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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*

No. 114

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John Papworth  
AFRICAN TRIBAL TRAGEDY



BOOK REVIEW SPECIAL

*Editorial:*  
THE UNITED NATIONS

# FOURTH WORLD REVIEW No. 114

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# THE UNITED NATIONS

**WHY IS IT that idealistic, well intentioned, peace-seeking people continue to give allegiance to the United Nations and, as some sort of moral bonus to its existence, to the concept of some sort of world government?**

None of these people, not one of them, has the slightest sliver of influence or control over any of the policies of the national governments under which they live. If they are assiduously painstaking, dedicated and prepared to spend the best part of an adult lifetime on the activities of a local planning committee it is conceivable they might be able to influence the design of a municipal bicycle shed, but when it comes to questions of war and peace, of economic policy, of energy supplies, of radio, television and the mass media, of matters affecting the police and the judiciary, of money and banking, of the general drift of transport, planning, of research, whether academic or otherwise, or of agriculture, international trade or the production of armaments – whether cluster bombs, warplanes, nuclear weaponry or military formations – they have none at all, repeat, none.

Yet the same governments are waging wars, pursuing economic policies which are creating conditions likely to make the planet uninhabitable for at least one of its major species, and on the way creating social conditions which have already made it a hell on earth for millions. There is no need to enlarge on the enormities of the conduct of those running public affairs in the name of statesmanship, they are all around us on every hand, and the very nature of these enormities itself bespeaks the powerlessness of the ordinary citizen to do anything effective to halt them.

Yet by some strange process of intellectual sleight of hand, our ardent, peace-

loving enthusiasts insist on supposing that if only all these same governments could come together to form a world government what a wonderful thing that would be! A world at peace! A world dedicated to human rights! A world of harmony, progress and prosperity, a world where the lion would lie down with the lamb and where a universal benison of goodness would prevail over everything and everyone for evermore.

## Armaments

Well, of course, there are odd patches of discolouration on this picture. We humans are not perfect, are we? And the old Adam in us will out now and then, will it not? And even the brightest jewel in the crown will perhaps have some flaw in it somewhere, will it not? Well, perhaps, no doubt and we shall have to see, won't we?

No we won't, for what mars this scenario is already part of the realities of life around us, and those realities encompass the dominance of the armaments lobby as well as other global forces of money and power, which already control much of our lives. Do our innocent, peace-loving idealists suppose these forces are just going to fade away? That the biggest single industry in the world, the armaments industry, will simply shut up shop? That citizen control, so obviously lacking in every major sphere of economic and political activity, will somehow be asserted to realise benign citizen dreams of general human well-being?

We really must recognise that any world government will be comprised of just these forces. How indeed could it be otherwise? And the citizen would soon awaken to discover he has far less prospect of control over public affairs than he has today. Of course

any world government would need an army, the arms lobby would see to that. Such a government would soon decide it has 'enemies', terrorists perhaps? Or Communists? Liberals? Radicals? Militants? Social subversives? The members of your great cause or mine?

It does not matter. A compliant media, owned and controlled directly or otherwise, by the arms industry, will be available to identify the trouble makers; the 'enemies of the people' or the disaffected; and it will promote the necessary (and inevitable) degree of mass hysteria in support of the campaign to hunt them down and wipe them out from every citizen bed under which they may be lurking.

If some of this sounds familiar and has already surfaced in the Middle East as a result of US war-mongering we might do worse than appraise events several decades earlier as they erupted in Europe in the aftermath of World War I. Then as now there were multitudes of enlightened citizens who were sick of the futile carnage of war and the appalling economic misery it had gestated. A revolution was clearly the only answer, a revolution which would sweep away privilege, exploitation, corruption and war and usher in an era of peace, justice and progress.

Well, they had their revolution, all these saintly idealists, and the masses of desperately impoverished seekers of an end to the economic misery they so needlessly suffered, and unwittingly, they ushered in the most murderously obscene and the most gruesomely ruthless form of government the world has ever seen. In many cases it was the idealists who became its first victims, and as they were starved to death in arctic labour camps by the million, or put on trial on trumped up charges before being shot, or tortured in the jails of the secret

police, as the entire Russian society was enveloped with fear of the consequences of a carelessly spoken word, even in private conversation, they might have been forgiven for failing to understand how they had been so barbarically betrayed.

## **Abuse of Power**

What then was the lesson? It is said that those who refuse to learn the lessons of history are condemned to repeat them, and today's idealists seem bent on doing just that. For the lesson is surely that if power is being abused then the problem to tackle is not the policies power may be pursuing but the problem of power itself. So the answer to the abuses of power needs to focus on why it is possible for any structure of power to pursue courses which are evil.

Today we can see that power, political and economic power, is out of control. It is out of control because it is deployed on a scale which makes it impossible for anyone, not just the citizen but even those in apparent leadership positions, to control it for sane social purposes whatever the colour of their parties and slogans. They will abuse power if only because the factor of scale obliterates any capacity for citizen control to be exercised.

The revolutionary or reformist approach is based on a fallacy that to end the abuses of power it is necessary to capture power in the same form that it is currently deployed, to capture it at the top and to replace 'them' by 'us'. It is a strategy which has been adopted by almost every revolt of which we have any knowledge in history and it is a strategy which has always failed, whether the immediate objective of gaining control of power at the top has been achieved or not.

Both the French and the Russian revolutions of modern times succeeded in deci-

sively overthrowing the old order. Did the result justify in any way the horrors of the civil carnage these events occasioned and which ensued from them? If humankind is ever to progress from the abuses of power it has to learn the lessons of these events and to adopt a quite different strategy. At the risk of pedantry let us list these lessons:

- ◆ First; if power at the top is being abused (as invariably it is), it is because power is being exercised that people subject to that abuse do not have.
- ◆ Second; no amelioration of this abuse can be expected if power remains at the top.
- ◆ Third; if people want to end the inevitable abuses of power they must control it themselves.
- ◆ Fourth; power can only be made responsive to people's needs and wishes when it is fragmented to human-scale dimensions that enables them to control it.
- ◆ Fifth; only on a human scale can economic activity be made subject to moral judgement and political control.

So that the answer to the global crisis which power-out-of-control has gestated is to see that the particular policies power may be pursuing are quite secondary to the problem of scaling down that power to a level where citizen control can be effective. Without that essential revolution any change, any revolt against the intolerable, which power-out-of-control has created, is simply to jump from the frying pan into the fire.

But the lover of peace and progress will insist, we do need some sort of international control, do we not? And the answer is, yes of course. It is imperative that we establish special international organisations for a variety of purposes. Some indeed already exist; we have an International Postal Authority, another for World Health, we have Trinity

House to monitor safety at sea and to oversee lighthouses in danger spots, and so on.

