters degree.) In the course, the students were mainly interested in the field of public policy. We specialized in an analysis of policy-making at the United Nations, the World Health Organization and other socially oriented international organizations. I finished my studies with an ABD (All-But-Dissertation), but never wrote my doctoral thesis, because the scholarship suddenly ended and I had to earn money to support my family again."

Due to financial and family constraints, Declan and Margrit were unable to do their doctorates together. Margrit was the only one to continue on this path, earning a Ph.D. with her thesis on Schools as Community Centers - a comparison of 16 countries, which was supported by Unesco and the OECD.

In Pittsburgh, the two of them both felt foreign. In ma-

ny ways, life in this part of the USA was different from that in Europe. Although there was a pronounced family culture, there was little public life. Opportunities for spontaneous activities, eating out, going to concerts, etc. were missing. Moreover, Margrit was always keen to help politicians with her abilities, but realized that she could not easily do so in another country. So she asked Declan to find something suitable for himself in Germany - and so he became a professor at the Technical University in Berlin.

"People often don't realize that they've been cured. When someone is healthy and alert again, it isn't clear where the healing came from. And everyone takes it for granted that they are well, if there is no pain or visible wounds. It's only when we have a disease that we may sense or recognize a particular organ or bone. But they were there before, too. Some people have to be sick to even notice that they have a body. This body is an immensely complicated system or network of cells - billions of cells working (usually) in harmony and creativity with each other. This coordination of cells, which automatically continues day after day, is proof enough that miracles can happen. These tiny creatures work miraculously together all the time without us consciously doing anything to help them."

Living Permaculture VI
Healing, Politics and PaLS |
The cycle of life

In the course of his life, Declan has encountered many different ways of looking at life. From coarse materialism to subtle spirituality, from technical-rational thinking to intuitive intuition, he's learned so many things. Everything and everyone was met with interest and openness. This is certainly a good reason why his life has so often taken him to exactly the right place - even to people who were very specifically helpful for him - taking him further along his path of development. At times this happened under unusual circumstances, such as in the period after 1985, when Declan was diagnosed with cancer as a result of skin problems which - as it turned out much later - was incorrect.

"At that time I was experiencing an inner and an outer crisis. It was both. I have always believed, however, that I could overcome anything without harsh medication. I had completely refused antibiotics, cortisone, and the like. Some people didn't understand that. I lived with this diagnosis during those years. We knew that my skin problems had to do with the sun, and we'd believed the doctors who had said that it was skin cancer. Then I met a doctor in Rome who recogni-

zed immediately that it wasn't cancer, but a fungal disease."

The good news - the correction of the previous diagnosis, didn't come until many years later. Declan already had several years of hard work behind him for GEN. He was Founding Chairman and represented GEN at the UN in Nairobi and New York, requiring him to travel even more than he already was. Fortunately, he then received sufficient funds from a foundation to hire a young woman, Agnieszka Komoch, as an assistant. She was a great help, especially because she spoke seven different languages. Nevertheless, he again suffered burnout. His skin disease symptoms worsened.

"I retired from the GEN board in 1998. My duties were taken over by the Italian Lucilla Borrio. May East, a Brazilian who had lived in Scotland for a long time, wanted to take over the UN thing because she knew many languages. The American Linda Joseph from Colorado took over the more content-related things that had to do with the Ecovillage Self-Assessment-System. All three are more or less still present today, e.g. in GENelders, who meet in an advisory capacity, every two months on ZOOM. My body had told me that something in my life had to fundamentally change. Antja, our daughter, has always helped me to understand the language of my body."

Efforts to overcome the skin disease kept Declan busy until 2003. Then he met Clemens Kuby.

"He brought me close to the system of affirmation. This was necessary because in the meantime I had completely neglected the spiritual stimulus I'd had in the early days of Lebensgarten. I had become a doer. While externally still expressing my spirituality, I hardly meditated any more and had no time for myself".

Documentary filmmaker and author Clemens Kuby (1947), one of the co-founders of the German Green party in Baden Württemberg in 1979, sustained spinal paralysis after falling out of a window, in the early 1980s. He then experienced "spontaneous healing." It was this that prompted him to intensively engage in spiritual healing and to organize lectures and seminars on this topic. In November 2003, in Cologne, Declan attended such a seminar with him, for the first time.

"I took a room in a small hotel. My skin was very bad at the time. My hands were full of these eczemas. We first saw one of Kuby's films at a movie theater. Afterwards, it was about ten o'clock in the evening, Kuby said that those who would attend the seminar should stay. Then he asked each of us to write down three life affirmations. One of them should be short-term, one medium-term and one long-term. The condition was that there should not be a single negati-

ve word in them. We should expect all three to work, but be ready to let go of one of them. We were to also specify the timeframe for the complete healing. First I wrote that my rheumatism would be gone on January 1st. Secondly, I wrote that I would be cancer-free on 28 March and, thirdly, that I would be a Member of the European Parliament on the 13th of June (election day). After we wrote it down for ourselves, we wrote another copy for him. We put the original under our pillows. Well, that's what I did! The next morning all the eczema had first disappeared from my hands. The whole bed was full of it, but my skin was pure and good. Then I went to the seminar, and when Clemens asked us how our night had been and how we felt now, I was able to show him the success! Rheumatism also disappeared by the end of the year, and on 28 March the skin disease was completely gone. But I did not become a Member of the European Parliament. Clemens had previously told us that one of the three affirmations would not come true..."

For the 2004 elections to the European Parliament, Declan stood as an independent candidate for Germany. He became part of a small informal group of twelve that had been founded two years earlier in Kaufbeuren to support such independent candidates and the implementation of direct democracy.

The election campaign at that time was determined,

above all, by the question of whether or not Turkey should be a member of the European Union. In the end, the position of the Union parties prevailed, and Turkey was granted the "privileged partnership" that still applies today.

At that time, for the German entry into the European Parliament there was still 5 percent locking clause, which was declared unconstitutional in 2011 after a ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court for Germany. The "action independent candidates" would have needed 43 percent of the 1.5 million votes to be able to move into Parliament. However, it had only 0.3 percent (70,301 votes).

