
FOURTH WORLD REVIEW

*For Small Nations
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& the Inalienable
Sovereignty of the
Human Spirit*

No. 120

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Kirkpatrick Sale

Israel – Thinking the
Unthinkable

plus

The Real Reasons for War



Editorial:

THE ROAD TO PEACE

Fourth World Spectator
THAT PEACE MARCH

FOURTH WORLD REVIEW No. 120

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THE ROAD TO PEACE

THE DAY THE USA dropped its first nuclear bomb on Japan in 1945 saw the opening of a Pandora's Box of historic dimensions; in so doing it revealed some ominous facts about the human condition to which even now, more than half a century after the event, no heed is properly being given.

The most imposing of these facts thus created is that the power of human *civitas* is out of control, and to such an extent as to pose a dire threat to its continuing existence. The lack of control over its own functioning extends to every reach of its proclivities. Today, for example, all over the world, research laboratories are freely producing ever more devastating and destructive weapons of war, weapons able to exterminate entire populations in a matter of seconds, or with slow infections from disease or poisoning.

One consequence is not only to make another global conflict inevitable, but to induce a chronic condition of psychotic fear and apprehension as an everyday fact of life for millions.

If the governments financing these laboratories are out of control so too are the laboratories themselves, for there can be no bounds to the horrendous knowledge their research reveals. Even more ominous is the fact that the trade in the weapons produced by such research is also out of control, in the

sense that there are no discernable limits to its propensity.

It should surely be a matter of utter amazement that every year 'arms fairs' (sic!) are held in which the latest as well as the less novel means of waging war are displayed and available to any government wishing to purchase them. And of course they are purchased, often at prodigious cost, by Third World governments which are already bankrupt and which seek to oversee social services which often lack the resources to maintain humanitarian standards.

Not least of the consequences here, in conjunction with other governmental excesses such as finite resource wastage, environmental abuse, corruption, massive ill treatment and torture of animals in the quest for cheap food, to name only some of the most prominent, is that confidence and any sense of security has collapsed. We have become a society devoid not only of trust, but of hope, vision, sensibility or purpose.

There is a natural psychologically defensive disposition to seek to evaluate these different aspects of what is, after all, a global crisis, in quite separate categories. War is seen as one problem, the fate of the rain forests or of the whales as another, the increasing disease-proneness of animal and vegetable life as another, fuller hospitals and prisons yet another, and so on, when

they are all, with many others, aspects of a general crisis of our entire lifestyle.

But the most formidable immediate consequence of nuclear weaponry, to say nothing of nerve gas and biological weaponry, is to make any state, except possibly the very largest, indefensible, and even the giants cannot avoid being exposed to death-dealing attacks such as the twin tower event in New York. It means the age-old concept of independent nationhood, where each is defensible and has the means to defend itself, is now over. This is the most staggering transformation of political life in several millennia of human history.

Inevitable conflict

The options now being canvassed to meet this new and perilous situation are often as futile as the still-prevailing disposition to ignore it. One that has gained considerable momentum over recent decades in Europe is to urge that the different member states of a region should cohere into a giant super-state for their joint defence. What is overlooked here is the inevitability of conflict between the super-states themselves. Giant America has been involved in every major conflict of the past century. A similar disposition for uncontrollable belligerency is evident in India, China and Russia. It is, moreover, a solution based on the inevitable elimination of democracy and of traditional concepts of freedom, a process now under way in Europe as the EUroplot gets into its well-financed stride.

This risk of super-state conflict prompts many innocent souls to respond by putting their idealistic faith in the formation of a world government, one that will usher in peace for evermore and where each individual will become a 'world citizen'. This

call, like the one for super-stateism, comes generally from people who lack any degree of control even over the government under which they already live, who are unaware that however many times they enjoy the privilege of casting a vote, the electoral process itself is in the hands of centralised manipulating forces having their own power and profit-seeking agendas, forces which promote values and assumptions which simply negate individual citizen power; unaware too that a mass democracy is an oxymoron and that, because of the nature of mass structures, it cannot be otherwise. Under current notions of mass democratic government, a world government could not be other than a world tyranny.

What then can be done? Quite clearly something must be done, and done quickly if the whole adventure of civilisation is not to be engulfed in the flames of modern scientific warfare. What can be done to arrest war by means which do not throw the baby of freedom out with the bathwater?

Two main steps are imperative. First: the fragmentation and localisation of power. Most governments around the world are dangerously top heavy, they embody functions and powers which render the citizen body powerless, if only because they oversee matters which are essentially local and not part of the remit of democratic national government at all. Power cannot be in two places at once: if the local citizen body has the power to run its own affairs the government does not have it, and vice versa.

Villages and neighbourhoods are the bloodcells of civilisation, it is they who should be controlling their own schools, health services, police, commerce, banks

and other important local matters. If they lack this power the body politic is afflicted with political leukaemia and subject to all the ills that a devitalised immune system is heir to. It is their local representatives, not national government nominees, who should be manning the regional boards which control public utilities such as water, gas, electricity, postal services, communications, radio, TV and so on, and the general principle needs to be applied that local government should be local, whilst national government should be confined to strictly national matters.

The second main step relates to the need for empowered separate international bodies to:

- ◆ outlaw research and the manufacture of armaments and warfare weaponry, and to have the means to uphold this law;
- ◆ oversee environmental matters to safeguard the globe;
- ◆ monitor and regulate the use of finite resources in the interests of economy and justice for living and future generations;
- ◆ administer space exploration;
- ◆ a world legal authority to define and maintain basic international law.

The emphasis on the need for quite separate bodies here for these different and essential functions for global peace, for safety and well-being, springs from a realistic appreciation of how readily power is misused. The only use of power, declares Professor Leopold Kohr, is abuse. Hence the global authority to control militarism and armaments will need not only to be separate from other functions, but itself to be divided in continental and other terms, and to be subject to strict rules such as, for example, that its enforcement agencies will not be allowed to function except in the

continent in which they are stationed.

As a matter of course these different international authorities each will have its own elected governing chamber, comprised of elected representatives from national parliaments. A further safeguard to prevent the abuse of their powers might well be the election of a second and advisory chamber for each function, comprised of members elected by the relevant professional bodies. There is no reason why professional legal associations should not elect people to serve on the court of international justice to advise and to be consulted on any proposals that may be mooted, and why international military, environmental and resource agencies could not be similarly served.

No human government can ever be perfect, if only because human beings are as far removed from such a state of grace as they have ever been. But it is vital to grasp that events are rushing all humanity to a destiny of doom because the powers integral to human society are out of control because governing units are too large to be subject to any kind of control for sane social purposes.

They are also too large to enable democracy to function effectively but, given the very existence of different forms of global power in armaments and commerce, and the disastrous scale of the damage they are inflicting, the need for empowered international institutions to ensure their democratic control has become as imperative as it is urgent.

But so too has become the need to implement the final consummation of democracy by asserting not only the right of ethnic groups the world over to govern themselves, but to ensure that power to control village and neighbourhood life

within each is as fully as possible in the hands of those who live in them.

If we believe a new world is possible then let us grasp that the present problems of the world are related not to what governments do, but to what they are. History is dominated by the rise and fall of giant empires or attempts to build them. All of them were based on armies and fear, but the spirit of democracy has developed to a point where the old empires have been largely snuffed out; democracy today is in dire danger from a different source, from the modern supposition – it is really a superstition – that countries can grow to any size and still retain their democratic force; it is one flying in the face of ascertainable facts, which is why, to take a current instance, President Bush and Prime Minister Blair can form an axis of evil to launch a war against Iraq. Neither can speak in the name of the people they presume to lead on this, and are claiming to do so in defiance of powerfully expressed opposition to their course.

