



Half the world's estimated 6,800 languages are predicted to disappear by the end of the present century. • Pakistani diplomats based in London have been involved in deals over nuclear weapon technology. • The real anti-terror war, according to Sir David King, chief scientific advisor to the UK government, involves combating global warming. • Mr Tony Blair has been completely exonerated from any charges of mass deception by the judge who conducted a lengthy enquiry. The judge who led the enquiry was appointed by Mr Tony Blair. • Brazil upset the Roman Catholic Church by handing out 10 million contraceptives at the Rio de Janeiro carnival to stop the spread of AIDS. • Civil war erupted in Haiti as the Arbonite Resistance Front sought to create an independent state in the north of the country. Over 40 killed in a recent clash. • Cancer is now the commonest cause of natural death of 13-24-years-olds in the USA. • The UK Co-op is planning to double its sales of Fairtrade products this year, the tenth anniversary of the Fairtrade mark. • President Mwanawasa of Zambia has converted the death sentences of 44 soldiers who took part in an abortive coup in 1997 to prison sentences of 10-20 years. He has pledged never to sign any death sentences during his presidency. • A million people lost their life savings and pensions when share values crumbled in Equitable Life Assurance Company (founded 1762). • The medical profession, according to the editor of a medical journal, is at last recognising that 'the concerns of a profession acting on behalf of patients have been gradually shaped by the concerns of an (drug) industry acting on behalf of shareholders'. • The UK government has given the go-ahead to GM maize. • A row has erupted over the cost of two warships now

being built. The Ministry of Defence has agreed a price of £2.9 billion (yes, no misprint, billions!), but the contractors are asking for more. The present price represents over £300 for each taxpayer. • A new technique of embryo implants can now end the menopause and enable women of 50 to have babies. • 140 Iraqi Shi'ite pilgrims died in a suicide bomb attack in Baghdad and Karbala as a result of increasing Sunni militancy. • The German firm Bayer has set aside £300 million for legal costs relating to claims from the side effects of its (former) anti-cholesterol drug Teboday. • Several top-level European managers have left Goodyear Tyre & Rubber Company in response to an ongoing investigation into improper accounting. Whoever would have thought it. • South Korean banks' 'bad' loans have increased by \$2.9 billion as more households and credit card holders defaulted. • The Pope has promoted a woman to a senior clerical position. Goodness. • China has amended its constitution to encourage capitalist entrepreneurship. • Shell Oil is just discovering (or revealing) that its estimates of proven oil reserves are much, much lower than previously announced. • There are now more than 75,000 people in prison, the highest number in UK history. • Binge drinking costs £25 billions a year in the UK. There are 3 millions alcoholics. • Unlicensed boxing fights with no head guards and no rules are drawing large crowds all over the country. • A small group of Amazonian Indians of the Azoreo tribe have emerged from the forests of Paraguay to make their first contact with the outside world. They were driven out by deforestation drives from giant businesses and pleaded, 'Do not touch the forest because it gives us life. Please stop the bulldozers.' – **SAM HAINS**



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# FOURTH WORLD REVIEW

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



**PETER DOLLINS**  
Gifts and Greeks

**THOMAS H. NAYLOR**  
The Vermont Manifesto

**No. 126**

2004  
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*Editorial:*  
**WHAT NEXT?**

# FOURTH WORLD REVIEW

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## CONTENTS NO. 126



Editorial:	<b>WHAT NEXT?</b>	3
Feature:	<b>Erectus Consciousness</b> KIRKPATRICK SALE	5
	<b>Gifts and Greeks</b> PETER DOLLINS	10
	<b>The Vermont Manifesto</b> THOMAS H. NAYLOR	12
Forum:	<b>Alan Turner</b> <b>Patricia Knox</b> <b>Harry Mister</b> <b>Christopher Houghton Budd</b> <b>Nick Stockbridge</b> <b>Colin Graham</b> <b>Meredith Thring</b> <b>Angela Bates</b>	13
Books:	<b>XINGU, THE INDIANS</b> <b>AND THEIR MYTHS</b> <b>Orlando &amp; Claudio Villa Boas</b> <i>Reviewer: John Papworth</i>	17
	<b>THE EARTH POLICY READER</b> <b>Lester R. Brown, Janet Larsen &amp;</b> <b>Bernie Fischlewitz-Roberts</b> <i>Reviewer: Edward P. Echlin</i>	18
	<b>A SOLAR WORLD</b> <b>David Elliot</b>	19
	<b>BEFORE THE WELLS RUN DRAY</b> <b>Edited by Richard Douthwaite</b> <i>Reviewer: Professor M.W. Thring</i>	
	<b>HUMAN RIGHTS &amp; THE</b> <b>ENVIRONMENT</b> <b>Lyuba Zarsky</b> <i>Reviewer: Dele Oguntimoju</i>	20
Column:	<b>FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR</b>	21
Item:	<b>FOURTH WORLD NEWS</b>	24

