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# FOURTH WORLD REVIEW

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

*The Way Out – How to Get There*  
**KIRKPATRICK SALE**



## **A Wake-Up Call**

*General Lee Butler*

## **Federal and Politics Money Manoeuvring**

*Gregory Bresiger*

## **The Wisdom of R.H. Tawney**

*Editorial:*

## **The Community Revolution**

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# THE COMMUNITY REVOLUTION

**O**NE OF THE PROBLEMS hanging over the contemporary scene is an utter failure of the generality of people, intellectually and morally, to come to grips with the monstrous evils and imbecilities it has gestated.

It is somehow supposed, for example, that hundreds and thousands of the flower of the youth of the major European countries, together with a massive contingent from America, could be set to slaughter one another for years on end, as they were in the first World War of 1914-1918, without damage to the foundation stones of civilised existence, or to the nature and the structure of the kind of societies that gestated such horrendous evil.

In the same way it is supposed that the murder of millions of innocents in the wake of the communist revolution in Russia requires no reassessment of current modes of political thought, that the many millions more, Jews, homosexuals, gypsies, cripples and political opponents, (the latter, whether real or imaginary), murdered in the holocaust and general Nazi reign of terror, and all the other bleak cold-blooded savagery of World War II, and the unspeakable tidal waves of human suffering and degradation it spawned, can all be dismissed as being the work of a few clinically insane sadists who have somehow managed to grab the levers of state power, with no serious attempt to re-evaluate the political means by which they were able to effect their monstrous depravity.

These events, which defy the capacity of

any ordinary sane person to grasp the full extent of their moral enormity and which are mirrored by similar tragic horrors in other continents, are presumed to be instances of a failure of current notions of democracy to be properly accepted and exercised. What in fact they bespeak to the powers-that-be is that those notions of seeking to practice democracy on a mass scale is what needs to be called to account.

## Reciprocal law

There is a tragic failure here to grasp some quite elementary factors relating to the political process; that, for example, affairs conducted on a small scale may well produce small-scale horrors, whereas when conducted on a giant scale they produce giant horrors.

There is an equal failure to grasp that when affairs are conducted on a small, local scale they are capable of producing, as indeed they have done, glory unlimited in every sphere of human creativity, whereas on a giant, mass scale, the chief orientation of modern life of the last century or more, we have produced the first ugly civilisation in the human record.

The *contrada*, the minuscule neighbourhood communities of the towns and cities of the Italian renaissance, are at one with the artistic achievements and with the harmonious street landscapes of small towns and villages all over the world before the modern era.

They are at one too with the scholastic wisdom expressed in Oxford and

Cambridge of creating small quadrangles as centres of learning, where tutors and students pursuing widely different branches of study live in the kind of constant proximity that does so much to oil the wheels of the pursuit of wisdom, as distinct from giant centres boasting thousands of students devoted to common troglodyte studies of computerised business processes, and where considerations of quantity reign supreme over those of quality.

### **Only connect**

There is a bleak failure to connect the horrors of monster wars and monster forms of dictatorial misrule to monster forms of government, a failure to grasp that on a giant scale, giant wars and giant repudiations of democratic principle are not only inevitable but part of the nature of giant government itself, that on such a scale a government, for both economic and political reasons, is necessarily warlike and expansionist as a matter of course.

The key here is surely an economic one, and one does not need to peruse in depth either Adam Smith or Karl Marx, even though both are reputed to have considered the point, that in a competitive market growth and expansion are their dominant innate characteristics.

At the risk of emphasising the obvious, although it is the obvious that is so frequently overlooked, the mainspring here is the quest for profit, and profit of course, being a law unto itself, is not remotely concerned with the body of law relating to society at large, or with moral principles, except when either can serve their purposes.

It is no less obvious that competition, the mainspring of the process, involves two parties, the victor and the vanquished, and

that the victor, having emerged, since market competition is innately and necessarily expansionist, does so only to confront and compete with rival victors on a wider field. A competitive process is thus in train where in successive stages a victor emerges over his rivals in an ever-widening field of expanded opportunity.

The process has been likened to jungle warfare, but it is not. The natural competitiveness of animals and lesser forms for suzerainty in the jungle achieves a natural equilibrium in which each species is able to survive in optimum conditions, no one species achieves total dominance, there is a mutuality of interdependence within which each species is able to flourish.

It is obvious that there is no parallel here with how competition operates in the human economic world, for competition here is not a means of establishing an equilibrium among rivals but a process of outright elimination of rivals.

Equally obvious is the fact that since the process proceeds rather in the manner of an arithmetical progression, so that each victor stage of enlargement simply creates the ground for further multiple enlargement, then the only limit to further enlargement is the size of the global market itself.

This of course is the stage we have now reached. At the beginning of the 20th Century the UK had hundreds of small banks; at the beginning of the 21st Century the economy is dominated by four or five giants and each is engaged in a battle for survival involving the elimination of the others. In due course one victor will emerge and it will at once be locked in a similar battle for survival (the survival of the slickest!) with giant victors in other countries.

But economics does not operate in a

political vacuum. In a world of a multitude of competing concerns, of which an elected government can be the ringmaster or the referee, it can determine conditions of trade in terms which have some bearing on the welfare of the workers and of the general consumer. But at some stage on the path of economic aggrandisement it is obvious that the power of the market victors will come to rival that of elected governments; at a further stage it will inevitably, as it has indeed already done so, surpass it!

### **Boardroom coup**

This is the reality behind the moves to extinguish national identities in Europe, so that the citizen body of the entire continent will become subject not to their elected governments but to the ordinances of a group of non-elected commissioners in Brussels, acting in turn in accordance with the dictates of the giant market victors who have set the whole show on the road from its inception, and who promote it non-stop with their control of mass newspapers, and of TV and radio stations. And such is their power no elected government dare oppose them, despite the manifest hostility of their electorates to what is afoot.

It is of course the reality behind the moves to enable the World Trade Association (WTA), an unelected and largely uneducated cabal of giant boardroom buccaneers, to dominate global trading conditions on terms favourable to profit and which governments – yes, governments – are compelled to accept. These terms are based on no moral precepts and on no principles that have any bearing on the well-being of the citizen body of any country. They represent in fact the promotion of greed as the principle to which all

other concerns must play a subservient role.

It is this principle, with power of giant governments as much as profit, which is creating the insane rationale of monster wars and an ever-expanding global trade in high-powered weaponry, to say nothing of the ecological destruction now rampant and the monstrously debilitating mischief of ill-balanced economic development and its catastrophic social consequences.

Radical activists really must wake up here. The sheer scale and degree of centralised power of most governments puts them effectively beyond the reach of any prospect of citizen control; but governments are not, in any case, any longer masters of their own house. That office is now decisively in the hands of a mere score or so of globally operating boardrooms.

In this light, however commendable it may be for radical activists to stage street protests or to petition governments to remedy this or that abuse, there is a need, more urgent than ever before, to define what we are protesting for and the kind of world we are seeking in which to live, one which rejects greed for profit or power as a motivating principle and one which restores power to the people.

It is an objective which must imperatively reject any form of mass organisation, precisely the form which has robbed people of power and enabled boardroom greed to achieve its dominance; it is one that commands imperatively a human-scale approach, one which enables personal decision-making again to become meaningful and vibrant. Revolutionary politics today is community politics, and its weapons are not guns and violence but clarity of thought and ever persistent peaceful persuasion. ■

## THE WAY OUT – HOW TO GET THERE

### Kirkpatrick Sale

*The author is one of the most influential writers of our time on the radical scene and on the bioregional vision. His books include *Human Scale and Rebels Against the Future*, the latter an evaluation of the Luddite struggle against the industrial revolution. He has been invited to be the Guest of Honour at the London meeting of *The Academic Inn* on September 12 (and is submitting this article as a discussion paper). Enquiries 01797 226 397.*

**O**UR WORK towards a way out of the present technological mess is inspired chiefly by the knowledge that people everywhere are dissatisfied, to one degree or another, with the technocratic life that is increasingly thrust upon them.

