
FOURTH WORLD REVIEW

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

No. 117

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DONALD LIVINGSTON
Dismantling Leviathan



Who Kneads it?

PAUL KYESKU

Editorial:

THE CASE FOR GLOBALISATION



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THE CASE FOR GLOBALISATION

THE CASE for globalisation has been spelt out by no less a luminary than the Director General of The Institute of Directors, Mr George Cox.

What is impressive about his case is its ostentatious intellectual and moral vacuity. He declares globalisation is driven not by the activities of a few big corporations but by millions of 'us'. We who fly around the world, have packaged transcontinental holidays, use TV, mobile phones, drive cars, invest in international companies and so on. It is not, he declares, 'being brought about by a few great white sharks; it is the behaviour of vast shoals of herrings. To call for an end to globalisation,' he continues, 'is to call for an end to the weather. It is unstoppable.'

From this utterance, which to the unwary might appear to have enough superficial verisimilitude to suggest it might have some relationship with reality, it might be supposed that democracy was operating at full throttle; that many thousands of locally elected councils in all parts of the land had decided collectively to invest millions of our national currency to promote a colossally clever educational programme conceived to promote consumerism as the dominant leitmotiv of the nation's life, to make it a religion which would effectively displace all the traditional moral teachings with a gospel of hedonistic greed for material things, and for the grati-

fication for instant satisfaction of any whim, whether for fast travel, fast food, fast entertainment or even fast relationships.

This gospel would be promoted non-stop at all hours through all the main channels of communication, whether in TV programmes, tabloid and non-tabloid daily and weekly publications, on hoardings, sports players' shirts, by extravagant mass mailings through the public postal service, and any other means which might help to saturate the public consciousness with its satanic message.

It is a gospel which had no concern whatsoever with its consequences, whether in terms of a dangerous and tragic despoliation of the environment, of a total disregard of the colossal and mounting waste of finite resources, (which cannot fail to beggar our posterity), or of its criminal disintegration of social bonds, social relationships and social health.

This vast, remorseless educational programme, masquerading under the seemingly innocuous misnomer of 'advertising', designed to establish the acceptance of values and beliefs, of usages and imperatives, on a global scale has, of course, been successful beyond any dreams of avarice. Millions of 'us' have succumbed to its allure and are so effectively hooked on its evil message and the values it promotes, that no political leader of any colour would dream of challenging it, in the full knowledge that

any public attempt to do so would make any prospect of office derisory.

But who in fact promoted this vast perverse exercise in educational depravity which sustains the entire works of a commercial society? Who continues to do so? The elected councils, of whatever political colour, have been neither its promoters nor instigators, they have not even been consulted; like those they are nominally elected to represent, they are its victims. And victims to such an extent that they have even proceeded to embrace the victimisers.

Up and down the country these elected councils, where they have not already done so, are busy betraying their electorates by franchising entire town and city centres into the hands of private 'development' companies. These apostles of greed and civic mayhem in turn are busy transforming historic city centres, which have developed over the centuries to serve the varied and multitudinous interests of the citizen body, into vast, soulless, concrete 'shopping' malls.

Wittingly or otherwise, these elected councils have become the handmaidens of destructive forms of economic imperialism which are destroying the social fabric of the lives of those they have been elected to represent. They argue, as so often do parliamentarians busy endorsing other such moves on a national scale, that they are responding to the wishes of the majority. As indeed they are, for the global educational drive to instil the values of consumerist greed into people's lives so that they become the bedrock of their political assumptions has succeeded to the extent that it has become the global religion of the 21st Century.

The argument about 'representing the majority' overlooks two cardinal points. The first is that on a mass scale, (the qualification

is important), the power to fabricate and manipulate the views of the majority is decisive, and far from being in the hands of the majority is emphatically in the hands of a powerful strategically placed minority whose sole interest is self-enrichment. It is they who control the content of newspapers and TV programmes designed for a virtually powerless and all too gullible mass audience.

Totalitarian media

Secondly it needs to be noted that any deep concern for the well-being of society, for its moral and artistic vitality and its general workings, is also the concern of a minority, but a minority concerned with self-enrichment in cultural and even spiritual rather than material forms. This minority is able to voice its concerns, for the most part, only through the media controlled by the economic globalising minority, and the very structure of a mass society, which reduces the significance of the individual voice to a virtual nullity, means that the voice of the globalisers is always dominant to a degree which is essentially totalitarian. It is a point which indicates that on a mass basis democracy not only does not function but that it is quite unable to do so and that a mass democracy is simply an oxymoron. It is one which raises a major question mark over any radical attempt to influence the workings of such societies to any effective degree and it also helps to explain why we are in the midst of a global crisis at all, a crisis which, like global wars and economic disasters, people do not want and cannot prevent.

Mr Cox goes on to declare that '... no other system, apart from capitalism, has shown itself capable of generating wealth and raising living standards'. And he proceeds to argue that poverty is a problem for

countries untouched by globalisation and which, because of undemocratic governments, have excluded themselves from the benefits of international trade. 'They are not afraid of globalisation,' he asserts, 'they are afraid it will pass them by.' How indeed could they not be with the overwhelming success of the global educational campaign to promote it? It should be noted how Mr Cox uses phrases like 'generating wealth' and 'raising living standards' in the casual manner common to globalising propaganda when all he really means is generating more material goods and higher standards of consumption. It was Ruskin who pointed out 'There is no wealth but life...' and higher consumption standards are all too often at the expense of a drastic collapse of standards of living, as any of those prevailing in any 'developed' society are such a tragic witness. Or does Mr Cox think the mass production of chemicalised junk food, to take a single example, with its concomitant of the prevailing and constantly increasing epidemic of cancer now prevalent in all such societies, is preferable to the uncontaminated fare of former times before the global merchants began to dominate food markets?

But behind this affirmation is the incredible assumption that the elevation of the inflated consumption standards now experienced by a modest minority of the world's population, mainly in Europe and North America, can even begin to be shared by the entire world. What on earth does Mr Cox read apart from *The Economist* and other organs of capitalist global propaganda? What statistics is he consulting about available reserves of finite resources? About the increasing disparities between rich and poor even in the nominally 'rich' countries? Of the figures for bodily and mental sickness?

Of crime? Of homelessness? Of suicide rates – especially among the young? Of the devastation to the environment which alone is urging that far from pursuing 'growth' in absolute terms we should be putting the brakes on it now, now, now as an urgent precondition for the survival of civilisation?

Civic control

The hollowness of Mr Cox's arguments may need no emphasis; what it does provoke is the need for those who grasp this hollowness to spell out a positive answer to the savage mendacity of global capitalism, and on this radical literature and radical debate is still tragically inadequate.

It really is not enough to cry woe, woe to the awesome consequences globalisation as currently promoted, nor is it enough to spout 19th Century nostrums, whether about land, money or industry, when the current malaise indicates all too clearly it is the scale on which things are organised that is so overwhelmingly determinative; nor is it enough to urge the ineffabilities of moral precepts which are part of humankind's millennia-old moral heritage, when mass conditions preclude the effective application of any moral concern whatsoever. What is needed is a concerted drive to put economic and other forces, whether in private or public hands, under forms of civic control so that they become answerable and responsive to the moral judgements of human-scale citizen bodies.

At present there is no research group dedicated to working on the multitudinous problems involved in such an approach for an alternative society and Mr Cox's outpourings have at least the merit of pointing up the urgent need for one. It is indeed the need of the hour. ■

DISMANTLING LEVIATHAN

Donald Livingston

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ECONOMIC EXCHANGE is always *Embedded in a cultural landscape of non-economic values, which impose restraints.*

Blue laws limit trade on Sundays, medieval Christendom prohibited charging interest on money, and some think no decent society could legalise the sale of drugs or firearms. If someone disagrees with these restraints, it is because he rejects the moral ideas they express, not because he favours 'free trade'. Within the restrictions imposed by usury laws, trade flourished in medieval Europe; indeed, it gave rise to the practices we call 'capitalism' today. Those who value liberty may seek to minimise these constraints, but economic relations cannot exist outside of non-economic restraints.