"It was a good experience, though. We were twelve independent candidates who helped each other in all organizational matters. I was able to make use of all my networks. During my years at the TU Berlin, 432 students had graduated under me. I had them all in a file and could write to them. So I didn't have to organize an election campaign myself, because many of my former students invited me. So I'd load my Peugeot with my promotional material and drive there. A lot of people helped me back then. They all wanted a good member of parliament in Brussels. Yet I'm glad it didn't work out, because I wouldn't be here if it had. Sven Giegold, a Green MEP and good friend, once told me that he can only endure his work because he doesn't get emotionally involved. But that's exactly what I can't do."

Margrit predicted the financial and economic crisis that developed after 2007. As she worried that a global scale collapse could also make it more difficult to provide food, it was of existential importance for Lebensgarten to become as self-sufficient as possible. Against this backdrop, plans to develop organic farming near the ecovillage became particularly topical.

Margrit was well aware that the small and large economic collapses of the parties involved are system-related adjustment processes for the prevailing money system, which, due to its debt coverage and the interest and compound interest receivables, demands continuous, continuously increasing growth. Collapse is therefore not only possible or probable, but necessary. The exponentially increasing growth curve of assets and liabilities must be pushed back, again and again, by the repeated shortening of the overall balance sheet, in order to delay the total collapse of the system. In a limited world, there can be no unlimited growth!

The most recent of the global financial and economic crises began in August 2007, with a sharp rise in interest rates on interbank loans. Other factors were the inflated U.S. real estate market, including the spread of subprime loans, and the, as yet unresolved, bursting of the dotcom stock bubble. When the major U.S. bank Lehman Brothers finally collapsed in autumn 2008, and when the euro crisis began in 2009, due to Greece's national debt, the disaster began to

unfold completely worldwide.

Already in 2003, Declan and Margrit had acquired the current PaLS (an acronym for Permakultur Park am Lebensgarten Steyerberg) site, consisting of 5.2 hectares of agricultural land and 2.8 hectares of monoculture forest. At first, the idea was to use the areas for an extension of Lebensgarten's residential housing possibilities, which included the design of the site, in line with permaculture.

"We went to our neighbors Gerhard and Rita Müller. He also sprayed on his farm, but only a little. Gerd Müller had something so natural about him and therefore didn't believe that spraying was the right approach. Instead, he tried multicultural cultivation, in which two or more plants are sown simultaneously. When we told him about our permaculture project, he could imagine giving us the land that belonged to his stepbrother. Margrit, Christoph Hatlapa and I then entered into negotiations. In the end, we were actually able to acquire the land."

To revive the agrarian desert, with sandy soil contaminated by spray poisons, herbicides and pesticides, required special measures.

"For the first five years, I only applied green manure to heal the soil. This I had learned through a lecture by Prof. Hardy Vogtmann in Witzenhausen, who had recommended this practice of green manuring. The

preparation of PaLS was part of my healing. When I had problems in my life, often something helpful would come out of my background. My name in this incarnation is Declan (= Déug-lán or literally translated 'full of God'). That says a lot! Well, we're all full of God. This is not just my theory - it has been told to us in many traditions by many prophets, mystics and God Himself".

But before the present day Permaculture Park at Lebensgarten Steyerberg (PaLS) project could begin, it was necessary to abandon the original plans to build houses on the future PaLS site, according to Permaculture principles.

"I noticed that the architects involved had not really understood it and that the project had become too expensive. We would have had to pay the county fees for reclassification and the seller additional payments if we used it as land for housing. This would have made the houses so expensive that it would have created two distinct classes of people in Lebensgarten. Many community members spoke up against this. We got into trouble with the architects because they had regarded the project as their life's work. But this conflict was resolved through mediation."

In 2009, organic farmer Jean-Philippe Genetier and his family came to Lebensgarten in Steyerberg to look for a new life and workplace. They had previously run

their own small farm in France for 15 years, mainly for the production of organic goat cheese. Now they were looking for a change. As they couldn't participate in an official weekend visit to Lebensgarten, they had come a week later. And now they wandered on their own through the community, to look around. That same afternoon, Declan and Margrit had just seated themselves in front of their house for tea.

"Margrit and I sat outside in our front garden and thought about who, from the community, would be willing to help me implement the self-sufficiency concept for the PaLS site, that had been developed since 2008. It was clear that I couldn't do it alone anymore. This couple passed by with two children. We saw that they seemed a little lost. So, Margrit invited them for tea, and they sat down with us. We found out that they'd heard of permaculture before. The parents were friendly and the children accepted us immediately. Jean-Philippe and Regine decided that afternoon to come for a month, as a trial run. For this, we wanted to find a house where they could live, during that time. Then, through the help of the 'Paradise Now' foundation, we found a free house. The condition of the house wasn't good, but for the time being it was adequate. After this month, they made the decision to stay. The move took place in February 2009."

Over the next few years, the PaLS site was planned and designed. Trees and shrubs were planted, vegeta-

bles, herbs and flowers were sown. In addition, a suntrap was erected, and berms built, to serve as windbreaks. Gradually, a "Permakulturpark" was created, through which, in addition to the cultivation of food, the design principles of permaculture can be studied in their practical application.

When it comes to understanding life, nature is the very best teacher. The beauty of her appearance cannot be surpassed by any work of art. And as it continually changes, blossoms, bears fruit and fades through the seasons, it's always closing the circle. When the leaves wither in autumn, the branches are already covered with buds. All the leaves and flowers of spring are already there when autumn and winter dawn, when the life of spring abandons itself to transience and dies. No death without life! But no life without death, either!

Four years had passed since the actual work had begun on the PaLS site. In four annual cycles, nature had displayed her beauty in ever fuller abundance. The hard work done by many people, over the many years since Lebensgarten's founding, had also made this miracle possible. Margrit is reported to have once said that she had gone through five incarnations at once, as the process of developing Lebensgarten's community was so intense. In the deep winter, the trees had lost their foliage, but they were full of buds

for the next spring, and Margrit's earthly life ended in peace and quiet, on the 28th of December 2013, at three o'clock in the morning.

