
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. 119

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COLIN TUDGE

Economics and Morality



Editorial:

A REAL PEACE INITIATIVE

Comments:

**Sri Lanka and the Tamils
Transport**

The Seeds of Hope

Government

Democracy Congress

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A REAL PEACE STRATEGY

DESPITE EVERYTHING there must be some way out of this mess. The elements of the global crisis are doubtless by now wearily familiar to any informed and ordinarily alert-minded person anywhere, yet we need to give them focus yet again, if only to spot any signs of constructive reaction that may be made, any signs perhaps of some sort of silver lining to the doomsday scenario hanging over us.

The most portentous of our problems is surely that of armaments and war; it is one of the world's largest and most profitable industries and every year arms fairs (sic!) are held where manufacturers of instruments of death display their latest and most destructive wares. Governments, rich or poor, queue up to buy them, and astronomical sums are allotted for their purchase – often by third world countries already bankrupt.

Behind the scenes, well away from the public eye, governments are allocating similar sums to 'research'; research into new ways of murdering more people with more nerve gases, more infectious disease noodles, more bombs, conventional, nuclear or whatever, involving new ways of blinding, burning or butchering innocents by the million. And in due course the results of all this research and trade will be used.

How can they not be? The mindless

rivalries of governments-out-of-control competing for political advantage, economic superiority, or commercial gain in a world succumbing to increasing hysterias about terrorism or security will evoke, is indeed evoking, conflict as a matter of course.

Meanwhile the abuse of the planet's living ecosystems continues unabated. Whilst all morality, all common sense and all concern for the mere survival of whatever passes for civilisation is screaming with the urgency of an amplified fire alarm for a halt to this abuse and a reduction of the, mainly industrial, factors promoting it, the British Government, in line with governments everywhere, is targeting yet higher 'growth' rates (currently 2% per annum!) in order, wait for it, to sustain its tax revenues.

Never mind that such 'growth' is also based on rapidly diminishing finite stocks of essential raw materials such as oil, never mind that it is also promoting stresses in our social structures which are destroying family life and any regard for the norms of ordinary morality, why bother about rising divorce rates and the multiple tragedies of broken families when the latest model of a new car is to be unveiled? Or yet another vast shopping mall is to be opened?

And beyond these factors there are the increasing insane rivalries of great or lesser powers; a militant, fanatical Islam is on the

march; China, like India, has acquired its own arsenal of nuclear and other weaponry and is now bursting at the seams with the threat of a vast tidal wave of yet more economic 'growth'; and looming over the lot is the uncontrollable terrorist power of the United States. It is currently in a phase of global imperialist superiority; in the nature of things that phase will pass, as that of all other empires in history has passed, and the speed of its demise will doubtless be even more rapid than its rise.

Exhausted by excess

Like all imperialist powers it will continue to abuse its power until that power is exhausted by its own excesses and by the acrimonies it is already arousing around the world. But the damage it will do on the way, is indeed doing, is not possible to compute without pain. Meanwhile the world's poor continue to starve or to succumb to disease whilst its affluent millions continue their progression with all the gay insouciance of ballroom dancers on the *Titanic*.

What then is the answer to this gathering multiple threat to human existence? What forces are being mustered to combat war and armaments? Ecological depravity? Social structure disintegration? The cultivated mass moronism of TV and tabloids?

There are, of course, any number of protest or reform movements in the field. Sometimes, as in the case of Intermediate Technology, Home Education and 'Fair Trade', they are performing a useful service in staking out what might be termed ideological parameters within an immediate and inevitably limited terrain, but in terms of the promotion of a broad general strategy which takes on board the

nature of the forces which are pulling our world to pieces, a strategy which might yield a unifying vision of a new world which has brought the horrors now encompassing it under control, there is, tragically, nothing at all.

Earlier centuries saw the upsurge of some such attempts, such as communism or socialism; they captured the minds of millions who believed that moral imperatives could be implemented by centralised forces on a mass scale, with no grasp of the reasons for the inevitable abuses of power and the horrors inflicted on millions that would ensue.

The same dangerously blinkered idealism prevails today in so many innocent minds which are bent on capturing the nearest way with the United Nations or, to help us all, a United Europe, a Europe united by hard-nosed power brokers and money bags which, our innocents fondly believe, will yield the fruit of peace and progress for evermore.

We really must do better than this. The problem is exemplified to an accentuated degree by the multifarious 'peace' movements which splutter around the world like some infectious contagion and which, by distracting attention from the real causes of the problem of war, are engendering their own due measure in helping to promote it.

Their ruling assumption, which is false to its roots, is that not enough people are convinced of the evil of war and of the virtues of peace. But of course they are! The overwhelming majority of the members of humankind is opposed to war and desires peace. Why then do we not get it?

The answer seen by our 'peace' and pacifist-minded ideologues is that people

do not protest enough, that there are not enough peace leaflets, journals, magazines, conferences, rallies, meetings and the rest of it. Perhaps they do not pray or meditate enough. So such efforts have become part of the stock-in-trade of 'peace' movements the world over and, it is assumed, need only to be redoubled over and over again to achieve success.

Yet such activity has been global in its scope at least since World War I, and it has grown and grown. But so too has the war danger and today that danger is poised to achieve the extermination of civilisation.

It is not difficult to conclude that if all our 'peace' activists with their organisations, their offices and publications and the rest of it were to shut up shop altogether they would not only leave the war danger unaffected but even increase the chances of peace by leaving people free to focus on the guts of the problem.

And that problem is not one of more 'peace' propaganda but of tackling the problem of power. For it is power on a mas-

sive scale, power out of control, power quite unable to stop itself from pursuing courses which will destroy even its own loci, which confronts us everywhere, which is the cause of war which people do not want and which must be resolved if peace is ever to reign.

And how can it be resolved except by people resolving to exercise that power themselves, so that it serves people's interests rather than that of the power freaks who now bestride the world like demented colossuses? And how can that be done except by a determined push everywhere to locate that power not in huge centralised governments or in the hands of armaments moguls or oil tycoons or other facets of the global brigandage which now passes for economic activity, but in the localised neighbourhoods the world over?

Where are the thinkers, the activists, the visionaries and the idealists who will promote such a push? Whilst there is still time? ■

Magazines received

Ethical Record The Proceedings (note that, The Proceedings) of the South Place Ethical Society, a 19th century monthly journal which has somehow strayed into the 21st century.

The Spectator A weekly forum for the pseudo intellectual elite with the environmental morals of an alley cat. Occasional good book reviews. Excellent chess problems. 1st year student editorials.