Letters to the editor, talk shows, surveys and back-fence complaints all suggest that the computer-generated technomania is, as *Newsweek* has said, 'outstripping our capacity to cope, transforming our mores, shuffling our economy, reordering our priorities... and shifting our concept of reality', leading to profound disquiet and malaise. Furthermore, all the indications of what people really *do* want, including a Harwood Group survey recently published in *Yes* magazine, point to a world without the pressures and constraints of high technology and instead embracing more time with family and friends, more development of neighbourhood and community, more connections with nature, and more honest work with simpler tools.

There already exists a widespread, if not completely coherent, movement towards a low-tech/alternative-tech future. Its main features are, on the one hand, a move towards abstinence, resistance and refusal,

as in the sort of simple-living choices offered by *Plain* magazine, and the Amish and back-to-nature examples, including the specific organisations opposing cars, televisions, pesticides, biotechnology, incineration, animal testing, food irradiation and world trade; and, on the other, a move towards radically new relationships with nature at a non-technological level, starting with organic gardening, whole-food diets, vegetarianism, backpacking and natural healing, and leading on to forms of human-nature harmonising inspired by deep ecology, American Indian shamanism, modern witch practises, and ancient and Eastern religions. This, in toto, represents a considerable constituency to build on.

Steps to the sane future ultimately must be fashioned locally, responding to local conditions and needs – that is, at a communitarian and bioregional level – and therefore are likely to be different in different places, even leading to different arrangements in different places. Therefore a self-conscious continental or international movement, though it can certainly offer necessary precepts and philosophies, inherent policies and prescriptions, cannot determine all the steps, or stones, or paths, or highways, than any locality should adopt to

solve its own problems and advance its own causes. There is, in short, not one way out, but many.

In order for communities and bioregions to be able to determine their own courses, however, to exercise true democracy starting from face-to-face direct participation, the national and international arrangements that now stand in their way will have to be dismantled. That is a tall order, and steps in that direction are by no means easy to contrive; but there is really no other way. There cannot be local power of the necessary kind as long as there are political and economic strangleholds on power exercised by large corporate and national organisations. Of the first order of priority, therefore, must be ways to confront those large organisations, to demystify and delegitimise them, to gradually rescind and reverse their monopolies on power, using all the means of scholarship, persuasion, intervention, activism, and deliberation at our disposal. It is a long-haul task, and victories will not come easily, yet logic dictates no other course.

If this syllogism is accepted, then it suggests active steps on three levels: first, in support of the resistance/simple-living forces; second, in support of the withdrawal/nature-harmonising forces; third, in support of the decentralist anti-corporate/anti-nationalist forces. It also suggests that none of these should have priority and all should be pursued as actively as our

time and resources permit.

The forms of such support are varied and will shift in scope and emphasis according to our abilities, but there are certain known processes for successful social-change movements. On the one hand, we must continue the work on researching and exploring, then writing and speaking about, the evils of the present technological system and the corporate/political forces behind it, always with the understanding that high computer-driven technology is to be seen as the chief manifestation of the problem: that means, too, similar work that illuminates the beneficial, salific, necessary aspects of the resistance/withdrawal trends, and can provide both strategies and tactics for the decentralisation trend. On the other hand we must not fall into traps that bind us to public-policy, change-the-law work that inevitably legitimises the very institutions we seek to abandon – that includes all kinds of state and national electoralism – or that force us into broad-coalition work with elements that do not share our analyses and goals.

The steps by which one – one person, one movement – gets from here to there are never clear or easy, either in imagining or in effecting. It may be that they are impossible of imagining correctly; or it may be that the impossible can become possible only if imagined while it is impossible. Perhaps it is our task to imagine the impossible – and then proceed on the long, arduous, uncertain task of making it possible. ■

*There is little doubt that if food production and consumption was linked organically at the local level, the Foot and Mouth virus would not have spread so widely.*

*Land Heritage Newsletter*

## A WAKE-UP CALL

### General Lee Butler

*The public seems to have forgotten about the dangers of nuclear weapons now that the Cold War is over. But many high-ranking military officers are sufficiently alarmed about the possibility of their accidental use to urge abolishing all nuclear weapons, including those in the US arsenal. One of the first to speak out in such a way was General Lee Butler, who, as Commander-in-Chief of United States Strategic Air Command, had planning and operational responsibilities for all of America's strategic nuclear forces. Butler retired from the military in 1994, fully intending not to comment publicly on national security matters. But two and a half years later, he could no longer stay quiet about 'my deepening dismay as a citizen of this planet'. In this article from Waging Peace Worldwide, the journal of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Butler tells about his experiences in the military and what led him to devote his life towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.*

**I** was commissioned as a lieutenant in June 1961. I became the commander of the nuclear forces of the United States in January 1991, almost 30 years later.

Until the day I assumed those responsibilities, I had never been given access to the nuclear war plan of the United States in its entirety, even though in Washington I had policy responsibilities that directed the plans. I knew nothing about the submarine operations of the strategic nuclear forces of the United States, and I had no idea how the decision process took place that would lead to a command from the President of the United States to unleash nuclear war and retaliation for a presumed strike.

#### Deepening doubts

Beginning in early 1991, I went through a process that very quickly accelerated and confirmed my worst fears and my worst concerns. What we had done in this country, what I believe happened in the Soviet

Union, and what I think will inevitably happen in any country that makes the fateful decision to become a nuclear power – to acquire the capability to build and employ nuclear weapons – is this: the erection of gargantuan agencies with mammoth appetites and a sense of infallibility that consume infinite resources in pursuit of a messianic vision of a demonisation.

#### A chilling ballet

In those responsibilities of commander of the forces responsible for the day-to-day operational safety, security, and preparation to employ those weapons, I was increasingly appalled by the complexity of this ballet of hundreds of thousands of people managing, manipulating, controlling, and maintaining tens of thousands of warheads and extremely complex systems that flew through the air, were buried in the bowels of the land, or patrolled beneath the seas of the world.

The capacity for human error, human

failure, mechanical failure and misunderstanding, was virtually infinite. I have seen nuclear airplanes crash under circumstances that were designed to replicate – but were inevitably far less stressful than – the actual condition of nuclear war. I have seen human error lead to the explosion of missiles in their silos. I have read the circumstances of submarines going to the bottom of the ocean laden with nuclear missiles and warheads because of failures, mechanical flaws, and human error. I read that entire history, and when I came away from it – because I was never given access to it before – I was chilled. I was chilled to the depth of my strategic soul.

Secondly, consider my responsibilities as a nuclear advisor. Every month of my life as a commander of the nuclear forces I went through an exercise called the Missile Threat Conference, which would come at any moment of the day or night. For three years I was required to be within three rings of my telephone so that I could answer a call from the White House to advise the President on how to respond to nuclear attack. The question that would be put to me in these conferences, and as it would be in the event, was ‘General Butler, I have been advised by the Commander-in-Chief of the North American Air Defense Command that the nation is under nuclear attack. What is your recommendation with regard to the nature of our reply?’

That was my responsibility, and about half the time that call came in the middle of the night as Dorene and I lay in our bedroom. I had to be prepared to advise the President to sign the death warrant of 250 million people living in the Soviet Union. I felt that responsibility to the depth of my soul, and I never learned to reconcile my

belief systems with it. Never.

