
FOURTH WORLD REVIEW

*For Small Nations
Small Communities
Small Farms
Small Shops
Small Industries
Small Banks
Small Fisheries
& the Inalienable
Sovereignty of the
Human Spirit*

No. 107

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*Europe, Nation-States and
Globalisation*
JÜRGEN KRÖNIG



*New edition of Leopold Kohr's
Breakdown of Nations reviewed*

Editorial:
The Age of Unreason

FOURTH WORLD REVIEW No. 107

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THE AGE OF UNREASON

FOR CENTURIES humanity has sought to push back the barriers of ignorance which have imprisoned it in dark, compulsive caverns of fantasy and superstition; we are today more aware of the nature of the structure of matter, of the vast interstellar spaces of the universe, of the properties of light, heat, weight and pressure, and of the subtle contradictions of the workings of our own minds, to say nothing of the matter-of-fact realities of history, be they biological or human, than former generations have ever been.

Equipped with such knowledge it might be thought that we would be on the verge of a brave new world of peace, plenty, justice and freedom such as no generation has ever known; instead, the evidence is piling up that what we are doing is nothing less than a remorseless, barbaric advance on a path of general destruction of the basic means of our own survival.

Within little more than a single century we have used the means that new knowledge has give us not to enhance life but to destroy it. For decades we have sought to show in these columns the damage new techniques of chemistry are inflicting on the soil, or the seas, on the dynamically interlocking and interdependent systems of natural life, of the effects of rain forest

depletion and the carbon-dioxide emissions on the ozone layer, on our weather patterns and on the polar ice caps; all this and more in the hope that a body of informed opinion would emerge strong enough to compel attention to the insanity of the policies producing such catastrophic results and strong enough to compel saner policies to prevail.

In fact the reverse is happening. The evil mischief of using a wide range of high-powered technologies to debase our environment continues to advance in giant strides and the general reaction is one for the most part of passive acquiescence.

*Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or discontent boil bloody;*

*They will be swift with the swiftness of the
tigris,*

*None will break ranks, though nations trek
from progress.*

So warned a World War I poet who had endured the savage miseries of mass murder in trench warfare. But if he had known of bullets, (one killed him), of bombs and poison gas, and yet survived, he would have lived to see the birth of nuclear war. In 1945 only two or three nations had access to such weapons; today they are in the hands of at least 20 different countries, some of which are inherently unstable and imbued with a high degree of ideological or religious fanaticism.

As though the doomsday prospect generated by this development was not enough, the nuclear madness has taken off into a no less evil direction with nuclear energy. Every civilisation of which we have any record has enriched the human condition and bequeathed some degree of ennoblement of human life and culture; ours is the first to have impoverished it and to have debased it. We are bequeathing to our children an inheritance of death; we are not improving their inheritance, we are simply robbing them. Our greed, our passivity, our spinelessness, our moral cowardice and our contempt for beauty, truth and for love ensures that they can scarcely fail to be victims of the wholesale corruption and degrees of social breakdown involved.

We need to emphasise at every turn that the entire litany of evil that characterises modern life is only in part a product of government or boardroom policies, for neither can act for long in ways which are contrary to the values people hold on how they should live; this is why of course they have such a powerful interest in persuading people on a mass scale to adopt values which suit political or boardroom purposes rather than ones people might themselves gestate.

Perhaps the most obvious example here is the ubiquity of the phenomena of mass motoring. After the Hitler war the British government, like many other governments, was confronted with a crucial choice, either to focus transport development on the private ownership of petrol-driven vehicles or to invest in a tremendous expansion of public transport.

But the field of choice was already occupied – by the oil and engineering boardrooms, to say nothing of those of the road-builders. Their propaganda had already

established in many people's minds the values that suited both their purposes and their purses. Private motoring was projected as being sane, laudable, economic, efficient, and an immense enlargement of freedom. The fact that it represented the economics of the madhouse, that it was immoral, wasteful, hideously dangerous and inefficient and, by pre-empting resources, shackling freedom of choice for alternative social adventures, was a message no fulcrum of power found it at all profitable to promote.

Road to ruin

So vast tracts of open farmland or countryside over hundreds of miles in length were devastated in a programme of motorway construction. Of course people were able to enjoy the freedom to speed along them – it simply meant that we sacrificed our freedom to teach our children in marble palaces. Their schooling, all too often, was centred on groups of concrete rectangles devoid of any special sense of civic dignity or purpose and which any observer might be forgiven for supposing were centres for the experimental genetic modification of delinquent dwarfs.

Public transport was of course curtailed; a gentleman named Beeching, despite widespread protests (which had no effect at all), proceeded to project a wholesale closure of branch railway lines. It was accompanied by a widespread reduction of bus services, with the result that countless village communities were left stranded, unless, of course, villagers succumbed to the blandishments of boardroom propaganda and immediate necessity by purchasing their own vehicle.

Today the values of car ownership ride

supreme. What prospect is there that any government might now act decisively to promote an increase of public transport and a cut-down on motorway building? Despite the obvious fact that in a generation or so hence a private car will be as remote from everyday reality as the Wars of the Roses, the values of ozone depletion, lung damage, resource squandering, environmental pollution and social deterioration continue to hold sway, and the reason they do so pertains to the whole arena of mass politics.

The downside effects of mass motoring are only fully evident generationally, but politicians are not interested in the next generation, they are concerned only with the next election, as indeed they must be, for if they weren't they would at once be replaced by others who were.

The same holds true for boardroom activists; if they are not primarily concerned with the stock exchange value of their company shares and the state of the current year's balance sheet market forces will soon ensure they are replaced by others who are. Again these forces are unconcerned about the long-term effects of their activities, and to be so concerned raises not market but moral questions.

It might be thought that the moral arena is one which established religious organisations might well make their own but this is to overlook that any organisation is, above all, a unit of power, and the bigger the

organisation the bigger its power. So that apart from the difficulty of separating considerations of power from moral imperatives (for what major church preaching the gospel of the Prince of Peace dare oppose the armaments industry and any war which its government may choose to wage?), we are back in the field of values.

Opposition to mass motoring by religious leaders would at once target them as causing unemployment, injuring the export trade and, of course, 'interfering in politics', as though non-interference in politics was not itself an emphatic political stance. It is a charge which ignores altogether that in any new development, if society is to have any healthy basis, the prime question to be faced is not whether it is more efficient, more economic, or of greater advantage to the export trade, but whether it is right or wrong.

