
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*

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THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Kirkpatrick Sale



THE TAWNEY LEGACY

Peter Etherden

Editorials:

**ANTI-WAR COALITION
BUSINESS AND MORALITY**

FOURTH WORLD REVIEW Nos. 121 &122



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ANTI-WAR COALITION

IN MY UNREGENERATE YOUTH I was virtually a founder member of CND. I soon deserted it as being too tame and joined the Committee of 100, which believed in a policy of direct action and in mass protest against nuclear weapons, and in civil disobedience.

I recall we 'sat down' in Trafalgar Square and hindered traffic for a couple of hours, and when we proceeded to organise another 'sit down' the authorities charged us with some offence or other and sent us to jail for a month. I have a memory of tiers of cells in a London prison which had lots of wire nettings across the galleries to prevent suicides and seeing Robert Bolt the playwright sitting in his cell across the landing and devouring his prison food as though he was starving, and simply marvelling at his appetite when my own was non-existent.

After about three days, by which time we had been transferred to an open prison in Staffordshire, I found myself unblinkingly bored. Along with Alex Comfort and some others, I decided to opt out, by giving an assurance of good behaviour to secure release. My fellow members of the Committee, who included Arnold Wesker the playwright and Christopher Logue the poet, as well as Bertrand Russell, took a dim view of what they viewed as our desertion, but, effectively, it was the end of non-violent protest on a mass scale.

Until, that is, April 12th of this year, nearly half a century later, when an estimated two million people in London and other millions in other cities around the world, demonstrated against the Anglo-American assault on Iraq.

Oiling the wheels

We may note in passing that the oft-repeated aim of this illegal act of war purported to be to rid the world of Iraq's 'weapons of mass destruction'. This was not a reference to mass motoring, which killed more than 45,000 people in Europe alone last year, and grievously maimed a great many more men, women and children, but to weapons of war. Despite the complete conquest of the country no such weapons have ever been found and the goal posts have now been shifted to claim that the war was justified to restore freedom and to rid the world of a tyrant. Whether it will simply replace one political bastard with another seems only too likely, but at any rate America now controls Iraq's oil. One Iraqi doctor declared when interviewed that now he has recovered his freedom of speech, could he use it to ask the Americans to leave his country?

But with the demise of the Committee of 100 I grasped at least one salient reality of the peace problem: that war was a result of power in society out of control, and that

further wars *were* inevitable unless and until the citizen body could find the ways and means of establishing that control.

With the help of Leopold Kohr, Fritz Schumacher and Ivan Illich I set about establishing a journal to explore this theme and called it *Resurgence*. It was not an instant success; it was seeking to pose fundamental questions about the structure and purpose of modern technologically developed societies, whereas most people, even ardent peace activists, wanted only to question what the existing structures were doing. To question basic institutional forms and the values which sustained them seemed unreal, impractical and even perverse, when indeed it was not simply irrelevant. Yet today it looms ever larger as the most imposing aspect of peace concerns; to question not what governments do but what they are.

Out of control

And of course what stands out like a red nose on a drunkard's face is that we cannot control what they do because of what they are, and what they are is too big to be susceptible of ordinary citizen control whatever ostensible machinery of democracy may be in place and whatever the citizen may want.

Resurgence was jostled out of my hands by an Indian entrepreneur who dropped the title of *The Fourth World* and proceeded to proclaim it 'The Spiritual Flagship of the Alternative Movement'. It was a step which overlooked that the world was already awash with spiritual organisations, it was already loaded with entire libraries of spiritual literature and that there was no part of the world which lacked its full quota of priests, swamis, avatars, rab-

bis, imams, gurus and other personal promoters of spiritual enlightenment. What the world did apparently lack was an understanding of the play of power, how that play was affected by the size and scale by which it was deployed and how as size increased control became impossible.

And of course it still does, which is why today what is called 'the peace movement' is as confused as it is ineffectual and why its assumption that we need only to convince a majority to renounce war in order to achieve peace is not remotely tenable.

I pointed out as much in a letter recently published in *The Times*. I pointed out that for generations peace-concerned people had campaigned against war in the belief that one day the majority of people would be won over to their cause so that peace might ensue; yet in the run-up to the impending Iraq war the majority were won over, the majority were in favour of peace – yet still the result was war!

I concluded by asking whether democracy was a fiction. Whether it is or is not, the question goes to the heart of any concern to promote peace today. Where do we go from here? On what basis do we campaign for peace in the light of events which indicate with stark clarity that even when we have won over a majority to our view we still get war?

Month by month, one of the main 'peace' organisations churns out a bulletin called *Peace Action News*, which is full of fairly predictable activity reports from ardent peace activists. A current issue details how two of them used sugar and treacle to interfere with the oil systems of service vehicles at Fairford RAF bomber station. They also used spikes to puncture tyres, and crowbars and hammers. It

appears Greenpeace UK flew a hot-air balloon carrying a 'peace' message over the same bomber base for the benefit of the service personnel. Others took part in a 'die-in' (lying down 'dead' outside the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall), yet others, brave souls, stripped naked and lay on a very cold ground spelling out the word 'peace' with their bodies in a Sussex village, and so on.

Spiking the Chancellor's guns

Is any of this activity achieving peace? Is it ever likely to? And if not, why not? And what then should peace-concerned people do? My friend Roger Franklin in the same bulletin urges his own tactic of refusing to pay taxes used for war purposes, presumably on the grounds that if many more people followed suit the Chancellor would be hampered in spending money on weapons. Roger seems blissfully unaware of the utility of a printing press in helping hard-pressed governments out of their financial problems; he is, you will note, concerned with what governments do rather than what they are.

In the same bulletin, veteran peace activist Albert Beale expresses concern that the monster anti-war demos of April 12th were not against war in general but only against the particular war in Iraq. 'If only', he pleaded, 'one in a thousand of them went home to organise action at their nearest military site...'

'If onlyism' is the intellectual Asian flu of peace activists and political reformers the world over; 'if only' people would see the world as we see it, and do what we do, we would all then be home and dry...

We can surely do better than this; peace, among other immense questions, is not simply a moral issue to be met with an immedi-

ate, and quite ineffective, emotional response; it raises a wide-ranging concern about the general nature of society which produces war as naturally as a hen lays an egg, the basis on which it operates, the values it is promoting and the effects it is having on people's lives and their responses.

Why worry about war and demonstrate for peace at Fairford whilst ignoring the perpetual war against men's souls promoted by the daily diet of violence, trash, sleaze and depravity on our TV programmes? Why not a 'peace campaign' to take control of such programmes out of the hands of hard-nosed money-makers and put them in the hands of publicly funded educators and cultural savants?

Why not a 'peace campaign' to capture control of local government as a step to booting out national government authorities from local government concerns in order to make power much more democratically accountable?

Why not a 'peace campaign' to fragment national government power so that its ability to squander vast sums on war weapons is effectively diminished? Why not a 'peace campaign' to challenge what governments are rather than what they do?

War is a potent symptom of a sick society, but when are we going to tackle the causes rather than engage with endless futility with the symptoms? Does the 'peace' movement have the intellectual vigour, the adaptability to a new situation and the profundity of vision and concern to grasp the need to confront these questions, as distinct from an everlasting round of gratifying a doubtless righteous spirit of moral indignation?

Albert Beale declares the April 12th demos might well be seen as a key move-

ment in British politics, but then lapses into the passive voice by saying 'it remains to be seen' whether it will accomplish anything more.

No it doesn't Albert, it depends on you and I and countless other concerned people on how to get the debate on the nature and functioning of our technologically overdeveloped and rapidly disintegrating civilisation under way before its self-generated excesses overwhelm us all.

What sort of society should we be creating which will naturally produce peace to

replace the present one which just as naturally produces war? What principle of democratic nationhood should we be promoting in order to ensure that the current worldwide ferment of ethnic and tribal unrest is enabled to realise its legitimate aspirations without the torrent of further violence and bloodshed which now threatens peace everywhere?

How much longer are the powerless millions of war from a failure to face these questions? ■

BUSINESS AND MORALITY

ARATHER CURIOUS development is emerging in the business world; it is called 'The 21st Century for Business' and seeks to express 'A Global Resolution for New Corporate Values'.

It represents a deep awakening of conscience in some – repeat some – business people about the effects of much current business practice on the environment and on society at large, and seeks to give effect to it by urging everyone to sign a very special resolution which declares as follows:

'We the people who have co-signed below agree with the tenets included herein and commit to the following vision: a world in which the global business community serves society in ways that are life-affirming, sustainable, humanistic and responsible for positively influencing the future evolution of humanity.'

There follows a ten-point acknowledgement programme. The first states:

"We acknowledge that:

- ◆ humanity faces grave crises on many fronts that cannot be averted through scientific technology alone;

- ◆ the industrialisation of the developing and undeveloped world is pushing these crises to a point of irreversibility; and
- ◆ a new consciousness is required to solve these problems."

The ten points are then followed by a nine-point 'resolution', each part of which urges the promotion of a generally admirable moral objective; to wit: Affirm Life, Balance Economic Focus, Act With Integrity, Be Socially Responsible, Honour Community, Value Everyone, Respect the Complete Human, Honour and Respect Emotions, and, lastly, Speak Out Publicly.