My third responsibility was to devise the nuclear war plan of the United States. When I became the Director of Strategic Target Planning – another hat that I wore as the Commander of the Nuclear Forces – I went down to my targetting room, many floors beneath the surface. I told my planners that we were going to get to know each other very well because I wanted to understand the plan in its entirety. I think this story is the most graphic illustration of the evolution of my views and my concerns and, ultimately, my convictions. When I began to delve into that war plan, I was absolutely horrified to learn that it encompassed 12,500 targets. I made the personal commitment – because I saw it as absolutely integral to my responsibilities and the consequences of that targeting – to examine every single one of them in great detail.

### **Ending the madness**

It took me three years to complete this analysis but only three months to be convinced that it was the most grotesque and irresponsible war plan ever devised by man, with the possible exception of its counterpart in the Soviet Union, which in truth probably mirrored it exactly. Because what that plan implied was, among other things, in the event of nuclear war between two nations, in the space of about 16 hours 20,000 thermonuclear warheads would be exploded on the face of our planet, signing the death warrant not just for 250 million Soviets, but for mankind in its entirety.

The second thing that I began to grasp was that neither in the Soviet Union nor in the United States did any of us ever understand those consequences, because the cal-

culatation as to the military effectiveness of that attack was based on only one criterion, and that was blast damage. It did not take into account fire; it did not take into account radiation. Can you imagine that? We never understood, probably didn't care about, and certainly would not have been able to calculate with any precision, the holistic effects of 20,000 nuclear weapons exploding virtually simultaneously on the face of the earth.

So in those three years I did what I could to cancel all of the strategic nuclear modernisation programmes in my jurisdiction, which totalled \$40 billion. I cancelled every single one of them. I recommended to the President that we take bombers off nuclear alert for the first time in 30 years, and we did. I recommended that we accelerate the retirement of all systems designed to be terminated in present and future arms control agreements, and we did. We accelerated the retirement of the Minuteman II force.

We shrank the nuclear warplanes of the United States by 75%. By the time I left my responsibilities, those 12,500 targets had been reduced to 3,000. If I'd had my way and I'd been there a while longer, they would have been reduced to zero. Ultimately I recommended the disestablishment of my command. I took down its flag with my own hands.

When I retired in 1994, I was persuaded that we were on a path that was miraculous, that was irreversible, and that gave us

the opportunity to actually pursue a set of initiatives, acquire a new mindset, and embrace a set of principles having to do with the sanctity of life and the miracle of existence that would take us on the path to zero. I was dismayed, mortified, and ultimately radicalised by the fact that within a period of a year that momentum again was slowed. A process that I have called the creeping re-rationalisation of nuclear weapons was introduced by the very people who stood to lose the most by the end of the nuclear era.

The French re-initiated nuclear testing at the worst possible moment, as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty hung in the balance. We in the United States have re-initiated the process of demonisation of 'rogue nations'. What a horrible, pernicious misuse of language! What an anti-intellectual dehumanising process of reducing complex societies and human beings and histories and cultures to 'rogue nations'. Once you do that, you can justify the most extreme measures to include the reintroduction of nuclear weapons as legitimate and appropriate weapons of national security. ■

*Last year General Butler founded the Second Chance Foundation, 12020 Shamrock Plaza, Suite 105, Omaha, NE 68154, USA.*

*Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, 1187 Coast Village Road, Suite 123, Santa Barbara, CA 93108, USA. [www.wagingpeace.org](http://www.wagingpeace.org)*

*Peoples of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment, but the conversation ends with a conspiracy against the public.*

**Adam Smith**

# GREEN PARTY POLITICS

## An essay in human misunderstanding

**John Papworth**

**WHAT WOULD HAPPEN if there was a mass road-to-Damascus conversion of the UK electorate to a sudden awareness of the grim dangers of the ecological peril our industrial anti-civilisation has created? What if millions proceeded to join the Green Party and to vote Green, what then?**

The average Green Party member fondly supposes that one day something like this may well happen and that a dedicated Green majority will be elected to the House of Commons, a Green government will be formed and a Green cabinet will proceed to implement Green policies as determined by the numerous Green MPs.

The fact that none of this is ever going to happen is not because such a mass conversion is not going to happen, nor to the fact that the Green Party has no strategy whatsoever for achieving it or anything like it; it will not happen because its party membership has no grasp of the realities of the mechanisms of mass politics.

All of them appear to believe that politics on a mass scale is subject to the same laws, the same pressures and the same idealistic give-and-take of, let us say, a Green Party branch meeting, or the same easy-going camaraderie of a local bowls club. But mass politics does not operate on such a basis at all and if it did there might be a good case for campaigning as it does for

mass election results. But it doesn't and there isn't.

Believe it or not a Green Party branch, like a bowls club or other local group, operates on the basis of a common code of morality. Their members might owe allegiance to any one of a wide range of religious beliefs, or none at all, but nevertheless they will ordinarily act in terms of a common belief of what is right or wrong, what is fair or unfair, what is just or unjust, and so on. They will commonly accept the principles of democracy, that each individual is entitled to speak and to vote according to his or her conscience and to have an effective voice in what is decided. They are able to do this because they know one another and they are linked by their personal bonds. That, we may say, is how morality works, on the basis of personal relationships and this is doubtless what led Gandhi to declare, 'You cannot have morality without community'.

The mistake the Greens and countless others make is to assume that the same moral force operates on mass basis; but mass politics is not based on morality, it is based on power. It is based on the quest for power, the prospect of power and, having achieved it, the retention of power, and the relationship of any individual to a mass political structure is not a moral relationship but a power relationship. We should

also note that whereas a moral relationship is one which is based on equality, a power relationship is decidedly unequal.

This fact pertains not only to Papworth's law, 'The bigger the political unit the smaller the significance of the individual member and, contrawise, the smaller the unit the larger the significance of the individual', but to the fact that on a mass scale power is focussed inevitably and inexorably on the centre, and power cannot be in two places at the same time.

### Who decides?

It will be argued, indeed it often is, that the individual does have the vote, that the vote is a form of power and the vote ultimately determines the course of events. Does it? Does this assertion bear any relationship to anybody's experience of mass politics? We may make an estimate of the value of the vote in mass politics in the light of one of the really crucial issues facing the British people today, that of 'Europe', the proposal that Britain should abandon its identity as a nation to become part of a federal Europe. The much-extolled fruits of such an abandonment are that Europe will achieve peace and that it will make giant strides in terms of economic development which no single European country can afford to miss. Never mind that each of the existing giant federations is a fully armed nuclear power and that it has an unbroken record of militarised belligerence either throughout the 20th Century or since it achieved independence. Never mind that the economic goals of such a proposal are as immoral as they are unrealisable, (or does anyone seriously believe that the billions of people in Third World countries are all going to enjoy – if that is the correct verb – the artificially promoted,

extravagant high consumerism lifestyle of the 'developed' countries? A process which has already endangered the globe as a sustaining and sustainable habitat?).

Never mind all this. How has the euro-plot emerged at all? Despite its hideously imposing import not a single branch of any political party, or of the trade union or co-operative movement, or for that matter of any grass-roots social, political, religious or cultural organisation, has ever called for it.

We are back in the particular realm of mass politics; the plot has emerged because the boardroom moguls of global capitalism want a more level playing field on which to play for greater and greater profit. To that end their environmentally ignorant presumption, and the kind of insolent freak power any mass society inevitably creates, has enabled them to spend vast sums of public money (through their Brussels brainchild) to frighten people with scenarios of economic disaster if Britain does not join, to engage hack journalists in a sustained campaign to rubbish Britain's royal family and to rubbish any other symbol of its national independence, whilst projecting on every corner the logo and the other symbols of European 'unity' using resources, financial not least, and in prodigious amounts, to drench the consciousness of an unsuspecting and all too often gullible taxpayer whose own taxes are being used to dupe him, that 'Europe' is fine, noble, wonderful, natural, inevitable and imperative when it is mean, squalid, disgusting and shot through with lies, deceit, catatonic degrees of greed and is simply another armful of nails in the coffin of a degenerate and over-industrialised civilisation.