"I think we were pretty well prepared for this. I could leave tomorrow, too, and I'd be fine with it. The only disappointing thing was that she had to be sick. Ultimately, Margrit placed her trust in the local family doctor, who was trained in palliative medicine and deeply respected the will of the patient. The physical suffering was low; she had no pain for a long time. It was only in the last month. I know quite well that we all have to die. And I knew she had to die. Margrit wanted to die with dignity. Without machines and all those drugs. She wanted to die in full consciousness, and she did."

A day after the funeral in Kassel, Declan looked over Margrit's file noting all the contact details of people with whom she had been connected, in life and work. He invited everyone to a weekend of encounter and remembrance in Lebensgarten. Many (85) came. Under the expert guidance of Ingrid Ebeling, a good friend of Margrit's for many years, an Open Space came into being where memories of Margrit were shared and views of the future were dared. And there was celebration at the same time, not only tears, but also laughter, reflection and dancing. Because no death is without life! That's what nature teaches us!

Waking up in the middle of the night,
Can't go back to sleep for remembering her flight.
The tears come all of their own accord.
The mind goes blank, I cannot afford
to break down again, although I am alone.
I cry, I bawl, I moan.

Is that what's called mourning?

I need to get out, get around, socialize,
I need to get warmth and to dry up my eyes.
I cover up, continually – I become a façade.
I go for 'occupational therapy' – otherwise I would go
mad
or break down again, although I'm alone.
I frantically work on my mails on FairPhone.

Is that what's called mourning?

I forget the whole thing, the fact that she's left.
I joke, dance and sing, although I'm bereft.
Or must I play the role? must I show that I'm sad,
break down, start crying, societal façade?

Is that what's called mourning?

Am I mourning for her? Am I pitying me?
It's just one month that she gone: 28th, hour 03.
I loved her so much, 'twas like fever but free,
I loved her so much that everyone could see.
Now in tears at my loss: for her or for me?

I argue with myself: to be or not to be?

Is that what's called mourning?

She's gone to the Light, to a Life never ending.
She happier than ever, she is Love. She is spending
the Now (not her time) to merge with the Essence.

The Soul that was Margrit is continually present,
developing her Being and supreme Becoming,
while I sit here writing, the tears softly running

"I'm just an interested person. When I meet someone, I am interested in what I can learn from them. I'm simply willing to talk to anyone, and I did so back then. Then they called me a "liberal jerk." That was the strain I found myself facing at the time, which was not only a contextual one, but also a political one, a practical one ... the new apartment, my wife in Pittsburgh, the child with me, a language that my mother did not speak ... everything was so intense. But I was happy!"

Development VII
Dare to change | Berlin and Kassel

Declan had returned to Germany in 1972 to take up a teaching post at the TU Berlin.

"By becoming an Adjunct Professor in the USA, I was ripe to be appointed a professor in Germany. So I came to Berlin, where they immediately gave me a job for life. Where else do they do that?"

Margrit had initially stayed in Pittsburgh to complete her doctoral studies (until 1973) before coming to Berlin. So in his first year in Berlin, Declan was alone with his daughter, but that wasn't the only special challenge he faced.

"Suddenly, when I became a professor at the Technical University of Berlin, my status was elevated from one day to the next. I was then expected to do things that I had to learn very quickly, or there were things I didn't actually want to do. They expected me to wear a suit every day, but I didn't want to, except on special occasions, of course. I'm usually a laid-back person... I was only 38 years old, which was still fairly young. All the other professors were about sixty years old. I was the youngest of them all. My students weren't all

much younger than me. I belonged more to the assistants than to the professors, in terms of age, which my colleagues always resented a little. But I was another generation, and I thought differently."

The West-Berlin of the 1970s was very different from the rest of Germany, not only due to its special political status, located in the middle of East Germany, or because there were farms still existing in the middle of Kreuzberg (Declan recalls that in 1973, there was a farewell party for the last dairy farm) - but also because this city had been the particular focus of the 1968 movement. At the university, Declan experienced first-hand the shockwaves of this tumultuous period.

Since the mid-1960s, the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition (APO) to the German government had gained strength as a result of the student movement. Supported by the Socialist German Student Union (SDS) and the Republican Club (RC) - which had set up a working group to specifically address vocational training and the democratization of the university - the aim was to develop alternative ideas and models, and to protest against the prevailing politics, especially Kurt Georg Kiesinger's grand coalition, from 1966 to 1969.

The APO called for the democratization of higher education policy. To this end, they protested against former Nazi leaders in high offices, including universi-

ties, and against teaching content and methods that had originated during this dark period of German history. However, the ideas of the student movement very soon went beyond the scope of politics, insofar as fundamental social changes were demanded in the spirit of a socialist revolution. The students articulated themselves through imaginative forms of protest, happenings, sit-ins and teach-ins - which at times was met with harsh response by the university management.

After all, the squatter movement that had originated in Frankfurt, had since the 1970s further evolved in West Berlin. In the prior decade, especially in Kreuzberg, a housing shortage had emerged due to the redevelopment of land. In the years to come, Declan and Margrit would have a lot to do with this predominantly student-based movement.

Declan held the Chair of Urban Design at the Department of Architecture at the TU Berlin, specializing in infrastructure in urban development processes. In his work with the students he was always interested in an open culture of conversation. As a teenager he had participated in his school's "Debating Club." Now, he encouraged the active participation of his students with the same vitality.

"I taught students and graduates mainly through games and simulated urban planning processes that demonstrate how the physical urban environment can

be shaped through citizens' participation. Through the surroundings of this divided city, I found concrete examples and scenarios drawn with the cooperation of the resident population and various squatters and action groups in areas like Kreuzberg, Charlottenburg and Schöneberg. In these very densely populated low-income areas, my students were able to help themselves and the citizenry to develop community-based solutions. It had a positive effect on the surrounding environment, halting the demolition of 19th and early 20th century buildings, that had been planned to make way for 'efficient' roads and motorways. It was my way of giving support to the needs of the students and the poor local residents by seeing them as no different than other West Berliners."