The failure to understand this leads to a number of modern superstitions. One is the illusion that there are economic experts in the way there are experts in medicine or chemistry. But economics is not a predictive science, because it does not have deterministic laws. We act on the basis of our knowledge, and no one can predict future knowledge (to do so would be already to possess it), much less predict how people would react to this knowledge. No one, for example, predicted the stagflation of the late 1970s. So-called economic laws hold only as long as the shared non-economic restraints obtain.

Adam Smith correctly observed that it is from the self-interest of the butcher, baker, and brewer that we expect our dinner, not from their benevolence. Friedrich Hayek won a Nobel Prize by refining Smith's argument to demonstrate that the planned economies of socialist and communist countries were doomed to failure because no central agency could ever possess the knowledge needed to achieve what a market can accomplish without planning. This solid insight into a part of social experience would be transmuted by some into a doctrine of the whole: the ideology of *laissez-faire* capitalism.

How did communist and national-socialist regimes come to be? They emerged out of a Europe whose social order had been shattered by World War I, a war that was largely the work of liberal regimes. Milton Friedman and others have praised the period from the congress of Vienna in 1814 to 1914 as the century of *laissez-faire* and, consequently, as the century with less war than any other in modern European history. But it was also the century of wars of unification and centralisation, in which smaller political societies of all kinds were crushed into vast states. This period was a century of relative peace only if the concept of war is limited to conflicts between large nation-states. But if we consider the wars of unification in Germany and Italy, the sup-

pression of secessionist movements in Latin America, the American war to suppress the secession of the southern states (the bloodiest war since the Thirty Years' War), and similar wars of unification elsewhere – not to mention global imperialism – we must conclude that it was one of the most violent centuries in the history of European civilisation.

The vast territorial states created by this runaway disposition to centralise justified themselves by claiming that they had cleared away petty, localist polities to make the world safe for cosmopolitan *laissez-faire*. But any power strong enough to destroy the political independence of the German principalities or the southern American states would not be content with merely playing the role of the 'night-watchman state' of *laissez-faire* fantasy. Like everyone else, the night watchmen had ambitions, and, with centralised power flooding in around them, they naturally graduated to estate management. When these oversized liberal leviathans collided in 1914, they left more corpses on the battlefield in four years than had been left in the two preceding centuries of war in Europe. The old saw that liberal regimes are not disposed to war is true only if liberalism is viewed not as a concrete practice but as an abstract idea, since abstractions, of course, cannot do anything. It is no exaggeration to say that the nineteenth century was a hundred years' war against smaller polities of all kinds in favour of unification, centralisation, and consolidation; and that the twentieth century was an eighty years' war between the giants created in the nineteenth century.

These disasters were the unintended long-term result of the disposition to centralise, first pursued with single-mindedness in the nineteenth century and justified

in part by *laissez-faire*. Centralisation led to a spectacular increase in economic liberty for the centralisers, a massive loss of economic liberty for the smaller polities crushed into large-scale liberal states, and the elimination of most economic liberty in the new socialist and communist states that emerged in reaction to the spectacular mismanagement of power by liberal regimes. Lord Acton and John C. Calhoun warned their liberal contemporaries about the evils of ritualistic centralisation, but no one listened. Their insights would later be given systematic shape in that school of economics known as 'public choice theory', which is associated with Nobel laureate James Buchanan.

Whereas Hayek, following Adam Smith, had explored the 'spontaneous order' generated unintentionally by individuals pursuing their self-interest, Buchanan discovered a principle of what could be called 'spontaneous disorder', generated unintentionally by the centralised governments required by vast-scale liberal states. Governments are disposed to grow at the expense of society by creating 'public goods' that benefit their clientele. The only way to prevent this is by a constitutional system founded on the principle of a veto, including the ultimate veto: secession. (James Buchanan has urged that the European Union include in its treaties the right of a member state to secede).

With this teaching, the 300-year adventure of Enlightenment liberalism comes full circle. Economic freedom may require not further unification but the division of liberal leviathans back into the smaller polities from whose destruction they violently emerged. Hayek, contemplating the clumsy behemoths of his time, observed that, in the

future, liberty might best be preserved in small states. This brings us to a question raised by Plato and Aristotle but largely ignored by modern political theorists: How large should a political order be?

Aristotle argued that everything in nature has a proper size, below which or beyond which it becomes dysfunctional. A cottage is not a small mansion, and a mansion is not a large cottage. The charm and beauty of both is lost when the size is out of scale. What is the human scale of political order? From Plato, Aristotle, and St Augustine down to the present, there has been remarkable agreement regarding the optimal size. A city-state of 50,000 to 200,000 is all that is necessary to produce a flourishing culture. Some would push the limit to 500,000, but beyond that nothing is gained. Experience confirms this. Athens (with 50,000) and Renaissance Florence (with 40,000) produced cultures that excelled in nearly every form of human endeavour and from which we still gain inspiration.

As the population of a city increases arithmetically, space increases geometrically. Problems of transportation, water, sanitation, crime, poverty, and corruption, which were easily handled on a human scale, increase dramatically as the population of a city moves into the millions. Vast bureaucracies are erected, often creating as many problems as they solve. Corruption and political alienation grow, and entire sections of the megalopolis (which can no longer be called a city in the traditional sense) are written off as blighted areas and resemble the results of carpet bombing. A megalopolis in the millions, such as São Paulo (19 million) or New York (8 million), requires more resources per capita to main-

tain the monster than would be required for a city of human scale, leaving fewer resources for the cultural luxuries that are the reason for the polity in the first place.

Cities of this dysfunctional size have appeared only recently. The largest cities during the Revolutionary period in America hovered at 30,000. New York did not gain 100,000 until 1820. The monster cities of the last 150 years are the creation of the centralised states in which they are embedded. Forty percent of Americans were on the farm in 1900; today, only around 2% remain. As the farmers disappeared, so did an entire order of villages and small towns. This shift did not occur merely because of 'free choice' or 'market forces' but because the rules were rigged to favour agribusiness and urbanisation. The message from the Department of Agriculture in the 1950s was 'Get big or get out'.

Since the history of such small states as Athens and Florence proves that states of vast scale are not necessary for human flourishing, some other justification must be found for their size. For this purpose, another economic superstition has been useful; namely, that economic integration requires political integration. This argument was used to justify the big 'unions' of the last three centuries: Great Britain, the nationalist union of France, the German federal union, the United States, the Soviet Union, and the European Union. But the scale of political integration has nothing to do with economic integration. Little Switzerland – one of the ten richest states in the world – is integrated into a global economy, but it is politically independent and has shown no interest in joining the European Union. The city-state of

Singapore is economically integrated with the world but has maintained political independence since seceding from the Malaysian Federal Union in 1965.

There is more economic freedom in small states because they must trade to survive and thus must allow fewer regulations on the economy. Large states contain a greater diversity of skills, labour and resources, and thus they can afford to impose onerous regulations that benefit special-interest groups at the expense of others. The tangle of regulations emerging from the European Union centralises the economy, reduces economic freedom and consumer choice, and benefits large-scale corporations that engineer the spirit-numbing uniformity of an increasingly mass culture.

The pursuit of economic liberty (what Hobbes called 'commodious living') through political integration is the one constant theme in the three-centuries-old story of modern politics. It is time that we rethink the entire project. The monster states created by modernity are not necessary for economic or political freedom or for the

flourishing of culture; taking their history as a whole, they are responsible for spectacular losses of both. Aristotle is right: the presumption must be on behalf of states of human scale. Extensive political integration is good only for domination and war. Although it is true that size is sometimes needed for defence, federations of small Greek city-states defeated the monster empire of Persia, federations of mere tribes defeated the Soviets in Afghanistan, and Vietnam defeated the United States. No country since Napoleon has thought it prudent to invade Switzerland and face her well-trained citizen army. Does anyone think that the large states of France, Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy, Japan, and Britain were safe places to live in the last century? Is the United States a safe place to live today? With a military presence in every corner of the globe, the American regime is suffering the fate of all empires whose reach has extended beyond what prudence can peacefully hold. ■

This article originally appeared in the January issue of Chronicles.