The Church Times Anglican Officialdom in print. Battling heroically with the problems of applying the religious beliefs of one creed to a society dominated by another, the secular religious beliefs of consumerism gone bonkers.

The Times A daily newspaper of excessive size, greed, moral ambiguity, political presumption and economic confusions, having a mass, similarly affected, readership.

COMMENT

Sri Lanka and the Tamils



WHILST terrorist forces in the USA, the world's largest economy, energetically arm and prepare for an oil war whatever the risks of a global conflagration, (and its economy will nosedive if war is averted), will the world take note that it is one of the world's smallest nations – Norway – which is hosting negotiations for an end to the 19-year-old civil war between the Sri Lanka Government and the Tamil Tiger nationalists (The London *Times* obtusely calls them rebels)?

The war is another example of the mess created by departing British colonial folly in imposing an unrepresentative central government on an ethnically divided

territory and leaving others to cope with the ensuing tragedy – which in this case has already cost over 60,000 lives and a mountain of economic impoverishment.

Well done Norway, but why is the UK Government not taking a leading role in resolving conflicts its own past policies have largely created, instead of standing shoulder to shoulder with US terrorism? Why not a peace conference to avert the impending Shona/Matabele conflict in Zimbabwe, before President Mugabe succeeds in killing his rival tribespeople with starvation and dispossession of land?

Transport

THE rail network is in trouble; delays, cancellations, congestion, breakdowns are now a daily occurrence when they were formerly rarities. This is not due to bad management or indifferent service but to the folly implicit in key policy decisions more than a generation ago. In the post-Hitler-war period a combination of oil, engineering, banking and insurance market forces combined to impel governments to embark on vast expansion of private car ownership and of motorway building. An estimate of the full social, environmental and resource costs of this catastrophic policy has still yet to be made. It was a policy which Hitler had initiated in the thirties in Germany. Among other effects was that major construction of building for social purposes such as schools, hospitals, libraries, art galleries and other civic needs was pared to the bone and those that were built were often shoddy, ill-designed and

bleakly functional. One of the worst-hit of public services was the railways. For generations they had provided an adequate service to meet the needs of the travelling public. Then came Dr Beeching, a government official charged to cut the rail service and to close 'unprofitable' lines. But of course passenger traffic on such lines helped to swell the revenues and make profits for the busier lines. One result of this appalling blunder was to isolate thousands of rural communities, impelling people to car purchase and the current temporary phenomena of mass motoring. Hence for decades the railways have been starved of essential investment, with the result that much rolling stock is antiquated, overcrowded and inadequate, compelling people who are unable to afford a car to the daily misery of nightmarish rail journeys, whilst those who can afford a car swan along on motorways that should never have been built.

The Seeds of Hope

IN A PREVIOUS issue (*FWR* 117) we reported on the proliferation of Neighbourhood Assemblies in Argentina, of local people getting together to do for themselves what the government and corporations have failed to do. In just one city, Buenos Aires, there are already 200 of them. The current issue of *YES! A Journal of Positive Futures*, describes how in Brazil's Porto Alegre dozens of local citizen assemblies meet to discuss how the city's \$200m budget is to be spent. Over 50,000 of its inhabitants take part and their number is growing rapidly.

Its winter 2003 issue focussed on the theme 'What Would Democracy Look Like?' It is packed with mind-alerting features and is easily one of the most riveting, relevant, positive and ground-breaking publications to have emerged on the radical front for a generation. Required reading for any radical who means business.

Other such initiatives are taking place around the world. They include:

- ◆ Peter Cadogan in London, who runs a

local citizen group to discuss issues of the day.

- ◆ Tom Atlee reports in *YES!* how Citizen Panels are meeting to make recommendations on local affairs in Minneapolis.
- ◆ Melbury Osmond, a village in Dorset (UK), has just held its first citizen meeting under the title, 'Who Will Decide the Future of Our Village – Them or Us?'
- ◆ Vandana Shiva, a physicist, organic farmer and author, is leading a new movement called 'Earth Democracy' across India.
- ◆ An environmental action group called Ps & Qs has been operating successfully for several years in the Wiltshire village of Purton and a new citizen body called 'Crisis Committee' has just been formed.

What is erupting here is nothing less than the political shape of the world of tomorrow. Small local, fragmented, multi-nomenclatured but united not organisationally, but by a common quest for genuine democratic practice.

Government

THE British Chambers of Commerce, speaking for 135,000 businesses across all sectors, have expressed their collective disappointment with the government's tentative and muddled drift towards regional administrations within England. 'Business is not against increased democracy and more cost-effective, value-for-money governance,' says the BCC which is not, in principle, opposed to regional devolution for England. 'However', they continue, 'the White Paper outlines plans that will give little real power to the regions, cost a great deal of money, create conflict between different levels of

government and will not add value to the political process'. The government's current suggestions are insufficient to justify the costs involved and, if it wants the support of business, it needs to propose real devolution for England, not 'toothless talking shops'.

True devolution would mean minimal interference from central ministries, fewer public sector jobs and a freedom to raise taxes directly at the regional level – offset by a fall in the national tax-take.

From Railondon, a London newsletter for business interests. Contributed by Margaret Chisman.

Democracy Congress

BRIAN Burkitt, in a recent speech to the Congress for Democracy, said that the anti-Euro campaign was in a stronger position than that against the EEC had been in 1975, giving five reasons: in a referendum a major political party would campaign for a No vote; there was a substantial body of opinion opposed to the Euro in the Labour Party; four leading national daily newspa-

pers supported the campaign; opinion polls had shown a majority against the Euro for two years; and over the last ten years, outside the Euro and the ERM, Britain had consistently outperformed all the countries in Europe preparing for and achieving entry into the single currency.

Contributed by Margaret Bottomley

Notes on the Comments:

Argentinean Neighbourhood Assemblies are documented in a new pamphlet, *Que Se Vayan Todos* (Argentina's Popular Rebellion) by John Jordan and Jennifer Whitney, obtainable via artactivism@jn.apc.org The report was published in *The Ecologist*, Unit 17-18, Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Road, London, SW10 0QJ.

YES! is a quarterly published at 284 Madona Way NE, Suite 116, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 2870, USA. The article on Porto Alegre was by David Lewit who co-chairs the Alliance For Democracy accessible at: www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/globalisation.

Peter Cadogan is at 3 Hinchinbrook House, Greville Road, London NW6 5UP. Tel: 0207 328 3709.