A strong quality of Declan's appeared in that he always saw the positive side of the facts and discovered possible solutions where his assistants and PhD students had gotten bogged down in negativity. Sometimes his attitude, to approach work in a relaxed manner was described as unscientific, but that didn't bother him much.

"Many critics (and at that time there were many "enemies" in the planning and urban political scene in West Berlin) saw me as a 'positivist'. That was almost a dirty word. Many times my vision work was considered to be "in the clouds", and often my future-oriented solutions were described as "unscientific". I

was certainly not a 'negativist', as I see it as the role of the architect in the urban development process to show solutions and models that have already been developed and applied in other places (even in foreign countries) and that can indicate a new approach. The urban population, including those who rented or owned land in the city, were at least as important to me as those planners and politicians who intuitively knew what the solutions were. And this is unique for every single area, because in my opinion, every place in has its 'own soul'. Later, in a review written of this period in the 70s, one of my assistants and star doctoral students described me as 'a person who makes things possible'".

Margrit came to Berlin after her doctoral studies in 1973 and worked until 1979 on research projects related to her doctoral thesis "Schools as Community Centres" for the SchulbauInstitut der Länder (The School Building Institute of the German States, Berlin), the OECD and UNESCO, in several countries in Europe, North and South America. She then worked for the International Building Exhibition (IBA), which was first held in Darmstadt in 1901, on the initiative of Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig. Since then, it was held in various German cities, until in 1984 and 1987 when it was again held in Berlin under the themes of "Cautious Urban Renewal" and "Critical Reconstruction". Margrit was responsible for the

IBA's Ecology/Energy and Women's Projects research fields.

"The research department was to be given fourteen positions, two of which it filled. The remaining twelve posts were suddenly withdrawn by Bonn, but the funds earmarked for them were not. So, Margrit suddenly had a lot of money at her disposal. She organized a lot of events that all had to do with city ecology. At the same time, she set up a few get-togethers for women, supported neighborhood centers for women, and so on. Through this, Margrit became familiar with the issues of ecology in Germany."

In the course of her work for the IBA, Margrit often met with the complaint that ecological approaches were incompatible with economic principles. It was against this backdrop, in 1982, that an important encounter took place, with the architect and critic of capitalism Helmut Creutz (1923 - 2017). Declan had been invited to give a lecture at a free-economy auditorium on the organic farm of Adolf Hoops (1932 - 1999), an advocate of animal-free farming. The theme of the lecture was the economic significance of trees among all ancient cultures. Margrit accompanied Declan. It was through this meeting that she discovered the theme that would occupy her for the rest of her life, and in the years that followed, make her an internationally renowned expert: the fact that money, freed from speculative interest, serves life.

While working in the field of architecture, she'd collaborated with a man who also brought valuable insights to the Kennedys' lives.

"One of her advisors was the chief engineer Rudolf Doernach from Stuttgart. He had worked with such things as natural construction, which resulted in a focal point for Margrit and with which she became very engaged. This man had told us about a new movement in Australia, where he had just been for a research semester. This was the very first months of permaculture."

The architect, bioarchitect and farmer Rudolf Doernach (1929 - 2016) lectured several times at Margrit's IBA department, presenting each time new ideas on nature and architecture. Doernach, who had coined the term "biotecture" for building with living building materials, had worked in the USA with Buckminster Fuller and later in Germany with Frei Otto before founding his own research institute "Bioversität" in the Black Forest at an adult education centre.

"Incidentally, he once told her that he had received a letter from this Australian guy saying he was coming to Europe soon."

In the field of higher education, it was routinely ex-

pected that lectures, speeches and reports be prepared in handwriting. Declan was always struggling with this, and he experienced that his mind often became muddled at critical moments of a presentation, and that he stuttered in search of words, when noticing that the audience was bored or the energies were running in a different direction. This gave him incentive to develop his own method of lecturing, and it led him to an essential insight.

"It had long been unknown to me that even then I was a highly spiritual person who could be guided from above. I gave my best contributions when I spoke straight from the gut, in the moment, using the listeners' energy. I was ingenious at it - I could impress and inspire people in a community, solution-oriented way.

I would often open my mouth, without first knowing what I actually wanted to say. I truly allowed myself to be guided by my inner understanding of the situation, because I had the inner ability to recognize the collective intelligence in space and to act accordingly. I have passed this gift for how to use the intuition on to many of my teaching and research assistants, to students and a few professional colleagues, too."

In day-to-day university life Declan frequently encountered the incomprehension of other professors. He surmised that in the course of his appointment they had expected a conservative American. They

were clearly disappointed because Declan was anything but conservative. For instance, he argued that an academic should read Marx, not to be a Marxist, but to better understand what was going on with the students.

"My fellow professors realized that they had made a mistake, and wanted me to suffer for it through my work, which meant that I didn't get rooms for my office nor for my teaching events. In this way, they wanted to shun me. I had no choice but to occupy a few otherwise empty rooms."

During this time, a professor-colleague organized a study trip to the USA during Christmas and New Year's break. Fate would have it that, as his wife was ill, he asked Declan to take charge of this excursion instead.

"I added Pittsburgh to the itinerary, and decided to stay there until the semester began again. Before that, I had written to the president of the university and told him that I would only come back if I was given the rooms I needed to work and teach. As it had not been my fault that I couldn't get rooms, I also said that I expected them to continue to pay my salary."

This impressed Alexander Wittkowsky (1936 - 2018), who was the first elected president in the history of the TU Berlin from 1970 to 1977, - he later asked Declan to stand for election as vice-president. At that

time, the teachers and students jointly elected the president and vice president. Declan immediately received 65 percent of the votes, a significant showing, compared to previous elections, which were always decided by a narrow margin. Declan had finally reached people!

"The post of vice president put me in the role of having to make quick decisions, and that changed my life. I often had to assess a situation and act immediately. I was moderator and coordinator for all educational and teaching programs, including new ones, as well as for adult education, which was a new field for me. After three years, I devoted myself again to research and teaching in urban design in the Architecture Department. This was when I first formulated my philosophy that: "The best teacher is the one who makes himself redundant "

At some point, Declan became aware that his work had become routine. He began to search for a new focus. What could he achieve with all his experience as an architect and university lecturer, with his fundamental convictions about ecology and with his many contacts? And in what branch of life?