ence in church pews is so marked by their absence, to think there might be something in all this Jesus stuff after all; and Marie and her colleagues in the press office might have found themselves working overtime.

Or suppose the bishops started to act as leaders at last and launched a campaign to abolish altogether the monstrous, degrading evil of commercial TV with its sustained repudiation of moral and spiritual meaning and its poisoning of the mass mind with sleaze and which is playing its part in the epidemic of emotional and behavioural problems in the young? Or campaigned for a mass boycott of the environmental moral squalor of 300- or 400-page weekend newspapers? Or led the direct action campaigns to dig up GM crops? Or promoted action against government plans to build yet more motorways (when the end of the age of oil is already in sight!)? If only, instead of sitting on endless committees which produce endless reports which nobody reads and which seem to change nothing, they would take a leaf out of their own book and act against the bankers, the business people and the bureaucrats who are so busy destroying everything that makes sense and makes life worth living. If only they would act to show that instead of being a part of it they were strenuously opposed to the evil consumerist onrush to destroy God's creation, to destroy our neighbourhood social structures and to destroy any grounds of hope for a decent future in our young people; if only they would show that they cared or that they were even aware that the ship of civilisation is sinking, that we are in the midst of the most awesome conflagration of civilised values in all human history. Instead of being a passive and complicit part of it they would soon become a voice in the land no one

could afford to ignore, they would pack all those empty pews and give their monstrosously tedious and tendentious talking shops something to talk about at last. I borrowed a sound bite the other day when a rather militant young lady sought to deride my religion and assured me rather aggressively she did not believe in life after death. I assured her she would soon change her mind if she ever went to an Anglican synod.

I WAS IN LONDON for an Academic Inn committee meeting so we were able to spend and hour in a nearby coffee bar. Have you ever been to Victoria Street? If you haven't I strongly advise you to continue to avoid it. It almost seems like another life-time ago in my youth (yes, I did have one), when it was a thoroughfare of Victorian or even Georgian or Queen Anne shops and houses. Today it is a canyon between sheer cliffs of glass rising ten or twenty floors. It is hideously repugnant beyond belief and the stink and noise of a continuous flood of deathspeed traffic renders passage across it all but impossible. Why did no one stop this monstrous inhuman transformation? If you want confirmation of the essential transitoriness of the excesses of money-greed that dominates modern life it is surely here in its bleak, sterile, ugly, insulting, contemptuous and degrading architecture. We shape our buildings, said Churchill, but our buildings shape us. I suppose when we have squandered our remaining reserves of oil in the current mental and moral aberration of mass motoring these giant structures will be hard put for power for lighting and lifts and will probably just be overrun with rats. Why do we so passively suffer it all? We seem to have arrived at an historical phase of government of the morons, for the morons and by the morons. ■

Is it true, as one leaflet urged, that Arafat wants the total destruction of Israel? Would he be able to remain as leader if he showed any readiness to compromise with the Israelis? I find it impossible to decide about the veracity of the claims and counter claims of this literature; I am aware that after the monstrous horror of the holocaust a Jewish homeland was an imperative necessity for Jewish life, just as I am aware that its establishment has involved considerable injustice to Palestinian people. The Zionist literature seeks to show that the Palestinian cause is being inflated by Arab propaganda and tends to decry that the Palestinians even have a history or an identity. Whatever the historic realities I think wisdom now indicates a need to act on the basis of current realities. In my exchanges with both groups I was astonished at their readiness to consider the concept of cantonising the whole area. I argued this had worked supremely well in Switzerland, and given the overriding need for peace might well do the same elsewhere. But these youngsters are being ill-served by their elders. Behind all this bawling and slogan screaming I would like to think that somewhere some wise, elderly rabbis are having quiet exploratory scholarly exchanges with some wise elderly imams on just some such approach and seeking to map out some commonsensical proposals. Perhaps a wholly voluntary International Peace Brigade might also find a role to play here.