Such opposition is beside the point; the sheer magnitude of their countries enables leaders to be beyond the effective control of the led and to ignore their views. Small countries such as Switzerland or Greenland, by the ordaining fact of their smallness, show how such control can be more effectively exercised. It may be noted that Switzerland has never been involved in a war in the modern era whilst Greenland, after sampling membership of the European Community, took the common-sense step to leave it and did so with no fuss at all.

If a new world is possible, and people are serious about building it, they must begin by rejecting the overlarge political structures that have engendered so many of the problems of the present. They must

grapple with the problem of power and realise that it is unresolvable in terms of giant mass political units, the terms which have made Stalinism, Nazism and the current Bush/Blair axis of evil possible.

We live today in a global community and, as the World Postal Union already demonstrates, we need global bodies for a variety of functional needs. But we are first and foremost human beings, members of families, of neighbourhoods and of localised communities. These communities are the primary political unit of human society and their democratic empowerment has today become the real battleground of radical advance throughout the world if freedom is ever to flourish. Democracy is not a dose of medicine to be taken twice a decade in mass voting exercises; it is a way of life. The challenge today is to make it so.

In recent weeks we have seen gatherings of war protestors in many of the world's major cities in numbers exceeding millions – events unprecedented in political history. However valuable such protests may be we have to acknowledge that they will achieve little without the vision of a new order of society, one that effectively supersedes the malevolent forces and the values that now dominate human affairs. These forces, out of control because of their sheer size, and now threatening ultimate nemesis, themselves indicate that the key problem is size itself. The problem is not what they do but what they are, and if the multimillion protestors around the world could act on that awareness and seek an organically divided and self-regulated global polity, they might yet save us from what threatens us with ultimate degrees of catastrophe and enable our race to live and flourish in hope. ■

AN END TO THE ISRAEL EXPERIMENT? UNMAKING A GRIEVOUS ERROR

Kirkpatrick Sale

THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE

How can peace be secured in the Middle East? The fathomless horror of the Nazi death camps, in which millions of Jews were wiped out of existence in meticulously organised gas chambers, has left an indelible stamp of shame and guilt on the conscience of civilisation. It has led to a determination by world Jewry to have its own homeland in Palestinian territory, largely as defined by the Balfour Declaration of World War One, in the belief that within its borders it could achieve peace and, above all, security. Far from achieving either of these objectives it has in fact resulted in their precise opposites, a state of increasing war and insecurity. Even more to the point it has become clear that there is no prospect of either ever being achieved so long as the injustices involved in the establishment of Israel which have been inflicted on the Palestinian people, injustices themselves the product of an essentially colonialist mindframe, continue. The people of Israel today can only continue to exist as virtual prisoners behind the walls of their own nuclear armed fortress in a perilous situation of ever increasing tension and hostility; unless, that is, there is a quite radical transformation of perspective. It is because we are aware that there many Jews and Palestinians who share a common awareness of this need, who are aware of its urgency and who are already working together to create the conditions in which all peoples can live together on the basis of justice, that we have readily agreed to publish the following proposals. – Ed

***N*OW THAT Ariel Sharon has been returned to power and his regime endorsed in its brutal occupation of Palestine, it seems to me that the time has come to ask whether the 50-year-old experiment known as the state of Israel has proven to be a failure and should be abandoned.**

Two things seem abundantly clear from the long months of multi-ethnic carnage in the Middle East. The first is that Israel cannot live in peace with the Palestinians unless it finally establishes a dictatorial apartheid rule and confines them in Arab bantustans.

The second is that the Palestinians will not live in peace with Israel, not even if they

achieve their promised statehood, for they share the deep, decades-old hostility to the Jewish state that has not abated but increased throughout the Arab world in recent years. We may disregard as hollow the rhetoric claiming that Israel would be accepted if it was confined to its pre-1967 borders, which is something that it will not do, anyway.

With the Likud electoral victory, we can expect, even if eventually some American-brokered peace plan is nominally agreed upon, that Israel will fortify its borders, continue occupying Palestinian territory at will, bolster its support for West Bank settlements, and keep on using military retaliation for any Palestinian acts of sabotage or

terror. And that Palestine, though most of its armed organisations will have been decimated, will be unable or unwilling to stop such acts, including suicide bombing, newly fuelled by the hatred stemming from the present Israeli occupation.

Israel will win this little war against the *intifada*, and Palestine will be effectively dis-embowled, but there will not be peace. In fact, there is guaranteed to be more violence.

And there will continue to be violence as long as Israel exists amidst a population that for the most part abhors, and in only a few quarters tolerates, its presence.

We all understand the reason for Israel's existence in the first place. Guilt, and reparation. But was it not a certain recipe for unrest and disorder to forcibly establish a Jewish homeland in the Middle East and, in effect, put down 2 million Jews in the middle of 200 million Arabs?

What would have happened if it was decided in 1948 that 2 million African-Americans should be returned to, say, a partitioned Ghana, supported by an annual \$6 billion in aid from the American government? Or, perhaps more to the point, if those African-Americans, who arguably deserve reparation of some kind, were established in that part of the Middle East, approximating the present borders of Israel, that their African ancestors settled from about 100,000 years ago on? Their claims of priority would vastly outrank any Biblical ones for the Jews, but it is hard to think that they would have been welcomed by the Arabs there, and tolerated only if they had superior military power and the support of the US.

Yes, I am arguing that the original idea of a Jewish state, from the Balfour Declaration on down, was a mistake, and to

establish it in an Islamic Middle East essentially by force and with the emiseration of millions of natives was a tragic mistake. We are reaping the awful results of that error today.

It is, of course, not so easy to know what to do to undo that mistake, but I would argue that a world that can make a state can unmake it. In its place one might establish a non-religious Palestine covering all of the original British Mandate in which Jews, Muslims, Christians and others would have equal rights and equal votes, as a few Israelis have suggested in recent years. Or a 'bi-ethnic/bi-national' state with equal powers to Jews and Muslims something along the lines of Switzerland, Belgium or a future Ireland – Switzerland, remember, used cantonisation (and half-cantonisation) to solve an even bloodier confrontation among Catholics and Protestants in the 16th century. Or an Islamic state that would be forced by international vigilance to give, and maintain, full religious and political rights to the Jews, who would then be free to settle in the West Bank and elsewhere.

The process need not be unduly rapid and just the prospect of it might well be enough to put an end to the present *intifada* – and it should include an extensive international effort to resettle those Israelis who would not want to remain in the Middle East. Given the skill and intelligence of the Israeli workforce one can imagine that a great many countries would welcome such settlers, even in large aggregates. The diaspora, after all, has existed since 70AD, far longer than the state has, and might even be thought of as the natural or historic role of Jewry.

I know full well that such ideas are an anathema to most Israelis, who after all

have made the land their home in the last 50 years. But I would suggest that the way things are going their options in maintaining a Jewish state are limited: an apartheid state with Palestinians forcibly removed from Israel and no end to the violence; a Stalinist police state with an end to both

violence and democracy; and a democratic one-person-one-vote state encompassing all Jews and Arabs, in which Palestinians will soon outnumber Jews.

Among those choices, abandoning the experiment of the Israeli state does not seem so far-fetched or undesirable. ■

Seattle Summit Protest

WHY WE ARE HERE

Because the world we imagined, the one we had always counted on, is disappearing.