Where is the power of the ballot box on this crucial issue? Where, when every polit-

ical leader of whatever persuasion is running scared of being labelled as strongly opposed to the europlot, knowing full well that the focus of power has shifted inexorably from parliaments to boardrooms operating on a global scale, where such power is able to destroy any political leader by the mere click of a computer mouse. People in any case tend to vote in accordance with the views and the values they hold. There was a time when people derived these from a variety of sources, and in large part from religious teaching, most of which had one thing in common: they were local. They were derived, when children, from the local school, the local church and from parental influence; as adults they were derived from local work, local employers, local shopping, local entertainment and from a generally intense interaction with local members of an extended family, friends and members of the local community.

### **Chains of bondage**

In little more than the span of a single generation most of this has been virtually abolished. Chain stores, supermarkets, tabloids, advertising, mass motoring, foreign holidays and, perhaps above all, television, plus 'national' schemes for ill health, education and welfare, have combined to marginalize the effective force of local community life and the values it once sustained, to the point of virtual extinction.

The new values are not based on the mutuality of neighbourly goodwill and concern for the well-being of the neighbourhood community, they are based on the personal gratifications to be derived from a savagely promoted propensity to consume, or on the virtues of silently acquiescing in a

distribution of power which ensures the citizen has no real voice in determining any of the matters relating to his schools, hospitals, social welfare or the provision of public utilities such as water, gas and electricity, to say nothing of radio, TV, telephones, rail services and many other matters that now dominate and determine citizen life.

### **Market forces**

The values brought to bear in deciding how to vote and on any consideration of the issues which are being voted on, stem not from local power and local concerns but on the brazen conscienceless voice of the market. It is the market which wants to sell cars by the million, for example, and it is the market which wants resources directed to building giant motorways whilst children are taught in ugly cost-price buildings instead of marble palaces.

What price then of a Green programme for a Green lifestyle promoted by a Green government? Aren't the millions who are going to vote Green going to transform things? We are back again to the problems of mass politics and what instead will happen.

As soon as there is any possible whiff of possible Green electoral success, among those who will flood in to swell the ranks of new members will be a number whose primary concern will be not Green causes but careerism and the pursuit of power as an end in itself. In any case this element is already evident in its higher ranks, members whose Green idealism is already in conflict with their power-seeking interests.

There will be policy squabbles in which there will be confrontations between Green principles and Green power. What element do the present members think will win? As a mass party what else can win but power?

To expect otherwise is to overlook that in any mass party it is the centre where power is deployed. It is the centre which runs party publications, which arranges the annual conference, which decides which items will figure prominently on the agenda, who will be the main speakers (and who will not!) and so on.

What Green Party members appear slow to grasp (a defect they share with all other mass party members), is that since democracy is a moral objective it can only be realised within an organic political structure, one composed of a multitude of small empowered communities. Such communities are indeed the bloodcells of civilisation as our cultural heritage from the Renaissance amply demonstrates. When small nations and small communities were the basis of life in former centuries art, culture, scholarship, music, theatre, painting and, perhaps above all, architecture, flourished to a degree which bequeathed to us glory and splendour unlimited.

Such small nations have mostly been wiped out of existence by the malign power-broking of such 'unifiers' as Bismarck, Garibaldi and Napoleon. So that instead of public life being conducted on the basis of a common code of morality it is now conducted under the constantly enlarging looming shadow of market concerns on the basis of power. As a result something in the soul of man seems to have died and we have produced the first ugly civilisation in the human record.

The mass society is inherently evil, it is a

creation of market forces aided by their political satraps and as such it puts money before morality, power before principle, 'growth' before any consideration of goodness, and market demand above any concept of decency. The essential thing to note is the extent to which it disempowers people, so that despite the extension of the electoral franchise people today no longer control, as formerly they freely did, their work, their education, their food, their clothes, their entertainment, their social lives, their relationships and the general corpus of values by which they live. Today TV, supermarkets and chain stores, plus monstrously overcentralised government, ensures all this power is now no longer theirs and mass balloting exercises, on the basis of values, issues and centralised propaganda, is presumed to give the citizen a free choice.

The lesson to be derived from all this is that a mass democracy is not simply a non-starter, it is an oxymoron.

This is perhaps the most imposing fact of modern political life, one which has created a global crisis which in turn has prompted the emergence of Green Parties and which will squash them flat unless the Greens can devise alternative structures and policies which really give power to the people, and a strategy to build them. All else is rhetoric devoid of substance, words in the wind as evil continues to flourish and the endless betrayal of idealism, whether Green or of any other hue, as the quest for power continues to marginalize the promotion of democratic environmental principle. ■

*...it does not require a majority to prevail, but rather an irate, tireless minority keen to set brush fires in people's minds..."*

**Samuel Adams**

## FORUM

### NICHOLAS ALBERY

Everyone loved Nicholas, who died so tragically in June. I don't think anyone could resist his original combination of eccentricity, warmth, good humour and lack of malice, nor fail to admire the enthusiasm, energy and dedication he applied to realising not just his ideas but those of others and everything he believed in. Any quiet, dozy corners of heaven will surely be rudely awakened by the thud and chatter of the walking, talking, never-ending, Perpetual Motion Encounter Group that he embodied!

**Gloria Pilkington**

*2 Southwick Mews, London W2*

### FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Hi everybody. This is a way to keep you posted with some news from me. I hope you do not mind the impersonal way of doing this. Today is July 4, but for me it is the second day after the funeral, because I had to be away.

The funeral and the 'memorial' were wonderful and moving and I hope did Nico justice. I got so much mail and would love to have digested all that had happened and gone on whilst being at home resting and reading these letters and answering them.



But instead I had to rush off to Munich to be with my mum, not knowing how much longer she was going to live, but she is doing better every day and I am very happy to have had this time with her, though it meant I could not really stay connected with what was going on for me, because she has not been told about Nicholas's death.

We returned from Munich yesterday (July 3). Merlyn picked me up at the airport and we went straight to Neal's Yard to take down the photos in the flat and to clean up. We also got a new hammock, the old one broke just recently. We had an emotional evening together, lying in the new hammock in the garden, after I had done a bit of work to make the garden nice again – it always gets very neglected when I am away. We went out for a little meal, walking the way we always used to walk with Nicholas, but now it is just the two of us and it feels strange. At the moment, I feel as though I want to pretend that Nicholas is not really dead and gone. I want to hang on to the near memories of us being together and what I remember of him. I have started to write them down, so that when it becomes distant memory I can read my diary and reconnect. Someone said

they were told this advice and it was one of the best bits of advice they were ever given.

I hope to have a little gathering here for everyone who helped prepare for the funeral and the memorial. It is my way of reconnecting with being here at home again. I hope the weather stays nice and that we can be out in the garden. I will also have the videos of the funeral and the memorial and hope to show some of that.

‘Live everyday as though thy last’: in each our way it is true for both Nicholas and me. He did it by writing and having ideas and working all hours to make them real. I am a much more retired person, I live intensely in relationship at the moment, or I try to, and my work is to do with relating. At least so far I have been much less ‘out there’ than he has. We’ll see what I will do now that he no longer is there, doing his bit for me.

If I allow myself to let it touch me, I am very, very sad.