Poverty, of course, has always been the lot of the majority of mankind: but misery, a helpless condition of utter degradation, as a permanent feature of life in town and country, associated with and promoted by the twin evils of unemployment and limitless urbanisation – this is a new phenomenon in the history of mankind, the direct result of modern technology thoughtlessly applied.

E.F. Schumacher

Membership of any mass organisation inevitably disempowers the individual since the scale of such membership creates a powerful central controlling organisation at the price of annihilating the significance of the individual member.

John Papworth

Our job as partisans of The Fourth World is to light the beacon so that in fullness of time people can dance in peace of freedom on the hilltops.

John McClaughry

WHO KNEADS IT?

Paul Kyesku

The author is a freelance writer specialising in environmental management and technology.

BACK IN the mid-1970s, when for most of us 'loaf' meant 'white sliced', London-based Andrew Whitley quit broadcasting for baking, opening a small-scale organic bakery to support a restaurant and craft chop in Melmerby, Cumbria.

Inspired by a mix of self-sufficiency and some traditional Russian baking techniques, Whitley used a brick oven fuelled by wood. 'In reality, there was little choice of fuel,' he explained. 'There was a poor supply of electricity, no mains gas and oil was too expensive. I'd also researched designs of oven and found that the retained heat of a massive, wood-fuelled structure produced excellent bread. Furthermore, wood is a renewable resource, unlike gas or oil.' And, he might have added, 'carbon neutral', too.

Two decades on, and The Village Bakery, as it's known, has exceeded all of Whitley's expectations by becoming a significant supplier of supermarkets north and south – thanks to some imaginative 'technology transfer' which has seen its techniques adopted by larger commercial outfits.

Its success has confounded the trend of recent years, which have seen the small 'craft bakeries' which used to supply most of our bread swept aside by the so-called 'plant bakeries' – large bread factories which now account for four-fifths of the market. (Of the remainder, in-store bakeries

in supermarkets account for 15%, with just 5% of bread supplied by the craft bakers.)

If the plant bakeries sound rather unappetising, it is hardly surprising. The bread they produce is a triumph of intensive production and chemical engineering. The aim is to make fresh bread for anyone, anywhere, anytime – or, rather, bread that appears to stay fresh. Due to complex patterns of manufacturing and distribution, the loaves from these factories can travel hundreds of miles before we get to eat them. The industry is also highly energy intensive. Some types of loaf, for example, are produced by a process known as 'double baking'. Here, loaves are partly baked, frozen, transported in refrigerated trucks, defrosted at their destination and then baked again – all to give the customer the impression of 'fresh' bread.

Industrialised baking also relies heavily on additives. Indeed, the Bakers Federation goes so far as to state that 'newly milled flour without further treatment does not make good bread' – a comment that sits oddly next to many people's experience of home baking.

To those in plant bakeries, Whitley's venture must have seemed like a return to the dark ages. Yet the sheer quality of the bread, combined with a growing appetite for organic food, helped the Village Bakery prosper, and it soon began supplying both local shops and northern supermarket

chain Booths. It was sufficiently prosperous for Whitley to commission a new bakehouse, its oven fuelled entirely by local wood waste.

Next came a licensing partnership with regional bakers Bells of Lazonby, who developed a scaled-up, computerised version of Whitley's oven, combining the best of new and radical technologies to make a modern – but still wood-fired – version. The agreement stipulated the use of organic ingredients, and Bells now use the process to make their own branded organic loaves, as well as Village Bakery bread. Results are encouraging. 'We were able to meet our growing demand,' enthuses Whitley, 'while Bells saw their turnover increase by 35%'.

Bells have since become a major shareholder in the bakery, and they has gone on to form a similar partnership with Nicholas and Harris Ltd, an independent bakery in Basingstoke, so fresh organic bread from

wood-fired ovens is now supplying southern branches of Waitrose, Sainsbury's and other big chains. Bells are hoping to add further partnerships, all of them specialising in organic bread, and all aimed at supplying shops on a purely regional basis. This is another contrast to the plant bakery model, which increasingly features large bread factories specialising in a single variety of loaf, and then exporting it all over the country, racking up food miles aplenty *en route*. With most supermarkets at least starting to pay lip service to the notion of cutting down food miles, the Village Bakery's approach looks less and less like a hippie throwback, and more like a business model for the future. ■

This article was first published in Green Futures (www.greenfutures.org.uk). Other contacts: paul.kyesku@one-step-writing.com; www.village-bakery.com; www.booths-supermarkets.co.uk

CRISIS COMMITTEES

In Argentina, it seems, some lessons have been learned. While the government struggles to get back into the good books of the bankers and the US treasury, many Argentine citizens have other ideas. John Jordan and Jennifer Whitney, two activists who have recently returned from Argentina, have documented what they saw there in a new pamphlet – Que Se Vayan Todos: Argentina's Popular Rebellion.

The most exciting story is the growth of neighbourhood assemblies – spontaneous, organised gatherings of local people getting together to do for themselves what the government and corporations have failed to do. There are over 200 of them in Buenos Aires alone. They make decisions on local issues – ranging from healthcare to postal services to taxation – by way of real, street-level debates focussed on people's needs.

The people of Argentina, declare Jordan and Whitney, are rediscovering direct democracy and local economic control. The pair quote an assembly member, an accountant, who explains the assemblies' appeal: 'People reject the political parties. To get out of this crisis requires real politics. These meetings of common people on the street are the fundamental form of politics.' Not quite what the IMF had in mind.

◆ For free copies of Que Se Vayan Todos, e-mail Jordan at artactivism@gn.apc.org

With acknowledgements to The Ecologist.



FORUM

MISGUIDED

THE Editor and Sir Richard Body are to be congratulated on their stimulating editorial and rejoinder (*FWR* Nos. 115/6, 'The New Radicalism' and 'Is Our Editor Right?'). But as the founder of Simultaneous Policy, which Sir Richard kindly described as 'the alternative' to the Editor's own proposals for confronting our global crisis, may I suggest a timely injection of 'Schumacher thinking' into the debate? For what we must surely recognise is that different problems require different approaches; each needs its own 'appropriate technology'.

Simultaneous Policy (SP), as many know, is a means for dealing with *international* and *global* problems such as global warming, the re-regulation of financial markets, increased taxation and regulation of transnational corporations, etc. Indeed it is an appropriate technology that citizens the

world over can use to campaign effectively for the implementation of *any* policy which cannot presently be implemented unilaterally by any nation or single group of nations for fear of uncompetitiveness, capital flight, job losses, etc. But is SP appropriate for dealing with *national* and *local* problems? No! And that is why we also need appropriate technologies for issues which demand local democracy. That, indeed, is why we also need the Editor's proposed Crisis Committees and other forms of national and local action.

If our Editor was ever wrong, therefore, it is not in his proposal for Crisis Committees *per se*. What is misguided, I suggest, is to propose them as a solution for our *entire* global crisis when they are manifestly inadequate to dealing with vast swathes of it. What impact, after all, could a

Purton Village assembly have on global warming other than adding yet more hot air? But by the same token, what could SP contribute to the better management of Purton's local amenities? In both cases: zilch.

Why oh why, I ask myself, after so many of us have benefited from the insights of Schumacher, do we insist on confusing the very nature of the problems we confront and consequently attempt to use the wrong tools to deal with them? Schumacher rightly pointed out that for different jobs we need different tools. 'For his different purposes man needs many different structures, both small ones and large ones, some exclusive and some comprehensive', and concluded that 'We need the freedom of lots and lots of small, autonomous units, and, at the same time, the orderliness of large-scale, possibly global, unity and co-ordination'.