The failure to pursue this vital question is largely why we are in crisis today. We have to face that our political leaders neither can nor will pose it, that powerful market forces are equally inhibited and that religious bodies, whose domain it might be expected to claim to be uniquely theirs, are supinely silent.

The lesson here is that if opposition to evil is to come from anywhere it can only come from the more perceptive and alert-minded, independent members of the general citizen body. That means us. ■

Many, many thanks to those kind, loyal, perceptive, sensitive, committed and devoted readers who, promptly and without prompting, renewed their subscriptions. It suggests not only that editorial labours are valued but that editorial morale is a reader concern!



EUROPE, NATION-STATES AND GLOBALISATION

Jürgen Krönig

The author is UK correspondent of Die Zeit.

IT HAS BECOME fashionable to predict *the end of the nation-state or at least to emphasise the need for its demise. There are certain parallels with the predictions about the end of religion at the end of the nineteenth century.*

Nietzsche thought faith a pathological aberration. Lenin tolerated it as a doomed anachronism. H.G. Wells expected it to be superseded by progress. But now, 100 years later, we realise how difficult it is to get rid of divinity. Religion has survived and will continue to do so, albeit in different shapes and forms.

Now we hear similar predictions about the nation-state. And ironically enough, predictions that its shelflife is near its end come from the same quarters that got it wrong about religion. Left-leaning intellectuals and liberals, in both their versions, the social liberals and the neo-liberals, tend notoriously to underestimate the emotions and instincts of humanity. In this respect, little, so it seems, has changed over the course of the last 100 years; Orwell wrote in his *Collected Essays* (vol. 2, *My Country, Right and Left*):

The energy that actually shapes the world, racial pride, leaderworship, religious belief, love of war, which liberal intellectuals mechanically write off as anachronisms, and

which they have usually destroyed so completely in themselves as to have lost all power of action.

Orwell wrote this during the first years of World War II. Today we would use different words to describe the emotions but one of these passions seems to be the strong wish for national identity and the preservation of national sovereignty.

Little seems to have changed since Orwell's times. I have come across the same conviction among politicians, business leaders and journalists – a belief combined with an astonishing blindness for the real world, for feelings and instincts of the vast majority of people around them. Whenever I hear well-meaning British pro-Europeans proclaim that the UK will of course join the euro soon after the next election and that the negative opinion polls about the euro do not mean anything for the outcome of the required referendum, I feel reminded of Orwell's observation.

The tendency to replace cool analysis with wishful thinking exists in Germany, where it is partly a result of the darkest period in its history. Many German liberals and left-leaning intellectuals are actually longing for the demise of the nation-state; they still dream of a future where a 'European nation' will supersede the squabbling peoples of the continent. This

vision of the disappearing nation-state may nor be confined to Germany alone, but its appeal is stronger there than in other countries because in the eyes of many people National Socialism has tainted the very idea of patriotism and nationalism, if only because it is impossible to draw a clear dividing line between healthy pride in one's feeling of national identity and aggressive, deadly mutations. Therefore the 'European nation', evolving on the back of a continuing process of economic and political integration, will remove any temptation to flirt again with the darker side of nationalism.

Problems of the nation-state

Of course the nation-state has its grim history. Nobody can deny that the nation-state was involved in disasters, atrocities and wars. But these disasters were not just confined to the centuries of the nation-state. They have more to do with the human condition; regardless of how we organise ourselves, if in feudal states, in nation-states, in tribal or in theocratic societies or supranational entities like the Soviet Union – history has shown that the darker instincts of humanity have again and again spoiled beautiful concepts and ideas; quite often especially attractive utopias ended in disaster. The problem with the nation-state is not the desire for self-determination or the wish to be the master in our own house. The problem is an all too often overwhelmingly strong conviction that only people like ourselves deserve to be in this house.

To avoid or minimise this urge needs eternal attention and wise and farsighted governance; sometimes this demands reducing the speed of change or bringing it to a halt, in order to assess the situation

and give people a chance to reflect how far they would like to go. For Europe nothing is more dangerous than to pursue the project of integration without paying attention to the undeniable fact that too much change can frighten and lead to reactions which endanger the aim of peaceful cooperation. It seems unrealistic to believe that the forces of modernisation, together with secularisation and cultural homogenisation will reduce frictions and lead automatically to greater tolerance and mutual understanding. On the contrary, the leveling of differences might lead to a stronger wish to define your identity by emphasising the differences to other nations who are with you in the melting pot of globalisations and technocratic supranationalism.

The nation-state is under pressure from two different forces at the same time – there is globalisation and the demand to pool sovereignty with others in supranational conglomerates like the EU; and there is the subnational differentiation, regionalism and tribalism. The first process can be associated with the models of liberal internationalism. Driven by the visions of liberal internationalism the nation-states decided to link their economies and create a single market. But this was not all. The economic process of integration should and would eventually be followed by politics.

If this process continued Europe would be more united and at the same time become more varied than in the last three centuries. In some ways it would be more similar to the Europe before the Enlightenment, the medieval Europe of Christianity.

The liberal internationalists still believe that Europe can be interpreted as a victory for their transnational ideas; they believe that it will only be a question of time before

national identities will be fused and most of the remnants of national sovereignty be abandoned. But I think such a conclusion would be premature. I don't see the historical inevitability of the integration process.

There is growing resistance among the European nations; they have become more wary and sceptical, and not only in Britain. No government, perhaps with the exceptions of Italy and Ireland, would today be in a position of winning a referendum on the euro, if it was forced to hold one. The latest Europe-wide opinion polls indicate a worrying dissatisfaction even about the working of the Union as a whole. It is important not to deny that some of the

forces which are vociferous advocates of the nation-state are dark and unpleasant; but I would like to present a positive argument in favour of the nation-state. Civil society and democracy are not only more important than supranational institutions or a European state; they both need the nation-state to flourish. Democracy, citizenship and equal rights have evolved in the framework of the nation-state. It is no coincidence that civil rights and democratic institutions took longer to evolve in those countries in Europe which were the late nations. The first nation-states were the democratic frontrunners. ■

In memoriam:

KNUD P. PEDERSEN

The nestor of the Danish resistance movement against the European Union has passed away. For the last forty years he was the indefatigable opponent of the integration of the European national states into a federal megastate with a centralised and undemocratic rule by a hierarchy of arrogant politicians and un-civil servants at the top.