Tom Atlee is the founder and co-director of the non-profit Co-intelligence Institute at www.co-intelligence.org.

The Melbury Osmond village meeting was hosted by Stephen Rayner, tel: 01935 832 92

Vandana Shiva is at Research Foundation, 105 Rajpur Road, Dehra Dun 248 001, India.

Purton Ps&Qs Chair is Richard Pagett, Huntersbrook House, Hoggs Lane, Purton, Wilts SN5 4HQ; the Crisis Committee Secretary is Richard Prior, 10 Blacklands, Pavenhill, Purton, Wilts SN54.

When critics say that the advocacy of decentralisation scarcely amounts to the rallying-cry of a new movement, they deeply misjudge what is implied. 'Decentralisation' is perhaps all that is available from a quantitative vocabulary to speak about a qualitatively profound change. Nothing less than the break-up of Whitehall, in fact, would be crucial to a new politics. The Dissolution of the Ministries is as necessary to the health of Britain as that other Dissolution was to the initiation of the Renaissance in England. The new politics, therefore, is essentially constitutional in character. Its business would be the creation of the local state.

Maurice Ash

ECONOMICS AND MORALITY

Colin Tudge

*The author read natural sciences at Cambridge in the 1960s and is now a visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Philosophy at the London School of Economics. He earns a living by writing, mainly books, and mainly on aspects of biology. He was introduced to John Ruskin a few years ago by Cynthia Gamble, and is more and more impressed by Ruskin's relevance to modern times. His latest book, *So Shall We Reap*, is on food production, and should be published by Penguin in 2004.*

IN THE EARLY 1990S I served on the Council of a large zoo. It (the council) was divided by general consent into the 'suits', who ran companies in their real lives and knew and cared deeply about money; and the 'beards', who could actually tell a giraffe from a hippopotamus and believed that zoos were about conservation.

Although this particular zoo was founded in another age for reasons of ideology and science, it was taken to be self-evident by the 1990s that money must prevail. The beards were allowed a minute or two to explain why rare if unspectacular beasts were important, and then we returned to the serious business, of jumbos and fun rides.

Thus was this portentous Council a paradigm of the wider world. For 'beards' read 'Greens'. For 'suits' read just about everybody who has serious power in government and commerce; the people who run the world. The suits currently pay lip service to the 'environment' because they perceive they will lose votes if they do not; but they see 'environment' merely as another item on the agenda, subservient like everything else to economic growth.

On the small scale, 'environment' is conceived as a material asset – essentially, as real-estate: to presidents Reagan and the two Bushes 'environment' means a 'golf-course', and a nice view. Admittedly, many in high places now perceive that large-scale environmental disturbance could make a nonsense of everything they do – with climate change the most immediate threat. Yet the world's biggest and most influential nation is content to flout the scientific evidence, as if even the laws of physics must give way to its whims, and Britain's Tony Blair recently told Jeremy Paxman on television that the Americans have a perfect right to protect their own economy even if the rest of us do drown.

The people who run the world of course lack education. Increasingly they are 'trained' (as opposed to educated) in management, law, or economics (which increasingly is equated with accountancy). The idea that the fabric of the Earth itself must be considered, or that other species have any relevance, remains entirely foreign. These leaders depend increasingly on scientists, who in turn are taught that the prime task of science is to generate short-term funds: which means weaponry, IT, and

biotech. The Greens, for their part, confine themselves to matters of environment – which largely means preventing pollution – yet the ideas that they espouse must permeate all aspects of life if they are to have serious impact. Greenness is an all-embracing attitude. Thus the suits who run the world lack breadth and vision; and the Greens, who in the end must be right, lack a coherent philosophy, that would enable them truly to seize the entire nettle.

At first sight, the aims of modern commerce and those of the Greens seem too far apart to be reconciled. Companies must seek to maximise wealth – and in a competitive world, those who take their foot off the accelerator will miss out to those who keep it most firmly to the floor. If the environment suffers as a result, so be it. In the short term the race is to the most bullish, and in the long term, as John Maynard Keynes observed, we will all be dead in any case. The Greens, on the other hand, urge a general slow-down, and would like to put a stop to some commercial enterprises all together.

Yet there are three theoretical ways forward.

The first, essayed several times throughout the 20th century, is to throw out capitalism, and hence commercialism, all together. The snags are obvious: that useful babies are thereby thrown out with the bathwater; that the transition from a capitalist to a centralised economy is immensely disruptive (and the planet cannot stand much more disruption); and that centralised economies have not generally proved convivial, and in particular have had scant respect for the environment, to say nothing of human rights.

The second two approaches involve liv-

ing with capitalism, but placing it within a moral framework. One route is through social democracy, as, in theory, is currently favoured in Britain. Commercial companies are relieved of the need to act as moral beings – except insofar as they are required to obey the law, as laid down by their own societies. They should not make money in ways that damage society, (for example by running arms, or polluting the North Sea), and a fair proportion of the money they make should be siphoned off for society as a whole to use as it sees fit. Social democracy ought to work but of course increasingly does not, since the companies are now more powerful than the governments who in theory should contain them: they compete with each other largely by flouting national laws and by making their own, while governments are reluctant to take society's share in the form of taxes for fear of killing the geese that lay the golden eggs. In reality, then, companies grow more and more transnational and all-powerful, yet acknowledge no constraints at all beyond those of the market. The battle between commerce and government that has been waged since the 17th century is now well and truly won. Thus, the market itself now defines morality. It really is not surprising that those who traditionally march to a different moral drum, for example the Muslim fundamentalists, feel threatened and affronted.

The third approach is the one acknowledged both by old-fashioned socialists, (those who stop short of the centralised economy), and by old-fashioned Tories: that the private companies who are the commercial players, should perceive themselves as moral entities. Such an attitude was common, even usual, in the early days

of industrial capitalism, as in numerous great Quaker companies. Now it is rare. Nineteenth century capitalist-moralists tended to be non-conformist tub-thumpers, who nowadays for all their virtues would be called 'patronising'. Modern companies who seriously aspired to be moralists should, among other things, have a serious concern for other species and for the environment as a whole. This should not simply be a matter of 'image' and public relations, as now is commonly the case, but truly of conviction.

But is the gap between the commercial companies who need to maximise wealth if they are to stay in business, and the Greens who are concerned for the planet as a whole, too great to bridge? Can we envisage moral principles that both would acknowledge? Nowadays, too, we live in an age of moral 'relativism', so that what's good in one society is bad in another. Can any moral principles be universally agreed?