To confront our global crisis, therefore, surely we need lots and lots of local Crisis Committees (and other such local and national groupings) working on local and national problems *and* we need SP for dealing with the global and international problems. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive but are entirely complementary and equally necessary. We can, and must, urgently pursue both. And what's more, each of us need not choose between them. We can each adopt SP *and* join our local Crisis Committee!

John Bunzl

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We do not solve the problem of the giant abuse of power by ignoring it. Simultaneous or any other proposals to change anything on the interna-

tional scene are simply pie in the sky when we have no power to influence. If we have any such influence where is the evidence? Such proposals ignore that those in high places, whether in cabinets or boardrooms, act as they do because they must. If Blair opposed the EUroplot he would be out in six months, as Mrs Thatcher was. If he opposed industrial growth he would be out; if he promoted public instead of private transport he would be out. Similarly any boardroom member who proposed any policies involving a reduction of company profits out of regard for the public weal would be ousted, if not by his fellow members then by the company shareholders or the stockmarket or the bankruptcy court. It seems idle to speculate on what we would do with power if we had it when the problem is precisely that we do not have it. – Ed. FWR

ENDORSEMENT

COULD I endorse one of the ideas from Angela Bates in the last issue, ref. a map so that we readers can get together and not feel so isolated with our views and then as she suggests set up an Academic Inn?

Doris Millward

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POLISH SOVEREIGNTY

THANKS for sending me your periodical, from time to time I make some quotations from it (translated into Polish) and place it in my articles in a few of Polish patriotic periodicals, saved from being handed over to the German press giants. We calculate that some 90% of all the Polish press is in German hands. Exactly as it is in the Czech Republic. German Europe Rising!

I have just finished translating the book *Fascist Europe Rising* (by Rodney Atkinson) into Polish. The content is shocking, but

even more shocking is that exactly the same thing happened to Poland in 1989-2002. We are in fact a German European colony, our Constitution contains an article which says that the 'Republic of Poland can give up a part of its sovereignty to foreign institutions'. So the clowns who govern this country are like other clowns governing some other equally 'sovereign' countries...

Certain extremely right-wing (almost fascist!) Polish politicians write openly 'when Poland is within the EU, then we shall be in a similar situation to such countries as Lithuania and White Russia and we shall support their aspirations to join the EU, and then we shall extend our Polish cultural space' (!). This politician uses Hitler's expression '*Lebensraum*'!

Dr Jerzy Wielunski

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SECRET

THE Europlot would seem less of a plot if the media would tell us what is being decided for us, by whom and why. As things stand, the EU is like a secret society. No wonder it arouses suspicion.

Allan Bula

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NETWORKING

A PARTICULARLY stimulating and interesting double issue (*FWR* 115/116). How to get power back to a local level? I see it as needing a mixture of disobedience (e.g. tax refusal), self-sufficiency in basic needs (food, shelter), and controlling our addiction to speed. As Ivan Illich pointed out in *Energy and Equity* (1974), most of the population is on a treadmill, wasting their lives, to make machinery that speeds up the

motion of a richer minority. We must learn to live in smaller spaces – Illich thought bicycle speeds would be the optimum.

It will have to be a gradual retrenchment. I'll have to wean myself from visits to family and friends in USA, Austria and Russia, as well as those in England over 100 miles away. But people now assume some God-given right to travel as far and as fast as they can afford. Reduced speed might be a beginning. There is now a 'Slower Speeds Initiative', sadly rather slow in getting itself recognised more widely.

Then, again, it's communication. We are constantly brain-washed by mass media. Yet local media is usually uninspiring, and mostly owned by giant corporations too. Crisis Committees might begin with publications for local circulation, networking between areas, and relaying the best ideas from national/international sources.

Roger Franklin

*Tickmorend House, Nuclear Free Zone,
Horsley, Stroud, Glos GL6 0PE*

EMPOWERMENT

I'M sitting in the Arthurian exhibition where your voice can be heard reciting Tennyson on the video. The latest copy of *Fourth World Review* is in front of me and your editorial (not too long at all!) inspires me to write.

What you say is absolutely right, we have to empower local communities. I think we need more people like you writing articles in local papers and magazines, because reading your editorial has given me new courage and hope to fight our local battles here. Ordinary people like me need reassurance that they can win and that is where you thinkers could have a great role to play.

Maria Parsons

Slaughterbridge, Camelford, PL32 9TT

LENGTH?

REGARDING the comments in *Spectator* (FWR 115/116), do not cut the length or the style of your editorials. Those urging you to do so would wreck the journal.

Goderic Bader

*Scott Bader Commonwealth, Wollaston Hall,
Wellingborough, Northants NN9 7RL*

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL!

THE lessons from Europe indicate that the best way to improve public services is to hand them over to local government. Tony Blair's second term will, other than recent anti-terrorism events, in large part be measured against his stated aim to raise Britain's health spending to the European average. Blair claims to be embarking on a 'radical' new direction in public service reform by opening the way for greater private sector involvement. Yet, a marginal increase in private sector participation is neither new nor radical.

A political culture that can only talk about public service delivery in terms of private versus public sectors or high versus low spending, is in no position to draw intelligent lessons from Europe. Far from being over-centralised, most public services elsewhere in Europe enjoy a degree of freedom from central control which is unimaginable in the statist Whitehall tradition which has so long dominated public service delivery.

The lesson is clear: an improvement in the delivery of public services is intimately linked to the political and economic powers of local government.

Nick Worth

*Centre for Future Studies, Stelling Minnis,
Canterbury, Kent CT4 6AQ*

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.

PLAY?

YOUR consistent and beknighted role as icon is much valued, at least by me. While I rage and rant, I am often dismayed, discouraged and despairing. Rather than bore you, you may, should you wish, avail yourself of more than five years of essays at www.swans.com. Links are invited.

Under the long-term spell of Leopold Kohr, perhaps, and probably more in terms of inspiration than specifics, I can't help but notice the imploding corporate and other structures littering the mindscapes of the moment. Meanwhile, back at the trough, the unelected US president and his crew are undoing generations of work. What is there to do? What can be done? The impotence of rant, rave and rage is more manifest each day.

Re-think is critical. Gnawing away at such conundrums, I worry perception and perspective. Can those who operate solely on one dimensional or two dimensional planes grow, integrate, possibilities of third, fourth and other dimensions? Catch phrases: 'Trying to solve problems using the tools, techniques and thoughts which create them is silly.' 'The only way not to play is not to play.'

Milo G. Clark

PO Box 454, Pahoia, HI 96778-0454, USA

THANK YOU

I HAVE just visited your website and started to read *Fourth World Review* 112. The relief! Your editorial 'The Great Divide', hit the spot. I have been increasingly distressed by the ineffectiveness of my attempts to moti-

vate others to appropriate choices and behaviour in the light of the global crisis. Is it worth all the time and energy I have used, and the resources I've destroyed (e.g. trees destroyed for paper on which to alert about forest destruction for wood chipping)? If I'm honest I have achieved very little. In fact it feels like we are going backwards.

I have been at a crossroads. Should I continue with my support of activism, with all the loathsome (for me) things that it entails (writing submissions, plugging myself into technology, trying to persuade the unpersuadable)? Or do I follow my increasing understandings and yearnings to direct my energies to building a local sustainable community?

I have felt almost a moral obligation to continue to try to 'warn' people. I questioned whether it would be selfish of me to turn my back on those still 'stuck in it'. Especially as I'm aware what their true nature really yearns for, and how this has been historically undermined and ruthlessly manipulated against.

I've been very frightened about letting go of my activist role to fully focus on local sustainability. How can I trust that I might not be mistaken. Your editorial confirmed for me what I intuitively knew.

Rosie Meharry

6 Genevieve Rd, Bullaburra 2784, Australia

DIRECTION AND PURPOSE

READING Fourth World Spectator (FWR 115/116) I noted that two of your colleagues felt that the editorials were too long and too repetitive. I am inclined to agree with the first criticism, less so with the second. For those who receive the review regularly, it will already be clear what it stands for and I sympathise with an element of impatience.

For new readers, however, I think it is useful to have a succinct opening feature which epitomises the magazine's stance.