Because the sun has become cancerous and the planet is getting hotter.

Because children are starving in the shadows of yachts and economic summits.

Because there are already too many planes in the sky.

This is the manufactured world you have come here to codify and expedite.

We have come to tell you there is something else we want to buy.

*What we want, money no longer recognises, like the vitality of nature,
the integrity of work.*

We don't want cheaper wood, we want living trees.

*We don't want engineered fruit, we want to see and smell the food growing in our own
neighbourhoods.*

*We are here because a voice inside us, a memory in our blood, tells us you are not just a
trade body, you are the blind tip of a dark wave that has forgotten its source.*

*We are here to defend and honour what is real, natural, human and basic against the rising
tide of greed.*

We are here by the insistence of spirit and the authority of nature.

*If you doubt for one minute the power of truth or the primacy of nature try not breathing
for that length of time.*

Now you know the pressure of our desire.

We are not here to tinker with your laws.

We are here to change you from the inside out.

This is not a political protest.

It is an uprising of the soul.

Robert Arthur Lewis

WHAT THE WAR IS ALL ABOUT

Kirpatrick Sale

The author has written nine books, including *Rebels Against the Future: The Luddites and Their War on the Industrial Revolution: Lessons for the Computer Age* *and* *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy*. *He can be reached at: kirk-sale@counterpunch.org*

WHAT'S IMPORTANT to know about this war we have unleashed is that it is not about oil, or about weapons of destruction, or Al Qaida, or Saddam Hussein – this war is about American global hegemony.

You see, Bush has a dream – or, rather, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and that crowd has sold Bush a dream: it is the creation of a world in which all states will be what we call capitalistic (though not allowed ever to be as rich as the US) and what we call democratic (though the power elite doesn't have to change as long as it allows elections from time to time) and participate in a global economy on our terms. This is what William Kristol and Robert Kagan, in a 1996 Foreign Affairs article called *America's 'benevolent global hegemony'* – and you know who is defining 'benevolent'. Benevolent... global... hegemony... and for those of you who skipped political science class, hegemony means leadership, control, power, dominance.

This has been the goal of the hard-right ever since the downfall of the Soviet Union in 1989, and when they came to power with George the First they tried to push it as hard as they could, going so far as to make a war

against Iraq for invading a country they told him he could invade. But they never got George to buy it and he saw no reason to fight a messy war in the streets of Baghdad.

Then comes George the Second, who early on in office was essentially an isolationist – he was opposed to troops in Kosovo, he was against 'nation-building', he knew practically nothing of the world beyond the Dallas Cowboys and he had no notion of an American role in it. But he put into power the old crowd from George the First's days and made it even more prominent. They started work on him right from the start, but he was a slow learner and nothing much stuck – he didn't even want to have anything to do with the so-called peace process in Israel, and he didn't care much about recovering our spy plane when it was forced to land in China.

Then came 9/11, and suddenly everything changed:

Bush could see it all now. It wasn't just that there was a terrorist group based in Afghanistan that had brought the war to us. It wasn't just that the US was hated by a whole bunch of Arabs. This was, as he said, 'the presence of *EVIL*' – evil attacking the United States, which was *GOOD*. That struck a chord that his little Christian born-

again heart could understand, and so he declared a war against evil – a war not against these terrorists but terrorism itself, everywhere in the world and for all time.

That was all the opening that the global hegemony people needed, and they were right there telling Bush that the war against evil also had to be fought against evil regimes – Iraq, say, Iran too, and throw in North Korea since we need one non-Muslim state – which he famously called ‘the axis of evil’, And that was no off-hand word – it came from the bottom of his inflamed fundamentalist Christian heart. As he said at another time, his task was to answer the attacks of 9/11 ‘and rid the world of evil’.

When George Bush was governor of Texas he would go to a church in Dallas run by a minister who had founded a movement called the Promise Keepers, a fundamentalist sect that pushed a doctrine it called ‘dominionism’. Dominionism held that it was the duty of the forces of good, guided in their mission knowing God was on their side, to rescue the world from evil and establish the Kingdom of God everywhere, ‘to restore the earth’, as they put it, ‘to God’s control’. Bush clearly resonated with that idea.

And now here he was, actually able to put that dominionism into practice, with the largest and most powerful armies in the world, and none to prevent or challenge him. It was, as Bob Woodward reported in his latest book, a chance to cast ‘his mission and that of the country in the grand vision

of God’s Master Plan’. But more: he could do it not just in the name of God but in the name of America, because America was good, and believed in God, and was rich and successful, and it would be its dominion that would be established in the world – a benevolent... Christian... American... global... hegemony.

Then Wolfowitz whispered ‘Iraq’ to Rumsfeld who whispered it to Cheney who whispered it to Bush, and it was suddenly so obvious. Let us begin the campaign to make the world safe for goodness with a war against that little mustachioed Arab Hitler.

So here we have it. That is why the whole thing seems so irrational, because it doesn’t have anything to do with rational, realpolitical calculations. Bush doesn’t care that there have been at least 175 wars since World War II, at the cost of perhaps 12 million lives, that have brought more misery than stability, or that the greatest user of weapons of mass destruction in history has been the United States, or that at least 10 nations other than Iraq actually have nuclear weapons. He doesn’t care that he lost the popular election by half-a-million votes, or that the Joint Chiefs actually opposed the war at first, or that 70% of Americans oppose a war with significant casualties, or that the only other world superpower – popular opinion – is totally against him. Why should that distract him? He is on a holy, American mission.

And it won’t stop with Iraq. You are forewarned. ■

The only way to restore stability and manageability is not by changing governments or economic systems, but by reducing social size to a magnitude commensurate to the small stature of man.

Leopold Kohr, *The Overdeveloped Nation*

FORUM

ROAD TO SANITY

WITH his usual trenchancy John Papworth in his editorial 'Cut The Cackle' (*FWR* 118) heaps up reasons why Leopold Kohr was spot on when he wrote, 'If anything is wrong it is because it is too big.' The road to sanity and safety leads to the small and local.

But, practically speaking, how on earth do we get on that road? To governments and most political parties such a route is preposterous, and the cheering section for small-is-beautiful offers one of those rare cases where small is hardly lovely. Even when the global crises now looming on the horizon finally cascade upon us, there is little to suggest that people will clap their hands and say, 'Aha! Small is the answer.'

A push has got to come from outside and that push could turn out to be climate change. In July 2000 Britain's Meteorological Office warned that as the planet warms, 'road traffic will regularly grind to a halt and train services will be increasingly disrupted... warmer weather will disrupt transport systems throughout the world... we're already seeing the first stages.'



In North America the average item of food reaching the average dinner plate has travelled 2300km to reach it, so absurd have the economics of feeding us become. Britain and Europe are probably little different. When a town or city finds its food import shipments caught in a storm, flood or a washout faraway, its inhabitants will doubtless experience an irresistible urge to get busy and make sure that in future most of their food is grown nearby. The charms of accessibility will beat the romance of distance any day.

Colin Graham

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POLITICISED

WHAT distinguishes Greens from other political movements and parties is their commitment to the principle of *subsidiarity*. This says that all decisions made, and actions taken, should always be at the most local level possible, with decisions made and actions taken at more centralised level only as needed. That is, local democracy

and accountability must be first, followed by regional, national, and eventually the international level.