These are functional bodies, all quite separate and answerable, however imperfectly, to elected national governments and the need for more of them conducted on the same lines, albeit on improved democratic terms, is unarguable. We need one for world disarmament, one for countering the dangers of global warming, one to establish norms for the consumption of finite resources, one to establish criteria for the level of human numbers and so on. But to achieve such essential measures we need first to solve the current pressing problem of power itself, and the manner of its deployment and control in our existing national governments.

Simply to merge these powers into one almighty world body, far from solving a problem, would compound it to an infinite degree by handing over the destiny of human life to an involuntary consortium of arms manufacturers, oil barons, financial tycoons, media manipulators, industrial magnates and others who live only to enrich themselves regardless of human health, liberty, social sanity, environmental safeguards or any prospect of freedom from war.

These powerful forces already dominate and control American life, which, because of its size and power, is already a world government in the wings. Is this what our peace lovers want? Because if they continue to genuflect to such bodies as Europe and the United Nations, this is inevitably what they will get. Unless?

Unless they establish clear signposts pointing to the need for the dispersal of existing governmental and economic forms of power to the localised communities, the villages, parishes, neighbourhoods and communities in every part of the world where it properly belongs. ■

## ACTION NOTES...ACTION NOTES...ACTION NOTES



**RADICAL CONSULTATION.** RADCON I created its own ferment in probing major questions of and RADCON II is now in preparation. Workshop Papers, Action Resolves and organising help are the need of the hour. Over to you!

Contact: Chris Wright, 6 Albert Rd, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 9AN.

Tel: 0161 928 4722; E-mail: [chriswright@iasco.sagehost.co.uk](mailto:chriswright@iasco.sagehost.co.uk)

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**CRISIS COMMITTEES.** A new baby this for a new radical strategy. A minority of people in every community is increasingly alert to the dangers of the global crisis and where events are taking us. They often feel bewildered, isolated and helpless. Call your concerned friends in your neighbourhood together at regular intervals, if only quarterly, for an evening of purposeful discussion. Have an agenda that focuses on the major problems. What are they? Who is causing them? How can we act for sanity and make power local while there is time? What do we do locally if essential services break down - as it *seems they will!* *Half a dozen people in one neighbourhood may seem of little effect, but that group will grow, is indeed growing, and such groups multiplied all over the world, especially with internet links, will be tackling the soft under-belly of the giants far more effectively than forming yet another national or international organisation. Concurrently FOURTH WORLD REVIEW proposes to publish a regular bulletin with a suggested discussion programme and pointing up possibilities for action.*

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# AFRICAN TRIBAL TRAGEDY

## John Papworth

*The author has travelled extensively in Africa and was a leading member of The Movement for Colonial Freedom, a body which campaigned for the independence of British colonies in the 1940s and 50s. He served for nine years as the Personal Assistant of an African President.*

***T***HE TRAGIC litany of oppressive and corrupt government that now prevails across much of Africa may suggest that perhaps African people have an innate incapacity for the political arts. The reality is quite otherwise.

Africa has always been more inimical to human settlement and development than any other continent. Even today it is host to a wide range of wild beasts, to dangerous riverine crocodiles, to disease-bearing insects such as the tsetse fly and the malarial mosquito, to say nothing of the locust swarms able to devour a village crop overnight. But its most imposing barrier is surely its sheer vastness. The Sahara, for example, is sixty times larger than England, and to this has to be added its sheer remoteness and the absence, south of the Sahara, of any beast of burden. The African elephant, like the zebra, has proved untameable for transport purposes, and this has had a decisive bearing on its economic development.

### Transport

Any goods produced in the interior which were surplus to local requirements could only be transported to the coast on human backs, a matter which doubtless made slavery an imposing economic factor long before Arab or European traders came on the scene. But on reaching the coast the African entrepreneur was confronted with yet another barrier, with thousands of miles of open ocean. He had none of the good for-

tune of the European trader using the horse and short sea routes such as the English Channel, or the busy waterways of the Mediterranean.

Given these imposing problems, how did Africans establish themselves down the centuries in conditions which demanded a high degree of intelligence and political sophistication? The answer can be found in one word: tribalism. The tribe is of course a close-knit body owing allegiance to a single ruler. How the leader was chosen, when indeed he was chosen at all, varied considerably. Often chieftainship, especially royal chieftainship, was hereditary. Sometimes a council of tribal elders decided, or the fortunes of war or individual prowess in leadership attributes such as martial arts was determinative. What needs emphasis is the necessarily small and human-scale factor of the size of the tribe.

In African history, as elsewhere, no generalisation is safe that does not admit exceptions, and this is evident from the tribal kingdoms, and even empires, which are part of the record. It is noteworthy however that such empires were often based on shifting and transient alliances with local tribal chiefs. The 'empire', itself generally transient, was not a vast mass of otherwise unrelated individuals, it was an organic structure of numerous sub-divisions, generally of smaller tribes each having its own tribal chief.

We are looking here at something which has been rooted in the African experience of

government for millennia. When the Egyptian Pharaohs sent emissaries into central Africa they found themselves parleying with African tribal chiefs. The tribe is indeed a factor fundamental to the African view of things and it is a view which the colonial powers, which erupted on the African scene in the 19th Century, did not understand, were unable to comprehend and which they ignored as they proceeded to impose their own alien political ideology on the peoples suddenly in their power.

### **The Democratic Ethos**

That ideology embraced a concept of 'democracy', one which has gained plausibility from its evident success in the glories of the Greek city states of antiquity. In the colonial countries themselves it was assumed that such a concept provided a practical working hypothesis for the conduct of government in the vastly different conditions of 19th Century Europe. It is an assumption which continues to grip the European mind despite the cataclysms of two world wars, gigantic economic upheavals and multiplicity of armaments programmes which can only render in due course much of the planet uninhabitable. What was overlooked here was the crucial factor of 'scale'. It ignored Aristotle's own timeless warning, 'To the size of a state there is a limit, as there is to plants, animals and implements, for none of these retain their natural facility when they are too large.'

It assumed that the exploding mass populations of Europe could be governed by the same ethos as that which had given ancient Greece its glory. It was an assumption that overlooked that any moral attribute, and 'democracy' is surely one, depends for its effective application on the relationships of those involved, and that whereas in a mod-

est sized city state, itself subdivided into wards, communes, parishes, neighbourhoods or villages, those relationships were highly personal, individual and based on an ordinary status of equality, in a 'mass' society such relationships could only be with power structures of giant organisations. In this latter case the relationships, far from being equal, become decidedly unequal, since power in mass societies is unambiguously at the centre of the organisations, whether governmental, commercial or even social or religious, which control it.