With love and good wishes,

**Josefine Speyer (Albery)**

## DOWNBEAT

While you are at it at your Radical Consultation, please will you enquire about the following:

- ◆ Why Athens and Sparta were in conflict?
- ◆ Why Alexander the ‘great’ wanted to invade and conquer?
- ◆ Why Rome wished to destroy Carthage?
- ◆ Why Genghis Khan engaged in a rampage of conquest and murder?
- ◆ Why Napoleon overran Europe?
- ◆ Why Bismarck took off on a conquering spree?
- ◆ Why all the above got people ready and happy to follow them, even unto death?

- ◆ Above all, what can be done to breed a race that is averse to such behaviour?

**Howard Cheney**

*Aylesmore Farm, Shipston on Stour, CV36 5EJ*

*If there is time perhaps the Consultation should also inquire why an elderly gentleman from Shipston on Stour should spend his time carefully selecting with such relish all the negative aspects of human history whilst completely ignoring its positive ones.— Ed.*

## TOTAL DEMOCRACY

In his letter in *FWR* 108, Stephen Eades accepts the need for ‘total democracy’, but is puzzled as to how the necessary restructuring of society may be achieved. We all are!

But surely, we can see how it may work. All government financial processes would need to start from the grassroots level, not from the top-down as present. For example, if the national budget for all government expenditure were \$500 billion, for a population of 20 million, organised as local government wards of 10,000 persons, then each ward should have ‘first cut’ at a typical budget of \$250 million as its share of total government expenditure. Successive ‘cuts’ could be assigned (as part of a systematic and annual national voting internet process) to municipal, cities, states and, lastly, national levels. The eventual outcome could be for an inversion of present expenditure priorities and a hugely increased awareness of whose money is being spent on what.

**Alan Ecob**

*2 The Bastion, Castlecrag, NSW 2068,  
Australia*

*When sending e-mail please include your postal address. E-mail is fine if you have one of those screen things, but most people in the world still can't afford a toothbrush.*

## BOOKS

**THE CASE AGAINST THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AND FOR A TURN TOWARDS LOCALIZATION**, edited by Edward Goldsmith & Jerry Mander. EARTHSCAN, London, 2001. £14.95. 328 pages. ISBN 1-85383-741-5

& Reviewed by Peter Etherden

Teddy Goldsmith has been worried about globalisation for a long time. As far back as 1988, we find his name in the acknowledgements to Susan George's *A Fate Worse Than Debt*. His concern culminated at the end of 1998 in the landmark issue of *The Ecologist* that delivered a damning indictment of Monsanto and all its works. On the other side of the North Atlantic, Jerry Mander at the International Forum on Globalization has long been campaigning against the power accumulated by transnational corporations at the expense of national governments and the democratic process itself.

In 1996, Goldsmith and Mander published a collection of essays by North American writers. This collaboration has now been extended to include articles by other English-speaking writers. So for the first time we have the great and good of the true opposition to the 'Onward and Upward Brigadiers' gathered together between one set of covers. Familiar anti-globalisation names like David Korten, Tim Lang, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Vandana

Shiva and Lori Wallach rub shoulders with such old stalwarts of the alternative movement as Wendell Berry, Mander and Goldsmith himself.

Much of this book is an implicit assault against the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and in particular its Multinational Agreement on Investments (MAI), which is not dead but merely sleeping. Lori Wallach points out that the WTO is engaged upon 'a slow motion coup d'états over democratic governance worldwide' and that, unlike past trade pacts, the WTO has moved far beyond traditional commercial matters such as tariffs, import quotas or the equal treatment of foreign and domestic goods. Its provisions set limits on the strength of countries' food safety laws and the comprehensiveness of product labelling policies. They forbid countries from banning products made with child labour. They can regulate expenditure of local taxes prohibiting environmental or human rights considerations in purchasing decisions. Indeed, since its establishment in 1995 this closed shop with 135 member governments has rapidly accumulated a sordid record of undermining consumer and environmental protections around the world while permitting transnational corporations to use the threat of WTO action to roll back and block countless rules designed to benefit workers, con-



sumers and the environment, and to promote human rights and development in the world's poor countries.

Jerry Mander summed up the globalisation issue in his October 1999 US Schumacher Lecture in Salisbury Connecticut like this: 'In the end it comes down to who should make the rules we live by. Should it be democratic governments, influenced by local communities concerned about what is good for people and the environment? Or should it be the global community of transnational bankers, corporations and speculators?' In passing he remarked that the rising tide – so beloved by the eurofantasists when not worrying about the train leaving the station – far from lifting all boats, seemed instead to be sinking most of them and lifting only the biggest and poshest yachts.

This is the bad news and it is a pity there is no essay in the book pointing out that it is also the good news. Power only flows one way at a time, so by shifting the nexus of power in the MAI from the World Trade Organisation to a myriad of 'village common sense trusts' we will have a manifesto for localisation with self-sufficiency that might actually deliver power to the parish and wealth to all our counties.

Business schools have long taught that globalisation is a good thing. But they are now discovering that the issues are much more complicated than they realised. They need to change tack fast. A good start would be them to make books such as this required reading in their courses on international affairs, because many of the arguments for allowing corporations to run amok and ride roughshod over governments are demolished, or at least seriously dented, by the essays here.

**URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES IN SUSTAINABLE CITIES**, edited by Michael Carley, Paul Jenkins and Harry Smith. EARTHSCAN, 2000. £14.95. ISBN 1 85383 717 2.

& *Reviewed by Edward P. Echlin*

THIS book derives from the Centre for Environment and Human Settlements, Edinburgh. There are two chapters on global urban sustainable development, eight on specific world cities, a final two provide an analytical framework to the eight studies and draw conclusions about sustainable communities today and in the future.

The authors broadly accept the concept of sustainable development as it has been received since 1987 and the reality of globalisation. They recognise the massive speed of urbanisation, seeing good as well as unsustainable elements in the increase. They recognise the problems of growth in the market, in private cars, and reluctance of developing nations to proceed more sustainably than 'developed' ones. They may be less aware of the unsustainable damage to soil fertility a 75% urbanised world, with procreation and migrations as usual, does and will do. What emerges is a perceived need for co-operating at different levels in the community, and the need to reconcile globalisation and the local.

Studies and analyses such as this one can be useful. There are many good insights. Readers will differ with some of the authors' views. The question remains whether the sustainable development of the Bruntland Report, the Earth Summits, the CEHS, and of the globalising marketers, is really sustainable. We also need studies on sustainably sufficient alternatives. ■

## **Fourth World Bookshop**

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### ***Leopold Kohr and Fritz Schumacher***

**John Papworth**

A survey of the work of two of the most influential political thinkers of our time which explains their differences of approach, especially with reference to their major books *The Breakdown of Nations* and *Small is Beautiful*, written by one who enjoyed the personal friendship of both and who for many years has published their writings and promoted their ideas. The paper was originally presented to a dinner discussion of The Academic Inn, itself the brainchild of Leopold Kohr over half a century ago.

### ***Retrieved From the Future***

**John Seymour**

John Seymour has written many books on farming, travel, self-sufficiency, poetry and social comment. In *Retrieved From the Future* he reveals his natural bent as a novelist. He describes the fortunes of a group of people, their families, their friends and their neighbours after the crash, when, with a sudden break in the all-important supply of oil, normal life collapses, government ceases to function, food disappears, mass starvation, disease epidemics and civil war take over and how people coped. Despite the background the story is one full of hope: people did cope, they won through – largely by learning the lessons of what went wrong. And that is why the book is important; it is not only a superbly engrossing read, it shows how ordinary people can rise to a challenge and enable decency to prevail. And it is yours for just £5. The best paperback you can hope to buy and one of the best gifts you can give a friend.