THE SEASON OF LENT is a time when local church groups meet to discuss the place of faith and belief in the modern world. It might be supposed to be a rather intimidating exercise, but it is one with any number of escape hatches of which there is seldom any lack of readiness to take advantage. One is a readi-

ness to speculate in detail on the significance of the role, and even the names, of obscure tribal chiefs, often called kings, to be found in the Old Testament. The OT is, of course, a massive fount of wisdom and beauty, even if today we are content to ignore most of the former and to murder in modern translation much of the latter; but much of it is also little more than tribal warfare propaganda as written by the winners, and one is given at times to wondering how the record from the hands of losing scribes might read. But however devout the reading today might be, it would be unreasonable to expect an awareness of the finding of the deeper crevices of biblical scholarship to be current in such gatherings. Nor, since no provision appears to be made in theological colleges for any grasp of the moral implications of modern economic activity, would it be reasonable to expect any grasp of its significance to be expressed. All too often on such questions our clergy are not so much leaders of their flocks as followers with them.

MARIE WORKS in the Church of England Press Office, all very modern with computers, TV and open plan, where you can sit at one desk and hear someone break wind at another. When I called to collect her at the end of the day there was horse racing on the TV; part of the news, she explained, which also explained why no one was placing any bets. There seemed no news being shown about the C of E and I rather uncharitably wondered if there ever was. Now if only half a dozen bishops had taken a leading part in those giant street demos against the war in Iraq! Wow! That would have pushed David Beckham off the front page of *The Times*, where he seems to have taken up permanent residence. It might even have induced some young people, whose pres-

## WHAT NEXT?

***IN THIS ERA of Elizabethan decadence the signs of sickness are so numerous that it is all too easy to focus on one symptom and to assume it is the key to resolving all of them. (If only it were!)***

So reform activity focuses on intermediate technology, perhaps, or on 'energy', or 'money', or 'peace' or 'global warming' or – the list is clearly a long one, but its very length indicates there is some deeper, general cause at work, and this may enable us to draw several working conclusions:

1. that no particular factor can itself be held responsible for the overall sickness;
2. that the signs of sickness are so pervasive as to point to a general cause; and
3. that remedial action to resolve the problems relating to any single factor, be it the environment, human numbers, war, the global economy or our rapidly disintegrating social structures, to take some of the most obvious, will, in itself, prove of only partial success, if indeed it is that, in resolving the general malaise.

The fact that the cause of so many of our problems relates to the mundane factor of size, that we are seeking to conduct government and economic activity on a scale which rules out any prospect of effective human control, is a view now becoming accepted by leaps and bounds. Serious people are coming to see that a general malaise has its origins in a general cause, and that that cause bespeaks a need for a general remedy. That remedy will need therefore to answer the dangers arising from a whole spectrum of crisis problems. Not least of these is the eruption of ethnic and tribal militancy in numerous centres of unrest in every continent, dangers that might at any

time ignite another world war.

It will need to answer the lack of any effective control of the assault on global marine life being made in the name of fishing, the lack of any wise conservation of finite global resources such as oil, water and wood, the lack of any effective policing of arms production and in the trade in armaments, to answer the widespread incidence of agricultural malpractice leading to increasing disease-proneness in all life forms (not least our own), to halt the monstrous tidal wave of propaganda promoting consumerism, and so on and so on.

The lineaments of the new way of life we need to create are now clear and accepted by a rapidly growing number; we must, as an imperative condition of human survival, adopt a simpler lifestyle, one which makes no needless demands on resources, which is based on reverence for all life forms and for the general balance of nature's self-sustaining equilibrium, and which satisfies human needs in ways which express that reverence and do justice to the complex needs of the human personality itself.