### **The Ballot Box**

It might be thought, indeed it generally is, that this consideration is nullified by the existence of the ballot box, but this is to overlook that on a mass basis the business of voting, the values being promoted, the means and the artifices of propaganda, are inevitably centrally controlled. It also overlooks a truism, 'the smaller the unit, the larger the significance of the individual, and the larger the unit, the smaller the significance of the individual.'

If this is enough to indicate why 'democracy' is not working in Europe (for democratic societies do not conscript youth to engage in world wars, or prompt the destruction of neighbourhood social structures at the behest of 'welfare state' programmes, motorways, shopping malls and the spiritual poison of commercial TV), it helps to enable us to grasp why the assault on the traditional tribal structures of Africa has yielded such horrific results. For the essence of the tribal structure, as of the Greek city states, or of the European city states, was the limited size of the unit, leading to the preponderant influence of the individual citizen.

In little more than 100 years the European colonialists burst upon the African

scene and established structures of government which either ignored tribal realities, cut across tribal boundaries or simply negated the power of tribal rulers which had prevailed continuously for thousands of years. Colonial gunpower ruled supreme, but, despite some creditable colonial achievements, even worse was to follow. When the colonial powers departed, often even more rapidly than when they arrived, instead of restoring power to the tribal rulers from which they had taken it, they transferred it to 'national' structures of their own creation which had no roots in African life, no correspondence with African traditions and no grasp of African realities. It was a catastrophic blunder of historic proportions.

The tribes in former times were no doubt not unique in having their own wars, their own forms of oppression and corruption, but the tribal system survived because however onerous these defects might be, they were incidental to its main thrust of ensuring a necessary degree of stability and security in a hostile environment and an often precarious existence.

### **Horrific Blunder**

Today the defects of these essentially colonial creations are so enormous and overwhelming they have already destroyed much of the governing system of which they are an inevitable product. It was the parting gift of the colonial powers to create political authorities based on the European model of 'mass democracy' and to lock the future destinies of the African people into them.

It was quite the most horrific blunder in the entire colonial experience and one which makes all the former massacres and repressions of the colonial record pale into insignificance besides what followed. Who can compute the number of those killed in the seces-

sionist war in Katanga which immediately followed the rapid exodus of Belgian authority from a Congo territory larger than Europe? To this we have to add the civil wars, (they were of course tribal wars for tribal independence), in Uganda, Kenya, the Cameroons, Gambia, Namibia, Nigeria (Biafra), Somalia, Angola and elsewhere.

### **All-Africa Commission**

Who can compute the numbers disfigured by mines and other explosives? Of the women who were raped? Of the millions, mostly children, who starved or whose homes were destroyed? No system of government is perfect because none of us is perfect, but how much of this horror would have happened if African tribal authority had been restored and an all-African commission to adjudicate on tribal boundary disputes had been established?

There is a disposition now, even as 'democracy' is disintegrating under our noses in Zimbabwe, to assume these matters can be dismissed as of yore, and that wiser counsels have come to prevail. If only they had! They seem much more likely to be the shape of things to come. For the most part the continent today has become a vast arena of endemic misrule as it sinks to ever lower levels of poverty and social oppression. Such government as prevails appears to be for the most part in the hands of military thugs or political bully boys, who can only govern by force of arms whilst their territories seethe with tribal unrest and disaffection.

Is it too much to hope that African tribal leaders themselves will before long establish their own all-Africa commission to establish the boundaries, the procedures and the objectives which will create a new road out of the tragic post-colonial morass which today engulfs the entire continent? ■



## FORUM

### REVOLUTION?

I consider you are the 'gadfly' which Socrates talked about as he was about to drink poison, as being a very necessary irritant to the powers that be, in every generation. I absolutely agree with your analysis of the current ills, and in theory your idea of local Crisis Committees is a good one. We are in crisis, and how can our Masters, political and global-business, be stopped? I wonder how every day.

The trouble is that most people don't realise what's happening, e.g. would anyone join a Crisis Committee? And if they did who would they lobby? (I have found it totally useless to write to the PM, my MP or my Bishop, for instance about the bombing of Afghanistan. They just tell you what they think.)

To give an example of the lack of awareness in the gin-and-tonic *Telegraph*-reading area where we live; when I suggested our Church congregation should use Fairtrade coffee instead of Nescafé, only about one person knew what Fairtrade was, or had any idea what was bad about Nescafé. And these are well-educated people, and Christians to boot!

While being completely behind your aims, I don't think we can do much about

the Crisis Committees, because we'd never get anything off the ground here in our rich, middle-class, middle-aged area; we're all far too comfortable with the status quo, and too unaware of the dangers. It's the young people who need to be targeted, and there are some splendid ones in the small World Development Movement branch that has just started in Woking, of which I am an 'oldie' member. So I could pass any leaflets on to them. Perhaps in the more rural areas local markets and local currency can take hold: certainly farmers markets have in our area.

**Carol and Michael Binnie**

*1 Bachelors Cottage, Longreach, Ockham,  
Surrey GU23 6PG*

*Thanks, but I am not about to take poison. – Ed*

### CRISIS COMMITTEE

Warmest congratulations for your indefatigable never ending efforts to do something about the sorry state of our world. In spite of your ability to make clear what is happening in the world, from the few society's with which I have been associated in Scotland it is extremely difficult to get young people interested in anything but

immediate gratification. I can't help feeling pessimistic, which doesn't mean I don't applaud every brave person's attempt to rouse public awareness to the idea that they could do something to alter things.

**Morag Aitkenhead,**  
*Kilquhanity House Estate,  
Castle-Douglas DG7 3DB*

## RADICAL

Following the Radical Consultation last autumn, I feel impelled to make the following comments:

◆ It seems it would be to everyone's advantage if leaders of workshops – i.e. facilitators – were briefed fully in advance, as to their duties. To facilitate is to aid; to enable members of the group to express their views without 'fear or favour'; to encourage each one to have the courage to express their thoughts without criticism. It is not a platform for the facilitator to teach, or to try to sell their book, but to encourage others to participate in an open forum.

*Dictionary:* to facilitate: is to aid; to make easy or more convenient; ease or readiness in doing; readiness of compliance.

Anger on the part of the facilitator is an expression of fear or inadequacy; fear of hearing something different from his own entrenched opinions; perfect love casteth out fear, and from a place of love when demonstrated by the facilitator a healthy exchange of opinions can emerge.

◆ I noted the use of the word 'radical' when a metaphorical finger was pointed at one member of the group. Radical is the starting point from where the roots extend in many directions. What may appear as 'radical' to one can be obvious or normal to another; but is nothing to be afraid of.