The sponsors, 'an informal group of people in business', are hopeful that if enough people sign the resolution it will bring to the fore a new consciousness in business practice which 'can change the world'.

How realistic is this hope? To what extent can the world of business be married to the world of moral principle? The second question really begs another: when and why did the two ever become separated?

We are touching here on some of the more extensive reaches of the battleground of the human soul for the triumph of good over evil; for whilst morality is concerned with the supremacy of the common interest over private gain, business is concerned with the reverse – if only because it must be.

How then can the two be reconciled? Perhaps they never have been united for the simple reason that they represent two fundamentally opposed drives in the human disposition; what is of more concern is to note the extent to which one has always been the dominant force. The modern era may be said to have its beginnings with the momentous change of the Elizabethan era when the age-old laws against the practice of usury were repealed. This may well seem a long way from the 21st century but it is vital to grasp that it is precisely this change which gave birth to the business forces that now dominate modern life and which seem hell-bent on destroying it.

Immoral and Illegal

Usury is simply the practice of lending money and charging a fee to the borrower. In the 16th century it could be said that it had always been seen as both immoral and illegal 'since the time whereof the mind of no man runneth to the contrary'. It was condemned in Jewish, Christian and Islamic scriptures and nobody can reasonably expect to make improvements to the disastrous trends that now have modern life in their grip who fails to see why that condemnation was so persistent and so powerful.

There is a disposition today to regard opposition to usury as a form of moral pedantry, and one which need no longer detain us in the headlong rush of modern progress. The case is very much otherwise. The men of old who fashioned the prescrip-

tions against usury knew exactly what they were doing because they could see exactly where it would, if permitted, proceed. And modern history is a sorrowful saga of confirmation of how right they were.

They could see that, if usury were permitted, instead of moral principle governing business relations the power of usury would become so strong as to dominate and even condition the world of moral relationships. Which is of course where we are today, when technological and scientific freakishness now reign supreme, susceptible to no effective moral judgement or control at all. It has achieved this dominance because whilst morality can only prevail on the basis of strong personal relationships, usury, in its insatiable lust for growth, must eventually come to operate on the basis of relationships which are utterly impersonal.

This is the root of the modern crisis, a global civilisation founded on a practice which the moral wisdom of our forbears was at strenuous pains to reject. They could not of course foresee the precise nature of the evils that usury would breed as a matter of course; they could not foresee mass motoring and its toll on human life and community structure and power, the chemicalisation of agriculture, the obliteration of species, the emergence of the awesome power of television to debase human culture and destroy moral sensibility, and much else of the crisis in human affairs which now threatens to sweep civilisation off the pages of history altogether. What they did see was that usury was a force of evil which, if not constrained, would wreck any prospect of moral progress.

Their warnings might well have been reinforced by the nature of the forces which succeeded in throwing off the constraints. They came of course from the world of

business, of banking and investment, the rapidly expanding world of trade consequent on the flood of gold from the 'new' world, singular improvements in navigation at sea, coupled with a general broadening of men's minds in relation to investment opportunities; these were the key factors; none of them remotely concerned with moral considerations, all of them emanating from the itch for gain.

These were the antecedent forces of Adam Smith and his pregnant soundbite that 'Your butcher does not give you your Sunday joint because he loves you.' An oft quoted remark which may be said to have set a seal of approval on the new mercantile forces which today are now busy wrecking the planet for profit in the name of progress.

Smith of course was writing when the vast giant of global trade was still in its infancy; a time when most of trade and commerce was still locally based so that 'your butcher' would be a local family-owned shop which, in dealings with other local traders and local families, sustained as a matter of course the moral community framework within which all might be held to operate on the basis of their personal relationships. His assurance, if he but knew it, that the general interest would be served by the force of competition which would keep prices in check, even though private gain was the mainspring, was based on an assumption that the localised basis of enterprises was a permanent feature of the economic landscape.

It is easy to be wise after the event, but possibly harder to learn the lessons it is able to teach. At no time did Smith entertain the notion that the mere fact of an increasing scale of operations might vitiate any of his

conclusions, that global monopolies, the bastard offspring of localised competition, would murder any moral concern for the public interest as a matter of course, and inevitably, would murder competition itself by substituting the giant impersonal forces of the market for the local personal relationships which had prevailed.

Economic nonsense

But so it has proved; the event makes nonsense of his theories, as it does of most of the economic teaching in our universities, of the reams of textbooks that are used and the journals such as *The Economist* which pour off the presses and continue to peddle assumptions which would fail to be sustained around a village pump.

It is these forces which our 'informal group of people in business' are now belatedly seeking to question and to influence. Insofar as they may help to alert more people to the horrendous dangers we are running we can surely applaud their efforts. But then, in practice what do they propose to do about usury?

In the first Elizabeth's reign the Church bewailed the proposals to legalise it and insisted it should continue to be banned outright; but once the die was cast what did it do? In Tawney's trenchant phrase 'the Church said nothing because it had nothing to say'. Can our 'informal group' do any better? It will accomplish nothing at all if it fails to grasp that the appetites of the market can in no wise be married to the magistracy of morality unless quite specific constraints are put on market operations to ensure the supremacy of the social interest.

For a multitude of reasons these constraints dare not be put in the hands of any form of central government without assail-

ing freedom. Market forces are always arguing as much, but in their case they are concerned only to promote the freedom of a wealthy and powerful minority to exploit a largely helpless majority, a lesson, that despite Stalin, Chairman Mao and Mr Tony Blair, our socialist friends still seem unable to digest.

If economic activity is to be subject to constraints which secure the overall paramountcy of community interest without making inroads into the fragile imperatives of freedom the community itself must be small enough to enable the personal relationships of its members to be the determinative factor of its moral consensus.

Unequal Relationship

Why? Because morality is a function of personal relationships; once the community enlarges beyond this size then those personal relationships are weakened and diminished as relationships with institutions increasingly supervene. But one's relationships with organisations are based not on morality but on power; we need also to note that the larger the organisation the smaller the significance of the individual member, whilst the smaller the organisation the larger the significance of the individual.

To this one needs to add that whereas personal relationships are generally on a basis of equality our relationships with power structures are decidedly unequal since inevitably the power to make key

decisions is with those in the central controlling apparatus. Perhaps all this helps to explain why commercial organisations so often embark on policies which are helping to wreck the planet despite the vociferous objections of more alert people who realise what is afoot.

So the problems confronting this 'informal group', as indeed they confront all of us, is not to engage in elaborate bouts of inspired moral rhetoric which leave the nuts and bolts of the practical affairs of things just as they are, but to tackle the problem of power in ways which enable people to have a determinative say in what is decided in economics and politics, to say nothing of numerous social questions over which they have no real control today at all.

Democracy, after all, is not a dose of medicine to be taken obediently two times a decade; it is a way of life where people decide, and as Einstein urged, 'It is not possible to solve problems with the mindframe that has created them.'

The lesson then, however at variance with almost all current theory and practice it may be, is to restore local power, local community structure and the force of the local community moral consensus. If there is any other way forward our 'informal group of people in business' will need to indicate what it is if we are not to be regaled with yet another bout of well-intentioned moral exhortation that changes and achieves nothing remedial at all. ■

The supreme evil of modern industrial society is not poverty. It is the absence of liberty, i.e. of the opportunity for self-direction: and for controlling the material conditions of a man's life. This produces poverty, because it produces hopelessness, irresponsibility, fecklessness. That is the lesson of the industrial revolution and of the enclosures. To give men the will not to be poor, we must first of all give them the control of the material conditions on which their lives depend; that is, set them free.

R.H. Tawney

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Living with Apocalypse

Kirkpatrick Sale

The author is raising here just about the most important questions about our contemporary lifestyle that could be posed and which have a crucial bearing on the policies beings pursued by environmentalists, ecologists and individuals everywhere. It would be evidence of vitality and purpose in the many organisations which share these concerns if this article could be seen as the first stage of a vitally important ongoing debate and contributions from readers and others are assured of full editorial consideration.

LET US BEGIN by imagining that a *small child with many bruises is brought into a doctor's office and the physician is told that she has been repeatedly beaten.*

The first question asked would surely be, *Where does it hurt?*, followed by an examination of those spots and an application of whatever remedies are possible to alleviate them. But it would take a callous or immoral doctor not to ask other questions: *How did it happen? Who did it? How long has this been going on? Why? How can we prevent it from happening again?*

Now let us imagine there is a society that suffers many injuries by way of environmental assaults, some obvious and open raw sores, some more hidden and deeper wounds. The first question we should probably ask, at least after the assaults start to harm the human component of that society, is, *Where does it hurt? What are the problems? Which are the practices that are violating our air, our water, our soils, our forests, our oceans, our fellow-creatures, our very sustenance on earth? And then we would, like the doctor, examine those practices in detail and set about finding remedies for them.*

We might even from time to time ask *Who did it? And where?* Sometimes we might even find the ones responsible and make them pay for it and promise never to do it again – sometimes.