"I looked around for what was in need of improvement or for some new field of activity - not necessarily architectural. On the contrary, I found the arrogance of a number of top architects regarding aesthetics, especially their own aesthetics, intolerable. I had the

feeling that the criteria for assessing the students' work was continually being redefined and should be more than just the professor's 'I like it' or 'I don't like it'. I had been called to Berlin in 1972 when I was 38 years old. Three years earlier I was in Pittsburgh and had been appointed because I was already talking about ecology and because my theme was 'Urban Infrastructure'. Thus I addressed both the social as well as technical infrastructure. Pittsburgh was actually a terrible city, but you could learn a lot there. Environmental Science' was a new field. In Berlin, there was tension among the normal urban planners, because they didn't want anything to do with the new trend of ecology. There had been unrest at the TU four years before - 1968 - particularly in the architecture department - and all my older colleagues were, as I say, '68 damaged . Not only did they despise the students, they also did not trust each other. Among the faculty, there was a tension in the air that you could have cut with a knife. You felt it every day; it was sometimes a real fight."

Was there a sane way out of this distressing predicament? A request from the German Education Union (GEW) suggested that Declan apply for the office of president at the University of Kassel!

The transition into the 1980s saw the dispute over the nuclear arming of the German armed forces, which

had been in operation since the late 1950s. In 1979, NATO passed the so-called Double-Track Decision, which stipulated that missiles and cruise missiles with nuclear warheads be deployed in Western Europe, including the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany, as a deterrent in the Cold War. This was intended to engage the superpowers in bilateral negotiations on limiting medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe. Retrofitting and arms control should complement each other.

In Hesse, Holger Börner (1931 - 2006), Prime Minister of the ruling SPD and an outspoken supporter of nuclear energy, planned to build a reprocessing plant for spent fuel elements from nuclear power plants for his state, by 1980. The purpose of such facilities is, among other things, to obtain weapons-grade plutonium. This alarmed an ever-growing peace movement!

In addition, under his government, a radical decree was adopted at the federal level in 1972, and revoked in 1979, to review the loyalty of civil servants in Hesse to the constitution. This had the effect of denying employment to applicants with a politically left-wing background, or of dismissing those already employed. However, among the population, the practice faced widespread disapproval.

Students played an important role in protests against the double-track decision of NATO as well as the radical decree, which in 1980 led to tumultuous events

at the University of (Gesamthochschule) Kassel, a reform university still under construction at the time, in connection with the election of the new president.

Among the applicants, which included the still-reigning president Ernst Ulrich Michael Freiherr von Weizsäcker (1939), was the German-Austrian Michael Daxner (1947). A social scientist at a young age with a decidedly left-leaning background, he described the current review procedures for civil servants as unlawful, unconstitutional and immoral, and the expansion of nuclear energy and the production of nuclear weapons as a suicide program. The hearing in the university that preceded the presidential election came to a head when students cheered Daxner but mocked and ridiculed the other candidates.

As a result, the Convention, with its student and trade union majority, elected Daxner as the successor to Weizsäcker, who was defeated in the vote. The conflict with Börner's state government was thus inevitable.

At that time the lawyer Hans Krollmann (1929 - 2016) was the minister of culture for Hesse. A rather model politician who, it now seems, knew all the tricks of the trade. While still a student, he had already joined the SPD in post-war Germany, was involved in the SDS (Student Socialist German Association), and eventually became state chairman of the Young Socialists in Hamburg.

Throughout his subsequent career as a professional politician, however, he increasingly adapted to the opportunistic manner in which tasks were managed and decisions made. Now it was up to him, in accordance with the regular rules of procedure, to confirm the elected new president of the university - which he did not do, to the annoyance of the trade unions and large sections of his party. Never before had there been such an intervention in the autonomy of higher education institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany!

"I saw the GEW's suggestion as an opportunity I should seize. Due to my time at the TU Berlin, and in the position of the 2nd Vice President, I brought a lot of experience with me. And I definitely wanted to get away from the architecture department of the TU, where I'd had a hard time because of a few adversaries. That had really scared Margrit. In the months from February to April 1981, I had travelled back and forth between Kassel and Berlin, again and again, in order to win my candidacy at the university. I didn't just want to be proposed by the union. So, I talked to the professors and all the other service personnel. There were even debates with other candidates. That's how I made myself known there."

The governing board of the University of Kassel, which consisted of the old professors and all sorts of notables, had to confirm the candidacy before the general election. This was the Hessian system.

"It took place on Monday afternoon and evening. The students in Kassel had cast invalid votes, by handwriting 'Daxner for President' on their ballots. So the question arose as to whether or not the election was valid. It was as if the students hadn't voted at all. As a result, the agreement that the factions had drafted in the background, saying that two candidates - one, more conservative and one, more progressive - which I would have been, were to stand for election - was nullified. In this way, Franz Neumann became the only candidate and therefore the new president."

Declan was defeated. And at the same time, he had blown the possibility of being appointed to a full professorship in the planning and construction department in Kassel.

"But I had screwed that up by running for president at the same time. Though I still had my job in Berlin, my hands felt completely empty, and I was highly disappointed when they took me to the station."

Bill Mollison was waiting for him in Berlin.

Appendix

Create a better world,
each day we live



Declan Kennedy has made a unique contribution to the spread of permaculture design, education and networking over almost 4 decades. Along with his fellow architect and wife Margrit, Declan was one of the first European design professionals to recognise the potential of permaculture to help create a sustainable

and just world facing the limits to growth. His role in the translation of books and teaching was critically important in spreading permaculture beyond the Anglophone world. Declan's pivotal role in the Global Ecovillage Network has helped nurture a complementary relationship between the permaculture and intentional community movements in Europe and globally.

Over the years his infectious enthusiasm and passion for permaculture have galvanised generations of students and colleagues to make permaculture a lived reality. To experience that enthusiasm from someone in their 80s gives one a sense of awe; and the motivation to create a better world, each day we live.