On the front cover you list what the magazine is for, from small nations to small fisheries. Perhaps that list, or individual components, might be expanded to answer the question 'Why?' This would establish the direction and purpose of the magazine. I think it is helpful, even for the converted on occasions, to be reminded of the basic philosophy, while features, letters and reviews give plenty of opportunity for providing more comprehensive coverage or making esoteric points.

Nigel Cartwright

12 North Close, Havant, Hants PO9 2TE

NEIGHBOURHOODS

ONE reason why we have such a scene of political confusion (and apparent indifference) is that we have at least three quite different political approaches being applied simultaneously to the same problems!

Firstly, there is the standard official party route conducted by regular elections of local councillors and MPs via wards and constituencies. The turn-out at elections clearly indicates marked decline of support, so much so that all parties are worried lest the Abstention Party becomes the biggest!

Secondly there is interest group politics. If you read the statements put out by London Mayor Ken Livingstone you will see him making a continual appeal to interest groups rather than to wards and constituencies. They include the Irish, the Afro-Asians, the Afro-Caribbeans, the gay and lesbians, the incapacitated – and women. This is the new political fashion also adopted with considerable success by the Socialist Workers Party (including the Socialist Alliance, Global Resistance and the

Stop the War Coalition). Their special groups include the trade unions, students and broad appeal non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty, Oxfam, War on Want, etc. No wonder they succeed!

So what's left out? The question now is this: Is there a personal-political dimension before us that is neither of the above? Are we just voters or impersonal members of large interest groups – and that is all there is to it? Or do we count as individuals with names and faces, hopes and fears, ideas and energy? And if we do so count, what are the structures that we can, or might, work through? Good question!

A neighbourhood can be a street, a group of streets, a small housing estate – usually with some focal point as in *EastEnders* and all the other soaps. They are entirely unofficial. A neighbourhood is simply an area which neighbours live and tend to recognise each other. It takes 20–30 neighbourhoods to make a community, usually based round a high street or market. It takes in all within walking distance thereof. It is largely self-sufficient in shops, services, police station, entertainment (including pubs and cafes), cultural facilities and, ideally, a town hall. Finally there is the region – in London's case, that of the Greater London Authority.

The thing about all the constituencies listed above is that they all have or can have a personal – person-to-person – base. People count, they are not numbers any more. That is what makes them different and a vital clue to the future.

Then there are, of course, the 32 London boroughs. Their trouble is that they are impersonal corporate entities that either ignore, or tend to ignore, communities and neighbourhoods – despite lip-service. Their

powers need to be decentralised to community town halls beginning with community councils, as are permitted under the 1997 Act from which, unhappily, London is excluded – something urgently in need of remedy by a Private Member's Bill. That is the outline of a radical new democratic structure, one of which all too many people are still unaware.

Peter Cadogan

*3 Hinchinbrook House, Greville Rd, London
NW6 5UP*

PSYCHO RESEARCH

OUR understanding of the paths that lead to intelligent actions is minuscule. The source of most of our problems as well as the solutions to them has always been the psyche. And we still have little understanding of the processes involved.

In seven years NASA has spent about \$100 billion exploring outer space. I would guess that during that same period no more than a few hundred million has been spent on exploring the psyche. How about a crash programme to promote psychological research? The thing we need most is to learn how to live peacefully together and preserve this planet! For one tenth of one percent of the NASA budget we could set up an Institute for the Study of Inner Space (ISIS) and work toward understanding human beings!

Also, I frankly did not understand your response about the EU (*FWR* 115/116). I've read Kohr off and on for years and if you are saying it won't work because the economic model is still pretty traditional, fine. But we have to start somewhere. And the project of uniting all these very different cultures and countries and making more internecine warfare unlikely is, in my opinion, worth doing no matter what the economic model! But I do agree with critics who object to the cen-

tralisation of power, which is probably one of your objections. That was not Monnet's view! And is not necessary for many issues.

I want to respond to your very interesting editorial and the equally interesting response by Richard Body. I agree and disagree with both of you! Not unusual given my natural bent to see several sides to most things.

There is no question in my mind about the seriousness of the situation, the importance of greed and the lust for power in the mix, or the importance of the roles that your groups and education can play in bringing

about the changes we'd like to see. And I like the idea of 'a new radicalism', which means going to the roots. Where I part company with you is where the roots of the problems lie! I tend to see it in terms of the individual. I certainly do not wish to denigrate the efforts of any of my fellow earth travellers who are working for change, whatever their approach! All are necessary and fruitful. And obviously individual and collective actions are inextricably entwined.

Barry Childers

30 Rue du Jura, Geneva 1201, Switzerland

Fourth World Online

We are delighted to find ourselves hosting more than 100 visitors a day at our *Fourth World* website and our web statistics show a doubling over the past few months with half our visitors coming from outside North America. At www.cesc.net you can get one-click access to five websites: *Radical Consultation*, *Crisis Committees*, *The Fourth World*, *League of Real Nations* and *Academic Inns*.

Online in Adobe pdf format for high quality downloading, printing and copying are *Fourth World Reviews 2001–2002*, *The Radical Hansard* and *Forum Papers* from last September's *Radical Consultation* as well as other goodies including *Kohr Online* from the *Leopold Kohr Literary Society* and the *Radcon Noticeboard* where key exchanges between the reformists and the radicals of the alternative movement are being posted.

As you browse the five websites you will find links to members of the *Radical Consultation Webring*, a *Who's Who* page with access to an online library of manuscripts by *Fourth World* writers and one-click access to the *Ecologist*, the *Nicholas Albery Foundation*, the *Independent News Collective* and to the ever increasing number of bookshops and publishers focusing on the crisis of power in global governance and the *sine qua non* of a human scale strategic response rooted in reclaiming village and parish power from trans-national corporations, local and state governments and the many other species of non-governmental global players now coalescing into a *One World Corporate State*.

Fourth World Online was thrown together in some haste to service the needs of last year's *Radical Consultation* with the help of some archaic Adobe Pagemill software. Over the next few months we will be upgrading our website architecture to support state-of-the-art archiving and commercial services. We need all the help we can get. So if you believe in the *Fourth World* and can provide the money or the skills, please get in touch with peteretherden@cesc.net as soon as possible.

insights...

I live on a fault line, next to wetlands where gas is stored. Planes fly over my head all day long and barely miss my little guest house. I breathe pollution daily and bathe in chlorine water. I eat genetically modified food and fry my brain with my cell phone. I eat diseased animals. I drive a sports utility vehicle (SUV) down the middle of narrow streets hoping to hit squirrels and small children. I am speaking for all the people whom I pass everyday on my way to work.

Dorsey Roe

Los Angeles, California, USA

Doctors must stop demonising 'inappropriate' human behaviour in an effort to sustain a narrow-minded status quo. And they must stop writing unnecessary prescriptions just to please their pimps, the drug reps, who wine and dine the good doctors to death. If we talked more about our problems and were more caring and supportive as a society in general, we wouldn't be so pathetically dependent on shrinks and chemicals.

Georgia Simone

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

I'm suffering from Dysfunctional Society Disorder, Over Input Disorder, and Opinion Influence Disorder. There is no mood-controlling drug that is able to mask these ailments.

Dave Bedicz

Guelph, Ontario, Canada

It used to be different when I lived in Romania, under the communist regime, with no TV at all and totally ignoring the official propaganda. Every day there was a new joke out about the communists. We knew how to demolish everything they fed us. I was free when I got here, only to be assaulted by the media.

Adrian Dobra

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Mourn not the dead
that in the cool earth lie...

But rather mourn the apathetic throng
the cowed and the meek

Who see the world's great anguish
and its wrong and dare not speak.

*from a poem written in prison by Ralph Chaplin,
a conscientious objector in World War I.*

Adriaan Nikken

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Here's a tip for handling a corporation that's been giving you grief. It's called 'the black loop of death'. Photocopy your middle finger displaying the international sign of obscene derision. Make two more copies and tape them all together. Choose a target fax machine. Wait until night-time, when you know it will be unattended, and dial it up. Begin to feed your long document into your fax machine. When the first page begins to emerge below, tape it to the end of the last page. This three-page loop will continuously feed your image all night long. In the morning, your victim will find an empty fax machine, surrounded by 2,000 copies of your finger, flipping the bird.