And local democracy is possible. Susan George (*New Scientist*, 27 April 2002, p44) documents how the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre (1.4 million) 'has developed a participatory budgeting system in which the citizens determine how a portion of the city's income is spent in their own neighbourhoods, on their chosen priorities. As a result, waste and corruption have been reduced to virtually zero, and the system produces informed and politicised citizens.'

But we also need to remind ourselves that the political process has been in the hands of elites for so long that they see it as their 'right' to 'own' politicians. For democracy to work properly, that must be changed.

David J. Weston

CREDITS ECONOMY

I JUST received your brief on Crisis Committees. I definitely think you're on the right track. We need to rebuild society from the ground up. That means organising ourselves for not only sharing information and discussion of issues of concern, but for political and economic action. I agree that scale is a key parameter. Small groups are essential, as is a means of networking them together for effective action.

What will it take to motivate people to do that? Either a missionary's calling or a lot of pain. Argentina is a good example of the latter. Even before the financial system melted down, there was a high percentage of unemployed. They, out of necessity, adopted complementary means of exchange – the *trueque* clubs with their *credito* currencies. Fortunately, some visionary

'missionaries' had already set up prototype systems which were readily replicated. Now, millions of Argentines depend upon their participation in the *credito* economy for subsistence. Out of this will come freer and more effective wide-ranging exchange systems that are independent of the money and banking monopoly.

The *trueque* clubs, which are mostly small – 50 or fewer members – are becoming politically significant as well.

Thomas H. Greco,

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PRAYER SCALE

I AGREE with Fourth World Spectator (FWR 119) that most Christian praying is completely bogus and ethically reprehensible. Dorothy Forster would agree with this analysis. This sad situation is not her concern, however. Her interest, like mine, is in the praying that works and the scientific reasons why it works. I accepted Dorothy's paper, *The Science of Prayer and Meditation*, as a legitimate contribution to the Radical Consultation sponsored by *The Ecologist* and The Fourth World in September 2001, and available for downloading from the internet (www.cesc.net), because it was pertinent to the radical debate on political strategy.

Peter Etherden

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RADCON II

IF WE ALL did as Dorothy would like us to do – join together in prayer at a particular time wherever we are – would not the effect be just what you would like it to be? If, as you say, the Kingdom of God is within us, then the result of that individual and universal prayer might be that those praying people

would be inspired to activate the Kingdom of God on Earth – that is, to do something.

Even if there were no visible effect, would it not be a good thing just that so many people – even a few – were not consuming for the time they were praying?

I have Dorothy's plea for Universal Prayer – The Silent Minute – Prayer for Peace stuck on my fridge. I did not know why until I read your last Spectator – except that I had to write to her. I have now done both that and read the paper *The Science of Prayer and Meditation* by Dorothy Forster. I wish I had read it before. Charles had it and I didn't know.

Dare I suggest that Dotty Dorothy and Dotty John truly clash their metaphorical swords and that sparks of truth will truly fly. The swords might really turn into ploughshares.

This comes from your long-time – possibly equally dotty – admirer in rural Nova Scotia – plus my overdue cheque. I hope you soon put on another Consultation to draw me out of my burrow.

Dorothy Hubbard

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IDEAS

THANK YOU for your latest stimulating and readable production, which I always enjoy and benefit from. It keeps us in touch with what's really going on and makes us feel we are not alone in the struggle for a saner and more moral world system.

The last four paragraphs of the excellent piece by Colin Tudge ('Economics and Morality', *FWR* 119), to my mind say it all: the reasons why everything has gone wrong and is roaring to destruction at a faster pace every minute (crime, global

injustice, destruction of the environment and man's inhumanity to man) are because our attitudes are wrong, out of the true.

Or, as Dostoevsky said of his own turbulent times: 'All these things happen because man has forgotten God.' Not a lot more need be said, except 'What are we going to do about it?' Any ideas would be welcome in your next issue.

Carol Binnie

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GLOBAL GOVERNANCE?

IN 'Economics and Morality' (*FWR* 119), Colin Tudge rightly points out that the Greens lack a coherent philosophy, but only then to propose one as equally incoherent; namely that if only businessmen individually adopted an attitude of 'humility, respect, reverence' our problems would be solved.

Given that Mr Tudge recognises businessmen operate in a competitive global market it should be clear that for them unilaterally to adopt such an attitude when they cannot count on their competitors doing likewise is effectively to ask them to put themselves out of business. Does he really think businessmen are generally any less mindful of the environmental crisis than other sections of society? Of course they're not! But they are caught in a vicious circle of destructive competition which comprehensively prevents them from applying the attitudes called for.

If the spoliation of the environment is to become unlawful as Tudge suggests, instead of calling for a 'going back' solely to individual responsibility and moral values – something which is clearly impossible in a competitive global market – he should be working towards a practical form of global

governance such as that offered by the Simultaneous Policy (SP) campaign www.simpol.org. Those advocating merely a 'going back' to individual responsibility or to solely local solutions therefore only serve to unwittingly perpetuate our crisis.

Of course we need local action and individual responsibility but we also need global governance. We need diversity but we also need unity. As Schumacher said: '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.' It's not 'either/or' but 'both/and'!

John Bunzl

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How is everyone to be persuaded simultaneously to be good, without individual responsibility and local solutions? Rhetoric about 'Global Governance' simply side-steps that it could only be a global tyranny and obscures the need for more separate functional global forms of cooperation such as already prevailing in the World Postal Union and The Trinity House authority for maintaining lighthouses for promoting safety at sea. Ed

BEST EVER!

HAVE just read the latest 'Fourth World News' and thought it was the best one yet – very inspiring, informative and, above all, amusing. I've even sent it to my parents.

Kate Robinson

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Wiltshire SN54

THE PSYCHE

YOUR editorial in the last issue was disturbing to me. On several counts.

First, your dismissal of the efforts of peace groups, which displayed a lack of understanding of what many of them are trying to do. Of course they wish to increase their numbers. Just as you would like to increase the numbers of those who share your views. But there is far more to their efforts than you give them credit for. Particularly in the variety and sophistication of their journals, conferences, rallies etc. that you dismiss so summarily.

I too feel frustrated at times at the failure of many who want peace to see beyond marching and ranting at the powers-that-be without even understanding them, or understanding what needs to be done to get them to change their ways. And I consider many of them to be equally naïve about their own motivations and likely consequences of their actions. But even they often make important, and perhaps necessary, contributions to the process.

It seems to me that your charge that peace activity has been global and growing in scope at least since WWI but the dangers have only increased has little merit as criticism, though it certainly needs to be pointed out over and over again! What 'movement' of merit has not increased slowly along with the activities of those it is opposing – up to a point! The 'tipping point' I call it. I certainly admit that this conflict (between – from my point of view – violence and non-violence) is the longest running of the bunch. But how could it be otherwise?

I think that we are moving in the right direction, in spite of obvious evidence to the contrary. Concerns about the environment are the best example. Many millions now know that we are destroying the environment. But as yet, too many of them – includ-

ing, unfortunately, many in positions of power – are not yet doing what they could and should do in response to the destruction.

You end with an excellent question. The \$64 million question. How can we get people to exercise the power that they have, and which in the absence of their doing so is misused by so many of our leaders – including some on the current scene with the best of intentions. I wish I knew the answer. If I did I would be more hopeful, and more confident about what I might do to further the cause. I think I know where to look. At least to bring about changes in the parts of the process that I'm most interested in. It's in the psyche – the source of all the problems that we bring upon ourselves and the solutions to them when they are found.