*Dictionary:* Radical: basic, complete, entire,

essential, fundamental; it is something which does not show on the surface but reaches down to the roots and has many aspects.

An open mind and an open heart is afraid of nothing.

**Dorothy Forster**  
*16 Crastock Court, 7-9 Queens Gardens,  
London W2 3BG*

## CLONE?

Your whole team does a wonderful job. Perhaps we could clone you.

**Jack and Kay Hutley**  
*PO Box 23, Brunswick Heads, NSW 2483,  
Australia*

## DANGER

One of the many alarming UK government policies which has been reported quietly under the cover of the fight against the enemies of the USA is the government's plan to remove from county councils the power to control developments and to vest it in the undemocratic 'regional' bodies.

It may be too easy to see 'reds under the bed' but it is difficult not to see this as one more move gradually to diminish the responsibilities of the (elected) councils and to gather more decision making into the hands of those regional bodies which are, we are told, of a convenient size for conversion into 'constituencies' of the EU.

County councils are not necessarily all wise or incorruptible but they are subject

*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.*

to elections and are relatively local. This government is known to be desperate to find ways of getting round inconvenient planning laws which make it difficult to force rural areas to accept large influxes of urban populations with their inevitable requirements for employment, education, leisure facilities and 'social services'.

The only conclusion that one can draw from all these machinations is that local regions with communities must not be allowed an effective voice so that central government can more easily impose its own plans for nationwide uniformity while preparing us to give away the last pretence of self determination and subject ourselves to the rule of the unelected commissioners in Brussels.

**Angela Bates**

*The Manor House, North Witham,  
Grantham, Lincs NG33 5LH*

### **CHOICE?**

Just to thank you very much for the copy of your well argued and beautifully written pamphlet, every word of which rings true to us.

But as my father used to misquote from the prophet Isaiah's (media) prophecy; the priests (politicians) rule in their name; and my people love to have it so – according to him, the saddest words in the Bible. However, I detect an auck I'zu bias that we don't go along with: surely if we have to choose between Europe and America, it would be better to go for the former and do what we can – quite a lot if connected – to saving 'its' policy with right direction, a lost cause in Bush's USA. How sad that Beaverbrook's dream of a North Atlantic commonwealth was never on.

**Professor John Davis**

*Four Mile House, 1 Cambridge Road,  
Great Shelford, South Cambs CB2 5JE*

## **IAIN DUNCAN SMITH JOINS THE FOURTH WORLD?**

We need a new approach to politics.

I want to axe layers of control from central government and re-establish the identities of schools as local institutions.

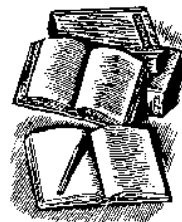
In the past, Conservative governments have been guilty of taking power away from local government to Whitehall. That was a mistake. We will reverse this process and restore to local councils the discretion to act according to the interests of the communities they serve.

We will free our hospitals from control by Whitehall. They will be more independent of politicians. They will be part of the communities they serve. The same is true of our schools.

When we give power to real communities in Britain, we will not stand by and let it be taken away by Brussels. If we don't want a Britain of bogus regions, we certainly don't want a Europe of bogus regions.


When Tony Blair finally has the courage to call a referendum on the single currency, we will fight him and we will win.

*Speech to Conservative Party Conference, 24th March 2002*



## BOOKS

**THE BREAKDOWN OF NATIONS**, by Leopold Kohr. GREEN BOOKS. £9.95. ISBN 1-870098-98-6.

 *Reviewed by Richard Body*

WHEN human beings associate, whether in a nation-state, a business enterprise, a unit of local government, a football team or even the darts club down at the Pig and Whistle, there must be a number of people in the group. Hence each has a size; and whatever has a size must have an optimum size.

Optimum for what? That is a difficult question and it can only be answered pragmatically. What is certain is that the men and women in command are seldom the ones best fitted to give an objective opinion. Power, we are often told, is corrupting and leads astray those who enjoy the use of it. Inevitably they like what is big. An ever bigger empire is good for their egos. This applies particularly to politicians and bureaucrats as well as the moguls of great business empires. They are ill-qualified to judge what is the optimum. It is, generally speaking, the size that delivers the goods for the people whose lives are governed by the decisions made.

This principle applies especially to a nation or, more specifically, a nation state. As we look around our planet, we see enormous varieties of how different nations live. In the so-called developed countries, there are some with great contrasts of wealth and

poverty, of good neighbourliness and criminal behaviour; in some there are smiling faces and in others the look of sullen misery. Why should this be? Surely it is a question worth asking; and if there is an answer, let us search for it. The study ought to be called social morphology.

Just as the human body can be diseased, so a body of humans can suffer dis-ease. A nation afflicted by crime, drug abuse, alcoholism, material breakdown and high divorce rates, with areas of mean housing and failing services, illiteracy, and where neighbours are fearful of each other, all these are symptoms of a society not at ease with itself, a sick society.

Most explanations for the disease of the body politic have been falsified by events. Of the more recent examples, Marxism has come unstuck in the Soviet empire and Hitler's National Socialism, although successful in the short term, proved to be an evil monster.

Looking again at the so-called developed countries of the world, we find a large number where there seems to be an absence of those symptoms of social disease. Their one common denominator is that they are small countries. Is this a coincidence or can we find reasons for a correlation between bigness and disease? Among the smaller of these countries is Liechtenstein. Until some twenty years ago if any of its 12,000 popula-

tion had a complaint or suggestion to make to its prince, a telephone call to the prince would be met by a reply in person – ‘this is the government speaking’. A one-man government can be remarkably cheap, and especially if he consists of a rich man; and so the people of Liechtenstein were never bothered by demand for taxation. This proved to be something of a disadvantage. Some 12,000 more people came to the principality, largely engaged in banking and other financial services, solely because there was no taxation. Doubling the population of any community brings problems and so it did to Liechtenstein, and now it has a much larger government and a modest amount of revenue has to be raised, not just to pay their salaries but also to overcome the problems caused by a doubling of population.

No doubt it would be rather too whimsical to try to divide the world into lots of little Liechtensteins, but states with a few million people might be another matter. Becoming the president of such a state might be a dull business; there would not be much power if it were a democracy, there would be no strutting about the world telling other nations how to behave, and the motive for seeking the presidency might even be a spirit of public service rather than an outlet for megalomania. As a democracy it certainly would bring the decision making much closer to those whose lives were affected. Democracy, after all, is the diffusion of power; and in small states the sense of powerlessness that must exist in megastates gives way to a realisation that one’s voice can be heard.