It will be a lifestyle which accepts the logic of the development of the democratic ideal, which, in the words of the UN Charter, gives every people the right to govern itself, a right which recognises the illegality of the post-colonial settlement in many 'countries', where ethnic or tribal peoples have been forcibly herded together under the rule of single governments, themselves inevitably venal, oppressive, corrupt and all too often militaristically aggressive.

It will be one which takes control of market forces so that they serve human needs, instead of promoting impersonal forces which largely determine what people

are persuaded to think those needs are, one which accepts the imperatives of moral judgement rather than the blind operation of market imperatives.

Having said as much we are aware we are in a cleft stick. Many millions, indeed billions of voters in our mass democracies are perfectly satisfied with the lifestyle modern commerce has established for them, they are not remotely concerned about the fate of the whales, or of the rain forests, or with the extent of global warming or of the proliferation of nuclear weaponry (now in the hands of nearly 30 governments).

They are untouched by the extent to which their high consumerist lifestyle is based in large part on the exploitation and impoverishment of billions more in other parts of the world. Indeed any move to redress the balance in rich countries would be enough to unseat any political leader and provide electoral support to any thug government that achieved power by opposing it.

What confronts us here is a clash of basic social values; a largely satisfied, satiated and self-absorbed majority, concerned only with the gospel of getting on, enjoying, if that may be true, an inflated consumerist lifestyle engendered and sustained by means which are destroying the capacity of the planet to be a civilised home, confronts an increasingly resentful and restive swathe of impoverished billions abroad, allied to a concerned and even alarmed minority at home, themselves encapsulating an even smaller minority seeking to indicate the true causes of the general crisis as a crisis of power in such enormous aggregates as to be out of control and, in the format it operates, to be uncontrollable.

The failure to recognise this cardinal

aspect of the global crisis is reflected in the almost total failure of all attempts to establish any kind of effective resistance.

What form shall such resistance take? How can it be effective without falling into the trap of the inevitable corruption of power when wielded on a mass basis? The failure to address these questions is the principal reason why what might be a radical movement is today so fragmented, confused and wholly ineffective in halting the onward march to Carmageddon.

The urgent need of the hour is for a continuous and ever expanding debate on the problem of the democratic deployment and operation of power in political and economic life. May we urge all whom these words reach in every country to plan how we all become catalysts of drives for local power and for the local education needed to achieve it in solving local problems.

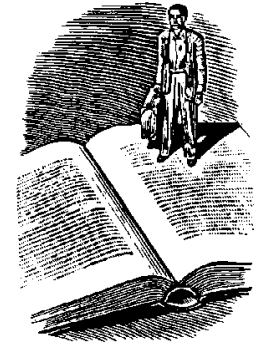
Such an approach opens up a meaningful vista of progress; a possibility of advance not in terms of campaigns to change parties controlling governments, by electing a different mob of power freaks, but in terms of changing the structure of government itself. It is an approach to ensure that national government is confined strictly to national matters and in no way involved in local affairs; an approach which insists that local representatives and not national appointees control regional bodies for utility functions such as transport, communications, energy and so on, a move towards an organic structure of power, power from the base up, not from the top down. That is the crucial lesson of modern history; that such an approach is the only way of ensuring that the enduring dream of democratic freedom may at last be realised. ■

## FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR

**I HAD WRITTEN TO ZAMBIA'S President Mwanawasa to urge that those 19 soldiers sentenced to death for participation in an attempted coup in 1997 should be pardoned.**

I don't suppose I was the only one who wrote urging mercy but I did feel an immense sense of relief to learn that the President had in fact done the decent thing. He comes across as an innately good man; odd to compare him with our own dear Mr Blair, whom I saw described the other day as 'that lying little warmonger'. But telling my Nigerian friend Dele Oguntimoju my relief at the decision I wondered about the effects on prisoners' health of long years in an African jail. Tuberculosis and other disease effects are rife and I wondered if there should be an international body to improve jail conditions. Dele replied; 'The problem there in countries like Nigeria is that conditions outside jails for ordinary people are sometimes much worse.'

I WAS EXPLAINING MY PLANS to get my latest book published and John Coleman cautioned me against undue optimism. 'I was talking to the literary editor of a well-known magazine and he told me he gets five sacks of books to review every week.'