Harry Flood

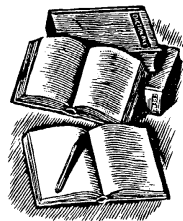
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

I read my own pledge of allegiance in school one morning: 'I pledge allegiance to the symbol of corporate imperialism, and to the consumerism for which it stands. One nation, über alles, with security and safety for all.' I thought it was funny but my teacher was furious. She told the principle, who told me I was in trouble for 'disrupting school activities'.

Andrew H


Richmond, Virginia, Canada

*With acknowledgements to **Adbusters**, 1243 West 7th Ave, Vancouver, BC, V6H 1B7, Canada. Tel: (604) 736-9401 Fax: (604) 737-6021 e-mail info@adbusters.org web: www.adbusters.org*



BOOKS

A NEW WAY TO GOVERN: ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETY AFTER ENRON, by *Shann Turnbull*. NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION, 6-8 Cole Street, London SE1 4YH, distributed by Central Books; mo@centralbooks.com or +44 (0)20 8986 4854; £ 4.99; 66 pages; ISBN 1 899 407 480.

 *Reviewed by Peter Etherden*


SHANN TURNBULL is a patron of The Fourth World and the author of *Democratising the Wealth of Nations*. His doctoral thesis demonstrated how to apply the science of governance to organisations and his paper *Limiting the Life of Organisations* was included in the Work Forum at last year's Radical Consultation. Turnbull's recent thinking has now been published as a small 12,500-word booklet in which he argues the need for institutions to be broken down into human scale ecological organisations.

A New Way To Govern begins where E.F. Schumacher left off 30 years ago in the final quarter of *Small is Beautiful* with his five essays on organisation and ownership. This forgotten part of the Schumacher legacy provides the key to understanding a career spanning 30 years that began with this son of a German professor of economics gaining fame as a high-flying academic expert on international finance before devoting some of the most productive years of his life grappling with the problems of scale and

power in the largest organisation in Europe in the 1960s...the British Coal Board.

Like Schumacher, Turnbull has understood that top-down command and control hierarchies cannot cope with the complexity and human diversity of modern large-scale organisations which, through their centralised power structures, are breeding grounds for corruption. And like Schumacher, Turnbull argues that a new breed of organisation is needed. But where Schumacher placed his hopes in the Scott-Bader Commonwealth and in common ownership (and Ayn Rand has a devastating critique of such schemes in her portrayal of the motor manufacturing company in *Atlas Shrugged*) Turnbull instead argues for organisations to design with nature and manage complexity through what he refers to as 'network governance' where power is decentralised and regulation of the organisation is locally managed and locally controlled.

THE INDIGENOUS WORLD 2001-2002, edited by *Diana Vinding*. THE INTERNATIONAL WORK GROUP FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS, Classensgade 11 E, DK 2100, Copenhagen, Denmark. \$20. ISBN 87-90730-70-4.

 *Reviewed by John Papworth*

IF HISTORY were to be seen as a record of revolutions there might well be a disposition to see 'globalisation' or the footloose,

burgeoning, war-power of the United States as the key markers of our times, but in this we would be wrong. The revolution of our times is undoubtedly that of the worldwide upsurge of indigenous peoples staking out claims for the oldest aspiration in the civilised record, for freedom, justice and equality.

But for freedom above all, the freedom sought by the slave revolts of Sparta and in battle after battle down the centuries against monarchical, religious, aristocratic, warlord or bourgeois presumption. And still the struggle is waged unceasingly and, despite everything, has today become the greatest revolution in all history.


But if the struggle proceeds apace, the counter forces of reaction have become ever more powerful, sophisticated and insidious, even as they abate nothing in their ruthlessness. In former times slavery was a matter of enslaving bodies; today, especially in 'developed' countries, it has become a consummate mass enslavement of minds. For the indigenous world it is often a struggle against both as company lawyers seek to usurp land or mineral rights of local people or to entice them into surrender with the baubles of affluence or the corruption of their leaders.

But the struggle proceeds and continues to grow under our noses. It is a fair bet that none of the mainstream media will bother to even notice this book, and the same goes, it must be said with regret, for much of the 'alternative' press. More's the pity, for the volume can only skim the surface of the events in each continent of this worldwide struggle for liberation, involving many thousands of identifiable indigenous peoples, of which, despite its 460 pages, only a large fraction can be reported on, which

will assuredly shape the political and economic future of this planet more decisively than any other of the factors which currently dominate the headlines.

This handbook is an essential workaday tool for those seeking a genuine transformation of the international scene; it should find a place on every radical bookshelf.

SOD 'EM AT GOMORRAH, by *Chris Wright*. NEW EUROPEAN PUBLICATIONS, 14-16 Carroun Road, London SW8 1JT; £12.95; 284 pages; ISBN 1-872410-22-7

 *Reviewed by Peter Etherden*

THIS is the first novel from the author of *A Sufficient Community* and *A Community Manifesto*. It has received mixed reviews but is very much a Fourth World novel. My 30-year-old daughter, who is ten years ahead of her generation, loved it but a Graham Green admirer of the older generation gave up after three goes. Whatever the book's shortcomings...and if the dialogue fails to come alive this may be a reflection on the characters rather than on the author...this is a masterly study of two cultures and is also the first novel I have come across with a LETS system in it. The novel is set ten years hence in the English suburbs. There has been no crisis and no collapse but things have not got any better. A teenage girl disappears and the hero of the book sets off to find her. In the process he finds himself. As a literary device it works extremely well allowing the author to explore the culture of the people Paul Ray refers to in *The New Political Compass* (www.culturalcreatives.org) as Cultural Creatives and New Progressives while contrasting their values and lifestyles with those of the suburban-based Guardianistas. Any more and I will spoil the story for you.

THE BREAKDOWN OF NATIONS, by Leopold Kohr, with forewords by Neal Ascherson and Sir Richard Body. GREEN BOOKS AND NEW EUROPEAN PUBLICATIONS. £9.95. ISBN 1-870098-98-6.

 Reviewed by John Papworth

I FIRST met Leopold Kohr by chance in a Cotswold valley about 40 years ago, when he and his partner Diana stopped at my cottage in the Slad Valley to enquire about a heap of stone in a hedge. They came in for tea, but I had not the remotest idea I was inviting in the most revolutionary savant of the 20th Century. We chatted inconsequentially and a day or so later Diana invited me to dinner at her house across the valley. I was by then a former Labour Party election candidate, utterly disillusioned with the mechanics of mass politics as I had seen them operating in my Salisbury constituency, and was beginning to affirm instead the need for the restoration of parish power and for a human-scale approach to politics everywhere. 'But', said Diana, 'That is just what Leopold is saying. You should read his book' and promptly gave me my much treasured copy of *The Breakdown of Nations*. Leopold by then had already returned to his Professorship of Economics in Puerto Rico.

Quite simply the book bowled me over. Here was somebody echoing my own deepest thoughts on our economic and political problems with a wit, grace and profundity I could never hope to match. Later, with Leopold's help, and that of Fritz Schumacher and the poet Sir Herbert Read (who had secured the publication of Leopold's book), I founded the magazine *Resurgence*.

Not to have read this book is to indicate, politically and economically at least, one is

uneducated. It is not simply a masterpiece, it is the greatest political masterpiece the 20th Century has produced, even if one acknowledges the immense debt we owe to R H Tawney for his magisterial *Religion and The Rise of Capitalism*.

One day there will doubtless be a Leopold Kohr Chair of Studies in one university or another, with an annual lecture and no doubt Kohr Scholarships available for worthy students, and the reason for asserting as much is that he has lifted the study of both politics and economics to those realms of classical scholarship to which they belong.