Despite the apparent moral differences between peoples, and their religions, I think it is possible to discern some universal principles. 'Universal' does not mean 'absolute'; but it is good enough. Those principles are not defined by moral philosophers, who tend on the whole merely to provide complicated justifications for their own attitudes and prejudices, they have been defined by prophets, from all religions, over several thousand years (at least); and they were summarised neatly by the Hindu mystic Ramakrishna in the 19th century. Ramakrishna took the

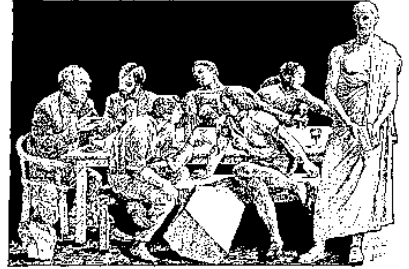
line, (as prophets do), that morality should be defined not in terms of actions, but of attitudes (and most of the Ten Commandments are about attitude). What really counts, he said, are personal humility; respect for other, sentient beings; and a sense of reverence for the universe as a whole. (Ramakrishna in fact said reverence for God: but the phrase 'the universe as a whole' works just as well and spares the need for theological argument).

The more I've thought about it the more it seems to me that these three – humility, respect, reverence – tell us all we really need to know. If the directors of commercial companies shared these attitudes, they would not do vile things. The spoliation of seas and rivers, the wholesale pillaging of forests, the destruction of other species would not merely be unlawful. It would be unthinkable. So, too, ethnic cleansing; and indeed the replacement of traditional cultures, in all their richness and variety, with hamburgers and coke. This basic code would serve modern science, too. Where is the humility and respect in the present enthusiasm for human cloning, and designer babies?

Go back to first principles, in short, and everything seems to fall into place. I do not have a notably religious background, but I find it more than intriguing nonetheless that the most straightforward and convincing morality has come roaring out of religion, and from religion alone; and not just from one religion, but effectively from all of them. That at least is interesting. ■

The last stage but one of every civilisation, is characterised by the forced political unification of its constituent parts into a single state.

Arnold Toynbee, *The Study of History*
monitored by Diamantis Pateras



FORUM

INDIAN REPUBLIC REALITIES

POST independence governments have expanded, squeezing village republics out of existence. The process continues, decentralisation remains only on paper. Even the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who has yet to visit a village since he took the country's leadership some four years ago, has accepted that the experiment with Panchayati Raj ('the village raj') has not yielded the desired results.

There is a historical importance and a need for people's control over their natural resources, in short, people's control over their own destiny. Since independence the political wranglings have continued to keep the villages as a subject of the powers that be in India. After all, that was the British legacy which still runs fresh in our blood.

The problem is at the top and not at the bottom. Take the case of the newly formed

state of Chhattisgarh. Instead of bestowing control over the natural resources to the local communities, as enshrined in the Panchayati Raj amendments, it has privatised a portion of a semi-perennial river. Before this there was the story of privatising the waters of Sheonath river on AgBioIndia. This anti-people act comes at a time when the Congress Party (which rules the Chhattisgarh state) has been shouting from the rooftops the virtues of promoting decentralisation. In reality, it tries to ensure natural resources can be brought under private control.

Why blame the Congress Party alone? What about the other political parties, including the fading left? What about the judiciary? What about the executive and of course the civil society? We all wait and watch. We only demonstrate our anger when power failure disrupts our favourite

TV soap. We then come marching to the street and beat up the officials at the nearest power station. The next day, the local 'national' newspapers have the story on the front page. The minister concerned promises uninterrupted power supply during TV primetime. For an average Indian, this is the meaning of living in a republic.

name & address removed on request

SUBSIDIARITY

I WAS quite surprised by the statement in your editorial 'A New Party' (*FWR* No. 118) that 'All these bodies, from the largest to the smallest, have one thing in common: they accept the existing framework of power.'

This is not so. I speak as a member of the Scottish Green Party (SGP), which is certainly not a single-issue party seeking power for itself alone. From its manifesto for the May 2003 Scottish elections, it is clear we do not wish to live in a plutocracy – which is what we currently have – but in a real democracy where the representatives are elected, and where funding of political parties is not under the undue influence of multinational corporations who then 'call the tune'.

There has to be a fundamental change before we get a 'paradise on earth' and you may agree with me that man's 'heart' (fundamental thinking) has to change – for as the Old Testament scriptures say: 'it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked'.

I heartily agree with Schumacher and your general thinking on matters, but there is also the question of the Principle of Subsidiarity which must be taken to the

international level. We also need a debt-free economy, but there, that is another subject.

I have enjoyed *FWR* for many years, and hope to see a few more in spite of my age. 'What are we waiting for?' A very good question! The May election in Scotland may, in some measure, be the continuation of your and other's works. Who knows?

LEWIS WESTON

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SCEPTICAL

WHILST I agree in principle with the concept of devolution of political power to the lowest appropriate level, I am somewhat sceptical of the ability of much of the 'great British public' to exercise it. There are, apparently, people out there who actually believe that the likes of Robbie Williams, David Beckham, Boy George and even Cliff Richard are the greatest Briton of all time! Even ignoring the fatuity of such an exercise in the first place, there is nevertheless a problem for participatory politics of any form when a substantial portion of the electorate are obviously idiots.

Might it be not so much a case of the ignorant and the unthinking governed by the greedy, the self-serving and the purblind, as the stupid governed by the same, and deservingly so?

JOHN F. EVANS

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CAKLE

HAVING just read your editorial I am eager to e-mail you my book, *Mankind and the Environment: Faith in Nature*. It is the 70-page culmination of five years of compul-

sive work on the questions of how we have managed to imperil the biosphere so grievously – and greedily – in only 5,000 years of ‘civilisation’ to give birth to the Sixth Great Extinction? And to what comes next? It is an anthropo-biological study starting with our advent as a species 150,000 years ago and is not agreeable to scientific or commercial publication.

I am a retired medic and, like Leopold Kohr, conservatively radical and vice versa. At 84 I lack the time and talent to promote my work but I would deeply appreciate your reading it and using it as, and if, you see fit. In my estimation the voice of *Fourth World Review* is unique and of vital importance. I owe you – I read *Small is Powerful* not long after defining the hypothetical instincts of terralogy and specieshood (my coinage) that underlie your concept of ‘collective decisions at the intuitive and unconscious levels’ (p96). One of my first realisations that I am not alone, and that was reassuring beyond words. I believe my work approaches the problems raised in your editorial – and perhaps a few more as well.