That is about where the environmental movement began in the 1960s, triggered by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, and that is about where it is today – 41 years later! We have, more or less, learned what specific assaults our institutions and our practices are doing damage to our world – global warming, intense weather, ozone depletion, deforestation, overpopulation, air and water and soil pollution, toxic waste, nuclear energy, resource depletion, acid rain, desertification, topsoil erosion, species extinction, chemical poisoning, overfishing ... well, those are the basic ones, the ones that add up to a global catastrophe. There are others, such as the net consumption of photosynthetic energy, the energy from the sun that allows all life on earth, which is now gobbled up at the rate of more than 40 per cent a year by one single large bipedal species that calls itself wise, or sapient, condemning all the other billion plant and animal species to dwindling supplies of their

life source – those others, well we don't talk about them much. But anyway, what the last four decades have been about is largely identifying the major environment ailments, publicising them from time to time – though there are always *crises du jour* that have their day and are then mostly forgotten, like Chernobyl, for example – and on occasion trying to fashion modest remedies for them.

I hasten to say on occasion. Because almost all of the ailments that get our attention are those that endanger people, so we ignore a great many others that threaten other species – coral reefs, say, and rainforests. And many even of those that endanger us are not seriously addressed by our system: the proliferation of man-made chemicals, for example, now numbering almost 90,000, the great majority of which have never been tested for human safety nor do they figure to be.

And I hasten to emphasize modest. Because most of the remedies that we have come up with have been sticking plasters for gaping wounds, massages for deep-set cancers. That, alas, is the essential message of Earth Day. We have had 33 years of Earth Days calling attention to our environment, an immense amount of legislation has been passed, particularly in the United States, many environmental agencies and bureaucracies established, a huge set of environmental codes and restrictions spelled out, great casebooks full of environmental court cases assembled, environmental lobbies and citizens' groups active across the country in every legislature and executive, hundreds of billions of dollars spent on studies and cures and correctives. But here is the hard truth: most of the assaults on the environment go unchecked, even in my own country which has had a better record than most, and our

total negative impact on the earth has not lessened in all this time – in fact, sorry to say, it has increased. An analysis by an international team of scientists this year, called the *Living Planet Report*, shows that overall the earth's natural ecosystems have declined by 33 per cent over the last 30 years.

Crushed by Man's Footprint

Worse still, the environmental pressure that humans have placed on the earth – our total ecological footprint, as the saying goes – our continuing appropriation of the resources of nature and her species, has magnified until such leading scientists as E.O. Wilson have recently declared that our impact 'is already too large for the planet to sustain, it's growing larger, and the earth has lost its ability to regenerate'.

And the reason for this predicament? It is because as a society we refuse to ask the other two essential questions that any rational doctor would ask: Why did this happen? How can we prevent it from happening again?

To take the first: *Why did this happen?* Or in other words, why does my country, and virtually all others, have a system, an economic and political regime, that not only has permitted the assault on the earth in the first place but allows it to continue, with only a few amelioratives and moderations, even after it is clear what kind of danger it is bringing? Why is it that our answer to environmental crisis is, first, individual 'life-style' reforms – recycling, solar panels, rainforest coffees, hybrid cars, string bags, organic food, composting, double-pane insulation, and the like – as if the crisis was our fault.

(This whole individual what-you-can-do-to-save-the-earth guilt trip, by the way, is

a crock of patootie – *WE* are not creating the crises and *WE* can't solve them, that's the truth. Take our crazy energy consumption. I haven't looked at the latest figures, but for the past 15 years the story has been the same every year: individual consumption – residential, private car, and so on – is never more than about a quarter of all consumption, the rest of it being commercial, industrial, corporate, agribusiness, and government. So even if we all took up biking and wood stoves, it would have a negligible impact on energy use or on global warming and atmospheric pollution. Sure, go ahead and live a responsible environmental life, recycle, compost, bike, as I do, but because it is the right, the moral, thing to do, not because it's gonna save the planet.) And, second, passing rules and regulations that never seem to change things much? Why is it that we seem to be willing to live with the threat of the apocalypse that our leading scientists tell us is impending rather than try to seriously alter a world where

- ◆ consumption, of anything, is seen as an unrelieved virtue;
- ◆ production, of anything, is regarded as a social and economic necessity; and
- ◆ more, of anything, like children or cars or chemicals or PhDs or golf courses or recycling centers, is unquestioningly accepted?

Well, the answer of course is that, to take just the United States for a moment, the great majority of people do not want to do away with an economic system – it is called industrial capitalism – that provides them with material riches, sometimes in great abundance, and longer lives, and nonstop palliatives such as entertainment, alcohol, prescription drugs, sports, and television. And the few who would like to do away

with it are essentially powerless, ignored or accommodated or intimidated or repressed by the powers-that-be, and faced with institutions, governmental and corporate, that are extremely powerful.

The problem here is that industrial capitalism rests completely on two principles that simply fly in the face of ecological sanity: One, the imperative of growth, of the market, of the firm, of the industry, of first-quarter sales, of scientific knowledge and technological innovations, of not just population in general but a consuming population. And Two, the exploitation of resources, using up the earth's irreplaceable treasures of every kind, from diamonds to oil, from forests to soil, for the benefit of human material comfort, that does not allow but the merest consideration of the effects of that extraction, what happens when the resources are manufactured into what economists call goods, though most of them aren't, or what happens when they are used, or how they are disposed of.

(You know, I was reflecting recently on just how crazy, and may I say stupid, is the teaching of economics in most American universities. Economics is a subject taught without any consideration of what is its most fundamental component, ecology, the systems of nature on which all economic life of course must ultimately depend. Hence we have a profession of considerable importance in our society that can measure the value of a hundred bushels of wheat coming off a farm but has no way of factoring in – subtracting in fact – the amount of topsoil eroded or poisoned in the process, the damage to the surrounding biotic community, the effect of toxic runoff from fertilisers in the streams and bays, or the enormous environmental costs of mass-producing artificial

fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides, and high-tech farm machinery. Economists do not factor such information in not because they are idiotic or cruel or dumb, but because they are conditioned by their education not even to see the natural world except as resources or understand the complexities of the science of ecology. No wonder Hazel Henderson says that economics is a disease.)

Edge of Ruin

Anyway, there it is: the imperative of growth and consumption, the exploitation of resources. That's what makes up the heart of market capitalism – it's not its fault, that's just what it does. But as the environmentalist Jeremy Seabrook has put it, 'If it had been the purpose of human activity on earth to bring the planet to the edge of ruin, no more efficient mechanism could have been invented than the market economy.'

That means that, to put it starkly, the environmental movement can never win, can never be but a tolerated gadfly, and that Earth Day can never engender environmental success, as long as it functions within capitalist society. Simple as that. That is why such a dedicated and longtime activist as José Lutzenberger said a few years ago, perhaps without realising the whole context of his remark, 'In the environmental movement, our defeats are always final, our victories always provisional. What you save today can still be destroyed tomorrow, don't you see?' Victories are provisional because they are superficial – you get them to build a toxic-waste dump but not stop producing toxics; you get them to make cars more fuel-efficient but they do nothing about producing them, and using them, and paving over the land and building great warehouses to accommodate them—

the victories are superficial because they do not get to the heart of the matter.

And the heart of the matter is that second question: How can we prevent this from happening again?

The short answer is that we cannot stop the continuing assault on nature if we are content to keep a capitalist system – at least one that permits industrial-scale production and mass-scale consumption. That's a tough conclusion to live with, but I see no other.

In 1990, the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day, the US Public Broadcasting System aired a six-part series called *Race to Save the Planet*, an elaborate and surprisingly hard-hitting analysis of the ecological perils facing the earth and the extent of the changes that would have to be made to avert them. 'Can we change the way we live,' it asked as its central, its guiding, question, 'in order to save our planet from destruction?'

That is really the issue for Earth Day—but, I would plead, not just for this isolated day, rather for the whole society every day, taking precedence over all the nonsense that occupies our media, our legislators, our generals, our academics, our besotted public. Can we change the way we live?

If it is to be answered in the negative, then it seems to me that no movement, even one as moral and productive as the environmental movement has been, will solve the problems of ecological destruction that are leading the human species, and with it most of the other forms of life, to a final end, to ecocide.

Of course I am not especially optimistic about answering that question in the affirmative. We don't realise it, any more than fish realise they are swimming in water, but we are surrounded in every act on every day by a culture, a way of seeing and living, that has erected a protective psychological

shield that enables our society to go on doing what it does even though it knows apocalypse is pending. It is something that psychologists call 'cognitive dissonance', the ability to hold in your heart, in your mind, two contradictory beliefs or ideas: in this case, the continuance of the capitalist system and the health of the planet.

We achieve this, I think, by allowing ourselves to make apocalypse fictional. Ever since Hiroshima began our knowledge of environmental disaster, we have produced movies, novels, especially science fiction, TV shows and suchlike, showing what environmental crises, even a world-wide catastrophe, would look like. Of course humans always survive these crises – or usually, I remember one movie – was it *Them* about the giant ants? – whose last frame was *The End*, and then there popped up a question mark – so already they don't seem so bad, but just by making movies and stories of such things allows us to put it in a whole separate realm of our thoughts, and of course lets us remove it from the real world of politics and life.