I WENT TO MEET A FRENCH FRIEND of many years' standing who was on a visit and who appears to have fallen in love with London. I found myself in Oxford Street, where my attention was arrested by a large group of people standing behind some crowd barriers on the pavement edge. Many of them were frantically seeking to hand leaflets across the barriers to passers-by. One man was bellowing slogans through an amplification device, his voice was strident, angry, hectoring and ugly; as a means of persuasion it was decidedly counterproductive and the banners indicated it was a pro-Zionist group. When I enquired, they explained they were staging opposition to another demo some yards along of a Palestinian group urging a boycott of Marks & Spencer because of its support for Israel.

I chatted with members of both groups, they were mainly teenagers, good looking kids with the glow of youth on them who were full of passionate conviction about their rival causes, and the exchanges and the leaflets they gave me left me sad, bewildered and frustrated. I am of strongly pro Israel and strongly pro Palestinian views, and this import of Middle Eastern rivalries into Oxford Street did not seem to me to do justice to either of them.

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT, CONFLICTS AND NORMS IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD**, by Lyuba Zarsky. EARTHSCAN 2004, ISBN 1-85383-815-2.

Reviewed by Dele Oguntimoju

IN WAR, the victor imposes its culture on the vanquished. Since the voyages of discovery to open up the New World, a war of attrition has raged between the individualism that underpins western society and the collectivism that is the soul of traditional societies.

The losses sustained by traditional societies in this conflict have become ever more systematic as the instruments of assault employed by the West become ever more subtle, yet no less lethal. Missionaries took over from mercenaries and trading replaced raiding. Most significantly, the iron rule of colonial government was succeeded by the inclusivity suggested by multinational corporations with the new gospel of globalisation.

But in what way are the Shell plcs and Lonrhos of today different from the Dutch East India Company and Royal Niger Company of the late 19th Century that preceded them as creatures of legal jurisprudence from advanced capitalist countries unleashed by their governments to forage in developing countries that have little

capacity to control their operations? By adopting the mantle of private companies to disguise the reality that they are instruments of their governments, they not only fool the locals but are able, also, to evade the more demanding standards that their domestic laws and public opinion would otherwise demand of their governments. Accountability to shareholders is less demanding that accountability to the electorate.

This collection of essays highlights how, in country after country, where the concept of the nation state (i.e. a State that is in the service of the people) is weak or non-existent, the interests of the State becomes aligned with the interests of multinational corporations to the detriment of the people and their environment. Drawing on case studies from China to the Congo, we see how the global campaign for human rights is being turned into a new subtle weapon against traditional societies. This is a consequence of the fact that it is the victorious West that is again defining what are and what are not human rights: individual rights, such as the right to life, are in, but collective rights – principle amongst which is, for indigenous peoples, are the rights to self determination – are yet to be recognised.

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## **ERECTUS CONSCIOUSNESS: HOW WE MIGHT STILL SURVIVE**

### **Kirkpatrick Sale**

*It is frequently argued that we can make no headway without a major transformation of consciousness. In Part One of this essay, the author, a prolific journalist and writer of some of the most important books of our time, seeks to indicate some of the moves involved.*

**H**OMO ERECTUS was the most successful hominid creature that the world has ever known.

For nearly 2 million years it created dense and harmonious societies on three continents in all kinds of climates, and it was the ancestral species to both the Neanderthals and the *Homo Sapiens*.

It matters, because that was when our basic, our primary, human nature evolved, since we lived as *Erectus* eight times longer than as *Sapiens*, more than 200 times longer than as historical *Sapiens*, indeed for basically 98 per cent of hominid time on earth. And I suggest it matters because we need to understand – and liberate – that human nature now, today, in the modern world, if we are to avert our headlong rush to ecocide.

It is in its attitude toward nature, as I have attempted to reconstruct it for a book I have just completed, that we can learn most from the *Erectus* culture. It would begin, as with a number of contemporary tribal societies, with a sense of the overriding benevolence of nature, which after all returned enough to them to make them successful and populous over an immensely long period of time. It would include an immediate identity with the land they settled on,

the spaces they moved over, the natural systems they interacted with, and the animals they moved among.