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STRATEGY

IN YOUR editorial ‘So what are we waiting for?’ (FWR No. 118) you wrote (and I am with him), ‘let’s get this show on the road!’ But where to start? Don’t we need to bash out at least a simple strategy? It is, after all, a rather large task, this decentralizing of Great Britain, Europe, the US and, I suppose, China too. Do we have the budget for it? Who are the opposition? What is their budget like?

But now I see that he thinks that devel-

oping a strategy would be an ‘abrogation of principle’ (p. 23) because ‘people should make their own decisions’. This laissez-faire attitude – isn’t that what got us to this mess in the first place? Hasn’t humanity endured tens of thousands of years of centralisation while never making a fuss? If we write enough books and publish enough magazines, will the control freaks see their error and change course? Something tells me that Tony Blair would scoff at Schumacher.

The opposition has a strategy. When the government heard that 70% of the UK population was against the Euro they set aside £300 million for an ‘educational’ programme. How about that? Brainwashed with our own money. Maybe the Editor needs to explain himself more completely since even having no strategy is, in itself, a strategy.

William Shepherd pointed out that Schumacher’s own strategy put education at the top of the list and I’d have to agree to the extent that what is missing from Western societies’ education is wisdom. For example, much of what Schumacher wrote about human scale was taken for granted in indigenous tribes such as the Iroquois in the US, the African Bushmen, and the Kogi Indians (in South America, I think).

All these tribes realized that positions of power ought not be created for the most arrogant and self-serving among them to subvert to their own advantage. Consequently their ‘leaders’ were simple functionaries who compiled, mediated and promoted the will of the people. They were not actually leaders, they were followers who took their orders from the tribe.

Furthermore they realized that trust was paramount, and in order to choose wise and trustworthy public servants there

was a limit to the size of their tribe. In order to vote for someone with any confidence one must have had long, in-depth, one-on-one discussions with him or her, and that is not possible if the tribe is too big.

Some of the stories are quite remarkable. *The Ecologist* reported on the Kogis a while back and mentioned that when the World Bank came trotting in with their 'loan' for 'sustainable development' the Kogis sent them and their money packing, asking what anyone could possibly mean by such an obvious oxymoron as 'sustainable development'. This little 'backward' tribe seems to be far more wise than most 'civilised' nations.

Still the task seems overwhelming. Teaching wisdom in today's society would be a lot like teaching swimming in the middle of a desert.

J. Walter Plinge

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HOW?

DENIS Nightingale-Smith has included your Fourth World editorial with his newsletter. A tour de force, which mirrors, far more accurately than I could have expressed them, my feelings about the world at large and the local community. Three years ago I came away from the Landmark Education Self-Expression and Leadership course and tried to make a community of the 25 households scattered around the hill. But I had no clear plan and those I tried to enrol I did not inspire to take on some of the effort needed. However, your vision will now motivate me again. May I suggest you write a piece detailing your ideas about how to proceed?

Richard Wilson

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LIVING DEMOCRACY

In India for the last 10 years of liberalisation, every area in which the State did not have power, people did – water, biodiversity, land. Every one of those areas has been taken over as an absolute property of the State to then be privatised. These are the contexts in which a constellation of power between unaccountable States and unaccountable corporations, coercive trade rules and now military coercion, are creating the ultimate theft of the planet's life. Thinking that they can do it. But even if the rights of people are denied in law, they can never be extinguished because these are natural rights. Our rights to be alive, our rights to our water, our air, our biodiversity, are not given by Governments. They are definitely not extinguishable by the World Trade Organisation's treaties. They

are natural rights, born with us as our birthright.

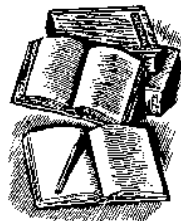
The Living Democracy movement is about the defence of these natural rights.

A lot of time has been wasted by some movements saying let us put all our weight behind Governments, let us put all our weight behind international treaty negotiations. Freedom is indivisible. Our societies are integrated. What we need is not countervailing constellations, constellations in which power comes back to people, for responsibilities are also part of that power. Responsibilities to other species and the less privileged and more marginalised of the members of the earth's community. The main issue therefore is reclaiming sovereignty.

VANDANA SHIVA

*Addressing the 2nd World Social Forum,
Porto Alegre 2002*

BOOKS



You Can Change the World, by *Ervin Laszlo*. POSITIVE NEWS PUBLISHING LTD, 2002. £5.

 *Reviewed by Patricia Knox*

THE message here is that the social, economic and political systems of the world clearly need changing; we have an economic and social system that has polarised the rich and poor, which has widened income gaps, and created hatreds and a desire for revenge. Because of the working methods of the international financial system, the world economy on which it is based is unsustainable and heading for collapse.


There is an urgent need for worldwide transformation. The future is in our hands; with new thinking and sustainable living, we can change the world. We face either a breakdown or a breakthrough scenario.

Too many people still hold five dangerous beliefs: nature is inexhaustible; life is a struggle for survival; the market distributes benefits; the richer you are, the better you are; and the way to peace is through war. However, growing numbers of people, the new cultural creatives, roughly 25% of the

population in industrialised countries, are forging a new way of living, based on quite opposite beliefs.

The author gives 10 commandments for sustainable living, urging the choices we make in our individual lives will either help or hinder global sustainability. The book ends with a vision of a sustainable and peaceful future, in which the basic needs of all people are met. Read this book, follow the vision, and we can change the world.

Future Perfect: A Compendium of the World's Greatest Ideas, edited by *Nick Temple, Stephanie Wienrich and Retta Brown*. INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL INVENTIONS. 287pp, £15.

 *Reviewed by Patricia Knox*

THIS is another world-changing collection of ideas from the Institute of Social Inventions. Ideas include: encouraging philanthropy amongst the wealthy young; a school which has introduced aromatherapy hand and foot massages to reduce stress among pupils; a judge who awarded this sentence to a landlord: either go to jail, or

live in one of your unsafe flats; solving the housing problem with the use of caravans or mobile homes; solar-powered internet connections in a Cambodian village.

Some are proposals already in action. Others, if taken up, could help solve many other problems in society. 287 pages of innovative ideas.

Identity and Development, Lessons from Nigeria for Africa and Europe, by *Dele Oguntimoju*. ECONOMIC RESEARCH 2002, 7 St James's Square, London, SW1Y 4JU. £10.