Instead of being bemused and immersed by and in contemporary preoccupations of current political or national identities he has elevated the subject to those lofty heights where the cool calm of reason prevails and where questions of abiding principle can be considered, and possibly resolved. For all that, the light touch of wit and the apposite quote from classical sources gives the work its own yeast of immediate access, making it one of the most endearing of all the works of scholarship I, for one, have encountered.

His thesis, as revolutionary as it is buttressed by ancient scholars such as Aristotle and Augustine, to say nothing of Lord Acton, is really expounded in the first two chapters. The first, which he titles 'The Philosophies of Misery', is a survey of the various theories that are frequently adduced to account for our social discontents. Having successively and successfully demolished them he then proceeds in the second chapter, 'The Power Theory of Aggression', to advance the main body of his theoretical approach. It is here that he advances his concept of 'critical magni-

tudes'. A stage of growth in the size of a political unit where it inevitably comes into conflict and explodes into violence.

What is impressive here is not only the argument itself as the scholarly subtlety with which it is propounded. One needs to emphasise that this is no fiery political tract bent on demolishing allcomers in order to affirm the one true path of salvation: at every stage of his reasoning the author is insisting on the need to think through until an intellectual outpost is secured which is unassailable and it is this which leads him to conclusions which are as revolutionary as any proposals in current political literature, without once straying from the path of ordinary common sense.

And what is he saying? He is not saying, 'Small is Beautiful', a popular but absurd assertion, for small is also capable of being both ugly and abhorrent, as well as boring; he is saying small is an essential element of balance, harmony and stability, and an entire chapter is given over to the implications drawn from the world of pure physics, the world of Einstein's 'Theory of Relativity', and of Plank's 'Quantum Theory', where he is concerned to emphasise that both, the foundation of our physical universe, are based on the sovereignty of small particles rather than on giant magnitudes.

The political implications here are profound and no pacifist will thank him (or me) for spelling them out. For he is asserting that it is not current policies of the great and lesser powers which should concern us, so much as the power on which those policies are based. He is saying that if evil consequences stem from overlarge magnitudes and the inevitable abuses of power that stem from them, then it is the factor of size

to which we must give prior focus. He goes further and declares political reform action which ignores the question of magnitudes is not only irrelevant but only too likely – and modern history is eloquent on the point – to be counter productive. It was this that so often led him to misquote Hamlet: 'To be small, or not to be at all, that is the question.'

Are you listening, you pacifists, peace activists, ecological warriors, Green Party militants, anti-EUro front-liners, human rights aficionados, globalisation opponents and all the other ardent campaigners for the great cause? Kohr is saying that, salt of the earth though you may be, the way forward is not just to rail against the inevitable evils of the big, and to propound reforms within the context of the big, but to negate the big and to promote the small.

It is an assertion which provokes a multitude of questions. What in detail are radical human-scale objectives in relation to money, finance and the stock market, to land usage and ownership, to public/private transport, to the power of television and radio to promote good or bad values on a mass scale, to militarism, to the arms trade, to scientific research, to natural resources, to immigration, to law and order to... let us stop there.

What is lacking here is any body concerned to promote research on these and many other questions and to furnish public consciousness with the kind of answers which will light up peoples lives and give them the sense of a direction which creates hope rather than despair, one that leads us all away from the current catastrophic crisis of power which now threatens to undo all that men and women have striven for down the ages. ■



FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR

EVERY POSTING of *Fourth World Review* seems to evoke a phone call from my old friend Howard Cheney. He tells me I am wasting my time, that the real trouble with the world is human nature, it is too corrupt and depraved, always has been, always will be; there is no hope, we are all doomed.

People who think I am a doomsday prophet should listen to Howard, if they can stand the strain. I often wonder how Margaret copes with him, but perhaps she just doesn't. I try to tell him that human nature built Salisbury Cathedral, abolished slavery, composed *The Marriage of Figaro*, raises billions of pounds for thousands of charities every year, and has produced *Fourth World Review* for decades, so cheer up. But the fact is Howard is never happy unless he is utterly miserable and infecting those around him with his misery. In his old age arthritis has made him immobile and even more irascible. I sometimes recall his generosity when I edited *Resurgence* and how he helped me to keep it going. I can't help loving the old devil. He is a really good man whom life has soured somewhat. TED DUNN on any reckoning was an outstanding man who dedicated his life to pacifism and peace. He wrote books, arti-

cles and pamphlets non-stop explaining his views on the evil futility of war and violence as a way of settling disputes; he was even a pacifist in the Hitler war, indicating to an exemplary degree perhaps how blind adherence to a principle can lead to a posture bereft of common sense. It seems to be one of the ironic contradictions of life that if you pursue any principle to extremes the result is invariably one of absurdity.

We kept up an intermittent correspondence over the years and he urged me to attend the launching of his latest book, *The Natural Laws of Peace*, of which the tenor of the title itself is enough to indicate from where he was coming and why he was going nowhere. But he had a heart condition which undid him before the event, so that the launching became an *ipso facto* memorial to his memory.

The launching of his book was held in Friends House, the Quaker Centre in London, a building with the customary confused architectural message of a well-intentioned, over-endowed cause not sure of its credentials, and which in this case seems to have emasculated itself in a quest for respectability at the price of principle. It does indeed have the air of a prosperous provincial bank which has not quite made it

to skyscraper status and has unwittingly made itself ripe for a takeover.

It was followed by a conference on 'An Alternative to War'. Despite excellent knockabout intros by Bruce Kent and Tony Benn, the only alternative put forward was by the author of these notes, who pointed out the need to find an adequate answer to the democratic conundrum of why, when the vast majority of people in the world wanted peace, we still had war?

Not a single person in that nearly 200-strong audience, mostly elderly, gentle, thoughtful, idealistic samples of humanity, making one feel privileged to be among them, took up my point, and if several people afterwards had not approached me to learn more I might have left feeling rather more depressed than I did. The event made me realise the enormity of the cliff we have to climb before the Kohr thesis and the extent to which the factor of scale is so fundamental to a realistic appraisal of political options, becomes part of mainstream political awareness.

Visionary idealism combined with high-minded pacifist principles and laced with political innocence is quite the most lethal cocktail that might be devised and accounts more for the befuddled ineffectuality of the quest for a viable peaceful social alternative to global capitalism than all the wiles of the globalisers put together. Ted wrote in the conviction he was concocting the wine of salvation when in reality, however unintentionally, he was distilling the brandy of the dammed.

AS A RELATIVE NOVICE at serious gardening I have been stumbling over one pitfall after another. One is the time it absorbs; there is always some job or other needing to be done immediately. It has been a heavy rainfall year so far and two assaults on my

handiwork have been pronounced. One is slugs and snails; they can consume a row of infant veggies overnight. A friend advised placing containers of beer at strategic points; she said the snails would get drunk and drown, but when I tried it the dog got in first and licked up the lot. Another friend suggested used coffee grounds, so I applied some to my lupin bed. It had some effect but then the lupins began to succumb to aphids, millions all over leaves and stems. The other menace is something called 'bindweed'. It grows faster than any growth I know. In a week it will smother a young fruit tree or displace a row of runner beans. Yet a third menace is my new dog, a sort of border terrier pup called Tempé who does not hesitate to trample on any planted growing thing at all. I took her to the local club but they said 'no dogs' and were adamant even though I pointed out it was a bitch. So I used to tie her up in the porch, but she protested so noisily I have had to find another place where one can relax and have a game of pool.

THERE IS nothing like a good murder, especially of children, especially in August, to sell newspapers. So it has been front page banner headlines for a fortnight, not only in the tabloids but in the one-time heavies. I used to suppose that progress would involve *The Sun* becoming more and more like *The Times*, but what do you call a process where *The Times* becomes daily more like *The Sun*? In the pub the landlord was declaiming his determination not to allow his 14-year-old boy to take on a paper round, (£25 a week but involving a 6am rising) because 'you never know what can happen to kids nowadays'. I suggested, statistics being the awkward things they are,

that any child was ten times more likely to be killed or maimed for life in a road accident than of being nefariously abducted. He seemed to think I was being merely inconsequential. It now seems the murder of these two small girls was the work of someone clinically mad, which in a way is some sort of relief; the idea that anyone sane would do such a deed seems so much worse.