But his definite No to the European Union was much more than a No. It was a Yes to democracy, to the rule of law, to a green society, where the welfare and the right of self-determination of people counted infinitely more than unlimited material growth.

Defeat after defeat could not break Knud's spirits. He was as great in defeat as he was magnanimous in victory, and he always possessed a unique ability to change both into new inspiration. And constantly he kept fighting for a Third Way in politics, a new way of thinking and acting so that a new synthesis – or perhaps rather a new complementarity – of freedom and solidarity one day would replace the out-of-date ideologies and class struggles of the former centuries.

Quoting the old bard:

*'His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, "This was a man!"'*

Knud Christensen

FORUM

LISTENING?

Congratulations on your excellent article, 'Who Is Listening?' (*FWR* No. 106). Many of us are indeed listening and share your concerns about large organisations but we are all, as you recognise, confronted with a global crisis of immense proportions which requires practical action.

I am encouraged, therefore, to see that *FWR* and *The Ecologist* are sponsoring an event to make practical progress in tackling the crisis. You say, 'This event is seeking to achieve a democratic, free-ranging and largely informal unity of the many varying strands of the contemporary radical movement in the hope of creating a single rope we can all pull together.' However, even if you can create the 'single rope' (which is no mean matter), it remains to be seen whether the 'informal unity' you envisage will be sufficient to meet the huge onslaught of globalisation. Indeed, the question remains whether globalisation can at all be confronted without forming what may become a large organisation of some kind, however strong our distaste for them may be. And for those like me who share that distaste, this is one of the conundrums we inevitably face once rhetoric gives way to the 'cold light' of practical action.



So we await the practical outcome of your deliberations with interest. But until you can demonstrate to have solved that conundrum in any better way than the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation or others, we will continue with our work – even though we continue to listen.

John Bunzl

Director, International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (ISPO), PO Box 26547, London SE3 7YT

OKINAWA TROUBLES

I thought your impressions of Okinawa make good reading for people (including some of my students) who swallowed the propaganda put about by the Tokyo government and their associates in the concreting mission here. In spite of a great deal of sensual evidence to the contrary, and the ongoing assault on what's left of the island's natural landscape, there is still a tendency to view the concrete jungle through Okinawan spectacles, which transform a landscape full of fast-food chains, apartment blocks and fly-overs into an unspoilt haven of tranquillity only in need of more tourists and a few extra dollops of concrete to sort out its problems.

- ◆ Okinawa (Prefecture) as a whole covers less than 1% of Japan's surface area (2,267 km²), of which 49.1% is classed as 'habitable'. The main island accounts for just over half the total area of the prefecture, so I should think less than 1,200 km² would be a fairly safe assumption;
- ◆ 74% of the area occupied by US bases in Japan is in Okinawa;
- ◆ US bases cover about 20% of the land area of the main island – perhaps your higher ratio referred the percentage of inhabitable land under occupation (though I'm not sure how *inhabitable* is defined, as recent public works projects have frequently involved levelling mountains and hills to make way for roads and other externally conceived development projects);
- ◆ 61% of US troops in Japan are stationed in Okinawa;
- ◆ there is a total of 33 US military installations, including arms dumps, listening posts, bombing ranges, and resorts and private beaches reserved for the use of US troops and their families;
- ◆ the US military is by far the biggest single employer in Okinawa, with 8,400 islanders at last count working in shops, offices, etc. on the bases.

Even so, the outrageous injustice the US presence represents is only part of the picture. The 'development' of Okinawa initiated by the Tokyo government has given rise to the incredible number of 40 golf courses, 33 of which are located on the main island, and 27 resort hotels – mainly operated by Japanese airlines and tour companies, and managed by personnel shipped in from mainland Japan.

Far from contributing to the local economy, the profits from these operations find

their way back into the coffers of Japanese companies who pander to the prejudices of 'mainlanders' by ensuring that Okinawans are only employed in menial positions or as cultural exhibits.

Peter Simpson

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NOTHING FOR ME!

My books, the friends that call or drop in, my understanding of the mature spirits, the earth. My morning study, my understanding of the spirit world is all the food for the spirit I seem to need most days. I grow about 90% of our food in my garden and little barn with simple hand tools. My four solar panels produce all the power I need for lights, water and refrigeration. My geothermal unit, along with some wood I cut, heats our house. I have found many plants growing wild that I use to make tinctures for medicine. I could go on but I find myself playing this game all day every day and there are days that the transports are soaring up and down the highway, but they are not carrying anything for me. Keep up the good work.

Edward Burt

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IS YOUR JOURNEY REALLY NECESSARY

'Round and round the town, desperately looking for a parking spot, temper (not to mention temperature gauge) rising and petrol being guzzled at an alarming rate.' Sounds familiar? For us, this scenario is a thing of the past for it is nearly three years since we decided not to replace our car. How have we fared? We feel healthier and, contrary to many people, we have been happy

with public transport – but then we don't have to commute every day to deadlines.

We readily admit that it is no good turning up at a bus stop and expecting a bus to come along straight away, but armed with current timetables there have been very few occasions when a bus has been seriously late or not turned up at all.

If you are fit, it is possible to do without a car. It makes you more aware of what could be done to improve public transport, but that needs a change of heart in the population – more use of public transport, more investment. On some bus routes we have been the only passengers. Unfortunately, it is a chicken and egg situation. Our road policies do not encourage pedestrians: lack of verges, not just in the countryside, can make walking very hazardous.

The downside is that most journeys have to be planned, so the spontaneity is taken away, but I still think in our present situation we have gained much more than we have lost. Life is less stressful, you meet and talk with people as you walk and ride and see things which you wouldn't otherwise see when travelling in a car.

This is just one viewpoint, but the message to all that I want to convey is *think* before you take the car. The number of cars parked in streets and choking the roads has increased enormously and the present level cannot continue if our environment and health is to survive.

Walking has helped to remind me that our environment is a gift to us for which we *should* be thankful and for which we must fight before it is too late. We can all do our bit, however small.

Elizabeth M Ewen

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PLANETARY HEALTH

What if a country was divided into, say, watersheds (or bioregions) and the inhabitants of each region told, 'it's yours to look after. If it declines or disintegrates the onus will be on you. Good luck.'

Could we have here one sure-fire way of getting a person to feel fully connected with his or her part of the planet? As things are at the moment most people feel planetary problems are so vast as to be quite beyond their capacity to influence them. When apocalyptic headlines come along, as they do almost weekly now, people feel a moment's discomfort, shrug, relegate the issue to the back of their mind, and get on with the business of living.