📖 *Reviewed by John Papworth*

IT IS slowly dawning on even uninformed opinion that the winding down of the British Empire was one almighty, historic cock-up. In one territory after another the departing colonial authorities proceeded to arrange elections on the Westminster model in order to establish a strong centralised government to which it could transfer the power of government.

The results everywhere have been both tragic and disastrous. The carnage and the bloodshed which has resulted already runs into millions of victims and the toll of terror, corruption, social disintegration, hunger and want continues to grow with only intermittent respite.

The key error lay in the arrogant British refusal to recognise the realities of Africa's tribal identities and the strength of the loyalties and traditions which underpinned them. One major victim of this patronising, Fabian-style arrogance was one of Africa's major colonial creations, Nigeria. A territory five times larger than England and the home of more than a hundred identifiable tribal entities of varying sizes suddenly found itself lumped together under one central, tribally dominated government.

Every conceivable disaster ensued, constitutional, political, military, economic and social. Since then there has been one disruptive upheaval after another as successive governments, military, federal, presidential two-party and multi-party, tried their hand at creating a coherent and comprehensive system. They all failed; even as these words are written, ethnic bloodletting continues and now yet another constitutional review is under way.

The Westminster model did not work, in part for the same reasons why it is ceasing to work effectively at Westminster, and why overcentralised, top-heavy government is breaking down everywhere.

The author has a keen eye for the problems and is not slow to spot the similarities of those problems of the Nigerian Union to the European Union. I am not altogether sure, however, about the validity of some of his proposals to resolve them. They include necessarily complex provisions for a fair degree of representation for all tribes, large and small, as indeed they must be, for such an incredible variety and complexity of interests.

But nowhere does he raise the question of the need for such a gigantic entity as 'Nigeria' to exist at all. On such a scale the USA is deemed a success. But is it? In any case, given such a colossal scale of the factors involved, and some of its constitutional arrangements are deemed worthy of emulation, a final verdict on it in the light of the pell mell development of war-making technology allied to a scale of economic brigandage the like of which the world has never before seen, history's final verdict on that enterprise has yet to be given, although the omens suggest it will not be long in coming.

Nigeria is, after all, a purely colonial creation of forces quite alien to Africa and Africa's interests; so that if it is of legitimate interest to consider whether such a giant entity can work at all and to consider how it may be dissolved into some at least of its hijacked parts, the next question is whether it is practical politics; practical in the sense of whether enough people would want it or work for it. Well, the world is already awash with the struggles of secessionist movements, and these movements are clearly the building blocks of the global polity of the world of tomorrow, a trend suggesting at least one answer to the problem that would arise of a successfully united Nigeria, which would inevitably become the bully boy of Africa tomorrow.

One may discuss the answers endlessly, the important thing is that for a change here is a modest book which is at least asking some of the right questions.

The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People are Changing the World, by Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson. THREE RIVERS PRESS, NY, 2000. £16.

 *Reviewed by Patricia Knox*


AN important new subculture is emerging. Paul Ray named them the cultural creatives, because they are literally creating a new culture. Since 1960, 26% of adults in the US – 50 million people – have made a comprehensive shift in their worldview, values and way of life. This rapidly-growing subculture is shaping a new culture for the 21st century.

It is a convergence of the environmental movement, the peace movement, the feminist movement and the consciousness movement, and is at the leading edge of

some of the most interesting developments in American culture, as well as in other parts of the world. It may be developing a culture that will sustain us and our children's children into the future. Yet the media continues to concentrate on the Modernists, now 48% of the population, almost totally ignoring the cultural creatives.

There are three possibilities for the future: business as usual, with continued economic growth, followed by collapse; a rapid transformation to a sustainable way of life; or muddling our way to transformation. For the transformation to sustainability to be successful, the authors urge, we need wisdom, compassion, generosity, imagination, intelligence and perseverance, as well as technical know-how. A very heartening book. It seems there are more of us than we thought.

AZRAEL ON THE MOUNTAIN, by Victor Depta. BLAIR MOUNTAIN PRESS, 2002. \$11.95. ISBN 0-966608-5-4.

 *Reviewed by John Papworth*

A very strange, mysterious, poignant, beautiful and bitter work this, a collection of powerful environmental poems protesting at the tragic despoliation of a once beautiful landscape of the central Appalachians by the ferocious greed of strip-mining companies intent on coal at any cost.

The effect on people's lives and their habitat is one of the great gruesome tragedies, just one, which gets buried under mountains of statistics about economic growth, the gross national product (how gross can you get?) and the rest of it.

(Available from: Blair Mountain Press, 2027 Oakview Road, Ashland, KY 41101, USA. Tel: 606-324-2266; e-mail: bettyhuff@alltel.net; www.blairmtp.com. ■



FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR

OUR VILLAGE of four thousand is really a small town. It has a Parish Council, but one that does not control the local surgery, the schools, the police, planning or any of the significant artefacts of its local life. The knowalls, the bealls and the sayalls up there in Westminster bewail that increasingly people don't turn out to vote, unaware, it would seem, that one way of generating irresponsibility is to deprive people of any real share of responsibility.

There is an enormous 'comprehensive' school in the village, but why so enormous when the village children in the age range number less than three hundred? Because the architecturally nondescript buildings, which include some 'temporary' classrooms more than twenty years old, serve to accommodate hundreds of pupils from other parts. They arrive and depart daily in about twenty large coaches, if not in mum's car. So the village High Street is chocker with vehicles and these include the cars of over a hun-

dred teaching, administering, catering and cleaning staff, whose vehicles are parked all day around the classrooms. It seems hardly any of the staff actually live in the village, so the school, far from being an important integrated part of village life, is like a foreign carbuncle on its host body. One teacher I encountered appeared somewhat bewildered when I pointed out that the chief lesson they were teaching the pupils with all this vehicle servicing was that global warming was of no consequence. She replied with the sort of patronising patience often employed in dealing with the mentally retarded, 'But how else am I to get here?'

THE TIMES reports that the Westminster fantasists are determined to increase discipline in schools. They should take a trip down reality road and discover just how phantasmagoric are their illusions. The giveaway can be indicated in one word, litter. The local school has large playing fields bordering open farmland and a perimeter stroll opens up a vista of plastic bottles, cartons,

'crisp' packets, candy-bar wrappers, soft drink cans, cigarette packets and dog ends, all impelling the hope that since there is apparently no discipline outside the classroom there may be some inside. The litter, ugly and mostly non-biodegradable, gives a harrowing indication of the dietary disposition of the pupils and doubtless indicates why so many are afflicted with obesity. Despite the classification of the school as 'comprehensive' I can see no evidence of any attempt to teach gardening or food-growing or any other elements of a comprehensive education for a comprehensive, or even comprehensible lifestyle.