I think you and I are looking at the same elephant, but like the blind men, are groping different parts! And we both are getting discouraged at what seem to be meagre results. But do keep on publishing *Fourth World Review* and stimulating new thoughts among what must be a very special group of readers.

Barry Childers

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LIVING BY EXAMPLE

FWR helps to voice several issues by the readers, writers, reviewers and activists. Thus small wheels turn big wheels. I take

up any issue in personal and the collective life, and find that there are contradictory messages from several places, the State, corporations and institutions. Is there any personal choice? It is mostly decided by the immediate environment of work, leisure, health and education.

Once I asked many different people, 'Has it ever occurred to you, while putting the morsel in your mouth, that to raise this grain of food some anonymous women/men have laboured in the muck, rain, heat, cold, wind?' The answers were negative, with one exception: my student in the college. Obviously he had worked in the paddy fields.

Having worked, in the prime time of my life, in the farms and cooked my own food, participating in building of my own mud house, and spinning and weaving, besides many other things which are not recognised by the establishment, I can differentiate between needs and wants. I can minimise, even eliminate, my wants. It is not easy. I would prefer rather to live by example than preach.

Remigius de Souza

PO Box 7003, Mumbai 400 028, India

THAT BOOK!

NO REVIEW of *Breakdown of Nations* in the latest FWR! It felt strangely empty...

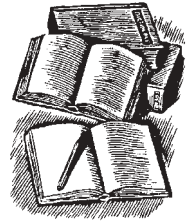
John Elford

*Green Books, Foxhole,
Dartington, Totnes TQ9 6EB*


Let no man turn aside, ever so slightly, from the broad path of honour, on the plausible pretence he is justified by the goodness of his end. All good ends can be worked out by good means. Those that cannot are bad; and may be counted so at once, and left alone.

Charles Dickens, Barnaby Rudge

BOOKS



The Politics of The Forked Tongue, by *Aidan Rankin*. NEW EUROPEAN PUBLICATIONS; London 2002; 155 pages; ISBN 1 8724 1016-2. £12.95 (available for *FWR* readers at £9 from the publisher at 14 Carroun Road, London SW8 1JT. Cheques to New European Publications Ltd.)

 *Reviewed by Peter Etherden*

THE Politics of The Forked Tongue is not an easy read. You cannot curl up in a chair with your mind disengaged. The text is compact, the meaning often quite subtle and ideas rush in one upon the other with clarifications often relegated to the notes at the back of the book. You may find you need to read the book several times, something that its brevity permits. Yet this is a deceptive book. Although it purports to be about political correctness it helped me to understand such seemingly unrelated political events as the Liberal Party MP for Oldham, one Winston Spencer Churchill, crossing the floor of the House of Commons to join the Conservative Party and the split in the Swedish Liberal Party that led to the founding of the Swedish Green Party.

Dr Rankin has a PhD in politics and has

spent several years as a Lecturer in Government at the London School of Economics. He is an expert on British political history and in particular on the shifting nature of liberalism and of the parties that seek to represent tolerance, individual liberty and social justice. Here are three quotations to give you the flavour of Rankin's analysis:

- ◆ The new liberal's ceaseless talk of diversity is fork-tongued, for under the rubric of political correctness they seek to impose a uniformity of behaviour and thought;
- ◆ New liberals do not appreciate true diversity. They place abstract principles before real human need, regarding those principles as universally valid and beyond question;
- ◆ Equality has come to be seen as breaking the population into groups and distributing collective rights at the behest of self-appointed lobbyists.

Implicit in *The Politics of The Forked Tongue* is the elusive Third Way being sought by the think-tanks of the Centre-Right and Centre-Left around the world. Rankin is critical of

both left and right. 'By failing to adopt human-scale economics or face down a new breed of Puritan bigotry the left has lost any vision of civil society that it had previously possessed,' he writes. The Conservatives are no better for they had '...discarded most notions of common endeavour and embraced a bogus form of individualism by which human beings are reduced to economic units and the measure of all things is economic growth, not quality of life'.

There is a powerful resonance between Rankin's interpretation of the 'Third Way' and the radical human-scale politics of Professor Leopold Kohr and John Papworth. Let me illustrate this with four further quotations:

- ◆ '[New Liberalism's] commitment to political correctness blocks off the possibility of local variation and prevents consideration of individual needs';
- ◆ 'Whereas traditional liberalism has strong local roots, new liberalism is a centralising force, prepared to coerce instead of persuade';
- ◆ 'Small businesses, craftsmen and independent farmers are natural enemies of the new liberal who favours large-scale units, be they state or corporate';
- ◆ 'New liberals put their faith in laws and structures erected by the state or imposed by court ruling, regarding local initiatives and voluntary activities with great suspicion'.

The Politics of The Forked Tongue provides early indication of a ground-breaking political analysis, evidence of a fresh new mind cutting through the undergrowth of today's party politics and representative democracies to reveal forgotten paths of political thought. At present we have only a work in progress but I would hazard the prediction

that the sequel might turn out to be as important to our political generation as the political tracts of Edmund Burke, Tom Paine and John Stuart Mill were to theirs.

Bringing the Food Economy Home, by *Helena Norberg-Hodge, Todd Merrifield and Steve Garlick*. ZED BOOKS, 2002.

 *Reviewed by Patricia Knox*

THE global food system has been a catastrophe, destroying farmers' livelihoods and the economic health of entire communities and towns. In many places, family farms have all but disappeared, replaced by huge corporate-owned factory farms run, not by farmers, but by technicians, computers and high-tech machinery. Millions of farming families are being driven from the land each year, in both north and south, as the global system amalgamates more and more local systems, taking entire rural communities with them.

Both the hidden and more obvious subsidies, as well as supportive legal structures, make the global food market apparently more 'efficient' and food apparently 'low cost'.


The authors compare the highly mechanised global system with the local food movement. They argue that reducing the scale of the economic system, starting with those that produce and deliver our food, would allow diversity to flourish again, and could set us on a path to environmental health.

Vegetable box schemes, farmers' markets and local food co-ops help farmers to stay small, stay local, and prosper. Money stays in the locality, to strengthen and revitalise their own communities. The job-sustaining nature of local food systems makes it highly desirable. Small farms

employ far more people per acre than large farms. And small-scale diversified systems are 200% to 1,000% more productive per acre than large farms.

These small, local changes need to be supported by changes at the global and national level. Reform of trade rules is needed, and removal of subsidies that favour corporations and global trade; also a change in taxation. Fossil fuels should be taxed, rather than subsidised. Shifting direction will not be easy, and there is much work to be done. This is an excellent book for clarifying the issues.

Battling Big Business, by *Eveline Lubbers*. COMMON COURAGE PRESS, 2002. \$17.95. ISBN 1-56751-224-0.

 *Reviewed by Don Riley*

THE companies criticised in this book include BP, Shell, British Nuclear Fuels, RTZ, Timberlands, Monsanto and Exxon. They all deal with our natural resources and are therefore the shape and size which governments encourage. Firstly governments hand out the concessions, secondly governments extract huge concession fees or royalties and thirdly, with regard to oil for example, take taxes at every stage of operation from extraction through refining and to petrol pumps. Fourthly, and worst of all, western governments are all too often successful at subverting non-European or US producers (who are often state-run or only quasi-independent) into serving 'west-ern interests' rather than their own.

The US and British governments are best at this with the French leading the rest of the European pack. A particularly nauseating aspect of this 'client control' is that the producing countries are continuously duped by the big three into buying arms to

defend 'their', i.e. 'our' interests.