David Holmgren
Permaculture cooriginator

Images









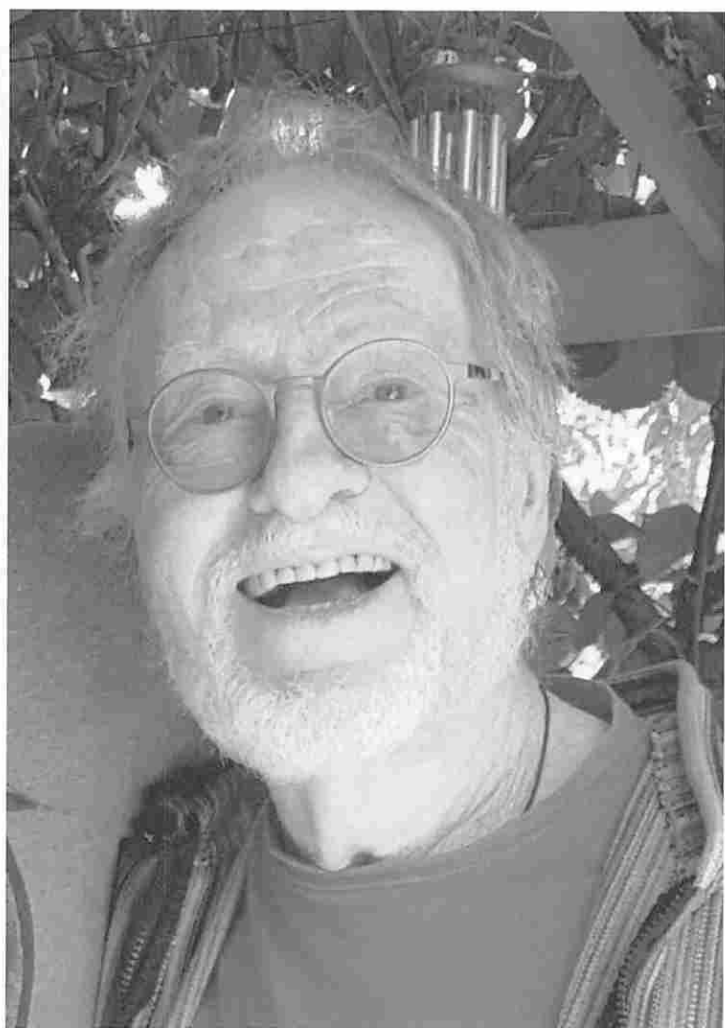


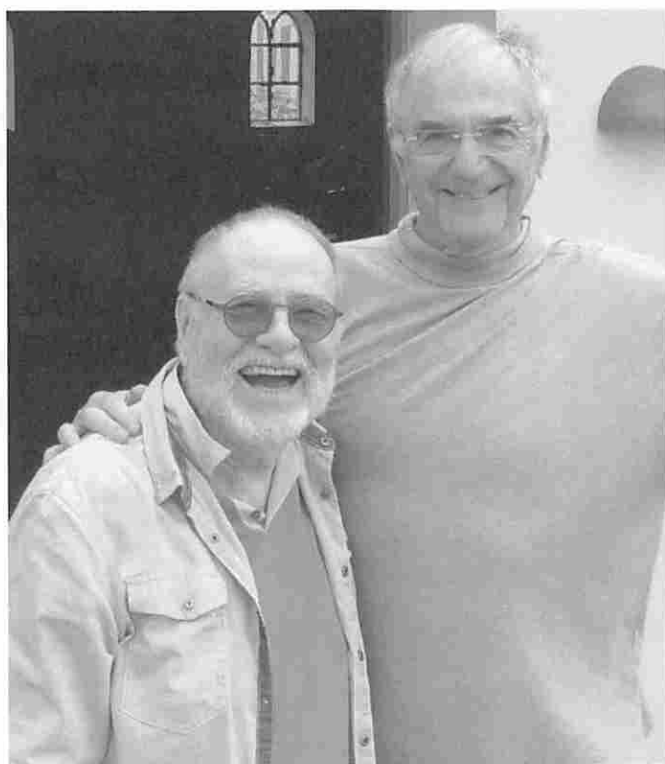














A Chronological overview (selection) of the biography

1923 Flight of Declan's father (later also his mother) to the USA.

1931 Parents return to Ireland (Mount Merrion, suburb of Dublin).

1934 Declan is born on 24th of July, in Dublin, as the sixth child of the family.

1938 Start of preschool.

1942 Parents give Declan a Broadwood concert grand piano and he sets up a music room.

1951 Abitur. Studied musical conducting (two semesters). Musician at fashion shows and parties.

1952 Start of architectural studies in Dublin.

1955 Father's burnout. Declan's work for his engineering office.

1958 Journey to the European mainland. Germany (Munich).

1959 Completion of the third year of studies in Ireland, and settlement in Germany (Darmstadt).

Continuation of studies. Archaeological excavation assistant in the Viking settlement Haithabu (Schleswig-Holstein). English teacher at the Benedict School. Meeting with Margrit (December).

1960 Excursion to Vienna. Engagement to Margrit (17th of December).

1961 Marriage with Margrit (4th of April) and birth of daughter, Antja (October).

1962 Study trip to Greece. First own planning office in Darmstadt.

1962 - 1965 Scientific assistant to Rolf Romero. Encounter with Constantinos Apostolou Doxiadis and the Ekistics method developed by him.

1965 to 1973 freelance contributor to Doxiadis as editor of the journal EKISTICS.

1965 - 1967 Collaboration on urban renewal in Regensburg under the direction of Werner Hebebrand.

1967 - 1969 Urban planning lecturer at the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee (Scotland).

1969 - 1972 Adjunct professor and doctoral student in Public and International Affairs in Pittsburgh (USA).

1972 - 1991 Professor at the Technical University of Berlin.

1973 Encounter with the book "Small is beautiful" by Ernst Friedrich Schumacher.

1974 The book "The Inner City" (with Declan and Margrit as editors) is published in London.

1975 - 1978 2nd Vice President of the Technical University of Berlin.