That fewer than half the people of the United States trouble to vote for a new president is itself some indication of how ordinary Americans feel about the effect of a single vote. No ordinary American can expect a reply to a letter to the White

House; even one to a senator in Washington is likely to be ignored, so we are told; but when an electorate consists of just a few thousands, one can be sure the response will be different.

Governments can do nothing unless they first of all take away the freedom of people or their money. Without the power of legislation and taxation, governments are themselves powerless. Yet both those powers are coercive. Fail to pay your taxes or obey the law, and the ultimate sanction is time in a prison cell. Ought people to be coerced into changing their ways or spending their money, as they must with new laws or changes in taxation, without their consent or the approval of at least a majority? That, surely, is the basis of democracy. Unless ordinary people feel they have some influence over these important decisions that affect their liberty, it can scarcely be said that they live in a democracy. Thus a democracy is more effective in small states than big ones.

In practice, it is somewhat more than that. If we feel disempowered, we must also become demeaned and belittled. Self-worth is a state of mind; it affects how we think and behave. We become disenchanted with the political system – and not least of all with politicians.

Anyone who lives in a small village, where the population may be no more than two or three hundred, knows how life among neighbours is very different from what it is in a town of several thousand other people. In the village, especially if it is isolated, a thief will soon have the finger of suspicion pointed at him, so too will the bad debtor. Even a minor degree of selfishness will become the subject of gossip and soon known around the village. Proximity among a few is indeed a deterrent to any kind of bad behaviour. But village life can

be positively good; a sense of interdependence will exist, neighbours become friends and readily depend upon one another; and even going off to work in the morning with a 'good morning' and a smile exchanged helps to set a happier scene than would be the case in a city street. Good health is not just an absence of disease but a positive thing; and in a village there can be that positive state of social good health.

Then there is culture. Before Bismarck gathered under one fold all those many duchies and principalities of Germany, there were scores of theatres and opera houses, for each of those little states seemed to possess one. They also had their composers, their own architects designing distinctive forms of architecture, musicians and artists. But once Germany was united, it became a powerful nation; it turned away gradually yet inexorably from matters cultural to create a great war machine. Small states cannot behave like that. We might ask ourselves whether the United States could possibly behave as she does now around the world as a super-power had she remained a confederation of small states, as was the original intention.

We can call to mind many examples. There was Athens: not many thousand people, yet its little component entities gave the world a great architecture and a body of philosophy that no nation, large or small, has been able to equal ever since. Then there was Renaissance Italy; again little states that gave the world great literature, opera, art and music. Yet once Italy became one large state, that great cultural tradition began to vanish. We do not have to look far to find a reason for this. A nation has a conatus, as any living organism must have, a will to assert itself; and as it cannot be done by military, imperial or other means


of power, it is natural for it to fall back on other ways which can be achieved in the smallest of states. One poor man in a garret can produce lots of culture for the rest of the world to enjoy.

Small states can never be 'viable', so it used to be said. Today, though, we are rapidly moving into an open world economy. Tariffs are negligible if they exist at all, and the non-tariff barriers are being dismantled rapidly. The businessman wanting to trade from even the smallest state now finds the world can be his oyster. It is as if the small state is in much the same position as Rutland in the United Kingdom.

It may be doubtful whether it was ever a handicap for the efficient businessman to operate in the smallest state. If the symptoms of social sickness are absent or insignificant, all the tasks of running a business must be considerably easier and more agreeable than in those countries socially diseased. Those states also tend to have lower rates of taxation simply because they do not carry the costly burden of a large government, nor do many of them wish to spend vast quantities of taxpayers' money on evermore expensive weapons of war.

One danger, though, looms over the small state. It is the shadow of a bigger and more powerful neighbour. In the ideal world, no one state is more threatening than another; or do they all possess – heaven forbid – a weapon of mass destruction?

**THE FIELD: THE QUEST FOR THE SECRET FORCE OF THE UNIVERSE**, by *Lynne McTaggart*. HARPER COLLINS, 2001.


 *Reviewed by Patricia Knox*

THIS is an amazing book. Lynne McTaggart set out to find if there was any scientific research which shows how the healing treatments of homeopathy and acupuncture

(ignored and sidelined by orthodox Western medicine) actually work. She did find the research. These treatments work by affecting the electromagnetic radiations in the body. This research has been sidelined by the scientific community.

But more than this, she discovered that there is related research into the electromagnetic forces throughout the universe, thus building up an exquisite relationship not only between all living things, but also between living beings and inanimate matter, giving a scientific basis to what the world's religions have always taught: 'We are all one.'

**FUTURE POSITIVE: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY**, by Michael Edwards. EARTH-SCAN PUBLICATIONS, 1999. £12.99.

 *Reviewed by Patricia Knox*


MICHAEL EDWARDS examines the successes and failures of aid and development in 'Third World' countries in the past 50 years. Analysis of the failures points to ways of succeeding in the future.

The author assumes that the successes of the future lie within the paradigm of export-orientated capitalism. This, I feel, is a mistake. A future based on what Colin Hines has called localism, on a global scale, seems a more hopeful future. This would mean countries building up self-sufficient communities, based primarily on local food security and a drastic cut in transport needs, and only exporting surplus after this has been done.

Nevertheless, Michael Edwards has analysed the problems well, and described how alternative ways of dealing with such situations would lead to far better outcomes in the future.

His hopes of taming capitalism to give it a human face seem unrealistic, given that a celebrity is paid 31,000 times as much as the production workers who make Nike shoes, just to advertise them.

**TAKEN FOR A RIDE: TRAINS, TAXPAYERS AND THE TREASURY. THE INSIDE STORY**, by Don Riley.

 *Reviewed by Tim Beaumont*

THIS is a splendid book, revealing depths of madness in the Treasury when dealing with the Tube, depths unimaginable even to the hardened sceptics who read *Fourth World Review*. For instance, we are told that the Treasury has been promoting a model of privatisation which would reward companies for crashing trains. Under the proposed contracts a company could lose its franchise without compensation if it were deemed to be 'inefficient'. But if it lost its franchise because it had (efficiently?) crashed three trains it would be compensated!


But the chief idiocy which is at the centre of this 90-page closely argued booklet is, that by not adopting site value rating, the construction of a new extension to an underground line puts enormous profits into the pockets of all the landowners along the route. And if you should doubt this you have only to inspect the bank balance of its author. One building sold in 1994 for £30,000 was sold at auction in 1999 for £230,000 because it was near a proposed Jubilee Line station.