Sanctimoniously the three are often outraged when Russia or China sell arms to countries which they view as client states.

I enjoyed the analysis of the firms' public relations misinformation onslaught but was disappointed that a connection was not made with the inevitability of this due to 'big government intervention' and inevitable lack of local (i.e. democratic) control of key natural resources such as oil, nuclear energy and timber.

Each company is modelled on what our governments encourage and permit. Each company acts on government spin that says what is good for their business, is good for the US of A (or GB).

Hence my reaction to the book was, so what is one to expect? *Battling Big Business* is a reasonable title to introduce the subject of resource exploiting firms.

A New Way To Govern: Organisations and Society After Enron, by *Shann Turnbull*. NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION. £4.99. ISBN 1-899-407-48-0.

 *Reviewed by Peter Etherden*

SHANN TURNBULL is a trustee 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 of 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 National 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.

DESCHOOLING SOCIETY, by *Ivan Illich*. Penguin, 1971.

 *Reviewed by Aidan Rankin*

IVAN ILLICH, who was born in 1926 and died late in 2002, was a man of many parts. He was a dissident cleric whose faith, rather than doubt, led him to challenge the Catholic hierarchy. Transplanted as a young man from Vienna and Rome to New York, Puerto Rico and then Mexico, he straddled Old and New Worlds, over-developed and 'developing' societies. A radical, who battled tirelessly and in practical ways for the poor, Illich was also deeply conservative, championing such 'organic' experiences as friendship, conviviality and loyalty to local community, rather than grand design or abstract theory imposed in the name of progress or the greater good of man. Illich was an erudite man, but in his long writing career he gave an intellectual context to the instincts and insights of peasant societies. As such, Illich might have been a pioneer of the green movement, had

that movement genuinely transcended 'left' and 'right' wing labels, instead of turning into an encounter group for recycled soixantuitards.

Illich might not have been a green pioneer (and that was the greens' loss not his), but in *Deschooling Society* he emerges as a prophet as well as a social chronicler. For he believed that mass education, far from being the harbinger of human progress, reason and opportunity, promised little more than a bureaucratic nightmare. Through mass schooling, and the emphasis on credentials and 'qualifications', valuable skills were being lost, communities broken down and individuals made more dependent on the state on the one hand and corporate consumer culture on the other. Modernist education, to Illich, was a poor substitute for traditional rites of passage for the young:

School is a ritual of initiation which introduces the neophyte to the sacred race of progressive consumption, a rit-

ual of propitiation whose academic priests mediate between the faithful and the gods of privilege and power, a ritual of expiation which sacrifices its dropouts, branding them as scapegoats of underdevelopment.

Even those who spend at best a few years in school – and this is the overwhelming majority in Latin America, Asia and Africa – learn to feel guilty because of their underconsumption of schooling.

These are harsh words, delivered with characteristic rhetorical flourish. But events have proved that Illich's thesis has more than an element of truth. In the 'developed' West, the narrow emphasis on academic qualifications has made schooling a miserable, rather than a fulfilling, experience for many young people. Studies of peripheral intellectual or cultural merit are elevated at the expense of craftsmanship and skill – domains of the increasingly marginalised artisan. Inventiveness and creativity are stifled, in favour of conformity and submissiveness. Accumulated wisdom is sacrificed, on the altar of approved 'knowledge'. The academic ideal itself suffers, because the academic curriculum is shorn of intellectual rigour to turn it into a product fit for mass consumption. To Illich, modern education is a game in which there are no winners, except bureaucrats and self-appointed experts.

There is more to schooling, of course, than Illich's bleak vision. However, it would have been better if this little squib of a book had received more attention in its day, for it points towards some of the most dangerous and destructive educational trends. The Blair government's daft proposal that half the population should go to university would be recognised by Illich as

the fulfilment of his worst prophecy. University is seen, in mystical terms, as an end in itself, whilst in the name of false 'equality', everything that makes university distinctive is undermined. Dumbed-down, mass-access academia is complemented by a growing body of school refuseniks, young people Illich sees as rebels with a cause:

In fact, healthy students often redouble their resistance to teaching as they find themselves more comprehensively manipulated. This resistance is due to ... the fundamental idea common to all schools – the idea that one person's judgement should determine what and when another person must learn.

It would seem to follow from this that Illich would favour 'progressive' schooling, in the form of Summerhill-style experimental schools or non-competitive, mixed ability teaching in state education. But Illich sees such approaches as a chimera. To him the underlying problem is schooling itself and attempts to modify it or 'reform' it are doomed to failure. In this, too, he is prophetic. The progressive educational methods that were coming into vogue when *Deschooling Society* was written have since congealed into authoritarian dogmas, inimical to creativity and overtly hostile to traditional skills. An admirer of the co-operative, as opposed to centralising, strain of socialist thought, Illich sees schooling as the bureaucratic nationalisation of knowledge. His is a society of autodidacts, where knowledge comes from an infinite variety of sources, and where the transfer of skills between generations, and the apprentice-master relationship, are cherished rather than undermined. Paradoxically, these localised and highly specific forms of education are broader in scope than the univer-

salised approaches of modern schooling. They give back to intellectual creativity, as well as artisanship, the value that dumbed-down academic curricula take away. A deschooled society is a more culturally diverse society than one governed by paper qualifications.

Rising skill shortage, alongside the growth of boredom and disaffection in non-academic pupils – and burnout among their academic colleagues – show that Illich was quite right. For green and free-market economists (who are usually at loggerheads), the value of this book lies in his challenge to the idea that big is always better, that more expense always brings better results:

Educators can justify more expensive curricula on the basis of their observation that learning difficulties rise proportionately with the cost of the curriculum. This is an application of Parkinson's Law that work expands with the resources available to do it. The law can be verified at all levels of school: for instance, reading difficulties have been a major issue in French schools only since their per capita expenditures have approached US levels of 1950 – when reading difficulties became a major issue in US schools.

Mass education, mass politics and mass consumption are the models we continue to impose on the 'developing' world. By the 1970s, Illich was already aware that these models were false ones, founded on bad faith, that would increase the very iniquities they were intended to tackle. His ideas, therefore, are as relevant today as they were then. Indeed, it could be said that their moment has come.

THE CHALLENGES OF IVAN ILLICH: A COLLECTIVE REFLECTION, edited by Lee Hoinacki and Carl Mitcham. STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS, 2002

 *Reviewed by Aidan Rankin*

THIS eclectic and brilliant collection of essays is equally suitable for academic experts and good generalists with an interest in ideas. This in itself would have pleased Ivan Illich. He distrusted experts, although he defended traditional specialised skills and crafts. He loved generalists, but distrusted intellectual shallowness. In the range of subjects he covered during his long writing career, Illich showed himself to be a true Renaissance Man. Yet unlike the Renaissance Men of history (but, curiously, like Rousseau or even Proudhon), he gave a political voice to the peasant. Like Schumacher, Kohr and our very own John Papworth, he favoured the local over the global, conviviality over rigid hierarchical forms, the traditional and (a favourite word of his) the vernacular over the universalised and abstract.

It is both fitting and ironic that this book should be published in 2002, the year of Illich's death. It is fitting, because it is a tribute to a long literary and political career that spanned three continents. It is ironic because it shows that, in the year of his death, Illich's ideas acquire a new relevance. In a sense, Illich's 'ideas' are best understood as a series of questions. For in a century of superstitious devotion to progress, he questioned the value of change for its own sake, especially when it is imposed from above by bureaucrats or (worse still) idealistic planners. A cosmopolitan himself, his experience of Europe and the United States made him fear both the mega-state and the mega-corporation.