1978 The book "Permaculture One" by Bill Mollison is published.

1978 - 1992 Regular stays in his own house on Hydra (Greece).

1981 (May) Failure of his application as the new president of the Gesamthochschule in Kassel. Encounter with Bill Mollison. First lectures of Mollison in Germany (Berlin and Frankfurt), organized by Declan and Margrit. Bill Mollison's second visit to Berlin (November) before receiving the Right Livelihood Award. Well attended lecture by Mollison at the Technical University of Berlin.

1981/82 Five-month journey from Declan and Margrit to Australia. First encounter with David Holmgren.

1982 (August) Third visit of Bill Mollison to Berlin. First Permaculture Design Course in Europe at Glienicke Castle. Meeting with the architect and critic of capitalism, Helmut Creutz.

1983 Second visit to Australia. Diploma as permaculture designer. Representative of Bill Mollison in Europe since 1983. Permaculture courses in seventeen countries in Europe and Brazil.

1985 Encounter with Christian Benzin. Move to Steyerberg to "Lebensgarten" (October).

1986 - 1990 First permaculture project at Lebensgarten. Participation in the construction of the Umwelt Kultur Park (from the permaculture point of view) in Groß-Barop, south of Dortmund.

1988 Margrit's book "Interest and Inflation Free Money" is published (edited and illustrated by Declan).

From 1989, plans for land use and development under ecological aspects for various East German communities.

1989 - 1994 Coordination of the "Global Action Plan" in Germany.

1990 - 2003 Annual conference on the topic of money in Lebensgarten, Steyerberg.

1991 Margrit is appointed professor at the Department of Architecture of the University of Hanover.

1997 The book "Designing Ecological Settlements" (with Declan and Margrit as editors) is published.

2003 Foundation of MonNetA (short for "Money Network Alliance") as a special purpose operation of Lebensgarten e.V. Meeting with Clemens Kuby (November).

2004 Foundation of 'Gaia University'. Candidacy for the elections to the European Parliament on the list of "independent candidates". Acquisition of the current PaLS site.

2005 'Chairman of the international Advisory Board' of Gaia University Germany.

2009 Management of the PaLS site begins.

2012 Awarded the GENAward.

2013 Margrit's farewell from Earth (28 December).

2014 Awarded the MindAward. From 2015 GENElders

2018 "Loving UniVerse" (collection of poems) is published.

Declan's brothers and sisters, according to their age

(by Declan Kennedy)

Reamonn Finbar Kennedy (Jan. 1926), was ordained a priest as part of the Holy Ghost Fathers, served for years as missionary in East Nigeria, and organized the BIAFRA airlift from Island São Tomé. Therefore, he was considered a persona non grata, in Nigeria. He switched to aid for Bangladesh, with CONCERN International, and met Yasmin who he helped to study in Ireland, to be a medical doctor. Later, he left the priesthood and married her, having 2 children. He died at age 78.

Colm Carr Kennedy (May 1927), finished high school (with a baccalaureate) and became a airplane mechanic, one of 16 in his time that had all 15 qualifications. He started his own firm, repairing and recycling planes at Burbank Airport, California. He invented, with his son, a mask for pilots in case of fire in the cockpit, whereby the plane can be safely brought to the next airport. He married Hilda Lennon from Limerick, Opera singer, a soprano. They had six children, of which five survived and were raised in the USA - in California. He died 1.1.2018 (age 90)

Una Maureen Kennedy (Dec. 1928), now O'Farrell, a Freubel and Montessorri teacher, especially for spastic children, worked all her life - full or part time - both in

Ireland and California. She married Sean O'Farrell (local boy from Dalkey, Co. Dublin) in Palo Alto, and they had six children, all well and happy. He died two years ago at over 90 years of age, and she moved recently to Wichita, Kansas. She'll be 91 on Dec. 2nd, 2019 and loves dance and swimming.

Donnaca (Dunk) Kennedy (Aug 1931) is also a mechanic, but for cars, planes and boats. He married Dickie and had ten children, all well and married. After many years abroad, he returned to Ireland, got married and had a rent-a-boat business in the Shannon river. He's lived most of his adult life in Carrickon, Shannon. He's ingenious, flexible, and can make anything from nothing, can make ends meet on a tiny budget, and is very positive in his attitude, and loved by all who have contact with him.

The above four siblings were born in California and were therefore U.S. citizens - and their children could be as well, if they wanted to be.

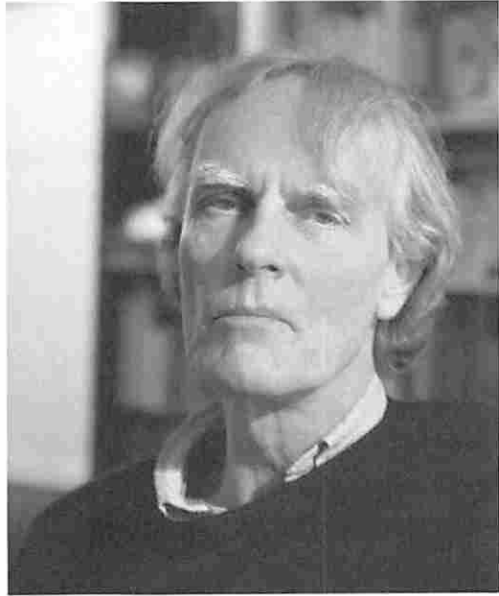
John O'Loughin Kennedy (Dec.1932), economist and printer, businessman who went bankrupt twice, gracefully. Married, very late, to Kay and had one son, Paul with whom he still has a business for taxi logistics, in Ireland and the USA. Founded CONCERN International among other things.

Declan (July 1934)

Nóirín M. Kennedy (April 1937), married Patrick Pye, a well known Irish artist. She was a handweaver, then a loomweaver of Irish tweed (mainly). They married very late (both 40 or older), and had two girls, both also very creative in life. She's very musical, and loves dance. She's also a staunch catholic and very apostolic. Known for short as Nono.