If the author was able to pick up such profits why does he think the system should be changed, you aforesaid hardened sceptics may well ask. Well, there are two answers: the first is that the author is obviously a public-spirited decent chap. And the other is that he will still do well out of a

reformed system, although the money won't come in just one unearned dollop but will be spread through the community and will pay for the new extension. And if you query that, it is exactly what happened when the Hong Kong government built its Mass Transit Railway and when the then Governor of New Zealand and John Stuart Mill worked out how to pay for the infrastructure of a growing colony.

This is a book to make you laugh and cry – and then go out and campaign for a sensible Land Tax (such as proposed by the Green Party and used to be proposed by the Liberal Party before they were infiltrated by Social Democrats).

**GENETIC ENGINEERING, FOOD AND OUR ENVIRONMENT. A BRIEF GUIDE,** by Luke Anderson. GREEN BOOKS, £3.95. ISBN 1-870098-78-1.

 *Reviewed by Angela Bates*

WAS it the founder of the Salvation Army who said that, 'The devil has all the good tunes'? The great wealth of those biotech companies responsible for the development of genetic engineering enables them to employ the most skilled publicists, political lobbyists and scientists. Hence it would seem those who oppose them, for example because they are concerned about the rights of small communities or who wish to promote organic farming, need similar skills if they are to exert any effective influence. Just because those causes appeal to so many different groups – lovers of the countryside and of wildlife, cooks, animal welfarists and freedom lovers – they are often represented in discussions ranging from fireside conversations to formal debates by well-wishers who are not equipped to produce effective opposition to the persuasive argu-

ments presented by the companies. Although a book on genetic engineering may not be the chosen reading matter for those rare hours of leisure, this 'brief guide' should be on the shortlist for anyone who cares about the future of man and the rest of the natural world because in a relatively short space and in relatively simple language Anderson here explains the basic technology involved and the social, economic and ethical implications of the genetic modification of plants and animals for commercial gain.

The book explains something of the doctrine of 'substantial equivalence' under which the products of genetic engineering are accepted as the equivalent of natural products unless damage to human health or the environment has been conclusively demonstrated. (In this county we found that in trials supposedly designed to test the safety of GE crops, no attempt was made even to check the macroflora of the area before the crop was drilled so no changes could have been monitored, while questions of possible effects on the soil microflora or fauna were simply not regarded as worthy of mention.) Anderson sets out clearly and simply the dangers from GM micro-organisms and the resulting increase in the use of herbicides, their likely persistence in the soil (with resulting effects on man and on both domestic and wild animal species), the likely spread of herbicide-resistant weeds and the resulting damage to the local ecosystems, the particular dangers presented by plants modified to produce insecticides more active than those occurring in naturally resistant varieties and the consequent danger to beneficial insects including bees.

The biotech companies argue that their work is in response to demands from farm-

ers and the need to increase agricultural production to feed those now starving in the third world. However, farmers in the industrialised countries are in difficulty largely because of the effects of globalisation and the activities of those companies, and many of those who use the GM products do so out of desperation because they have been taught to look to chemical and biotechnological innovations for solutions to their problems. The younger ones especially have had no training in such traditional methods as crop rotation and basic hygiene. That problem demonstrates yet again the need to provide technical as well as philosophical and political information for the struggle against global tyranny.

It is all too well established that people in poor countries starve because they are poor but the book sets out many of the very cogent arguments that the activities of the global GM companies worsen their plight by increasing dependence on GM seeds and the accompanying biocides and by reducing the diversity of crop varieties, thereby increasing vulnerability to pests and diseases as well as depriving them of many of the 'incidental' crops of wild plants and animals which may make valuable contributions to the family diet or income and which are likely to be wiped out by the biocides.

Many of the practical dangers have been well discussed by those involved even marginally in anti GM actions and, although it is useful to have them set out here, the book is likely to be most useful, and is at its most chilling, in its reporting of the ways in which the companies have effectively seduced so many governments from the protection of their people and land to the promotion of commercial interests. The book lists names of former executives

from the companies that sit on government scientific committees and of the methods used to prevent publication of results which show adverse effects of their products. A whole chapter is devoted to the account of the bullying tactics used by Monsanto to prevent the broadcasting in Florida of a TV series devoted to the examination of the use of a GM hormone used in milk production.

The ability of the international corporations to penetrate and influence governments is dangerous simply because it can influence legislation to allow the use of otherwise unacceptable products but, perhaps especially in the UK now, it is the more sinister when the government is increasingly ready to use taxpayers' money to try to influence its citizens. The chair of the UK Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes is quoted as saying, 'Sometimes you just have to tell people what's best for them.'

The book ends with a chapter on the passionate opposition demonstrated by so many people in so many countries and groups, which has already had some influence on government policy, notably in Austria and Luxembourg, and has been able to exert sufficient pressure on the supermarkets, formerly staunch supporters of GM, to encourage some of them to exclude GM products from their 'own brand' products. Even the UK Rural Affairs Secretary has now said that there will have to be 'a further independent review to satisfy the government that GM technology has no adverse effects on human health or the environment'. That leads to interesting speculations about the definition of 'independent' and how to prove that there will never be any adverse effects from the release into the environment of completely novel genetic material.

**THE SIMULTANEOUS POLICY**, by *John Bunzl*. NEW EUROPEAN PUBLICATIONS, 2001. £9.95 (pbk), ISBN 1-8724101-20-0.

📖 *Reviewed by Richard Body*

THE author begins by telling us that Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* has been his inspiration, and the foreword is by Diana Schumacher herself. That may be enough for *FWR* readers to feel disposed to take up the book with a healthy prejudice in its favour. Although there is no furious denunciation of the europlot, the inference is clear: it is better for the nation states, no matter how small they are, to co-operate inter-governmentally than merge under some supra-governmental authority.

Nation states – even the largest – can no longer serve their people over a range of issues. For that, globalisation has been responsible in all its different forms. Free movement of capital in a world-wide market place has curbed the power of what were once sovereign governments. It has led to destructive competition. Competition on a small scale is fine; unbridled, unrestrained and on a global scale, it is the cause of two grave problems: the irreversible destruction of the planet's finite resources and the ever widening gap between rich and poor.

Politicians should stop pretending. They should admit they no longer have the power in their own countries to deal with these two problems of the world, for the very good reason that they now belong to the world as a whole. But will the politicians admit it?

Our author envisages a world-wide movement to force governments to face the reality of where the power now lies and to get them to agree, by way of inter-government agreements, to introduce policies enforced simultaneously.

Let's give an example. For 18 months I presided over an official inquiry into what extent the pesticides used in food production had an effect upon human health. After hearing a considerable amount of conflicting evidence – especially that from the United States – it seemed obvious that certain pesticides should no longer be used.