He believed in living within limits, in incremental reform that builds on tried and tested practice and custom, rather than grandiose attempts to fashion the new. One of the contributors to this volume, David B. Schwartz, applies Illichian principles to his rambles around the older parts of Harrisburg:

As we wander home from the market, we pass many other scenes that have traditions reaching into the past. There are local cafes and diners where neighborhood regulars meet for coffee, even tiny one-person grocery stores. People call out their greetings to each other on the street. Further on, there are two gendered locales: a tobacconist's, where men seated in clusters of leather-covered chairs puff on pricey cigars, and a beauty parlor, where women come to be fussed over and touched; there's always a pot of coffee on in the back. These singular corners, I know from Illich's studies, may be the most significant remnants of all – 'rests of gender'. In such places one can see traces of a time when men and women used different tools on either side of a gender line, a core characteristic of 'asymmetric complementarity', now almost completely faded from Western culture.

As a member of both a 'gentlemen's' and a 'working men's' club, I am aware of the value of gendered locales, and how they give dignity to men and women alike and how both are diminished by their disappearance. Illich saw the dangers in trying to abolish, wish away or level out differences, whether between the sexes, or between cultures and regions, or between different forms of work. He did not see 'progress' in homogenisation, but a terrible diminution

of the individual and a loss of soul. Although a maverick theologian, Illich never broke with Rome and retained his lifelong commitment to celibacy. As such, he believed in a politics and economics with a spiritual dimension and should have been a Green pioneer, had the Greens not been hijacked early on by an already ageing 'New Left'. But today, in a genuinely new century, left-wing ideologies of homogenisation are as hollow as their 'right-wing' counterpart – corporate globalisation. As we grope our way once more towards a philosophy of the human scale, we should let Illich be our guiding light. This he has been for another of the contributors, Aaron Falbel, a young man of obvious wisdom and sensitivity with whose words I conclude and commend this volume:

*The surprising and deeply radical aspect of what Illich has to say is that the danger stems not just from the obvious sources (say, the military, or the hegemony of multinational corporations) but more fundamentally from those elements of modernisation that appear to most people as undeniable benefits: education, health care, transportation, equality of the sexes, communication, self-help, labour-saving machines, economic development, and so on. Partisans of both Left and Right politics see these things as the fruits of progress and, as such, [they] lie outside the sphere of critical debate. They constitute what Illich calls modern certainties. But Ivan Illich, almost alone among scholars and intellectuals, trains his critical gaze on precisely these unquestioned benefits, and sounds the alarm: *Corruptio optimi quae est pessima* (Corruption of the best is the worst!)*

FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR



MAURICE ASH was a gentle man of truth and honour, a sage of no mean order whose books I treasure.

A day or two before he died he sent me a commendation for a book I have written entitled *Why The London School of Economics Should be Shut Down*, (he said I was 'the Cobbet of our times' but how I am going to live up to that I don't know). Strangely enough, although we corresponded fitfully over 40 years I do not recollect we ever met. When I founded and edited *Resurgence*, the original journal of 'The Fourth World', he was one of my earliest supporters and when I was elbowed out of it by an Indian spiritual entrepreneur he again helped me to establish this review and continued to do so unstintingly until he died.

I am sometimes asked why I do not try to work with the elbow man Mr Kumar, especially since we are assumed to be working for the same cause. An admirable sentiment and one I have sought to adopt; a letter I sent recently suggested the global situation

was so traumatic that we should bury our differences and work together on a number of projects, was ignored, but the difficulty of co-operation arises from a quite different source. In a recent issue of *Resurgence*, where my own role in its history is sedulously suppressed and never mentioned, Mr Kumar delivered himself editorially of the following verdict on the global crisis:

'If we are serious about dealing with the deep causes of terrorism and wars we need to make a fundamental shift from seeing the world in fragments, in pieces, in divisions, and see the world as a seamless continuum. This holistic view of reality is the essential ground on which a new world order must be built if we are to free ourselves from perpetual spectres of conflict, war and terrorism.'

It is no use blaming Mr Kumar for preaching a doctrine utterly opposed to what the journal was founded to promote, he is not doing it from any motive of ill will or discourtesy; nor is he deliberately seeking to undermine the force of Schumacher's

message, or that of Leopold Kohr's. The fact is he simply does not think in the kind of theoretical political or economic categories which are relevant. Water, clearly, is not the only element that finds its own level; it is a level which enables him to boast now that *Resurgence* is 'the spiritual flagship of the alternative movement' and if I defy anyone to read the 39 Articles of Belief in my beloved *Book of Common Prayer* with a straight face, I can only assert as much in relation to this declaration. Maurice Ash, like Kohr and Schumacher, was above all, an apostle of clear thinking. This was the source of their strength and the reason for the extent of their influence.

I WENT TO A PUB one evening to play pool. A TV programme was blaring away with gunfire, car crashes, explosions, fist fights, screams, shouts, fire-balls and non-stop scenes of blood and gore. After an hour or so there was a break for the news, which was largely about the murder of a policeman and the knife injuries of several more, plus preparations for another world war. After the news the former programme resumed with yet more gunfire and bloodshed. What sort of society do we now live in when millions wallow daily in this witches brew of violence and anger?

SPIN, SPIN, SPIN, we live in an age of it, and this war scenario is making it so profuse and blatant it has now become impossible to give credence to almost anything public figures may utter. Via TV the Bush/Blair axis of evil intrudes into our homes and their falsity of speech, as well as that of their aides, is so palpable as to suggest a dubious figure on the doorstep without credentials purporting to want to read the gas

meter. And spin involves so much more, including the TV manipulators' capacity to downplay and upgrade. So in the midst of a global war scenario the news programme gives a few minutes to the crisis and then switches to lengthy accounts of the death of a pop star or the progress of a football match. The distortion of priorities is as grotesque as it is deliberate, and as calculated as it is contemptible. Over a quarter of a million young men have travelled across the globe to set up bases in the desert for no other purpose but to kill. When some of them are interviewed they express no moral qualms and declare, 'we are here to do a job and when the order comes we will do it as well as we can', unaware that it was precisely such attitudes that landed men in the dock at Nuremberg. This is not some horror in history, but right now in the 21st century, a century already showing many signs of progress in material terms whilst skydiving in terms of ordinary morality.

The language of Bush and Blair, which carries the inevitable import of countless deaths of children, women and men, and the disfigurement and bereavement of even far greater numbers, to say nothing of a tidal wave of homes destroyed and the multiple demolition of schools, hospitals and other artefacts of the life abundant, has ceased to have any accoutrement with rationality; we are in the realm of the paranormal, of grown men adopting the emotional bluster of school playground rivalry, men who see war not as some ultimate and unforgivable monstrosity but as an instrument of policy projected for reasons that would carry no credence round a parish pump. The case is pleaded in ways which contradict each other and which simply paper over the basic business of oil, and no

amount of tendentiousness, falsehood or demonising of the Iraqi leader can conceal that if he were not sitting on half the world's oil supply his demonry, real enough in all truth, would figure as of no more account in the reckoning of the White House or of Westminster than the fate of the Dalai Lama or of Father Christmas.

Given the stakes of war and peace, given the recoil effects of a general military conflagration in the Middle East, flames fanned no doubt by medieval Muslim masochism, given the portentous acerbities of great power rivalry involving a resurgent and insurgent China and Russia, of India and Pakistan, of Israel and its neighbours, it is clear that what is at stake here is nothing less than the future of human life on this planet.