We don't really believe that we are headed for an apocalypse: that's just fiction.

Besides, we can fix it before it comes. We are smart and rich, and we're just getting smarter and richer, and we can create any technology we want, and there is no environmental problem to which there is not a technological solution. This is a very old, very rooted American belief: the technofix. It doesn't matter that there's hardly ever been a technological solution that didn't create some new technological problem – one of the most egregious is the treatment in the 1940s and 50s for acne, tonsillitis, adenoids, and ringworm among children by high-dosage X-rays, which later turned out,

according to the National Cancer Institute, to have given thyroid cancer to as many as 4 million people, but there's plenty of other examples. Nuclear power, DDT, thalidomide, on and on. And it doesn't matter that the search for technofixes is beyond the control of the technofixers, or anyone else, for that matter, to the point where Bill Joy, one of the giants of Silicon Valley, was moved just last year to declare the dangers of continuing research into genetic engineering, robotics, and nanotechnology, not because it wouldn't work but because it would – with disastrous consequences.

No those things don't matter: our belief in the technofix is solid and unchallengeable. And that's why we don't really take seriously the apocalypse warners.

And that's why we are not likely to answer the question of 'can we change the way we live to save our planet from destruction?' in the affirmative, I am sad to say.

But I would add this: if there is any hope here, if we can turn enough people around with a realisation of the nature of our economic system, and the reality of the threats to the world it poses, it will come by asking all the questions. Earth Day has traditionally been the day devoted to 'Where does it hurt?' and 'Who did it?' And occasionally 'How long has this been going on?' But it now has to be devoted to the harder questions, 'Why is this happening?', 'What will it take to stop it?' And 'How can we, as a movement, a people, a nation, fashion the elements of an ecological society, modest and biocentric, attentive to nature's laws and purposes, embracing the values of the living earth, and living lightly on the planet as if it were the only one available, and prevent it from happening again?'

All the questions. ■

FORUM

ACTION

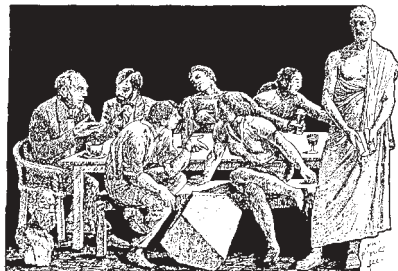
I THINK your work is important, dynamic and invigorating. I share what I can with my children and (among other things!) our vocabulary has improved as a result of reading *Fourth World Review*. I appreciate the intellectual vigour you apply to your work and the contribution you have made to my understanding of the world, including the vital importance of taking action on a local scale.

Rachel Bridgeland,
78 Foreland Road, Bembridge,
Isle of Wight PO35 5UD

GOD'S AGENT

MY FRIEND Kirkpatrick Sale believes that President Bush, under the sway of Christian 'dominionism' and power-mad advisors, is obsessed with effecting a 'benevolent global hegemony', with America as the hegemon. Still angry that George W. Bush is President of the United States, Kirk sees America as the ruthless Godzilla crushing the people of a hapless world under its military, corporate and cultural power.

America's historical record has many



blemishes, chief among them the dispossession of the native Americans in the 19th century and the existence of Southern slavery until 1863. But in a world of turmoil, hatred, and rapine, America since 1941 has been an unquestionable force for Good.

The problem of a Saddam and a Kim Jong II and a Mugabe have always confounded decentralists. Like your editor, they dream up vast 'global authorities' (wielding what power?) to attempt to restrain the villains. It can't work. Evil yields only to superior power.

The people of this world ought to be thankful that at this time in history, the world's only hyperpower is led by a moral and sincere man who believes he is God's agent for Good in the endless struggle against Evil.

Decentralists may decry Bush's 'dominionism', and even, despicably, identify Bush and Blair as the true 'axis of evil'. But in my view the world is far better off enduring that burden than fatuously yearning for John Papworth's world bureaucracy that, to take one example, is currently in the pro-

cess of destroying all hope for a peaceful, productive Kosova.

John McClaughry,

Ethan Allen Institute, 4836 Kirby Mountain Road, Concord, VT 05824, USA

To describe the American extermination of its native peoples and all that it pertains to one of the most sensitive and sophisticated civilisations in the human record as a 'blemish' can only put a question mark on any judgement contingent to it; and to project the same spirit of ruthless genocidal, cold-blooded aggrandisement that dominates the US power complex today as being somehow the work of 'God's agent for Good' seems to suggest that God has somehow acquired an American passport. – Ed.

COPYING

MANY THANKS for a very welcome *Review* (120) with your editorial and the article/column by Kirkpatrick Sale 'The Real Reasons for War'. I want to photocopy this to send to my son in the USA.

Doris Millward

23 Station Road, Robertsbridge, East Sussex TN32 5DG

THE ENEMY?

IF MODERN HUMANITY has indeed lost its way, destroying itself and life all around, can we identify clearly the most key, singular problem and address it? Are we to attack it? Tolerate it critically?

Assuming money, greed, materialism

and exploitation are part of one main threat to our existence, and we call this threat the market, have we included whatever else threatens us? What is the enemy? Is it a 'what' or a 'who'?

When we see and hear a polluting motor vehicle, disturbing the air, water, sound and our safety, or when we see deforestation take its toll on the environment and climate, have we dealt with these threats by simplifying the focus to the market? Or does overpopulation answer our question?

If these questions vex us, it is tempting to acquiesce to tolerating the market by instead blaming technology or 'human nature'. If we are hopelessly, insufficiently evolved, we can pass ourselves off as children in a long evolution – assuming we have a long time to keep evolving and are not cutting our story short! Regardless, the market seems to cover almost everything we can see as inimical to our survival as natural, social beings. The market even deigns to cover such a basic real, necessity of life – land. Land is for sale and becomes part of 'the market'.

Jan Lundberg

PO Box 4347, Arcata, CA 95518, USA

EXCELLENT

Thank you for your important work and your excellent presentation.

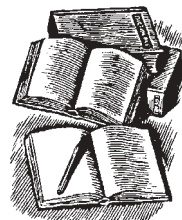
Daniel Rufer

Bunishoferstrasse 206, CH-8706 Feldmeilen, Switzerland


Any economic or social system that does not benefit natural communities is unsustainable, immoral and really stupid. Sustainability, morality, intelligence and justice require the dismantling of any such system.

Derrick James, The Ecologist

BOOKS



ONE NO, MANY YESES – A JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF THE GLOBAL RESISTANCE MOVEMENT, by Paul Kingsnorth. THE FREE PRESS, imprint of Simon & Schuster, London, 2003; £ 10; 355 pages; ISBN 0-7432-2026-9.

 *Reviewed by Peter Etherden*

IF YOU ask ten people what the global resistance movement is about you will get ten different answers. Some call it anti-globalisation. Some call it anti-capitalist. Some call it pro-democracy, others a social justice movement. The British Prime Minister famously called it ‘an anarchists’ travelling circus’. *The New York Times* journalist Thomas Friedman said it was ‘a Noah’s ark of flat-earth advocates, protectionist trade unions and yuppies looking for their 1960s fix’. What Clare Short in the UK Labour Government dismisses as ‘misguided, white middle-class activists’, Noam Chomsky calls ‘the first real promise of a genuine International’.

But while analysts and pundits dissect or dismiss it, the global resistance move-

ment has been growing rapidly and is now the biggest political and social movement for generations and one which regularly outfoxes the corporate establishment. To think that this resistance movement will be brought to heel by the draconian measures governments are foisting upon a frightened public in the wake of September 11th or by the obscenities of permanent pre-emptive aggression waged by tax-funded mercenaries and military contractors is to live in cloud cuckoo land.

In 1995 after reading history at Oxford University, Paul Kingsnorth joined *The Ecologist* as Deputy Editor. In August 2001 he resigned to travel the world. But it was no ordinary world tour. His journey began in the southern Mexican province of Chiapas and ended eight months later on Blackheath a few miles south of London where in 1381 John Bull and Wat Tyler confronted King Richard II and demanded an end to serfdom and a sweeping shift in social relations and economic organisation.

One No, Many Yeses is the skillfully

crafted record of Kingsnorth's travels across five continents. During the course of his travels he met and broke bread with many of our world's future Castros and Mandelas as they struggle to bring political and economic freedom to their people. This is no ordinary package-deal tourist. Kingsnorth quotes Gustavo Esteva from Oaxaca in Chiapas: 'People have been disillusioned with the ballot box for a long time. And yet they are disillusioned too with rebels who come with guns and say, "give us the state we will do better".' Kingsnorth reckons the freedom fighters he meets are onto something.

After the water wars of Cochabamba in Bolivia, Kingsnorth takes us to Soweto where we learn about the privatisations of utilities and the punitive electricity rates that have given rise to Operation Khanyisa with its illegal reconnecting of households to the state electricity supply. By this stage in his travels, Kingsnorth is quite clear that 'those who believe the answer is a coalition of polite negotiators working to make globalisation work better or persuade corporations to behave better are wide of the mark'.