OH DEAR! I have fallen out with an old valued friend, one who has worked with me for years. Dorothy is a very spiritual person who believes that if we all pray enough, especially repeatedly and simultaneously, so that the world is encircled and embraced by prayer at given times, somehow peace will be advanced. This not only seems to me dotty, I have been brash enough to say so. I proceed in such downright terms in the expectation that people will respond by showing me just how dotty my thinking is, and that from such a clash of swords the sparks of truth will fly. The fact is that Dorothy shares a very widespread misconception about the nature of prayer itself: that if you pray devoutly and earnestly enough for a given objective God in his goodness and mercy will grant it. But we are assured that 'The Kingdom of God is within you', which I take to mean that we in this mortal life are God's agents, His fingertips in working on the problems of human destiny. He has given us, uniquely of all life forms, the power of thought, imagination and compassion to achieve His purposes,

and such response as He gives will be in terms of the degree of acuity and creative perception we bring to bear in tackling the problems, (His problems), confronting us. There is no independent power out there ready to rescue us from our folly and to reward us. If we pray on our knees for wisdom and inspiration let it at least be the prelude to action on our feet, for otherwise prayer becomes simply a process of self-deluding self-gratification.

WHICH BRINGS ME to another problem of religious belief, that there is no longer any generally accepted core of belief to which people generally subscribe. This was brought home to me recently by a gospel reading from Matthew on what is called 'The parable of the talents'. Jesus is reported as saying 'the Kingdom of Heaven is like...' and proceeds to describe how a rich man gave several of his slaves some money to manage whilst he went on a long journey. When he returned some of the slaves had multiplied his money with banking operations and presented the master with the capital and the profits. All except one, who simply returned the original sum. This poor chap was judged to be lazy, cowardly and worthless and was 'cast into outer darkness'. I was revolted by this account. It seemed to me Jesus was endorsing both slavery and usury and that the last man, far from being punished, should have been held in high esteem and rewarded by his fidelity in refusing to engage in usury. As a pointer for moral behaviour the account is simply absurd, but the comment in the *Church Times* confined itself to the traditional interpretation of the need for everyone to exercise his talents to the utmost, a stance which might have come straight from Adam

Smith or Samuel Smiles. Well, if the Kingdom of Heaven is really like that I can only hope I never find myself there. But don't be too hard on the *Church Times*, it serves the most fractious and contradictory readership imaginable; they bicker and snarl at each other endlessly over women priests, remarriage after divorce, homosexuality, the jib and cut of vestments, the nature of the Trinity, relationships with rival Christian bodies and so on, and it serves them with enormous journalistic skill. I don't mean by that that it is an organ of some centralised orthodoxy, but that it gives fair coverage to all these disparate and conflicting views, whilst giving a decent hearing to some of the problems of the wider world in ways which serve to remind its readers that that wider world really does exist, however much they may appear to overlook it is there at all. It does not of course promote Fourth World concerns, but one cannot have everything in this mortal life, and if it did perhaps my own scribbles would become superfluous.

LONDON is a rum sort of place. On a recent visit, as I alighted from a bus, a well-dressed and well-fed looking man approached me and said, 'Jesus loves you.' I responded with, 'Well, there is no need to stress the obvious, but why do you choose to make a public exhibition of yourself to assert as much?' He looked at me in some bewilderment for a moment and then, after repeating his mantra, walked off. Outside a block of flats I saw a large new notice. A car parked without permission would be clamped. It would cost over £70 to unclamp, plus charges for parking, watchman's fee and so on. If the car had to be towed away charges of over £200 would be

involved. A taxi would surely be cheaper. Later, walking past the synagogue just off the famous Abbey Road, I was saddened to see the Jewish authorities had found it advisable to erect some massive security gates and fencing around it. The world does not seem to be getting any safer for anyone and certainly not more affluent for some; with a cold wet drizzle on a dark night, I must have passed at different points more than a dozen huddled figures sleeping under blankets in shop doorways.

BY THE TIME he died in December last, Ivan Illich had long ceased to be the major bulwark of radical thinking on contemporary issues. This was partly due to the development of trends in his own thinking, with books which related his conceptual concerns to other thinkers rather than to the world around him, but the cancer which for years involved an unsightly growth at the side of his face and which finally killed him, must also have played a part. He told me there was no point in an operation on the growth as it would simply deflect it to his brain, but his courage and his stoicism were indomitable and characteristic of the spirit with which he conducted his intellectual battles with different authorities – not least religious – across the years. He really was a quite extraordinary mixture; the child of a Croatian Catholic father and a Sephardim Jewish mother, he became a Catholic priest with a lifelong commitment to celibacy en route to becoming a major force in radical thinking in the seventies.

I owe him a great deal for the help in establishing *Resurgence*, the original journal of The Fourth World, and he was the Guest of Honour at a memorable Academic Inn dinner in London when over 200 people

packed a church hall to hear him. At one stage of the discussion somebody asked him a question in which the word 'positive' cropped up, although I cannot recollect the context. Ivan's reaction was odd to say the least, he simply exploded. 'Don't use that word' he shouted, and proceeded to tear the term to pieces in a way I found both incomprehensible and, as chairman, embarrassing. But it was all part of his curiously pedagogic style where his razor sharp intellect combined with his vigorous forensic manner drove him to paroxysms of vituperation over fine distinctions. It was part and parcel of his didactic persona and his ever present sense of threat emanating from the working assumptions of educational, medical and scientific institutions. Like Leopold Kohr he was forced to flee from Nazi-governed Austria and it prompts one to wonder about the other riches of the human spirit which failed to reach the frontier in time and which must have perished in those monstrous Hitler death camps. His critiques of methods of teaching and medical treatment are as valid today as ever; perhaps one day there will be an Illich Institute dedicated to promoting them along with his other work in the fields of energy, transport and technology. The world will then be the richer for such work as it is now the poorer for his passing. He was a friend of freedom in ways often prompting people to think the unthinkable and much that he taught has become an imperishable part of our moral and spiritual heritage.