At the bioregional level, on the other hand, problems seem small and concrete enough for everyone to feel their input could matter. Moreover, diagnostic techniques, such as the ecological footprint analysis developed in recent years by William Rees and Mathis Wackernagel at the University of British Columbia, provide a simple means of keeping tabs on the health of a bioregion. And of course a planet with healthy bioregions is a healthy planet.

However, there are some problems such as global warming and the health of the oceans that are so vast and multi-regional that they are the proper domain of national governments.

Colin Graham

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POLITICALLY CORRECT?

Edward P. Echlin ('Dysfunctional Food Miles', *FWR* No. 106) ruins a thoughtful article about humanity's relationship to nature with a heartless, prejudiced attack on the fuel protestors. Whatever the rights

and wrongs of their protest we should be championing the underlying values of these yeomen of England: independence of spirit, loyalty to friends, country and locality, self-management and self-reliance. A politics of the human scale must reflect these values, not sneer at them as Echlin does. Worst of all is his disparaging reference to 'young males' as if they were zoological specimens. His attitude reflects the fashionable 'politically correct' attack on masculinity, which is as bigoted and irrational as old-fashioned criticisms of women.

Echlin caricatures the independent businessman and farmer as 'me-alone individualists'. This was a term widely used in Maoist China for those who refused to submit to totalitarian state power. I suspect that Echlin wishes to increase the role of the state and diminish individual independence. His goal appears to be a malleable – and emasculated – population that neither thinks nor creates.

Aidan Rankin

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ONE HUNDRED PER CENT

If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look something like the following:

There would be: 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the western hemisphere, both North and South, and 8 Africans. There would be 52 and 48 males; 70 would be non-white, 30 would be white, 70 would be non-Christian, 30 would be Christian, 89 would be heterosexual, 11 would be homosexual. Six people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth and all 6 would be from the USA; 80 would

live in substandard housing, 70 would be unable to read, 50 would suffer from malnutrition, 1 would be near death; 1 would be near birth, 1 would have a college education, 1 would own a computer.

Chris Mason

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HELP

I'm writing to you on behalf of the organisation Zi a Nechaj Zit ('Live and Let Live') from the Slovak Republic.

We are a group of active people concerned with serious problems created by human society – destruction of Earth and nature, social inequality, hunger, militarism and the arms trade, suffering and killing animals, loosing respect for all forms of life, etc. We are trying to spread information about these problems and raise awareness. We are also promoting alternative lifestyles (including communities, eco-farms, self-organisation of people, self-sufficiency, freedom from over-consumption, vegan gardening, natural products, etc.).

We have started 'Food Not Bombs' in the Slovak Republic – you can see it on the web at www.jedlo.sk), we published six issues of our magazine *Kruh z ivota* (www.kruh.miesto.sk/kz). We are preparing one CykloMarch, Free Tibet demonstration, Buy Nothing Day actions, several street actions, happenings, benefit concerts and performances.

We are preparing a community house with an office, info-tea-room, library, and non-profit local shop with organic food. We have started publishing a new magazine, *Zanz* (www.zanz.sk), it will also be for people 'outside' of the movement. We are launching anti-racist campaigning (www.rasizmus.sk), activities for propaga-

tion of vegan food and lifestyle (we have prepared vegan cookbooks, leaflets, a booklet with information about veganism), we are preparing next a cyclo anti-car street party and so on and so on. We have many plans and big energy and enthusiasm. The main problem for us now is lack of finance.

So I would like to ask you for help: We need magazines, materials, information – in our magazine we want to bring actual information about worldwide activities in eco, human and animal rights, community, direct democracy, anti-military movement, we also want to translate good, inspirational articles, theoretical articles, because we think that it is very good to know about people, information and thoughts in many countries of the world and we hope that it will empower movement in our country.

Your magazine is a very interesting source of information for us and we would like to subscribe to it, but the price is too high for us. Is it possible to give us a subscription for free? And is it possible to translate articles from your magazine and publish it in our material (of course with acknowledgement)? If yes, we will be very happy.

Matúš Ritomský

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REPLICABLE PROJECTS

We have set up the Pereira Awards in memory of our late friend and colleague Winin Pereira. They go to people who are living and/or acquiring skills which are relevant to the small-scale self-reliance we want to see developing.

Last year, we selected two people (in their 80s and not in perfect health) who grew their own food and manage to supply

themselves all year; one heavy goods driver who cleared his mother's overgrown garden and taught himself this skill, transforming his own life and health in the process; and a nun who cultivates her garden in the inner city, that of an elderly neighbour and was preparing the garden of an Asian neighbour who was preoccupied with rearing her children. All freely share their surplus with neighbours and friends.

This year we are looking at house building and renovation, developing skills and using earth-friendly materials.

We will be following up a range of such individual and group initiatives all over the country. All will either be using their own small resources or – in cases like the co-ops for instance – be using funds which are available to others, not on the competitive or city-challenge type of basis, where one gains and the rest lose. We value *replicable* projects.

Barbara Panvel

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AGAINST NATURE


What chaos over the foot-and-mouth disease in the UK. The semi-nomads in Jammu and Kashmir often brought it up along with their flocks and I heard that they used a strong solution of salt, garlic and some local herb for a foot-and-mouth wash. Though they infected our animals *en route*, my own never got it and I am sure that was because they were kept free and sturdy, fed on the best home-made hay. Really healthy animals and humans do not succumb easily to disease, but of course farmers are being forced to go against nature. What is the EU doing to England's green and pleasant land?

Asha Hanley

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BOOKS

THE BREAKDOWN OF NATIONS, by Leopold Kohr. BOOKS AND NEW EUROPEAN PUBLICATIONS, £9.95. ISBN 1-870098-98-6.

 Reviewed by John Papworth

THERE have been several editions of this major work since it first appeared in 1957, but for some time it has been out of print and the appearance of this latest edition could scarcely be more timely, if only because quite suddenly the core of its argument is now rapidly advancing to the centre of the stage of political debate.

Suddenly argument and discussion is focussing on what is now called 'globalisation'; a phenomena not concerned so much with climate as with global market trends and where they are taking us. The May Day street demos in London and elsewhere have done a valuable service in impelling discussion on this phenomena so that even the BBC is now making it a subject for debate. If 'growth' of global dimensions is wrong then, inevitably, the question raises its head, what then, in terms of size, is right? It is of course the question central to the thesis of this profoundly illuminating book.