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## THE WISDOM OF R.H. TAWNEY

*The author of Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, one of the pivotal books of the 20th century, was a public school product with a firm belief in equality. He insisted on enlisting in the 1914 war as a private, was severely wounded and lay in the Flanders mud for more than 24 hours. He later became a professor of economic history and when he was offered an earldom in the first Labour government of 1924 he responded to the prime minister with, 'My dear MacDonald, even a mad dog does not tie a tin can to its own tail'. Before the war he kept a notebook, the contents of which were only published after his death. Some extracts follow.*

**THE** indictment brought by workers against modern industry is in essence that brought in all times against slavery: viz, that under present arrangements men are not used as ends but as means.

**THE fundamental idea of Liberty is Power. Power to control the condition of one's own life. Whether this [is] thought of as the removal of restrictions imposed by the state and minor sanction (individualism) or as the imposition of restrictions (collectivism) is a matter depending on the economic and political circumstances of periods and classes of people. It took men 150 years and two revolutions to arrive at some working conception of religious liberty. It may take us as long to work out our idea of economic liberty.**

*THE people who construct Utopias on the assumption that in the life of the future men will have so mastered nature as to [have] achieved undreamed of power and felicity err profoundly. They are worse than wrong. They are irrelevant. They do not only miss the mark. They fail even to see what the mark is which they miss. They do not only fail to find what they look for, but what*

*they look for is not worth finding. The whole social philosophy which rests on the idea that the vital thing in the well-being of society is its material environment, and that power to modify that environment in an extraordinary degree is equivalent to power to live well is a doctrine which flies so plainly in the face of all human experience as hardly to deserve discussion. It is falsified by the whole course of economic history since 1750.*

**THE greatest mistake we make with our lives is to snatch at the particular objects we desire. We grasp this that or the other for fear that the opportunity of obtaining it should not recur and we should be without it forever. But the mere fact that in the possession of such and such a thing our happiness seems to be involved, shows in itself the absence of the inner peace without which happiness is impossible.**

*THE most pressing problem of our day, and the most neglected, is that of economic right, not of economic facts. But during the last half century nearly all English thinkers have devoted their whole attention to the collection of facts, not to the examination of the nature of economic right.*

*It is time that the current were change[d]. There is no alchemy by which force can be transmuted into right, and in our calculation of forces we have forgotten that the human mind demands not explanation only but justification of all established orders and all schemes of progress. That is to say, the question of our day is a philosophical rather than an economic one.*

*People often argue that the industrial system is justified by its 'efficiency'. But this [is] the shallowest of claptrap. For what is at issue is not whether it is efficient, but whether it is just. If industry could be so organised that the mass of workers would feel convinced that the social order was just, a decrease in efficiency would be cheap at the price.*

**THERE is no such thing as a science of economics, nor ever will be. It is just cant, and Marshall's talk as to the need for social problems to be studied by 'the same sort of mind which tests the stability of a battleship in bad weather' is twaddle.**

*WHAT I mean by society needing a philosophy is this. No machinery, whether of the state or minor corporation, can apply ideas which do not exist in society. They must always act at second hand. They must always be fed from without. All that a statute can do is to reduce a philosophy (important or trivial) into sections which are sufficiently clear to be understood even by lawyers. Hence the great days of a Parliament are when there is outside Parliament and in society a general body of ideas which Parliament can apply. It has no creative force. There is no creative force outside the ideas which control men in their ordinary actions. There is no deus ex machina who can be invoked though men are always trying to discover one. Nor is the modern futility of Parliament due to mechanical difficulties, which can be removed by mechanical remedies, such as revolution. It is due to the absence of any general accepted philosophy of life. Our principal task is to create one.*

### **The Law of Diminishing Productivity**

*The principal argument against the fetishism of large-scale economics is not derived from the comparison of the economic developments in large and small states, but from economic law. Every student of economics must acquaint himself in one of his first lessons with the law of diminishing productivity as the most basic of all economic principles. This, however, is again nothing other than the economic version of the small-unit principle which, as we have found, permeated all creation.*

*The law of diminishing productivity states that, if we add variable units of any factor of production to a fixed quantity of another a point will be reached beyond which each additional unit of the variable factor adds less to the total product than the preceding one.*

**E.F. Schumacher**  
*Small is Beautiful*

# FEDERAL AND POLITICS MONEY MANOEUVRING: AN AMERICAN LESSON FOR BRITAIN

**Gregory Bresiger**

*The author is a writer and editor for Traders Magazine, and has written for The Free Market as well as The Journal of Libertarian Studies.*

**P***OLITICALLY ORIENTED monetary policies and business cycles are the inevitable byproducts of a central bank, the ultimate favoured banking institution which is viewed as a saviour by politicians facing elections.*

After the election comes the bill: inflation runs amok, the economy goes into painful recession, or the stock market crashes. Whatever the extent of the damage, monetary policy is always the primary cause. One such episode of monetary mischief, for example, occurred three decades ago during the Nixon presidency.

America would stumble through a decade of stagflation – high inflation rates coupled with high unemployment rates, something the Keynesian economists had said could never happen simultaneously. This round of monetary-policy-through-politics began when President Nixon, unhappy with the policies of the then Federal Chairman William McChesney Martin, decided that he would not reappoint Martin. Nixon was worried about his re-election two years ahead and opted to name his political ally Arthur Burns to succeed Martin and blamed Martin for the recession of 1969 and 1970.

And he was taking no chances. ‘We’ll take inflation if necessary, but we can’t take unemployment.’ Burns became chairman at the Fed in early 1970 and immediately Nixon started his pressure. Commenting about the new Fed chairman, he said, ‘I respect his independence. However, I hope that independently he will conclude that my views are the ones that should be followed.’ In private Nixon’s message was more blatantly political: ‘I must register with you as strongly as I can, my concern that what really determines the result of an election is not interest rates, but unemployment statistics around election time... there is no doubt in my mind whatever that if the Fed continues to keep the lid on with regard to increases in money supply and if the economy does not expand, the blame will be put squarely on the Fed,’ he wrote to Burns.

Nixon threatened to wage a public campaign against Burns if he didn’t ease monetary policy. Stories were floated in the press that Nixon was going to double the members of the Federal Reserve Board, which would have diluted Burns’ power. The administration believed its policy of threats would be successful and the printing presses would hum. Halderman would pri-

vately brag in 1971 that 'We have Arthur Burns by the balls on the money supply.' The administration was going to obtain the money supply it wanted. Burns, several board members said later, would press for looser monetary policies in 1971 and 1972.

The figures confirm that the pace of money creation increased greatly. Monthly money growth, which had averaged 3.23% in the first quarter of 1971, jumped to 11% in the same period of 1972. Money creation was 25% faster in 1972 compared to 1971. Burns and his allies at the Fed were flooding the market with new money. The Fed was going to do everything possible to ensure that 1972 would be a great year for the economy.

And it appeared to be a good year, as the inflation rate, along with unemployment numbers, declined. Nixon adviser John Ehrlichman later wrote that Burns understood what was wanted by the Republican administration. 'Some economists are oblivious to political reality, but Arthur Burns was every bit as much a politician as he was an economist.' Only a month after the election, in which Richard Nixon was reelected, carrying 49 states, and most Democrats in Congress were reelected, damaging double-digit rates of inflation were becoming apparent. In Toronto in December 1972, Burns said that 'the current inflationary problem has no close parallel in economic history'.