IT WAS INCREDIBLE, an Academic Inn on an express train! It was sparked off by a remark I made to Dick Body about the absence of any tax on air fuel which made cheap flights possible. Suddenly a young woman oppo-

site blurted, 'You were talking about how to get yourself a cheap taxi at the station, now you want to stop people having cheap flights for their holidays.' In no time three other passengers joined in the discussion whilst others nearby were listening hard and clearly enjoying the exchange. The long coaches on express trains are apt to manifest a curious ambiguity in social relationships; passengers tend to be in close proximity and, whilst covertly taking full note of what their neighbours are eating, reading or talking about, try to pretend they are unaware of their existence. This spontaneous discussion on the environment seemed to break all the unwritten rules and I rather think the young woman must have been astonished at the furore she created; not least since a young man who joined in proved to be a very articulate energy scientist, whilst Dick is of course something of an expert on matters agricultural. Between them, they quietly and patiently piled one fact on another until she felt driven to declare, 'Well, if everything is going phut why shouldn't we all just enjoy ourselves as best we can?' A far from common reaction I fear, but at least the ballroom dancers on the *Titanic* were ignorant of what their ship had hit.

I WAS TURNING OVER some roasting potatoes I had taken from the oven when one dropped on the floor. I promptly rescued it and popped it back in the dish. 'I think that's disgusting,' said John David, the second of my three, who tends to observe my movements with all the casual insouciance of an MI5 agent on a nuclear submarine. Well I cook on the principle of not serving anything I would not eat myself, and any germs that might have adhered to that acrobatic tuber would not have survived the

oven heat. But this exaggerated concern for 'germs' is a rather modern thing. Some, of course, can run riot and do harm, but some don't. Life is a balance of competing forces and, as our current American/British warmongers may discover, wholesale slaughter tends to rebound onto the slaughterer, which is why it has been discovered that some American housewives are becoming ill because their homes are too clean.

My cooking is done mainly on an Aga and it came with the house. It is a heavily insulated continuous burning stove which is supposed to heat the house and the hot water as well as doing the cooking. In winter it is marvellous, although in summer I resort instead to an electric stove. But the Aga was designed in the thirties by a Scandinavian and I do wish he had consulted his wife when designing it. The top is largely taken up with two thick hinged, insulated 'lids' covering the boiling plates.

Unfortunately, instead of being flat the lids are concave, so that when removing anything large from the oven there is nowhere on the stove to put it.

THE CHRISTIANS seem to have taken over the mid-winter festival from the pagans, and now the pagans seem to be taking it back. At night the village comes aglow as neighbours, consciously or otherwise, vie with each other to see who can display the largest number of coloured lights, one house has an illuminated life-size reindeer and sleigh plus Father Christmas on the front lawn, all picked out in electric bulbs. What with shop displays, illuminated civic celebrations and private homes up and down the country determined not to be outdone, it must surely amount to a global warming factor. An old American friend who was my overnight guest suggested it was all part of a campaign of 'Kilowatts for Christ'. ■

Consider industrialism as we know it. The diabolical direction in which it is going – on which it actually prides itself – is the supercession of human labour in the necessities of life by the machine. If they win, human labour will be only for hobbies (fancy work, fretwork, 'pure art' they call it – art released from utility. 'Industrialism has released the artist from the necessity of making anything useful', and it has released the workman from the necessity of making anything at all – the machines will do the making – man will only mind the machines). The necessities of human life – the things men need and therefore love, the things upon which, during the countless centuries of human history, men and women have expended all their care and skill and pride – the arts of agriculture and the farm, the arts of the kitchen, clothes, furniture, pottery and metal, the whole business of building – from cottages to cathedrals – all these things will be made or done by machines, and we shall be released for 'higher things'. So they say. But for the majority of men and women – for us – there are no higher things. If, as it says in St James' epistle, true religion and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and the widows... then we may also say, this is true art – to make well what needs making – for love of God and for the service of our fellow men and women. And again, to keep ourselves 'unspotted from the world' – that is, the world of flattery and vanity and personal display, and exhibitions, and museums, and art galleries and art critics, and all art nonsense.

Eric Gill

Fourth World News



Divorce rates in **England** and **Wales** rose last year for the first time in five years, leaving an extra 147,000 children who now come from broken homes. • Almost a third of all nurses in **Britain** take a second job to supplement their income. • The Tamil Tigers announced that they would enter 'democratic politics' in **Sri Lanka** after their 30-year campaign for independence. • Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has called on the international community to target **Iran** as soon as the imminent conflict with Iraq is over. • Police are investigating 30 deaths of elderly patients at a **Hampshire** hospital after relatives complained they may have been caused by overdoses of a powerful painkiller. • The Countryside Agency, set up to improve rural services, faces closure as ministers seek to cut its budget by £26 million. • Conservationists are trying to poison 40,000 rats on **Lundy Island** to preserve its puffin population. • **South Korea's** Justice Minister and the country's Prosecutor-General have resigned amid public outrage over the death of a murder suspect tortured in custody. • **UK** Children are likely to be immunised against up to six illnesses, all in a single injection, despite recent fears about the safety of the combined MMR jab. • The decline of Britain's sealife is 'close to point of no return' according to the Government's official conservation body. • **Britain** spends £4 million a day on nuclear weapons while 87% of the population believe they should be banned. • 61% of **Germans** wish the Euro had never been introduced, according to a poll by Berlin's Forsa Institute. • Despite massive food shortages, **Zambia** is standing firm in the rejection of thousands

of tonnes of free, GM maize. • The number of doctors applying for GP posts has halved in the last two years. • One of the biggest power companies in Europe, **TXU Europe**, has gone into administration due to falling power prices in the UK. • More than 200 householders were forced out of their homes due to severe flooding in North East **Scotland**. • Over 50% of **US** military personnel are overweight. • Spending on prisons in England and Wales has doubled in the last four years to nearly £3 billion. • Pollution, development and mass tourism has left 36 of **Italy's** heritage sites in a state of emergency. • An aide in the office of the **Canadian** Prime Minister has been sacked after referring to George W. Bush as a 'moron'. • **North Korea** is set to vote in the Euro as its new exchange currency, replacing the US dollar. • The Aids epidemic in **sub-Saharan Africa** could cause another 70 million deaths by 2010. • Illegal immigration in **Britain** is 'out of control' according to the House of Lords European Union Committee. • An area of green-belt land three times the size of Hyde Park is covered in houses every year in the South East. • Taxes on waste could help to solve Britain's rubbish mountain. • Salman Rushdie has urged Muslims to reclaim their religion from the fanatical image it has today. • A senior Vatican official has said that ordaining homosexuals would be inadvisable and 'very risky'. A former Army Colonel and coup leader has been elected as President of **Ecuador**, echoing a trend towards left-wing politics in Latin America where anti-globalisation sentiment is increasing. – **SAM HAINS** ■

Fourth World News