I first met the author by chance when he was a neighbour in the lovely Cotswold hamlet of Slad. He was out walking with his partner, Diana Lodge, and, quite unaware that I was meeting one of the most original and challenging minds of the 20th Century, I invited them in for a cup of tea. Talk was general and it was only a few days later, when going to dinner at their house across the valley, that I learned Leopold had already returned to his university teaching post in Puerto Rico. The talk with Diana remains a clear memory. I was, by then a disillusioned Labour Party member, former local party secretary, ex-parliamentary candidate and had recently turned down the offer of a safe Labour seat in the industrial north. I had begun to see that the problem of radical politics was not the policies of mass parties but of their size, and I was beginning to write down (at the late Professor R.H. Tawney's urgings) my ideas of alternative politics; in terms of community power. Explaining some of this to Diana she said, 'but Leopold is saying exactly the same things; you should read his book'. And so I became the owner of one of

my most prized possessions, a copy of the first edition of *The Breakdown of Nations*. At the time, on reading it, my main reaction was one of joy in discovering that I was not alone in the general direction my thought was taking, and that a university professor expounding similar unorthodox ideas could actually get his work published.

Intellectual currents rarely flow in isolation and the question of size, with its origins in Greek philosophy and St Augustine,

has been the concern of a wide range of thinkers such as William Morris, Ruskin and Gandhi. I was to learn Kohr was also in a goodly contemporary company of such writers as Paul Goodman, Ivan Illich, Sir Herbert Read, Theodore Roszack, John Seymour, Frank Lloyd Wright, Murray Bookchin and others, themselves the fore-runners of what is now a mainstream current of intellectual thought.

Well, here is the latest edition of what is

The Curse of Unication


Now let us turn our back on the Middle Ages, and see what happened when the small-state world with its ever-feuding parts and operetta wars gave way to our modern large-power system. The reason and apology with which it introduced itself to historians was the pacification of large regions previously torn by tribal warfare. In this it unquestionably succeeded and, because most of us grunt with delight whenever we hear the word *peace*, it is applauded on this account to this very day. But was the result of this regional pacification peace? Hardly. For as soon as the new nation states had established themselves on firm ground and pacified their new dominions into reliable and well-co-ordinated units, their natural aggressiveness began to assert itself in exactly the same manner as was the case with their smaller predecessors whom they had wiped out because of their peace-disturbing quarrel-someness. Once their acquisitions were properly digested, they looked again beyond their boundaries for outlets of their energies – and a new cycle of wars began, wars, however, that were qualitatively different from the earlier ones.

These wars which, from the establishment of the Eternal Truce of God onwards, characterise the evolution of modern times, had one element in their favour. They occurred at longer intervals than the medieval wars. This is why we are often deluded into thinking that the pacification of large regions and their organisation as great powers was beneficial to mankind after all. Even if wars were not completely eliminated, their number was greatly reduced. But it is not the quantity that matters. It is the quality that counts. Being waged by great powers, these wars were no longer little conflicts with their inevitable crop of a few casualties, and their tendency to recur with the regularity of seasons. There were now prolonged spells of peace, with no casualties at all. But when wars finally did break out, they sucked into their maelstrom each time a major part of the world. What might have been saved in the prolonged spells of peace, was now destroyed with a terrifying multiplier. A single month of a modern great-power war costs more in life and wealth than the sum total of casualties and destruction of several centuries of medieval warfare put together.

Leopold Kohr, The Breakdown of Nations

surely the most important treatise of the 20 Century and an indispensable prerequisite for any sound grasp of the problems of the 21st. It is a very handsome volume, with forewords not only by the author himself, but by Neal Ascherson and Sir Richard Body. I can only urge anyone seeking to get to grips with where we are and where we are going to get hold of a copy and read it. If you can't buy a copy, borrow one or beg for one. In cases of dire extremity you may well feel driven to stealing one, but whatever you do, don't rob me of mine.

ENGLAND FOR THE ENGLISH, by *Richard Body*. NEW EUROPEAN PUBLICATIONS. ISBN- 1-872410-14-6.

 *Reviewed by John Papworth*

A provocative and even perhaps off-putting title for a timely and sober assessment of what in the current ethnic and political turmoil it means and ought to mean to be English. This is no xenophobic rant, rather it is a gentle discourse on the origins of the English, the spread of the English language and the gifts of freedom and tolerance English people have helped to give to the world. Not least it is a perceptive study of the problems facing the English people today, problems of survival as a trading nation, problems of relationships, of status, of power and above all identity.

Curiously enough, given the imposing relationship between the English and the factor of immigration today, the author does not give it over much focus, even though the bare facts of the case may affect the outcome far more than, let us say, the computer revolution or the europlot.

Transport technology has made people everywhere footloose; a fair-sized corner of

the world, northern Europe and the USA, has temporarily succeeded in grabbing an undue share of global resources in order to create a non-sustainable, energy-consuming lifestyle which has become a magnet for the rest of the world's impoverished billions. Legally or otherwise the Third World multitudes are on the move, crossing oceans or frontiers in order to get a share of the goodies going in the rich countries and, despite immigration laws and controls, there seems no way they can be stopped.

England is already grossly over-populated, as any serious breakdown of international trade and interruption of imported food will quickly make evident, but the remorseless influx of the poor and the dispossessed will continue until, presumably, some approximate equality of living standards between the poor and the rich countries ceases to make the latter a magnet for the former.

All this presupposes the continuance of an ever-expanding volume of international trade and the continuing enrichment of national economies from it, but on that some dark shadows are already hovering around. They pertain of course to ecological disruption and, given the incredible current levels of expenditure on armaments, the next global war waiting to happen.

In the balance the author puts England's historic traditions of fair play and phlegmatic tolerance; he is not bothered by immigration and is confident England can cope with the current influx as it has absorbed other waves in its history; to this he adds its prospects as a trading nation in the computer revolution, and what he believes will be its result in a much greater democratic control of events. I think in this he overlooks the

sheer social malignity of commercialised TV, for even if people vote in computerised referenda on every significant social issue, they will do so in the light of the values they hold.