Some countries have banned their farmers from using them, but they cannot stop a food being imported from another country which permits the pesticide, and which gives the producer a competitive advantage when using it.

Around the world there are scores of organisations opposed to the indiscriminate use of pesticides. Let them unite to demand a simultaneous policy!

I suspect any reader of *FWR* could write out a long list of other issues that are growing urgent yet cannot be adequately handled by governments acting in isolation. All of these issues probably have NGOs, think-tanks, pressure groups, etc., which are engaged in these issues.

The simultaneous policy movement can link them all, together with all the other groups. Just imagine the total coalition that could be formed. To expect the coalition to speak with one voice on every issue is absurd. Besides, that is not essential. What is necessary, though, is for the coalition to persuade governments to recognise their powerlessness, and then to produce the simultaneous policies. Having agreed inter-governmentally, they could then be ratified by the parliaments of the world, directly answerable to the people. That makes it the democratic approach as well as the only one likely to succeed in solving the two problems of the world that are the most serious and urgent. ■



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## FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR

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***ON THE FACE OF IT what could be more reasonable than to sign a form petitioning the government to save thousands of jobs by keeping a local aerodrome open and in business when it is proposed to close it?***

The impact on the local economy is bound to be severe and so petition forms are on display in the local shops. But the aerodrome in question is an RAF transport station at Lyneham, from which RAF supplies and personnel are ferried around the world. So at a stroke one is confronted with one of the major economic/political and environmental problems of our time. There must be millions of people in the global economy who arrive at work at 9am on a Monday morning with no other objective but to make the most efficient means possible to kill their fellow human beings; planes, guns, tanks, bombs, rockets, nerve gas, biological poison capsules, mines, hand grenades and all the rest of the grisly panoply of modern war-making. So do we

sign this petition to ensure the 'jobs' of local people or not? Perhaps the Pope or the Archbishop of Canterbury might advise? For it is surely, above all, a moral problem.

I HAVE BEEN READING a US publication new to me called *The Match* which professes to promote what it calls 'ethical anarchism'. The word 'anarchism' itself is one I generally try to avoid using, if only because it seems to harbour more confusion of thought than any other in the language. And given the nature of the word perhaps it should, for in essence it is a one-word mantra used to convey whatever its user is disposed to utter. The essential function of a mantra is to yield an almost mystic sense of self-assurance and self-gratification to those who delight in repeatedly rehearsing it, whilst relieving them of any apparent obligation to think, since all the necessary thinking process is presumed to be embodied in it.

One page is given to expressing 'What Ethical Anarchists Believe' and begins by

asserting, wait for it, 'Government is an unnecessary evil'. Is it? I suppose if we all lived in isolated, self-sufficient, rural family units of the utmost material simplicity that might be a conceivable option, although it is worth noting that even families tend to become subject to their own internal pecking order and governing processes.

But the moment we step into a modern house with its needs for power supplies, water and sewage services and so on, we have sold the pass on this particular pipe-dream. We are involved willy-nilly in the processes of the market and all its ramifications of credit, currency, insurance, contracts, communication, employment, transport, schooling, medicine, pensions, taxes and so on and so on. And not least, of course, the processes by which all these matters are regulated to keep things going and to avoid contractees being robbed, defrauded or ruined.

So how do 'ethical anarchists' propose all this be carried on 'without government'? They do not say, they go great guns at rehearsing all the many indubitable abuses of government that are part of our 21st Century living day, but they are careful to avoid reference to any of its no less indubitable advantages.

There is an implicit assumption in the proposition that 'government is a necessary evil' that all of us all the time are well-disposed, socially responsible, friendly, outgoing, caring, sharing and co-operative individuals, that none of us would dream of doing anything to our own advantage at the expense of the general interest, that none of us would get drunk and become irresponsible, engage in a punch-up, or rape, rob, molest children, murder, cheat, lie, defame or wreak any kind of social havoc.

One must assume that no member of this anarchist editor's family has been defrauded of his life savings, been crippled for life by a road hog, been mugged of his wallet or mobile, been made ill by carelessly prepared restaurant food, or cheated out of his pension rights or raped or murdered. One wonders how an 'anarchist' social structure would deal with all this, the stuff of everyday life, in the absence of any form of government?

The attentive reader may well begin to be impatient; why bother with all this when it is so obviously idiotic? But the fact is, despite its evident absurdity there are a great many well disposed and intelligent people, especially young people, who regard this sort of piffle as a serious contribution to the political debate; inadvertently and by implication and without realising it, 'Fred', a car driver incidentally, (sic!), who edits this lively and entertaining journal, has hit the nail right on the head; the alternative movement, under whatever name it marches, has not the remotest idea where it is going and has not even begun the vitally necessary task of doing its own homework. If government today is so top-heavy and involving us all, *inter alia*, in degrees of ecological mayhem that involve something akin to the collective suicide of the human race, how do we begin to control it and its workings? Not a single university or any other educational institution anywhere in the world is focused on this problem, and in default of the multi-faceted research programmes that are needed I rather think that if 'ethical anarchism' ever seriously surfaced it would scarcely fail to prove to be yet another 'unnecessary evil'.

I NOW HAVE A LODGER, a local lad of about 20 who is something of a pack leader for the

youngsters of the village. His family are my near neighbours and it was actually his Mum's idea he should move in after my last robbery. He tells me he sleeps with a knife under his pillow, which is assuring somewhat. I was even more assured when he told me that despite sleeping at the other end of this large house he could hear any movement. He claimed he could even hear me turning over in bed.

But returning one cold dark wet night I found he had locked me out. Nothing could rouse him, not stones or a long pole banging on his window, so at 2am I used my mobile to ring his Dad. Bruce, like Anita his wife, is an absolute sovereign of a neighbour and in no time he gained access with a ladder through a bathroom window. By now I think we were both beginning to worry that Marc might have had some kind of seizure, and might even be no longer with us; but when we entered his bedroom he was sleeping as peacefully as a two-year-old in his cot after a really nourishing feed. We did not bother to wake him. In many ways he is an exemplar of modern youth, what with his girlfriend problems, his clubbing, his addiction to different kinds of crisps, (packets of which he buys by the dozen) and his general aversion to anything resembling real food such as fruit or a salad. He is very much a child of his time, a fact displayed above all, perhaps, by his addiction to a form of amplified noise which I have to confess appears to bear some relationship, albeit vestigial, heavily disguised, esoteric and downright murderous, to music. If I play discs such as a Brahms or Tchaikovsky symphony, he recognises it immediately as the background to a film or a TV programme he has seen. To humour me he will sometimes put on a disc of some-

thing for which I may have indicated a preference; such as the third act of *Die Walküre*, (surely the most passionate opera music ever composed), but torment through repetition is an experience which he has yet to embrace.