Besides a disastrous expansion of the money supply – which by the mid-1970s would give the country double-digit inflation rates – Burns was part of an administration economic team that constantly eschewed market forces. He persuaded the administration to go ahead with an incomes policy as well as wage and price controls, all policies that were as bad as his easy

monetary policies. Burns later complained that huge deficits were to blame for inflation, conveniently forgetting the role he had played in the great monetary expansion of 1971 and 1972, not mentioning the failure of wage and price controls. All these policies, which had one common theme of greater government meddling in the economy, were failures. Nixon continued to fund an expensive war in Vietnam.

He didn't dismantle Lyndon Johnson's huge Great Society programmes. And, with bipartisan support, Nixon greatly expanded social security programmes, a measure that would be as disastrous on the fiscal side as his monetary policies. Have Americans learned the lesson of politicised monetary and fiscal policies? There have been proposals to limit the dangers of a central bank. We need to listen to Vera Smith: 'A central bank is an artificial creation, an imposition of politicians often working in concert with pseudo-business people who believe their success will come from favours provided by politicians with itchy palms.'

When Nixon wanted more money, he wasn't only speaking of campaign contributions. Before any reforms should be entertained Americanised need to study the record of these dangerous institutions called central banks. We must understand that, just as a military industrial complex is inimical to our liberties, a central bank is as much a threat to our economic liberty as a despot is to our political liberties. Damage to the economy will likely happen again as long as Americans accept the flawed notion that the nation's top banker – the Federal Reserve System chairman – is also an all-knowing economist who can always anticipate economic trends. And that he is either uninterested in political pressures or that he is invulnerable to them. ■

# Global Crisis?

## Press Release

No workaday journalist will be remotely interested in this: no murders to report, no scandal, no tragedy, no love affairs, no divorces, personal disasters, not even any pop stars or footballers in any sort of trouble; what is worse, a bunch of folk – nutters no doubt – declare they are out to change the world.

Well, we have heard all that before of course, and hard-boiled men of the world who know a thing or two are not going to be bothered with that sort of crap, not in this day and age, are we?

These people are actually claiming that the combined readerships of all the small magazines now proliferating in response to the global crisis is probably greater than that of some of the big national dailies. What is more, they are now turning their backs on established party politics! Can't get barmier than that can you?

Oh yes you can! They are now saying instead of Westminster controlling local government it should be fully controlled by local people themselves as an equal partner with Westminster as one answer to the global crisis.

Global crisis? What crisis? Everyone knows we have never had it so good; everyone now has more and more of everything –



cars, computers, ice-cream, cuckoo clocks, you name it. Global warming is just a bit of panic mongering by a bunch of green fanatics; if oil does run out it won't be in our lifetimes will it? And anyway those scientific johnnies will soon come up with something else; and all this disease in animals and humans is just a cyclical phase isn't it? And the global economic meltdown they talk about, well the pessimists always talk like that, don't they? And this pile-up of nuclear weapons is nothing to worry about is it; I mean, there have always been armaments havn't there? And we have to defend ourselves somehow, don't we? And all this talk about Britain disappearing into 'Europe' is just plain silly, isn't it? Everyone knows that a united federal Europe will not only secure peace, just like federal USA, China, Russia, and India, it will enable us to have secure unlimited 3D prosperity, everybody peaceful, happy, prosperous, every garden with its own swimming pool, every hamlet its own golf course, every citizen with his own car all in glorious technicolor and able to drive on both sides of the road for evermore...

# What Crisis?

But the weirdos puffing up this Swindon Radical Consultation talk as though all this is some sort of nightmare! They are gathering all the freakies and offbeats and longhairs on the scene in order to forge some sort of alliance with a common policy. Policy for what? You'd never believe it, but to enable every village to control its own bank and economic arrangements, its own social welfare, education, police (yes, police!), health, transport and so on.

What's more they are now insisting that regional boards for the control of water and gas, for example, for the post office, TV, radio and so on should be made up of elected village council representatives,

instead of being appointed by our own dear, totally trustworthy Tony Blair. It is all a load of nonseime of course, don't we live in the most perfect form of democracy ever conceived? On the other hand, this sort of rabble can sometimes create a shindig, and even get a lot of popular support. There might even be a story in it. I mean, nowadays the troops will swallow anything won't they?

Perhaps they will. But a sane alternative message can be heard! make sure your voice is part of it. See you in Swindon, September 13–15.

Telephone 01453 752277 or 756571.

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## FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR

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**F**OR SUNDRY *weighty reasons I rode into London recently at the front of a van. Normally I make the journey by rail.*

Unlike saloon cars, seating in a van is rather like sitting at a table rather than sitting in a cushioned deck-chair. One has a lofty view of the road and the other traffic and one feels a wee bit more secure, but not much. I find all motorway traffic when I am part of it gives me the jim-jams, and it says volumes for the power of media scare stories that a young village man said to me recently that he was going to London by coach because – ‘Well, I mean to say, trains aren’t safe any more are they?’ He had no idea that more people are killed on our roads in a day than on our railways in a year. The fact is I found that ride traumatic. I was part of a mobile carpet of cars, coaches, vans and obscene-looking 24-wheel heavy lorries moving in both directions at about 70 miles an hour. Why the speed? What are we all rushing for? It is not

as if there is a deadline for us to complete the Taj Mahal or Durham Cathedral; we are racing in a mad frenzy because we want to sell more mobile telephones, or carcinogenically chemicalised chocolate bars, or spare parts for TV sets which spew out programmes which degrade our civilisation as much as they debase us.

Anyone with half an eye for statistical realities must be aware that this transport scene cannot possibly last, that we are gobbling up the planet’s remaining oil reserves at a speed which will beggar our posterity as much as it morally disinherits us. I find it frightening, and fear is surely the only rational response, when one reflects this daily scene of toxified environmental degradation is replicated in every developed urban centre in every part of the world.

Approaching London the skyline became pockmarked with clusters of high-rise apartments and offices. They multiplied until they blocked the view of anything else, and each one is built to consume

more energy in a week than a large village of former times would have consumed in a generation. Escalators, elevators, floodlighting, multiple lights for posters or pintables, powered gadgets for this and that, burn, burn, burn, waste, waste, waste. The hallmarks of a way of life busy with mindless abandon digging its own grave. As the bard puts it, 'Its rash, fierce blaze of riot cannot last.' Yet election candidates were recently promising more and more of this and that unsustainable evil clamour for my vote.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury and I, I am intrigued to discover, have something in common; we both love poetry. Even more to the point, we both love the same book of poems. A recent front page picture in *The Times* showed the Archbishop reading poetry to his grandchildren and the volume he was holding was *Poem for the Day*. Well, this is not just a puff for a volume edited by my long-treasured and now alas deceased friend Nicholas Albery, which it is, but to share something great. The book has a poem for each day of the year, plus notes and indicators of anniversaries of the significant events in the poetry world. What endears me to it so eagerly is the catholicity of taste it expresses, both across the centuries and across the contemporary spectrum. It gives me more joy than any other single volume of anything I have encountered and if that is not worth sharing I don't know what is.

WITH uncommon enterprise our local vicar organised a meeting in the village hall of all four local candidates during the last general election, in which millions of misguided souls proceeded to vote, fondly believing, the europlot and eco-

nomic boardroom globalisation notwithstanding, that doing so gave them some democratic say in how our destinies are determined. As the four candidates made their opening pitch in turn I was struck by the sheer vacuousness of the proceedings, an element seemingly pervading the entire campaign nationwide. The major political questions confronting the British people today are:

- ◆ The danger of global war;
- ◆ The colossal damage our everyday lifestyle is doing to the environment;
- ◆ The europlot to destroy British sovereignty;
- ◆ The destruction of community life.

The intros by the candidates touched on none of these things, with the exception of the candidate for the United Kingdom Independence Party, who could scarcely have failed to talk about the europlot. But none of the other did and none of them referred to the other problems listed above.