In the past people acquired and adapted their values from religious teaching, earthly powers, the democracy of mastercraftsmanship in work and the constant interacting relationships of a vibrant local community life. Today religious leaders are silent on all major social questions, they do not even oppose armaments and war, mastercraftsmanship has been murdered by mass production, the power of local community life has been gelded by overmighty centralised government, and in the place of these factors even the former earthly powers of monarchs and ministers is now subsumed in the commercial message emanating from radio, newsprint, billboards and, above all, TV

No question of social progress today is worth a discarded dustbin that does not embrace the challenge to establish localised control of TV as a public service in place of the commercialised orgy of competitive mass debasement that now dominates it.

But we digress. The author is a mature and seasoned parliamentarian; by which I mean he knows intimately the score when it comes to appraising legislation and legislative procedures. So his final chapters need to be required reading for their appraisal of the various European institutions outside the ambit of the europlot. The blunt fact is that the europlotters have largely succeeded in making 'Europe' a dirty word, one carrying overtones of sharp practice and devious dealing at the expense of such limited forms of democracy still accessible to us.

The author's subsidiary concern here is

to show there is an alternative road to 'Europe' which involves maximum degrees of co-operation with no loss of sovereignty or of democratic control. But his main theme is about England and the English, an England that may soon find itself a kingdom no longer united with Scotland, Wales and Ireland. What is England, and who are the English? What have they to offer a world in every kind of turmoil as events lurch from one crisis to another'?

There is plenty to chew over here and the author writes with a beguiling spirit of optimism. It is one of those books where every reader should make it his business to first read and digest, and then to call a meeting of neighbours and friends to discuss.

THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION: GLOBAL GOVERNMENT FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM?, by *Debi Barker & Jerry Mander*. THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON GLOBALISATION.

THIS primer charts the evolution of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) from the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT), and the methods used to induce members to join and then abide by its rules.

It is tragic but predicable how the poorer countries were forced to join, in the face of threats of trade boycotts or withdrawal of support by such bodies as the International Monetary Fund, but what is even more sinister is the report of how leading countries were tricked into agreeing major transfers of power to this secretive and unelected body.

The WTO's Dispute Settlement Body allows any member nation or foreign-based corporation to sue a member state directly if they are seen as impediments to free

trade under WTO rules. Extreme penalties can be imposed on those found in breach of the rules: when Canada tried to use one of its existing laws to ban a known neurotoxin fuel additive it was sued by the US-based manufacturer and, faced with the prospect of defeat, had to repeal the law and paid \$13 million in damages.

The Dispute Settlement Body consists of trade officials and commercial trade lawyers who meet in private, do not have to have any knowledge on such matters as the environment, agriculture or public health and exclude NGOs and any representatives of other non-commercial interests.

The WTO's authority is not limited to trade in goods but also covers foreign investment rules, property rights, local laws, insurance, transport, farm policy and food and environment standards. There is no report of any involvement in setting minimum standards of safety, wildlife conservation or working conditions but, as the Canadian example illustrates, maximum standards are subject to attack if they are seen to impede the giant corporations' access to markets. The ruling are also reported to take precedence over all other international agreements, including the Convention on Biodiversity and the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer.

Under the WTO rules governments find it increasingly difficult to retain laws limiting foreign access to their forests, so the rate of tree cover loss, with all its consequent effects on biodiversity and the rate at which species become extinct, and on air quality, continues to accelerate.

Wildlife and fishery protection rules are similarly threatened by the rules but the task of preventing pollution and cleaning up

after exploitation is left to the citizens of the host country. Members are not allowed to discriminate against products on the basis of the way they are produced so no favourable treatment may be given to timber from sustainable forestry or tuna from 'dolphin friendly' fisheries. Another of the WTO rules nullifies measures such as export bans on raw logs or endangered species.

Although 'Article XX' is supposed to protect conservation and human, animal and plant life, it is claimed that in practice whenever it has been invoked trade dispute panels have always found reasons for not applying it. Even water is a subject for 'free trade' and companies are prospecting for fresh lake and river water to be transported overseas in huge tankers.

Inevitably the WTO rules favour large agribusinesses, mainly by forcing the removal of tariffs formerly used to protect farmers, and efforts are being made to phase out the rights of governments to impose quantitative controls on imports. The now sadly familiar result is the replacement of mixed self-sufficient farming by the large-scale monoculture of crops for export. As the huge companies dominate the markets price volatility increases and small (and not so small) farmers are driven off the land, migrating to already overcrowded cities. Traditional crop varieties are lost and the gene pool is reduced and with it is lost potential for selection for adaptation to climate changes and for pest resistance. In many countries where the farming tradition has evolved to provide a balanced diet the change to the new high-yielding crop varieties is dependant on high inputs of fertilizers and biocides which often have lower contents of proteins, minerals or vitamins has resulted in

malnutrition among local populations.

Under the WTO rules corporations have already been able to reduce prices to producers while maintaining or increasing prices to consumers.

A particularly sinister ruling is the hideously named Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures which effectively replaces the 'precautionary principle' under which an industry must prove that a product is safe before putting it on the market by placing the onus on a government to prove that a product is unsafe before being allowed to ban it. This development is particularly horrifying coming as it does relatively soon after the experience of the immediate benefits and long-term harm from such new products as DDT and many applications of some antibiotics. The report quotes a depressing list of WTO rulings including that under which the EU was forced to allow bananas from a notoriously cheap labour-based company equal treatment to that given to fruit from small-scale, poor producers in former colonial countries; the case where the EU was forced to remove its ban on hormone-treated US beef; and that in which Japan was forced to accept products with higher levels of pesticide residues than they had deemed to be safe.

In all sectors – agriculture, investment, environment and finance – it is generally the poorer countries which are likely to suffer most, notoriously where foreign corporations are allowed to apply patents to pharmaceuticals developed from traditional uses of native plants which have been part of the common heritage of the local people. However, in the UK the actions of successive governments in obsequiously over-applying EU rulings and

imposing ill-planned if well-intentioned new taxes without imposing controls on imports from EU countries have achieved the near impossible by effectively ruining many farmers, owners of small abattoirs and hauliers without any reduction in road use or fuel consumption (indeed they have increased the miles travelled by many animals going to slaughter). This exaggerated attention to the rulings of undemocratic supranational bodies must make the country particularly vulnerable to the machinations of the great international corporations and their legal advisers.