He sees clearly that power is what is at the heart of every battle, even 'though they might seem to be about trade, treaties, agriculture, consumerism or corporations', and this, he writes, 'is a timeless, international battle to decide who runs the show; who wields that power and how, and by what authority do they do so'. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

After the new South Africa of the African National Congress it is back north to New York where Kingsland investigates the tactics being used in Manhattan to lay siege to the cult of shopping. After a lightning tour through the States we head off to Papua New Guinea where the local peas-

antry is confronting giant corporations like Shell and Rio Tinto. This is not some traveller's quest for the perfect beach but investigative journalism of the highest order... the Fourth Estate at its best.

Kingsnorth never ceases asking what the resistance movements stand for and how a new world might be built on its principles. And everywhere he goes he discovers that it is all about power. Of course those who claim that the anti-globalisers have no positive constructive alternative are correct, he says, 'but they have missed the point'. The 'Ya basta!' Enough is enough! of the Zapatistas of Chiapas – now a slogan of the global resistance movement – is a 'positive no', a *Que se vayan todos!* (Away with them all!), away with any one system.

From Indonesia Kingsnorth travels to the Atlantic city of Porto Alegre for the second World Social Forum and from there to the Landless Rural Workers Movement and the reintroduction of organic farming in Brazil, just one of the many 'yeses' Kingsnorth discovers in South America.

Finally back in the United States, Kingsnorth reports on the tremendous diversity of activity taking place: legal challenges to the corporate personhood doctrine in California, the Community Vitality Act in Colorado, Sprawl-Busters in Massachusetts, and much more besides. Like the young French nobleman Alexis de Tocqueville two hundred years before him, Paul Kingsnorth sees America as it is and not as others report it. And he likes much of what he sees. He finds grassroots America renewing itself and appealing to a new patriotism, one that is rooted in the original ideas of the 1776 revolution – to freedom, self-government, liberty and democracy. This appeal, Kingsnorth believes, is capable of uniting

left and right and young and old in a new kind of American spirit, the spirit of 1776.

Governance the world over is in disarray. Only states and corporations are legitimate. Radical monopolies have been created over death and taxes through control of the production and distribution of weaponry and debt. Abraham Lincoln saw it coming in 1864 when he wrote six days before his assassination that ‘...this cruel war has cost a vast amount of treasure and blood... but I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. As a result of the war, corporations have been enthroned, and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavour to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands, and the Republic is destroyed...’. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.*

Half of the biggest hundred economies in the world are states and half are corporations. General Motors and Thailand, Mitsubishi and South Africa, Wal-Mart and Venezuela. All are Soviet-style command economies. Their functionaries increasingly resemble each other as a gulf opens up between them and their fellow countrymen. It is increasingly difficult to find any real differences between ruling and opposition parties. Radical opposition is eliminated by what Thomas Robertson referred to in his 1947 classic *Human Ecology* as ‘the financial filter’. Any party leader hazarding land reform or wealth distribution is instantly removed. To govern is to ensure that the world is safe for General Motors to make profits and for party politicians to live in luxury.

What Kingsnorth has discovered on his travels is that virtually everything, every-

where comes down to two ‘thrillingly simple questions’: Who’s in charge, and why. ‘The global resistance movement,’ he insists, ‘is designed and built to contest power – to question, and to claim legitimacy. And that is exactly what it is doing.’

It may not know it, but the global resistance movement is not only making mockery of those who would claim that the young are no longer interested in politics but is applying every tenet of Fourth World theory in doing so. Were the Fourth World a political party then the activities described in *One No, Many Yeses* would be the work and policies of its youth movement. The next step is for ordinary people to support them.

What the youngsters in the global resistance movement are doing on the global front, their parents and their grandparents must start doing on the local front, using every trick in the book, ranging from a stubborn refusal to obey rules that are wrong to the enthusiastic endorsement of everything that affirms the good life. Only the local is real. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.*

VITAL SIGNS: THE TRENDS THAT ARE SHAPING OUR FUTURE 2002/2003, edited by Lester Brown. EARTHSCAN PUBLICATIONS, 2002. £14.95. ISBN 1-85383-918-3.

 Reviewed by Edward P. Echlin

Vital Signs is an annual companion to World Watch’s widely studied *State of the World* series. World Watch is foundation-supported, which enables more objectivity than would government or corporation support. Nevertheless, funding from foundations, with nominal echoes of corporations, may influence reports, at least indirectly. A few names are significant for the wise: The Ford Foundation, the Geraldine

R. Dodge Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund... *Vital Signs* is published in partnership with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Vital Signs selects and distils up-to-the-minute trends, and features, in 45 selected signs of our times. Each piece is brief, about two pages, almost executive summary style. It provides 'headlines and lead paragraphs', whereas *State of the World* discusses one general topic in about a dozen chapters. The trends covered in the present volume are Food and Agriculture; Energy; Scientific; Economic; Transportation; Communication; Health and Social; and Military. The 'Special Features' are Environment; Economy and Finance; Resource Economics; Health; Social; and Military. In brief, the book is wide ranging.

Like the longer essays in *State of the World*, *Vital Signs* is factual and instructive, condensing a lot of information in two pages. Sometimes it uncovers a trend of which readers may be ignorant, such as growth in car sharing, asthma, soda consumption, and biotechnology in organisms other than food plants and animals. It also notes the worldwide growth in car transport and indicts the resultant impact on climate and health, and destruction of prime arable land, especially near cities. It also refers to the UK rail privatisation 'debacle' from which, it says, other nations, if not UK New Labour and Tories, are learning.

Many trends are alarming, such as the worldwide shortage of grain due to 'water stress', i.e. shortage of water, largely due to climate change, dams, irrigation, pollution, and overpopulation. Israel, for example, imports 96% of its grain, with other Middle East nations not far behind. With the pre-

sence US militaristic administration's tolerance of Israel's ethnic cleansing, this statistic alone is ominous for the earth's future. As just noted, World Watch is honest about population trends, despite the unpopularity of being so. It recognises the need for pro-creative and migratory restraint. Sadly there is little encouragement here for sustainable organic food production and animal welfare, although surging interest in organics, especially in Switzerland, and the horrors of pesticide poisoning, are reported. *Vital Signs* ignores human dependence on Transcendence, and ignores trends in getting that relationship to the common root right.

ECOLOGICAL DESIGN: REINVENTING THE FUTURE, by John Todd and **Cold Evil: Technology and Modern Ethics**, by Andrew Kimbrell. Published by the E.F. Schumacher Society.

 Reviewed by John Papworth

Was Schumacher a radical? What indeed is a radical, as distinct from being a reformer? We may say a reformer is one who wants to change what governments do, a radical is one who wants to change what they are. Schumacher was undoubtedly a radical, he realised it was not just what governments were doing that mattered, but that we needed a different mindframe and a different political and economic structure to give effect to it; he was concerned with what they were rather than what they did.

There is a current disposition of the reformist camp to co-opt Schumacher's name for reformist agendas and to ignore the radical imperatives of his general message. We surely need to acknowledge that there is now a general understanding of many of the problems, ecological, economic, social, personal and political not

least, that an uncontrolled industrialised technology is so wantonly promoting. But there really are limits to the extent to which the 'woe, woe' message can be absorbed within prevailing political structures without promoting satiation, boredom, passivity or despair. The radical problem today centres on how we proceed to change our governing structures so that their workings respond to people's real needs, rather than to the amoral propensities for profit and power which now tower over us.

So, in this light, how do these two lectures, given to the American Schumacher Society, shape up?

There is a lot of good sense in John Todd's lecture in answering the question, 'How is it that (eco) systems sustain diversity and longevity?' He goes on to argue the need 'to take nature's intelligence and apply it technologically in order to reduce the destructive human footprint on this planet'.

Nobody would want to quarrel with the ecological solutions he puts forward, the composting of waste (is 'waste' a uniquely technological industrial concept?), expanding natural livestock feeds, generating energy from burning industrial 'waste' and so on. But if we are 'Reinventing the Future', as the rather grandiose title proclaims, on what basis do we proceed to do so? Why is it necessary to 'reinvent' it? What are the forces operating in our societies which put us to this necessity? How do we propose to tackle them to make it possible for this reinvented future to be achieved? On these key questions the author maintains a discreetly reformist silence; he might well be one of my own Anglican bishops!

Andrew Kimbrell's work is on an altogether deeper and philosophically suggestive level. He does in fact cover ground many,

many writers have already traversed, not least Schumacher himself, but there is never any harm in tackling old problems with new insights and here he provides plenty.

He postulates an unholy trinity of Efficiency, Competition and Progress, and on each he has some arresting and pertinent insights to offer: 'We must become creators rather than consumers.' 'Living beings must never be treated as mere objects, commodities, or means of production.' And then his peroration: 'There is absolutely no doubt that we cannot be a democratic nation, we cannot be a democratic people, and we cannot free ourselves from the cold evil of technological control that now has spread even to our genetic core until we stop allowing technology to control human choices and instead see to it that our human choices control technology.'