WWOOF is the rather off-putting acronym of World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. I seem to recall publishing a letter in *Resurgence* in the sixties which launched the whole scheme, which was originally for working weekends on farms. It is a flourishing concept now with its own magazine and an active international membership. To boost fund raising they have recently sought charitable status. You might suppose that the obvious social advantages of the scheme with its rural educational facilities would impel immediate approval, and even some kind of civic award. Instead they are plagued with paperwork and bureaucratic nosy-parking as though they were bent on blowing up Parliament. Anyway good luck to them; their address is PO Box 2675, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1RB.

I NEVER IMAGINED I would find myself publicly singing a madrigal; I had always supposed that sort of activity was for the pros at Covent Garden or the Metropolitan Opera. But the musical soiree given by Philip and Gloria Pilkington in their mews cottage a stone's throw from Paddington Station was just superb in every way, hosts, company, music, refreshment, the lot. Some of the company played a Haydn piano trio and then a Beethoven trio in E-flat, which had me thinking there must be something

in this chamber music stuff after all. Then over dinner two young ladies sang madrigals and suddenly I realised that I also knew one, I had learned it in my orphanage childhood when I was ten when attending a local elementary school. So when I began to sing, 'I will give my love an apple...' the ladies joined in and I found I still remembered the whole charming 16th century little ditty by heart. 'Elementary School' is a real bureaucratic putdown, a categorisation for the lowest educational stream of its time; today those who continue to undermine civilisation by assuming it is normal to usurp the right of local communities to run their own schools, give such schools another name – primary perhaps, but do children in them learn to sing madrigals?

AND THEN THERE WAS that lunch at the Royal Overseas League where Diana Schumacher hosted a Canon from a London cathedral, an ardently committed peaceworker, a youngish admin bloke from the Henry George Foundation and your scribe. Listening to the talk I was struck by the extent to which we all seem to establish parameters of ideology in our minds which no amount of alternative approach talk can succeed in shifting. I suppose the young man will die one day with Henry George on his lips, just as the peace lady will always view the world in terms of the success or otherwise of the latest peace demo. She reminded me of a Communist Party lady who taught me mathematics when I was a wartime cook stationed in Grantham, swotting for matriculation in my spare time. She constantly referred to 'the Soviet Union' in the same easy, well-oiled spirit of assumed concurrence with her own stance that my peace friend unconsciously used in

talking of peace. The Canon had a rather more complex approach and has just produced a book which seeks to indicate certain steps towards peace. In fact they do nothing of the kind because they erroneously assume people in a mass, centrally controlled society have the power to make essential decisions. But it was a good occasion, a mini-Academic Inn you might say, with a thoughtful hostess skilfully keeping the talk on the boil even if I would not recommend the Overseas League sausages.

THERE IS a rather endearing naivety about the sudden 'Call To Action' put out by Positive News. If its promoters really succeeded in getting a grand global alliance of alternative movements off the ground it is not difficult to see how it would go. On one hand the organisation would be frenetically split by rival factions out of which the career boys and girls would soon oust any idealistic souls who might still be thinking of peace and economic justice instead of jobs, salary scales and pensions, to say nothing of power. And of course success would not only attract the careerists and the beady calculating eyes of the Eurofreaks, to say nothing of one or other of those endlessly proliferating United Nations commissions who would soon want to be in on it. The grand march of progress would soon, inevitably, become a gravy train. But the saintly idealists of the sponsors have no eyes for these realities; if only they would focus on getting Crisis Committees off the ground in every parish across the world! The only answer to the powerlessness of the individual in mass societies is the invigorated power of countless local neighbourhoods in every part of the planet. All large-scale power approaches cannot fail to be

bedevilled by the corruption a mass scale inevitably engenders.

WHY HAS THE JUBILEE aroused such a wave of patriotic enthusiasm? The republican guard will assert Queen Elizabeth is a member of a middle-class family having no particular talents, who is absorbed in horse racing and her corgis, and who is also at the apex of a graded system of hereditary privilege which any decent socialist government would abolish overnight. Perhaps she is, and perhaps it would, even if she finds herself doing a job nobody in their right mind would freely opt for; but there are far deeper currents flowing here. The europlotters are rampant, the realm is direly threatened as never before and somehow the Queen symbolises what is threatened. People feel threatened, so of course they respond by adulating something which gives them a unique bond of unity, security, continuity and stability, things the EUofreaks are busy trampling on. This is what made the Jubilee celebrations so spontaneous, heartfelt and widespread, and in doing so deservedly gave the europlotters the two fingers. Our village Jubilee party involved most of its people and all ages seem to have had the time of their lives, from banner procession, a free concert, pig roast, dancing, picnic and fireworks. My own contribution was a couple of patriotic declamations from Henry V. Afterwards an elderly gent said, 'That speech you gave was not at Agincourt, it was just before Harflour.' And in the pub that evening another elderly said, 'That speech of yours was very very good. I enjoyed it very much, and my Missus agrees. Mark you, I did not understand a word you were saying...' ■

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Britain sold £5 billion of arms to over 130 countries last year, some of them involved in conflicts or with poor human rights records. • Tony Blair has refused to commit the government to a vote in the House of Commons on whether troops should be deployed in Iraq. • **China** marked United Nations anti-drugs day by announcing that it had executed at least 50 drug criminals. • Sixty-one thousand women are raped each year in England and Wales; nearly half of all cases involve their current partner. • Over 700 people became ill after eating cream-filled pastries at a festival in **Spain**. • Bugs which destroy **Britain's** crops are becoming immune to pesticides. • **Polish** riot police thwarted attempts by the radical populist Andrzej Lepper to let the government know how anti-Europeans feel. • Residents of an **Alaskan** village are considering moving because rising temperatures have made the icepack on which they live unstable. • José Bové, a campaigner against fast food and globalisation, has been imprisoned for three months for smashing up a McDonald's restaurant in the **French** town of Millau. • A new report suggests the **Antarctic's** ice shelves are melting faster than first thought and are now getting 130ft thinner every year because of global warming. • Up to 5,000 children have been injured by land-mines in **Chechnya** in the past three years. • A crime is committed in **England and Wales** every five seconds. • Five **southern African** countries want laws on the ivory trade relaxed so they can earn millions of pounds from sales of ivory stock. • Nearly 20 per cent of **China's** land territory has turned to desert as a result of damage to the environment and rapid industrialisation. • Young smokers start to suffer sig-

nificant damage to their heart and blood vessels at a much earlier age than was previously thought. • 10,000 people in the **UK** go missing every year; one-third of them are never found. • People in **Britain** have fewer friends than ever before. Fifteen per cent of people do not know anyone who would lend them £100 in hard times. • Gulf-war syndrome is likely to have been caused by organophosphate pesticides used to kill flies and lice at American and British desert camps. • The **UK** Environment Secretary, Margaret Beckett, has called for an international tax on air fuel to help combat global warming. • RSPCA experts have warned that hundreds of seals around the coast of **Britain** could die from a mystery virus. • The Prince of Wales has blasted modern hospitals for their 'stark brutality' and called for designs to have a more human touch. • The **UK** Environment Agency says up to 13 million tyres are stockpiled in fields and quarries never intended to store them, risking fire and pollution. • The leaders of **Tuvalu** have announcing they will abandon their tiny island, midway between Hawaii and Australia in the Pacific Ocean, because of rising sea levels. • 600 **Nigerian** women took over Chevron Texaco's Escravos terminal. During negotiations an American executive pounded his fist on the table, only to be told 'In our culture, only the chief pounds the table.' • The **US-China** Security Review Commission has claimed that China is the real threat to the United States, not terrorism. • Planning permission has been given to build a 700ft tower in **London**, despite protests that it will obscure St Paul's Cathedral. – **Sam Hains**

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