And don't people know it! By the million they are marching in protest in cities all over the world, marching for life, for hope, truth and decency, knowing in their hearts that if this obscene proceeding, which repudiates whilst it desecrates all the wisdom, the diplomatic, the political, and the moral verities of human history, is allowed to proceed it involves nothing less than the beginning of the end of Western Civilisation.

And if the war-course can only be pursued by distorting truth, destroying credibility and ignoring the plain wish of people the world over for peace, what else can ensue but the death of democracy as we enter a new dark ages of uncontrollable degrees of totalitarian power armed with full control of mass media technology enabling it to spin, spin, spin for evermore?

IT WAS A RATRUROUS DAY with a bizarre beginning. I set off to attend a memorial gathering to Maurice Ash near Totnes, but a saga of cancelled trains and missed connections

landed me at Bristol, where I discovered I would be too late to join the Totnes event. So I caught the next express train to London in order to join that wonderful and astounding 'Peace March'. Despite my regrets as missing Maurice's meeting, I was glad I did.

I emerged from Charing Cross underground station to find the street a sea of people carrying banners and placards, a crowd so enormous that it made any vehicular traffic out of the question. I sat in a coffee bar and watched the throng before joining it. How many people there? The 'anti' press talked of half a million, a platform speaker in Hyde Park spoke of two million. Who was counting and how? Some placards opposed war, others said 'Freedom in Palestine'. I asked several carrying this, 'When Palestine gets its freedom, which I hope will be soon, will it be friends with Israel?' 'That's a difficult question,' said one, and others were equally at sea. But what impressed most was the crowd's youth: 90% were under thirty and a grey head was simply unusual. I felt I must have been the oldest person present.

From Charing Cross Road and Trafalgar Square, to Piccadilly Circus and along Piccadilly to Hyde Park. We did not march, we just could not march, as far as one could see in front and behind just a tight packed sea of faces and banners. So we shuffled and ambled. Now and again I wondered about personal safety if there were to be a sudden stampede. But the mood of that incredibly vast throng was relaxed, good-natured, good humoured, and even at some times, festive. Now and again a group would start to cheer and whistle and the rest would take it up with deafening results. Along Piccadilly the *Pret a Manger* coffee bar had hurriedly shut its doors, but

further along the *Starbucks* chain had not only remained open, they had even posted a young chap at the door to point people to the queue for the loo or the coffee counter as they might indicate need. Good for them, a good and timely service. It was a strange, even uplifting feeling of being in the midst of an immense multitude, all united, one must suppose, for the moral principle of peace, even if some Muslim banners seemed concerned to stress a quite opposite approach, especially in relation to Palestine and Israel. I asked one young bannerman why the Muslim world insisted on stoning young mothers to death if they were unmarried, or of chopping off people's limbs for stealing, and he explained it was – 'Well, you see, you have to see such things in context; it is all part of our whole way of life.' I responded, as the offspring of an married mother, with, 'Then it is surely a wrong way of life which you need to change if we are going to make any sort of progress, don't you agree?' But he only looked at me in bewilderment; perhaps the language barrier was too great.

The yellow-jacketed police were there in force, but they too were relaxed and good-humoured. Yet one was aware, despite the general sense of bonhomie and forbearance, which tended to make that vast concourse of people seem more like a festal rally than a protest, of a lurking question-mark over the whole proceedings. We were there, after all, to seek to stop a war, to object to something the legally elected government was seeking to do in our name, and the forces of law and order were benevolently standing by, often chewing gum and engaged in cheerful repartee with the protesters, and even giving help and advice about the location of loos or the direction of the route. What if

the anger of some sections of the crowd began to find expression in violence? The troops and police reinforcements were no doubt in reserve somewhere, and if war does begin and protests are again mounted on this sort of scale I wonder if things will be quite so peaceful? Hyde Park was soggy with a lot of February rain, and much of the carefully tended grass, to say nothing of the beautiful flower beds, were already a sea of mud when our part of the concourse arrived. There were stalls for food, for literature and for mementoes; a huge marquee, a floodlit platform from which the amplified voices of speakers, including that of Michael Foot, who by now must be about a hundred and twenty, echoed across the park. By now, like a great many others, I had had my belly-full of protesting and made my way to Marble Arch. I passed an immense heap of abandoned placards and posters and on an impulse rolled up a varied dozen and took them home with me, where they are now on display at my front gate and occasionally being vandalised. Pity more people did not keep theirs for local display. Perhaps next time...

SOME DAYS LATER I made a poster of my own urging people to make contact so we could plan local anti-war action. I put them up at village vantage points and at one stage an elderly man barked at me aggressively, 'I have been following you; what you are doing is illegal, its fly-posting. Do you realise you could be summoned by the police for doing that?' Quoth I, 'Well, I would sooner be summoned than do nothing when innocent people are going to be killed by the hundred thousand.' To which he responded, as he stalked off, with, 'You are nothing but a bloody fool.' ■

Fourth World News



One in eight World War One widows died within a year of the news of their husband's death in action. • 40% of Britons admit to never having read a book. • Over 1 million people, including our very own Editor, took to the streets of London in opposition to the proposed war in Iraq. Similar demos were held around the globe. • Britons spend more than £1 billion on over-the-counter medicines each year. • The number of suicides in prisons in England and Wales increased by 30% in 2002. • The former Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu has described Britain's backing of America's stance towards war in Iraq as 'mind-boggling'. • 2002 was a record year for car sales in England and Wales. • Gun crime increased by 35% in England and Wales in the last year. • Zambia's national debt, with compound interest, costs the country more than \$200m a year. • Over a third of all teachers are expected to leave the profession within five years as a result of heavy workloads and badly behaved children. • Obese 40-year-olds can expect to live up to seven years less than their thin counterparts. • Rape victims will be asked for their views in how to convict rapists. • The US will provide \$17 million worth of military assistance to Nepal to help it to fight Maoist guerrillas. • Calls for an international tax on air fuel, to penalise the airlines for causing harmful greenhouse gases, have been backed by the UK Environment Secretary. • Many counties in Britain will lose hundreds of millions of pounds of European funding when ten new countries join the Union in 2006. • The British Government plans to enlarge

the Thames Barrier as a result of the increased threat of flooding caused by global warming. It seems the risk of flooding has increased faster than originally thought. • Plans to improve the rail network in Britain, which would of course lessen the number of cars on the roads, have been scrapped because of lack of funding. Meanwhile the government has announced an increase in spending on the road network. • The BBC has again been condemned for showing disturbing, violent scenes. • Jordan is set to receive 16 fighter jets as part of a programme of US military aid. • Tony Blair has pledged that after Iraq has been destroyed, North Korea is next. • Babies born after IVF treatment are thought to be at a higher risk of developing a rare eye cancer. • Six men were stabbed in two Kent towns after rival gangs of asylum seekers clashed. • Support for Labour has fallen to its lowest level for more than a decade, largely due to Tony Blair's stance on Iraq. • All State secondary schools in Britain are set to be run by private companies. • According to *The Times*, any proposed disbandment of the IRA would be opposed by the rank and file members who have been its backbone for the last 30 years. • More than 7,000 birds have been affected by oil slicks off the Belgian coast, thought to have been caused by companies illegally dumping oil. • According to recent scientific studies it now seems that humans are descended from aardvarks – **SAM HAINS**

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