In the discussion that followed his discourse, he was asked if he saw any hope of policies or legislation in accordance with his views being enacted. He proceeded to cite the opening of a holistic and alternative health centre, to urge that conservation is now being advanced with public funding, that there is an outcry against cloning, and that organic farming is the fastest growing sector of the agricultural economy. 'Things are beginning to change,' he declares, 'but change comes very slowly.'

Perhaps the passive tense of that last sentence was a slip of the tongue; perhaps if he were to expand his talents to consider the problems of how to apply his insights to a society which is innately and bitterly hostile to them, he might well emerge after all not so much a reformer as a genuine radical, one prepared to tackle the nuts and bolts of political and economic realities that hem us in. We can only leave the question open. ■

THE TAWNEY LEGACY

Peter Etherden

The author, a regular contributor to *Fourth World Review*, is an ecologist, journalist and historian.

FEW PEOPLE have come up with as many genuinely new ideas in a lifetime as Ivan Illich. Yet he would always insist that there was no such thing as a new idea. Inscribed on the edge of our new two-pound coins are the words 'Standing on the shoulders of giants'. This was one part of Illich's meaning.

It is revealing to look at the writings of John Papworth in *Fourth World Review* in this light because it would appear that the ideas could be traced to two sources. The first and familiar source would be the writings of Leopold Kohr, to which can be attributed Papworth's views on small nations, small communities and the need for a human scale in human affairs. The other lesser-known source would be the writings of R.H. Tawney¹ on the relationship between religion and society.

The story is told of a 'Harvard' professor addressing the latest intake of undergraduates and announcing that half of everything taught them over the next three years would be wrong. After waiting for the laughter to die down, he looked intently at his audience and with a twinkle in his eye continued. 'Your job while you're here,' he declared, 'is to find out which half.' He reportedly left the platform to loud applause. So much for 'Harvard'. How about our man from

the 'London School of Economics'?

When quizzed on the subject, Papworth immediately acknowledged his debt to Tawney, but insisted that the suggestion that Leopold Kohr was the source of his ideas on the human scale was 'right off the rails'. Kohr had come to his human scale approach through his academic work, whilst Papworth had come to his through active work and as a parliamentary candidate. Indeed Papworth tells the tale of the time he was explaining his ideas to Leopold's partner, Diana Lodge. Her instant response was: 'But Leopold is saying exactly the same things; you should read his book,' whereupon a copy of *The Breakdown of Nations* was thrust into his waiting hands.

Before returning to Tawney there is another story to be told of the time Papworth turned down the offer of a safe Labour seat in the industrial north, an offer made by Ann Kerr MP in the tearoom in the House of Commons. After demurring on the grounds that he knew nobody there and nobody knew him, the somewhat naive young Papworth was astonished to be told 'with easy assurance', 'Well, these things can be arranged you know.' Half a century later, Papworth was to comment: 'This was an incident which helped to increase my disillusionment with the whole mass politi-

cal movement long before I met Leopold or, later, Schumacher.'

Though a 'Labour Party' member and a strong 'Fabian', Papworth, like many other young men at the time, was far from happy with its timid approach. So with the help of G.D.H. Cole, who became its President, he formed 'The International Society for Socialist Studies' with himself as its secretary. The subsequent demise of the organisation under 'reams of Marxist twaddle' and the 'internal quarrelling and ego-tripping' at the root of it, is another story. But the side effects often turn out to be the main effects. At the institute Cole and Papworth teamed up with an Italian architect and communitarian anarchist named Carlo Daglio.

A lifetime ago, after surviving the Kaiser War as an NCO in the British army, Tawney embarked upon two mighty intellectual undertakings. In the first he sought to explain the origin of modern industrial civilisation. And in the second he sought to establish principles for the evolution of that same industrial civilisation. These were two sides of the same coin.

The former began its public life as the 'Holland Memorial Lectures' in 1922 and was eventually published in March 1926 as *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. This went out of print but was resurrected by the Peregrine imprint of Penguin Books in 1984. The latter appeared as a Fabian Society tract entitled *The Sickness of an Acquisitive Society* and was subsequently republished in April 1921 as *The Acquisitive Society*. It is out of print.

You will look in vain to find any direct appreciation of the concept of scale in Tawney's writings but yet the significance of bringing human moral judgements to bear on the problems of civilisation pervades his every thought. As a result, the

moment you seek to apply the principles Kohr espouses to the real world, you will find a reading of Tawney to be indispensable.

Tawney had two big ideas. The first was the idea that society should be organised for the performance of duties rather than the maintenance of rights. This led to the idea that industry and banking should be organised as professions. The other was intrinsic in his analysis of the nature and proper function of property and led to far-reaching and incisive attacks on 'functionless property' and 'divorcing ownership from use'... attacks that went far beyond the ideas of either Marx or Proudhon and echoed Gesell.

Theft and property

In Tawney's view his two big ideas were related. He begins his discussion of 'property and creative work' in *The Acquisitive Society* with the words: 'The application of the principle that society should be organised upon the basis of functions ... offers a standard for discriminating between those types of private property which are legitimate and those which are not'. Nowadays most economists have learnt to discriminate between 'goods' and 'bads' in our gross national products, but if Tawney had his way, they would also be distinguishing between property and 'improperty'. 'Property,' exclaimed Tawney, 'is not theft, but a good deal of theft becomes property'.

I would wager that Peter Drucker was a disciple of Tawney, and to many of our leading businessmen Drucker is wisdom and truth personified. Peter Drucker was the first business mind (and much of the best economics comes from the business schools) seriously to examine General Motors' invention of the idea of company

pension funds. He was sufficiently intrigued by the socialist implications in the idea that he made pensions and socialism the subject of one of his earliest books. Yet this was clearly set out in Tawney's writings decades before. And one of Peter Drucker's big ideas – the idea of the mind worker as a distinct class – had already appeared in Tawney's discussion of the position of the brainworker and the growth of an intellectual proletariat in *The Acquisitive Society*.

Another thinker I would wager to be 'a Tawney man' is the Harvard Professor, John Kenneth Galbraith. The Scots Canadian Galbraith kicked off his broad-ranging career with a trilogy of books² that were rooted in Tawney's observation that 'the agreeable optimism that the less attractive characteristics of our industrial civilisation, its combination of luxury and squalor, its class divisions and class warfare, are accidental maladjustments which are not rooted in the centre of its being, but are excrescences which economic progress itself may in time be expected to correct, will not survive an examination of the operation of the institution of private property in land and capital in the industrialised communities'.

And though we think of globalisation as something that has crept up on us unexpectedly in the last decade of the twentieth century, nothing could be further from the truth. Tawney laid it all out for us a lifetime ago. He homed straight in on passive property allied to the limited liability of the joint stock company as the cancer eating away at the heart of our civilisation.

Here is Tawney again: 'In earlier ages the protection of property was normally the protection of work, the relationship between them has come in the course of the

economic development of the last two centuries to be very nearly reversed.' Tawney saw very clearly the 'constant collision' between 'active efforts and passive property, the labour of human beings and the tools which human beings use. Of these two elements those who supply the first maintain and improve it, those who own the second normally dictate its character, its development, and its administration'.

Sinister Concoction

In G.N. Clarke's 1946 publication *The Wealth of England from 1496 to 1760* (Oxford University Press Home University Library of Modern Knowledge), he recommended the 1937 edition of *Religion and The Rise of Capitalism*, adding the cautionary note that it was 'a controversial book, and the controversy still goes on'. Tawney in his preface to the 1937 edition explained that this controversy was grounded in the 'suggestion that (his book) was the sinister concoction of a dark modern conspiracy designed to confound Calvinism and Capitalism, godly Geneva and industrious Manchester, in a common ruin'. Tawney then went on to argue that his book had been stirred together in the same heretical brew as Max Weber's 'preparatory essay' (Weber's words) on the influence of religious thought on social issues, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, noting that although the two books were dealing with the same thing they were coming at it from 'two different sides'.

Where Weber emphasised the influence of religion on men's outlook on society, R.H. Tawney, Professor of Economic History at the University of London from 1931 to 1949, was interested in the effect of economic and social changes on religion. Where Weber made little attempt to inquire into matters

such as how far the Reformation was a response to social needs, Harry Tawney, for sixteen years President of the Workers Educational Association, burned with a passion to change the world he lived in and sought always to play a part in challenging the social evils he saw around him.

John Papworth tells the story of the time the young Papworth was expounding his views on human scale and local democracy to the great man. As Tawney got up to leave he turned round, fixed his gaze on the young (and failed) Labour Party candidate and said quietly: 'Have you written about any of this, Papworth?' 'No Sir,' was the plaintive reply. 'Write it down, my boy! Write it down!' Half a century later, with Papworth's *Small is Powerful* now selling well in German as well as English, Tawney has a lot to answer for.

Nowadays Weber is required reading at universities throughout the world, while no student either within or without our ivory towers reads Tawney any more. Perhaps it is time to exhort a new generation to heed his words with the cry: 'Take it up, my boy! Take it up! Read the words Tawney wrote down!' But read them not only for the wisdom and truth they contain, but also for the future embedded within them. Globalisation is at its limits. A new generation is stopping it in its unsustainable tracks. Implicit in Tawney's analysis of the origins of the beast is the idea that the world must one day tread the same path again in reverse. This time we have a guide. There will be no need to muddle through.