It seems there is almost a new style of political correctness in swing where political discussion is confined to taxation, pensions, schools or the price of petrol and where it is regarded as almost indecent to raise the really serious questions. Is this perhaps why there was no adult person under 40 present? People, at least older ones, seem prepared to discuss prices and other matters of immediate social concern with no glimmer that economically, to say nothing of environmentally, militarily or even, in terms of human numbers, biologically, that we are on a steep slope of utterly unsustainable conditions, or that those conditions are as transient as a tropical snowflake. It can only be a matter of not too much time that my fellow villagers

and many millions like them will not be preoccupied with the length of health service waiting lists, or the shortage of teachers, so much as the prospects of their next meal. The generation gap here was well pinpointed by a young teenager who asked me earlier in the day in some puzzlement, 'I saw in the papers that many thousands of arctic penguins are in danger from the effects of global warming, yet one of the party leaders is promising to cut the tax on petrol. Surely he should be increasing it?'

**H**AVE YOU ever been to Tetbury? It is a wonderful ancient Cotswold town with a skyline of such mind-benumbing beauty as would melt the heart of an economist. But the church! I defy anyone to enter it without being bundled into sheer stupification by its elegance, holiness and loveliness. There are many beautiful churches up and down the country, but in my experience the parish church of St Mary the Virgin at Tetbury surpasses them all. I wandered about in a daze of wonder at the glory and the splendour of it all! But I have to record that after a while I was compelled to leave. I was feeling decidedly unwell, and the cause? Long familiarity with church interiors made me aware that the old oak pews were saturated with a woodworm insecticide. It is a contemporary conceit that you can rub shoulders with an agent which paralyses the central nervous system of an insect without harming yourself. In fact most insecticides are carcinogenic liver poisons, as many farms labourers who have spent years pushing sheep through sheep dips to kill liver fluke parasites have discovered in a sick and painful old age. So do

visit and enjoy the splendours of Tetbury's deservedly famous church, but don't stay too long

**W**HEN I FIRST moved in the large garden was a wilderness of overgrowth. It has taken many months to clear and weed and may now be beginning to look something like what was intended by the former owner but one, or possibly two, or even perhaps but three. Under tangled overgrowths of a particular weed which seems to grow a mile a minute and to seek to strangle everything in sight, I have been amazed to discover an incredible array of unusual and exotic plants. I am not a knowledgeable gardener and, no doubt to some reader relief, am unable to reel off names either in latin or my own vernacular, but I get the impression somebody at some stage visited a quite large and comprehensive garden centre and ordered something growing of everything in stock. Well it makes for a lot of fun and interest but I do wish slugs and snails would reproduce at a much slower rate. These creatures seem to go for some growing plants and to utterly ignore others. One of my favourite flowers is lupins but slugs and snails seem to have a similar view, with the difference that whilst I want to gown and admire them, they just want to devour them. And proper horseradish sauce, not the bland product on supermarket shelves but the real McCoy, the stuff that makes your nose tingle when you taste it, is one of life's delights. Trouble is I want the root to grate but the snails want to devour the leaves – and they have a way of getting in first. The village is full of sage, elderly gardening enthusiasts and I have accumulated enough remedies to deal with this pest,

even if it is one of God's creatures, to author my own manual. Use broken egg shells, advised one; sprinkle salt, urged another; go round at night with a torch, suggested yet another, and pick them up. None of these remedies worked. Nor did another, urging me to have bowls of beer, the rims at ground level; snails then would rush to this source of free booze and after a few mouthfuls would have become topsy, fall in and drown. I tried this but Sam (now of blessed memory, for after impaling himself on a spike he had to be put down. The total bundle of energy he represented wore me out but I do miss him so much.), had other ideas. No sooner was the beer in place when it was his thirst which was quenched. The upshot of all these endeavours is that I am using some poisonous blue pellets to protect my lupins. The slaughter is incredible and each morning I pick up snail corpses by the dozen. I then dispose of them before birds get at them. But for my veggies I must stick to eggshells and nocturnal torch forays.

WE WERE in the middle of a steering group meeting for the upcoming Radical Consultation and discussing details of the timetable. It was at Jackie Carpenter's home near Stroud and we had a good view of the garden. Suddenly Chris Wright, a man I sometimes suspect has missed his vocation as a theologian, said, 'My goodness, there's a long-tailed tit.' We all turned but by then the bird had already disappeared. How I envy people who can name birds like this. I can see there is a dif-

ference between a robin and an eagle, but I am ignorant of the finer points of ornithology, even if I am slowly beginning in my rural home to learn a rural thing or two. In my London days I scarcely ever really looked at the sky. Now it is one of my standby pleasures, helped by the fact that I have a view from my garden which reaches for miles.

WHEN THE row blew up about my remarks on shoplifting a rather unimaginative officious London archdeacon effectively deprived me of my licence to officiate as a priest. (If you missed the row, I merely said that following Aquinas, if people took goods from their neighbourly shops without payment it was both immoral and illegal, but if they did it in giant supermarkets it might be illegal but it was not immoral. I argued than in saying 'Love thy neighbour,' Jesus had said nothing about one's duty to love Marks and Spencers.) So for several years I have been restricted to the mundane concerns of the lay world. Relief came when the Bishop of Bristol recently restored my licence, which should tell you something about his quality. Anyway, being scheduled at one service to preach, I was wired up with a mike clipped near my collar leading to a gadget in my pocket. At the due moment, in attempting to switch it on, I switched it off. Afterwards an elderly gent, the soul of Christian charity, said to me in great confidence, 'Well, I could not hear a word you were saying but I could tell from your face that it was all very interesting.' ■

*There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.*

**Henry David Thoreau**

## Fourth World News



Recent mild winters in **Britain** have led to a steady rise in the bird population. \* Tesco, the **UK** chain retailers of what pretends to be food, has instructed staff to cease addressing customers as 'duck', 'luv', 'my dear' or similar familiarities and must in future say 'madam' or 'sir'. \* Green groups may have to pay £200 million to Stephen Randolph Hearst to stop him building on the vast **Californian** coastal ranch next to Hearst castle. \* **French** police are launching an investigation after three men were caught smuggling uranium, used for nuclear weaponry, into the country. \* **America** has said it plans to break the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty within months rather than the years it first suggested. \* A leading doctor claims that women underestimate how hard it is to have children in later life when they postpone families to concentrate on their careers. \* Schools are teaching their pupils swear words in an attempt to stop them using bad language. \* The Co-op is risking prosecution by selling peaches in the **UK** below the minimum size allowed by the European Union. It claims it cannot always meet the prescribed size without using chemical

fertilisers and pesticides. \* Anti-globalisation protesters clashed with police at a meeting of the World Economic Forum in **Salzburg**. Ditto in **Genoa**, where police staged their own brutal protest against protesters. \* A report in *The Times* claims that **UK** schools depend increasingly on Parent Teacher Association events for basics such as books. \* According to a leaked report radioactive emissions from Sellafield are set to rise over the next three years, despite a treaty signed by John Prescott three years ago to reduce them. \* 'The role of rural England as a food provider for the nation is no longer an essential one,' according to a Rural White Paper, the 7th Report of the **UK** Environment, Transport and Regions Affairs Committee. \* \$821 million has been allocated for **US** federal prison construction despite testimony by BOP's Director that three out of four female inmates should not be in prison. \* The **US** prison population has jumped from 24,000 in 1974 to over 100,000 today. More than half are drug offenders. \* Lord Beaumont, the only Green peer, is seeking to get **UK's** Railtrack back into public ownership. The government is giving it about £5 billion in grants. - **SH**

## Fourth World News



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