It would be interesting to hear a response to the reports and arguments set out in this 'primer' because even now it is hard to believe that so many responsible, or even simply power-hungry, politicians have voluntarily handed over so many vital aspects of their countries' lives to such a powerful, non-democratic and, if even half the assertions in the primer are correct, almost totally harmful institution even though in the UK we have already seen power being relinquished into the hands of the EU, which imposes enormous costs on the country and seems to act generally against the interests of most sections of its society. Perhaps the increasing success of the organic movement in face of long-term sustained derision and opposition from both the political and academic establishments, large parts of which are now racing to establish their organic credentials, provides a reason to hope that humanity may come to its senses before it has irreversibly ruined the natural world and its peoples although it seems unlikely that the commercial giants will easily be persuaded to relinquish the power which the WTO has conferred on them. ■

FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR



A VERY DEAR FRIEND rang me in great excitement with the news that a wonderful American lady was in London and intending to purchase the Dome, the Millennium Dome no less, and to make it into a great centre of spiritual life.

Anything more inconsequential I don't think I have ever heard in my long and not entirely uneventful life. Whenever I utter the word 'walk' my dog Sam immediately bursts into life, just as there are people seemingly born with an innate disposition, the moment they hear the word 'spiritual', to begin to wag their metaphorical tails as though confronted with an imminent prospect of paradise. What is lacking here is any recognition of the ordinary facts of political and economic life and the power and the nature of the forces creating the modern crisis. Even if this good lady does

not prove to be a fraud, even if she obtains the title deeds to the Dome and packs it with credulous pilgrims, (and a mass spiritual rally on the moon might be easier to accomplish), it will have no more noticeable effect on our current drift to disaster than a ripple of wind-blown sand in the Sahara.

SOME ANNUAL pre-Easter discussion groups organised jointly by several Christian churches, but mainly Anglican, focussed this year on 'money'. The format, which served groups nationwide and was largely masterminded by Christian Aid, was a revealing display of current orthodox Christian attitudes to the subject. The course ran for five weeks and covered earning, spending, giving, money-values and so on. It was all at an intensely personal and even myopic level. There was talk of

Christian attitudes to Third World poverty and indebtedness, how much of our income we should give to charity and so on. What held me was the absence of any reference to the power of money *per se* and its control. As mass murderer Lenin said, the key questions of anything to do with power is 'Who? Whom?' meaning who controls and for what purposes? There seemed no awareness of the total absence of the capacity of ordinary people to control money or money mechanisms; I think if people were disposed to think of it at all they would assume their responsibilities ended with casting a vote in an election. It is an attitude indicating the astonishing prevalence of the illusion that voting in mass balloting exercises represents any degree of control by the individual of policy direction.

IN THE EIGHTIES I attended a bioregional conference in the USA and came away fired with enthusiasm for the need to promote a similar sense of things in Britain. I was even going to have a bioregional name in the address on my notepaper – I think it was 'Thames Valley Bioregion'. Without doing this I made several forays to arouse interest, but in no way was I able to strike oil. Perhaps I should have put T.V.B. on my notepaper after all, but it struck me as rather pre-empting the question, one which needed to be settled by discussion and consensus rather than unilaterally. So things rather fell into abeyance until Peter Berg, the tireless, innovative apostle of bioregionalism in the USA, wrote me a rather sharp letter reminding me of my former spirited commitment and asking what I was doing. He was quite right of course, so I published the letter and waited

for the response. There was none at all, and I still find myself wondering why. In England we have our deeply historic sense of identity in terms of our counties; the men of Kent, Cornwall or Yorkshire have reputedly different identities, a sense buttressed by our county cricket teams. Then there is the size factor; Kirk Sale argues that Wales is a bioregion, so is Scotland, and on the US scale it is not difficult to agree; perhaps England is another, but nobody sings patriotic songs about the US bioregions or cheers their baseball teams; it is very much a concept of the mind still waiting to be grabbed by the heart. It will be interesting to see how Kirk handles this at the Radical Consultation in September; he has, after all, written an immensely readable book on the subject and one which deserves much wider attention.

ISEEM TO GO to some rum places for meetings. A recent one was a private threesome to discuss some aspects of the Radical Consultation in London's Travellers' Club. You might think a special club for travellers as a place whose members run around the globe in khaki shorts and who resort there to boast to each other of their exploits. But I was warned by our host, 'Make sure you are wearing a jacket and tie or you won't be allowed in.' As though that were not enough to kill an image stone dead, I was sitting in the smoking room waiting for the others to arrive and leafing through my papers when an attendant approached and said, 'Excuse me, Sir, but paperwork is not allowed in here.' Rum places, these clubs. By mistake I first went to the wrong one next door, which happens to be The Reform. It is an immense place of lofty marble pillars, tiled floors, deferential

attendants and solemn looking, immaculately suited gents ambulating about expressing about as much spirit of reform as a winded marathon runner. No doubt these are the places where high-level political plots are hatched, influential introductions initiated and where a lot of the wheels of government and administration are oiled. A friend wanted to propose me for membership of one of the lesser of these exalted associations but was warned that because of my reputation as a shoplifting vicar (I have never been either!) and even more because of my role in the absurd Blake escape affair, I would probably be blackballed. Reform clearly involves foregoing some far-reaching felicities. I felt like quoting Groucho Marx: 'I wouldn't want to join a club which would have a member like me.'

WE HAVE RECENTLY lost another food store in the village and it has now been converted into two houses. It is a change mirrored across rural England as giant out-of-town shopping malls and supermarkets (super profits of course), plus the ubiquity of the private car, drive village shops to the wall. Few people seem to have any grasp of the essentially transitory nature of these developments. Another generation or so and the private motor vehicle and all its attendant trappings will be as remote from everyday experience as the Wars of the Roses. What erupts suddenly in history tends to disappear at the same rate, and the longer and more complex our lines of communication the more fragile they prove.

THERE IS A beautiful Georgian mansion in an idyllic country-house setting at

Wollaston in the heart of Northamptonshire, which happens to be the headquarters of the Scott-Bader Commonwealth, an innovative enterprise in the field of plastics and resins, which have all sorts of applications, from waterproof boat-keels to, unfortunately, arresting the tendency of concrete to corrode and disintegrate with age.