Those in the over-developed world should read Tawney, not to see where their country has been, but to understand the route it must take into the future. Read and reverse. Those in the under-developed

world should be looking aghast at the spiritual state of the over-developed world. But there is no need for them to pass that way, nor any hope that they might. Instead they could head straight for the elysian fields – if the tiny elites of 'improperty holders' in the over-developed world could be persuaded that it was in their own self-interest to allow them to do so. Death may always be with us. But poverty, slavery, taxes – and interest – are human constructs.

Weber may be essential reading for the past but Tawney is what is needed if we are to move with intellectual confidence into the future. Tawney, together with the Austrian Jewish academic Leopold Kohr, the communitarian anarchist professor teaching at the Catholic University of Bologna, Carlo Daglio and the dissident 'shop-lifting' Anglican vicar, John Papworth. The apostles of Jesus were a motley crew but they produced four excellent books that have stood the test of time. Perhaps it goes with the radical territory? Besides the young writer of *The Fabian Papers*, George Bernard Shaw, insisted many centuries later that their guvn'r, Jesus of Nazareth, was a first-rate political economist. Now there's a new idea for you. ■

¹ *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, by R.H. Tawney. Penguin Books; first published 1926; 280 pages; ISBN 0140184244; £8.99. Other Books by R.H. Tawney: *The Acquisitive Society* (1921), *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (1912); *Secondary Education for All*; *Education: the Socialist Policy*; *Equality, Land and Labour in China*; *Business and Politics under James I*.

²Included in the J.K. Galbraith's trilogy are *The Affluent Society*, *The New Industrial State* and *Economics and The Public Purpose*.

THE VOICE OF ALL THE ANIMALS

John Seymour

When you have poisoned the air
And you have swept the sea bare
When the woods where we roam
And can still make our home
You've destroyed so they're no longer there.

And when you've eroded the soil
And the last whale has been turned into oil
By the bold Japanese
And the tireless Chinese
Have put their last tiger to boil.

For the soup that they think makes them randy
When at loving they're not very handy
And rhinoceros horn
They find better than porn
More effective than Viagra or brandy.

When the last duck has been shot from the sky
And the last geese has been sentenced to die
The last swamp has been drained
Where the waterfowl reigned
The last pigeon has been made into pie.

The last elephant driven to death
The last hippo has drawn her last breath
The last free-flying fowl
The last hawk the last owl
The last lizard and snake of the heath.

When you've ransacked the Earth in your greed
And smothered us all with your seed
So of life we're bereft
You're the only ones left
Then to whom will you turn in your need?

When the Angel of Death beats his drum
And an archangel reads out the sum
Of all your misdeeds
You'll find out where it leads
You'll discover that your turn has come.

With acknowledgements to
Playing It For Laughs – A Book of Doggerel, Metanoia Press



FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR

THE MONSTER DEMOS against the Iraq war did not just happen, they were the result of careful coordination across the world by an anti-war coalition relying mainly on e-mail channels. They may well prove to be one of the most significant political developments of our time, not least because they have their heart not in some almighty central body but in countless local groupings.

The weekly meeting of one such group in Swindon indicates all the strengths and the weaknesses of the current concern for the war danger. About 30 present, one third women, a broad age spectrum and an even broader spectrum of political allegiances. No less than three magazines of different socialist groupings were being hawked around; they struck me as being remarkably similar in content but when I asked the chap selling *The Socialist Worker* (For a Socialist Alternative to New Labour), how it differed from *The Socialist* (Paper of The Socialist Party), he said it would take a long time to explain. Clearly the 19th century is still up and running. The pacifists were there in force, and the Quakers (it was indeed a Quaker meeting room – rather bleak and functional, with no concessions to God’s gifts of the imagination), plus the usual

elderly Labour Party stalwarts and trade union aficionados, among others. One had the sense of a 19th century political museum *en viviant*. They had all responded to a need to oppose the war, and at our last meeting the war, in an immediate sense, seemed to be in its closing stages. So what, collectively, was to be our next step? The sense of indecision, and even confusion, was manifest. We broke into three groups to talk about Resources, Events and Coordination. I proposed a special group to discuss Objectives, but this was judged superfluous.

At a subsequent meeting the war was indeed over, but our gathering seemed to lack nothing in terms of voluble contributions and a pronounced sense of incoherence in contemplating further action. It is not often that political leaders commit themselves unambiguously to a major, clear-cut course on which a huge wave of popular opposition can be focussed; the question here now is whether the diverse elements of that opposition can come to see the extent to which their failure to stop the war is related to the other crisis factors of modern life, and to the extent to which the factor of size renders them largely powerless to exercise any decisive control over any of them. The fact remains that despite their pronounced differences these people,

as people right across the world, have come together for an avowed political purpose. It is a flame of purpose that needs to be fanned into a blaze.

GIVING NAMES TO THINGS has a way of making them seem somehow less real; so when we talk of 'agriculture' we appear to lose sight of the fact that we are talking about food as a basic element of life; it becomes instead something apart from ourselves that concerns simply a government ministry or economic journalists. We seem to become oblivious of the fact that it is a vital aspect of our daily existence and quite literally a matter of life and death. That is the only reason I can account for the peculiar indifference the people of my village show to what is happening around us. Recently John Seymour came to stay for a few days. He is in big trouble with his eyesight, but we are working on prospects for improvement. One day we rambled across some fields and for the first time it struck me how many of them were abandoned and given over to brambles, nettles and overgrowth. These fields, which have helped to provide village food for generations have been 'set aside', meaning the government pays the farmer not to cultivate so as to avoid flooding the market with crops and causing prices to crash.

John commented that some pig farming would provide the village with plenty of meat as well as churn up the fields and increase their fertility, but later, in the village butcher's, when I asked the assistant the origin of a large ham he was dressing, he peered at the label and said 'Denmark'. I recounted this to a village friend and asked why our local farmers could not produce ham much more cheaply than the cost of importing it from Denmark. He replied with

sage assurance, 'Well, you see, this is not really pig country.' I am not quite sure what that means but in any case, he seemed to be overlooking that his own house was situated in a thoroughfare called, 'Hoggs Lane', that we live in the neighbourhood of Swindon (Swinedon?), and that Wiltshire was once famed for the excellence of its hams.

A REGULAR FORM OF entertainment in the village pubs is an experience called karaoke. It consists of a singalong with words on a screen backed up by electronic music and a vocalist who belts out songs with electronic gear at such enormous volume that I find I can't reach the door fast enough. But one evening after a beer or two John got going with some of his own songs, including *The Modern Farmer's Boy*. There were not many in the pub and they were slow to join in, but what a marvellous evening it made and as I pondered the contrast with the karaoke stuff Eliot's question came to mind: 'Where is the life we have lost in living?' Incidentally there are a few remaining (signed) copies of John's *Playing It For Laughs*, containing many of his songs. It carries a warning to parents: 'Not to be read by anyone under the age of 84' and goes on to declare, in the author's own words, 'John Seymour is completely prejudiced, utterly biased, and without any sense of moderation or proportion.' In another generation they will be valuable collectors' pieces.

OUR VILLAGE OF AROUND 4,000 sprawls; it originally clustered around its fine Saxon church but perhaps owing to the Black Death, people moved *en masse* to higher ground. Then the council built a housing estate, which few would find it in their hearts to describe as either elegant or glam-

ourous, so that the church is more or less isolated at the edge of one end of the village. Other housing developments for higher income brackets ensued, but it is one of the features of modern architecture that hardly any of its products seem to merit a second glance. The former council estate, now extensively owner-occupied, has tended to go up-market; most houses boast one or more cars and vans, TV aerials and what might be called 'garden centre' gardens. This can result in not always well-tended exotic shrubs and ornamental trees, fencing or walls of garden-centre materials and sometimes carefully nurtured vegetable plots. One I pass regularly is remarkable for not having a weed in sight (no mean feat) and rows of beans, cabbage, onions and so forth in such geometrically planted precision suggesting the gardener is a former regimental sergeant major. But all too often the gardens display a rather peculiar garden-centre innovation. It is really the result of owners just not wanting to garden at all; so they put down a sheet of thick durable plastic big enough to cover the entire area and then cover it with pebbles or crushed rock, sometimes of natural colour. But at other times the owner shows more ambition; he opts for artificially coloured rock, perhaps blue, mauve or pink. The result is too visually dispiriting for words and reminds one all too emphatically of the extent to which modern life is careering along in a welter of vulgarity.

OUT WALKING ALONG a footpath during the early stages of the Arab war, which looks set to continue for the rest of my life despite the collapse of Iraq, the US bombers from nearby Fairford were booming away in the heavens above. It is not a pleasant noise and

one has to be dumb indeed not to ponder the fate of many families in a far land as a result of their mission. But my sombre thoughts were interrupted by the sound of my name being called with some high pitched urgency. A middle-aged lady had run several hundred yards to tell me that my small dog had done her cigarette size business on a neighbour's flower bed. I tried to adjust my thinking to a suitable level of gravity as she declared she had actually seen Tempé doing the awesome thing she had done. 'It's against the law,' she shouted, 'and it is steaming.' I tried to suggest I would not be sending an invoice for compost, but that was clearly the wrong tack and as she stormed off I felt a sense of envy that her life was contained in the immediacy of such innocent concerns.