TWO NEIGHBOURS CAME TO DINNER the other evening. I gave them cheese-toasted polenta and salad for starters, followed by bouillabaisse, jacket potatoes, chopped spring cabbage with tomatoes and finely chopped celery, plus another veg dish of chopped peppers, grated celeriac, leeks and thinly sliced carrots, followed by home-made apple and damson jam turnover with cream. I mention these details if only because I am frustrated when they are omitted when meals are mentioned. I was reading of the memoirs of a Soviet general at the battle of Stalingrad who described how he made a lightening visit to his rear headquarters and was given a superb dinner. Good. But what actually did he eat? The outcome of the battle may well have hinged on the state of his digestion! And think of the local colour these details would have added to the picture. But, to resume, this well-informed and liberal-minded couple rather shocked me when the man, a newly-elected parish councillor, said he disagreed with my opposition to EUrope. Why? Because the USA has become a menace to world peace, and a strong Europe is needed to restrain its power. This seems a quite new dimension to the debate. Hitherto EUrope has been championed on the grounds that it would achieve peace and prosperity (and that anyway joining it was 'inevitable'). There is no need here to explain how it will quite inevitably achieve the precise opposite, but now the plea is

increasingly heard that we need a rival superpower to stop ourselves being swamped by the USA. What this sort of talk ignores is that since the governments of all the major European powers are beyond the effective control of their citizen electorates, an amalgamation of all of them can only result in a monolith of US proportions able to discount or manipulate citizen influence decisively in terms of war/peace/economic/expansion/ecological terrorism or any other major form of misbehaviour. I wanted to tell them, but there wasn't time, of the elderly German who in his salad days had been an enthusiastic member of the Hitler Youth. 'What hurts most,' he said sorrowfully, 'is the way I failed to ask questions and passively allowed myself to be used.' Do we learn anything from history?

AFTER MY GUESTS HAD GONE I made for bed only to find someone had thrown stones at

my window and broken one of its panes. I am due to be a witness in the trial of the thieves who broke into my home some weeks ago, and can only conjecture that by seeking to rubbish my reputation with absurd allegations and damaging my home there is a hope that I will be forced to flee before the trial. Well, they do not frighten me in the least and neither do they make me feel vengeful. I have too much else to preoccupy me. This behaviour is really part of the malaise of our time. Without being able to articulate beyond swearwords people sense they are being got at and feel a deep sense of frustration and anger which must find an outlet somewhere.

IT WAS MY GUEST, as he was leaving, who told me of the man who said he was always being accused by his wife of being unable to make up his mind. 'I don't know,' said the man, 'whether that is true or not.' ■

### **HOTPOINTS: KASHMIR**

Once Kashmir is free, it will break up India. India is not one nation. It has 18 official languages. It has tried to keep Kashmir by deploying over 400,000 troops there since 1947. It has fought three wars with Pakistan over it and it has spent hundreds of thousands of rupees to maintain its illegal occupation against the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Every day 15-20 people are killed in Kashmir, including Indian soldiers, and the Indian Army has suffered great personnel losses. Five hundred were killed in a recent confrontation and 300 of these were Sikh soldiers. India is making the Sikhs scapegoats. The time is right now for the Sikh nation to wake up and establish a sovereign, independent Khalistan. Otherwise, India will continue to get Sikh soldiers killed in Indian-sponsored wars and also kill the Sikhs by using the Indian army and police. Since the attack on the Golden Temple, India has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs and 52,268 are rotting in jails, according to the government's own figures.

**KALSA BAGI YAN BADSHAH**

The Council of Khalistan

## Fourth World News



RESEARCH carried out over the last 14 years shows that better access to contraceptives and family planning fails to reduce, and in some cases actually increases, the number of teenage pregnancies. • **China** has purchased a Russian aircraft carrier for £17m and plans to use it as a template for making its own aircraft carriers. • Domestic incidents accounted for one quarter of all violent crimes in **London** last year. • Makers of the third generation contraceptive pill are being sued by a group of over 100 women who claim that the pill has caused strokes, permanent disability and death. • The war in **Afghanistan** continues, with heavy US casualties reported. • **British** children are at risk of suffering from tooth decay and other mouth related diseases because they are not eating enough cheese. (According to the British Cheese Board.) • For the first time since the invention of the wheel sales of mobile phones have fallen. • BAE Systems, a giant war machine manufacturer, has agreed to sell 66 Hawk jets to the **Indian** Air Force for around £1 billion. • Cancer research reports indicate testicular and colonic cancer are caused by the excessive consumption of dairy produce. • A woman in **Nigeria** is set to be stoned to death for having an illegitimate baby. • An election has been won in **Zimbabwe** amid fierce allegations of corruption. • The **UK** government proposes to bring back police powers to 'stop and search' to help combat the problem of growing street crime. • Five men from **Cairo** were sentenced to three years in jail for being homosexual. • Hundreds of prisoners on death row in the **Caribbean** could escape execution, after law lords decided that the mandatory death penalty is unlawful. • According to recent studies **London** is dirtier than Lusaka, the Zambian capital, and is as run-down as Kingston, Jamaica. • Scotland

Yard is trying to take the best police officers from around the **UK** and bring them all to London to tackle the city's crime wave. • The size of **Britain's** nature reserves must expand to allow for the effects of global warming, according to a Texan professor of conservation biology. • A new disease alert has been sounded in **Northern Ireland** after cattle on more than 40 farms died from a toxin-causing botulism which can be fatal to human beings. • **Musicians** have won their battle against a EUropean Union directive to reduce noise levels in the work place. The directive would have meant hundreds of musicians would have had to play quietly or not at all. • Stricter EU controls on **vitamins** and dietary supplements may result in many products being taken off the shelves, causing huge problems for the 1,300 health stores in the UK. • Organic vegetable soup may help to protect against cancer, heart disease and strokes, according to scientists at a **Scottish** university. • According to studies in **Israel**, people who listen to dance music while driving are twice as likely to have an accident than those listening to slower music or no music at all. • **Scottish** yew trees that live for thousands of years are now in danger because of vandalism, land development and neglect. These are to blame for the loss many trees. • An **Antarctic** ice shelf the size of Cambridgeshire has disintegrated into the sea in little more than a month. • Five Russian soldiers and riot policemen have been killed in clashes with rebels in **Chechnya**. • **Indonesian** authorities have refused a visa extension for an Australian journalist for 'creating hatred among the people'. He had been critical of the government in reporting on human rights issues. • More than a third of **French** voters are set to abstain from voting in the next presidential election. – S.H.

## Fourth World News