Péig (Margaret) Mary Kennedy (March 1939), very witty and straightforward, was first married to Seán Dillon, who died of diabetes at age 30, leaving her a son who was mentally deficient: Colman. She went to California where she met and married a widower Jew who had been born in 1926 in Berlin, and left in 1938. She manages a hotel and is a teacher for deprived children. She's also now an artist of huge wall hangings and happenings, and lives in Stockton California, with Paul Fairbrook (= Schönbach), who's very humorous, and also works in the hotel and catering profession and is agile in body and mind..

About the author



Born in 1957, in Schleswig, I studied art, pedagogy, theology (1976 - 1980, 1988/89) and business administration (1997 - 1999), after graduating from the Free Waldorfschool in Rendsburg.

Today I work as a freelance journalist and writer (37 books published to date). The main topics I write about are the medical services sector, the economy and biographies. I'm also a co-initiator of the fair-venture Project.

In 1992, I co-founded the "Steinschleuder Bewegung zur Bewegung" as an initiative for development assistance, which managed projects worldwide, until 2016. I offer the opportunity to learn directly about the effects of my work through lectures and workshops, at home and abroad.

In addition to my professional interests in ecologically meaningful business and forms of money, I am particularly interested in meaningful experiences in nature. For me, both a sustainable economy and the ecology of the world around us belong together. The fact that we today are relatively far removed from a way of life based on this does not necessarily lead to resignation, but can also lead to a worldview that encourages the good, even in the adverse.

Your own life is full of wonderful experiences, moving experiences, challenges, joys and sorrows. All this is a precious treasure. This treasure can be made accessible to one's own circle - family and friends - if it can be read in a book. As a journalist and book author, I would be very happy to write such a book for and about you, by commission.

From experience, I can assure you that our cooperation will be a beautiful and moving time of reminiscence for you. Together we travel through your life with the goal of creating a book that makes your life

memories comprehensible for others. In writing, a portrait of you as a person is created, which, like a painted portrait, is the result of an artistic-creative process. As an author, I myself pursue the goal of creating a book that is as unique as your life!

You can contact me via my homepage:
aktiv-zukunft-leben.de

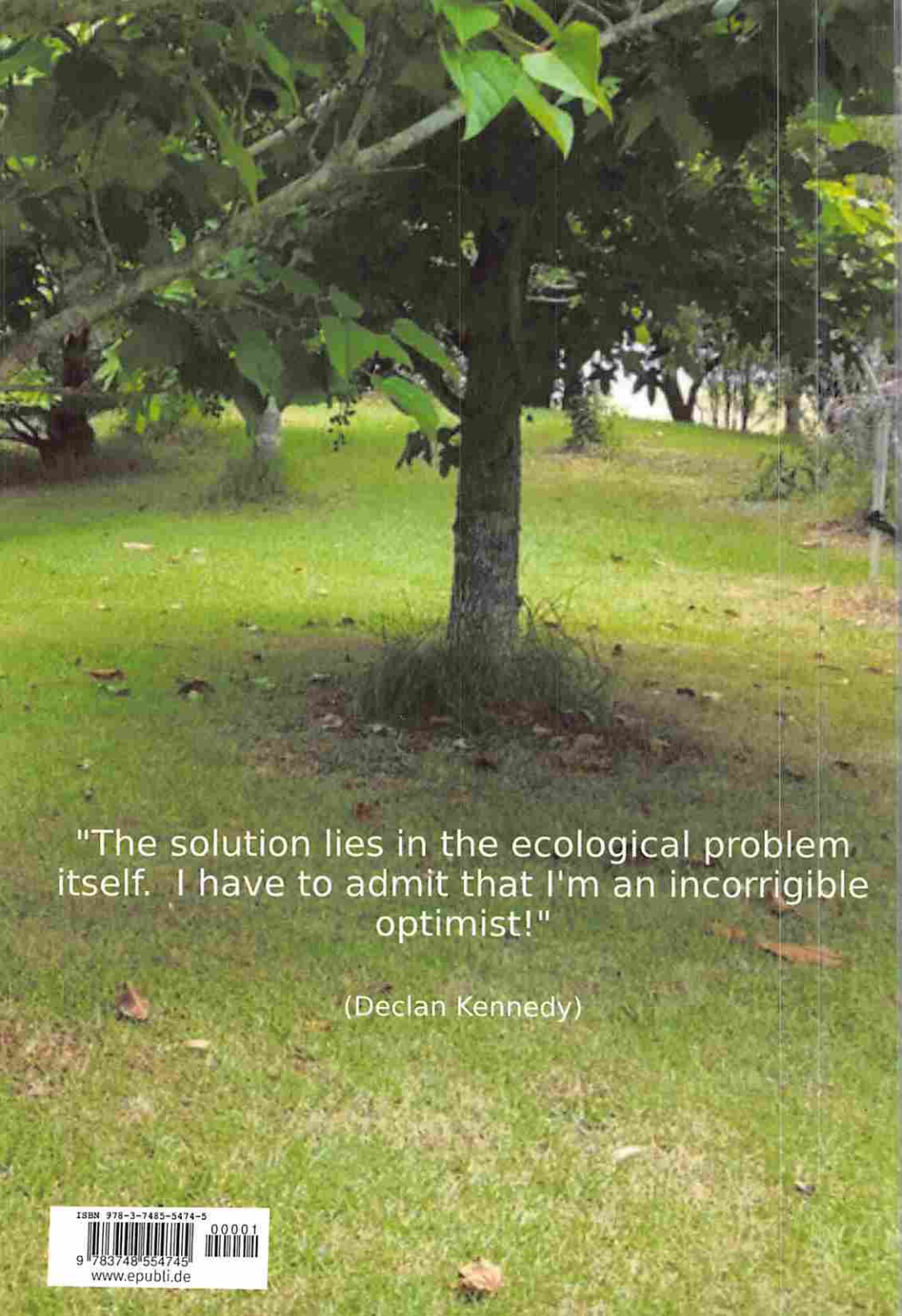
ISBN 978-3-7485-5474-5



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"The solution lies in the ecological problem
itself. I have to admit that I'm an incorrigible
optimist!"

(Declan Kennedy)

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