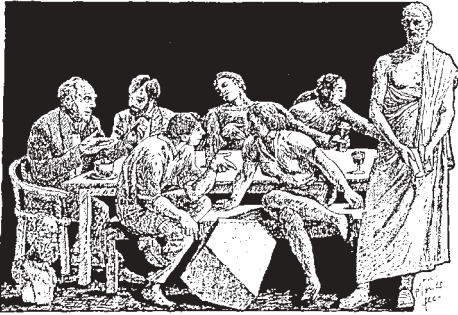
JUST A WORD about the production process of this journal. I have a large desk in a study overflowing with books and papers, to say nothing of magazines which reach me from many parts of the world, and files spanning more than seventy years of activity, but the wood fire is rather a bother in winter and since the kitchen is fitted with a warming Aga I tend to do most of my scribbling at the kitchen table. (Incidentally only a man could have designed that Aga, a heat retaining stove with two thick chrome lids covering the hotplates. But the lids have concave rather than flat tops, which means when removing dishes from the oven there is nowhere on the stove to put them safely.) I cast an eye over the magazines that have dropped on the front doormat. I am looking for anything that can suggest the factors of size or scale are related to their concerns, but many have a somewhat pointless predictability and echo attitudes I have known (and even shared)

from decades ago. I am rarely gratified; but sometimes there is gold around. I cast an eye at book reviews I have solicited; sometimes there is a book in the post. To whom shall I send it in the hope of a scintillating review from an (unpaid) reviewer? A college student types up my scribbles, editorials, book reviews and items for this column and notes on this and that (not to mention taking care of my e-mails, photocopying, filing, accounting, taking care of the index, composing the back page and teaching me how to play pool in the local pub). Meanwhile Ezzy, a proud, aloof and seemingly totally self-contained, exceptionally fluffy Persian, decides to squat on my notes. I scribble on and every time I tear off a page from the notepad Tempé, young, hyperactive, border terrier antecedents, leaps to her four feet, tail wagging overtime in the expectation of 'walkies'. I telephone at varying times Dick Body, Peter Etherden, John Coleman, Teddy Goldsmith, Diana Schumacher, Kirk Sale, Aidan Rankin and other members of this informal Masonic ring of Editorial consultation. The typescript, proofed and corrected, is posted or e-mailed to the typesetter Geoff Ellis, who lives in the Midlands and not only typesets but designs the layout and does not hesitate to indicate when I am writing rubbish and is generally a lynchpin of the whole exercise, who then sends me proofs to correct. Sometimes his son Blake, who appears to be studying for a university degree in drumming, and who is all of eight years old, answers the phone and insists on establishing my credentials before handing me over to his father. Then a call to Anne Fealdman, the Queen Regnant of everything to do with the circulation list and without whose selfless voluntary service this enterprise would be in real trouble. Typeset proofs corrected, they are dispatched to

Instant Print in the West End of London, and who are easily the most expeditious, efficient and competitively priced printers to be found anywhere. What colour shall the cover be? They provide a swatch from which to choose and having decided the print run they dispatch the job to be on my doorstep in 48 hours. Meanwhile Anne has organised the address labels with her ever helpful son Alan, who seems to know all about computer processes, and then some local lads and their girlfriends who enjoy doing me a favour, even if they seem to know or care nothing about the journal's contents, stick on labels and stuff envelopes. So sacks of mail are delivered to Purton Post Office and then... well, then what? Hundreds of copies posted to nearly fifty different countries, and after an interval I begin to peer anxiously at the morning mail. Comments? Rebukes? Appreciation? Subscriptions? Do the sub renewals include details of a friend who might appreciate a free copy? Some do, some don't. Then it is more magazines; more scribbling, more books to review, more letters for the Forum to keep the great debate going and on we go. A tiny sliver of opinionating in the great world of the printed word, with effects no man may measure, but yielding a modest sense of fulfilment that we are around, saying what needs to be said and living always in hope of more readers, more response and more effect on a prevailing trend bent seemingly on its own undoing. But the real lesson is that nothing worthwhile happens on this mortal coil without focus, persistence and commitment.

A VISITING PRIEST began his sermon by inveighing against his heavy retirement workload. 'I think,' he said, 'retirement is really a job for a much younger man.' ■

Purton Academic Inn: Inaugural meeting



A new village venture modelled on similar ones in London, Rye, San Francisco and Auckland, to discuss leading questions in relation to the concept of the human scale. It is the brainchild of the late Professor Leopold Kohr, who urged people to get together to talk over things that matter in a free, convivial setting...

A tavern chair is the throne of human felicity
– SAM JOHNSON

Guest of Honour SIR RICHARD BODDY

Former MP, journalist, ecologist and author, and a radical authority on farming and the countryside who will introduce his paper *Democracy in Danger: Are we becoming powerless?*

7PM THURSDAY JUNE 5TH, THE ANGEL, HIGH STREET, PURTON

Admission £3 (all welcome). Includes a copy of the paper. Dinner, reasonable prices, available from extensive pub menu. Advance bookings for the paper: The Secretary, Purton Academic Inn, Fieldview, Purton, Wiltshire SN5 4EW. Tel: 01793 770704

It will be said: 'abolish economic privileges, and there will be enough wealth for all to live, and for all to lead a spiritual life.' This, I take it, is the Webbs' view. Now economic privileges must be abolished, not, primarily, because they hinder the production of wealth, but because they produce wickedness. But supposing unearned incomes, rents, etc. are pooled, will not the world, with its present philosophy, do anything but gobble them up and look up with an impatient grunt for more? That is the real question. It will not be faced in my lifetime because as long as the working classes believe, and believe rightly, that their mentors rob them, so long will they look on the restoration of the booty as the great reform, and will impatiently waive aside more fundamental issues, as a traveller robbed by a highwayman declines to be comforted by being told that money, after all, does not buy happiness. But when their masters are off their backs they will still have to face the fact that you must choose between less and more wealth and less and more civilisation... In other words the idea of 'humanity' stultifies itself. The social order is judged and condemned by a power transcending it.

R.H. Tawney

Fourth World News



Prawn fisheries are responsible for a third of the world's discarded catch, often dead or dying, despite producing only 2% of global seafood. • Medical schools in Britain are restricting their intake of Muslim students after claims that they are refusing to learn about certain procedures such as abortions and fertility treatments. • The Litunga of Barotzeland has blocked an attempt by the Zambian Government to sell off two game parks to a South African finance company. • The British Environmental Minister has claimed that GM crops are not necessary to feed mankind, and that he seriously doubted the truth of companies trials. • Sales of bottled water in Britain trebled after the start of the war in Iraq. • Luxembourg, Berne and Geneva have been found to be the safest cities in the world in terms of crime. London is 64th. • The Astronomer Royal, Sir Martin Rees, has expressed his fears that the human race may not survive into the next millennium. • 100,000 body bags and 6000 coffins were sent to an American army base in Sicily in preparation for the war in Iraq. • Many Russians still revere Stalin as a great hero. • Glasgow has been named as the 'fattest city in Britain' for the second year running. • A new poll has found that mothers take an average of 28 car journeys a week. • Street crime in Johannesburg, the world's most dangerous city, has been cut by 80 per cent thanks to a new surveillance camera system. • A new study shows that 3 million Britons are dependent on alcohol. • Cafés and restaurants in America have changed the name of French Fries to Freedom Fries as a show of disapproval towards France's opposition to the

war in Iraq. • Ten per cent of cancer cases in the developed world could be caused by a lack of fruit in the sufferers' diet. • Bailiffs will have new powers to force their way into people's homes under proposed laws announced by the Lord Chancellor's Department. • Two out of five 18-24-year-olds in Britain are now classified as 'binge-drinkers'. • Radio stations and music television channels in Britain have banned any songs which contain images or words that will remind people of the war. • Scientists in America have discovered that low levels of a widely used insecticide, permethrin, could cause changes in the brain that lead to Parkinson's disease. • Scientists have discovered that a glass of cranberry juice with every meal can significantly reduce your risk of heart disease. • Thousands of school children took to the streets across Britain to protest against the war in Iraq. • Co-op stores around Britain are slashing their prices on Fairtrade Bananas in order to broaden awareness of Fairtrade products. • The British Government is labelling 'healthy' supermarket food with the NHS logo in a bid to encourage people to improve their diet. • Consumers in supermarkets are being duped into buying 'healthy' foods which are in fact no more healthy than the standard food-stuffs. They are more expensive though. • Up to two thirds of children in Britain do not get enough sleep. • Children without televisions in their bedrooms are more likely to get the recommended amount of sleep. • Tony Blair was voted number 1 in a list of the 100 worst Britons carried out by Channel 4. Margaret Thatcher was number 3. – Sam Hains

Fourth World News