In the late forties of the last century the owner, Ernest Bader, told me of his scheme to establish a Commonwealth in which the workers would become the effective owners of his works. I recall he was rather cross when I urged him not to give it to the workers but to sell it to them. Giving, I urged, would make people feel they were being patronised, whereas if he loaned them the money to buy it they could repay over time and he would then have a revolving fund with which to undertake other good works (such as helping me to establish *Resurgence!*). He dismissed all this as airy-fairy, but a fortnight after signing the papers he came to me in a panic that the Trotskyists were taking over this new Commonwealth. It was all nonsense and the problem was resolved by sacking a rather outspoken labour officer who thought of himself as some sort of radical. Since then the Commonwealth has gone from strength to strength, with flourishing factories in half a dozen other countries around the world. It might be supposed this success was the result of 'workers' control' and the input of values significantly different to those prevailing in the capitalist world and it would be nice to think so, but reformers everywhere should digest the lessons of reality here.

Scott-Bader is not the first reform movement to discover that workers' values are not determined by their work, or their shop-

ping, or their religion, but to those prevailing in society at large. This is why the values promoted by common ownership or by co-ops or churches are always marginalised by the dominant values in society at large as determined by powerful market forces and their non-stop advertising propaganda. It is the market which has ousted the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury and devout Quaker leaders such as Ernest Bader as effective spiritual forces, and Scott-Bader today reflects those values as ruthlessly as any capitalist enterprise anywhere. As indeed it must, for if it failed to do so it would just not be there. It is, in any case, with current globalisation trends, now under pressure to merge with competitors in the field and it will be interesting to see how the senior technical management, who really run the show, 'workers' meetings' notwithstanding, handle this threat to Commonwealth identity. I was invited recently to its 50th birthday and invited to unveil a plaque commemorating the event and to say a prayer. I am not very good at praying but I used one I composed when visiting the atomic bomb site in Nagasaki. People seemed to have found it acceptable, and they included activists in a wide range of reform movements; but I was sorry not to have met more of the top brass of the enterprise, most of whom were conspicuous by their absence. Perhaps they were afraid of me! Never mind, but, as a professional cook,

let me record that the buffet lunch was quite the most exquisite culinary exercise it has ever been my fortune to experience and if the Commonwealth goes in for awarding gold medals it should certainly give one to its caterers.

I HAVE NEVER owned a dog until the advent of Sam, and after a couple of months I find myself ensnared in a medley of complexities. I have already had three visits from a woman who drives a large van on which is painted the title, 'Dog Warden'. Sam has found a way of escaping from our large garden and an eagle-eyed village lady at once rings her to report him. I have also had a letter warning me of fines for letting the dog stray and of a possible danger to traffic. I responded to this last point by suggesting that in view of the fact that motorised vehicles could travel through the village at speeds that might injure people or animals, would it not be a good idea for motorists, on entering the village, to be obliged to hire the services of a special safety warden who would proceed in front of the vehicle waving a red flag? This would enable people to be alerted to the danger in time for them to take evasive action. The flag, I urged, need only be two or three feet square but the pole to which it was fastened should be quite short to avoid a possible hazard to pedestrians. So far I have not had a reply. ■

Capitalism has no vision for a better tomorrow only of 'more' of the same. It has created a form of human bondage to money in which the spiritual and social links between people are severed, the society is atomised, and the individual is left alone in an alien and largely uncaring environment.

Yorick Blumenfeld

Fourth World News



A survey shows that children are likely to suffer worse exam results if their mothers go back to work too early. * The US Defence Secretary has claimed the European Rapid Reaction Force could yet undermine **Nato**. * The beating of a 17-year-old youth in **Ireland**, linked to republican dissidents, has led to warnings of a new republican feud. * According to a survey almost 50 per cent of people thought that the government was hiding something when it offered reassurances about the safety of new technologies. * Museums in **Britain** need a huge cash boost in order to continue to stay open. * The **Basque** separatist group ETA has claimed responsibility for two car bomb attacks, one of which caused the death of a policeman. * **Brazilian** salvage workers are struggling to contain oil leaks from the world's largest off-shore rig which sank recently. * **American** scientists are being recruited to build a new network of spy satellites costing the country \$25 billion. * The Bishop of **Birmingham** has been criticised for getting involved with politics in the run-up to the general election. * Restaurateur Raymond Blanc has attacked **Britain's** factory farming methods by proclaiming the foot and mouth epidemic is punishment for 'a culture of cheap food'. * According to new findings an overwhelming number of Anglican and Catholic youths reject their Churches' teachings on family values. * There are fears that depleted uranium used by Nato may have contaminated water supplies in **Kosovo**. * Police have confiscated shotguns from depressed farmers who may be suicidal due to the recent **UK** foot and mouth crisis. The government has admitted that the original source of the crisis may never be known. * A study claims that in 25 years two out of three people on the planet will suffer regular depletion of water supplies. * According to the *Australian News Report*, issue 279, governments around the world are secretly negotiating ways to put an end to all not-for-profit public ser-

vices. * 215 people have died and many more are ill from alleged exposure to a deadly nerve gas, VX, made in a former **Soviet** chemical weapons plant east of Moscow. * A small 35-gram chocolate bar commonly sold in **British** shops contains the following ingredients: Toasted Rice Cereal (26%) (Rice, Sugar, Salt, Malt, Flavouring, Niacin, Iron, Vitamin B6, Riboflavin, Thiamin, Folic Acid, Vitamin B 12), Sweetened Condensed Milk, Chocolate Flavour Coating (13%) (Sugar, Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil, Skimmed Milk Powder, Fat Reduced Cocoa Powder, Whey Powder, Milk Fat, Emulsifier (Lecithin), Flavouring), Fructose, Glucose Syrup, Milk Chocolate Pieces (10%), Invert Sugar Syrup, Sugar, Humectant (Glycerol), Gelling Agent (Agar), Flavourings, Stabiliser (Disodium Phosphate), Emulsifier (Lecithin), Antioxidant (E320). This monstrous carcinogenic collusion is frequently available in vending machines in hospital waiting rooms! * The **Thai** government was urged to cut public holidays after 636 people died over the Thai New Year holiday. * **Iraq** is exporting 45 times as much illegal oil than it is exporting legally. * A crop of oilseed rape has been contaminated by a genetically modified gene, leading to fears of increased cross-contamination. * A House of Lords committee ruled that people who use cannabis for medical reasons, such as relieving multiple sclerosis, should not be prosecuted. * Last year £15 billion was spent in the **UK** on advertising. On TV alone there are 120,000 advertising slots each week, with a daily average of 1,200 images. * By a three to one majority the convention of the **UK** Federation of Small Businesses (165,000 concerns) voted for a motion calling on the government to repeal the European Communities Act 1972 and pull out of the EC. — **S.H.**

Fourth World News