And I would argue that at the heart of it, the very reason for its benignity, was the fact that *Erectus* societies did not get the bulk of their meat by confrontational hunting but rather from scavenging, either the leftovers of a carnivore's catch or the remains of a natural death before the hyenas and the buzzards got to it. As a result they did not develop a distance, a mental separation, from the animals, as the *Sapiens* did – there was no antagonism, no confrontation, no need to think of Self and Other or to act that out by committing an assault on the web of the ecosystem on a daily basis. By stalking, spearing, killing, and butchering large mammals.

Evidence for hunting, particularly of larger species, does not emerge until about 70,000 years ago. Hunting, after all, is a complex and difficult way to get the evening meal, demanding considerable practice and planning, and, when dealing with large animals, a particularly dangerous way. It is hard to see how an *Erectus* band would have been able to hunt elephant, hippopotamus, buffalo and the like –

animals whose bones are found at their campsites – especially with the simple hand axes that are the only tools they had that could have been used as a weapon. The idea of half a dozen men, even as strong as *Erectus* men would have been, charging at an elephant or a hippo and trying to kill it with a hand-held blade without being trampled is simply ludicrous, as is the notion of men racing across the savanna trying to catch zebras and antelopes and other fleet-footed prey. The eminent Stanford University anthropologist Richard Klein has concluded that ‘humans had relatively limited ability to hunt large animals’ until the time of the *Sapiens* much later on.

### Natural scavenger

And, basically, limited need. Klein points out that most *Erectus* sites in Africa where tools and animal bones have been found – at the Olduvai gorge, Koobi Fora, and Duinefontaine, for example – were not caves but open-air ‘water-edge’ sites by rivers, lakes, and bogs, where all kinds of animals would come to drink, predators made their kills, and ‘where scavenging opportunities may have been particularly abundant’; in places such as East Africa today, he notes, ‘substantial amounts of scavengable meat and marrow bone’ are left behind and escape the attention of hyenas and their ilk, especially in the drier months.

More than that, though the fossil record cannot tell us for certain, there is no grounds to think that there would be a reason for *Erectus* to behave any differently from the other animals of the wild savanna, all of whom pass each other regularly through the day without flight or fear and drink at the same waterhole at sunset. As

scavengers, they could live intimately in nature, as animals and birds do, as hunters necessarily cannot once their killing habits are known. ‘Prior to hunting’, say two scientists in the classic Man the Hunter study, ‘the relations of our ancestors to other animals must have been very much like those of the other non-carnivores. They could have moved close among the other species, fed beside them, and shared the same water-holes.


They would know themselves on the animal level, as just another species making its way in the world, part of a seamless membrane of life. There would be no separate self, no declaration of individuality as in ocher-decoration and ornamentation of the later *Sapiens*, none of which is found in the *Erectus* record.

That is to say, they would have an *Erectus* consciousness different in some fundamental ways from that of the *Sapiens*, different from our own. British philosopher Owen Barfield wrote a book in the 1950s called *Saving the Appearances*, which was essentially an attempt to examine what he saw as ‘the evolution of consciousness’, starting with the earliest humans: ‘a time when man – not only as a body, but also as a soul – was a part of nature in a way which we today, of course, find it difficult to conceive.’ He regarded them as having what he called ‘original participation’, which he said was a ‘primal unity of mind and nature, with no separation between inner and outer worlds’, and no sense of the self apart from the rest of existence – nor, presumably, even a sense of ‘the rest of existence’. As difficult as it is for us to imagine now, Barfield held that there was a time ‘when men and nature were one in a way that has long since ceased’, which we recognise today only in

not about (retaliatory) ‘terrorism’ but takes land and water from indigenous people for illegal Israeli settlements. Brown knows his agro-chemical economics: one ton of wheat requires 10 tons of water. To export wheat is to export water. To import third world avocados and strawberries is to import precious water. We should contradict our fat-cat ‘overseas development’ agencies: aid, especially sustainable examples, not trade, is the small scale, survival way forward.

What John Muir called ‘temple destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism’ have brought the earth near eco-melt down. I recommend this book for facts on trends, with some solutions. But we need greener think-tanks, millions of local environmentalists, from India and Morocco to Purton – and even Sedgefield – who think aloud wise, informed sustainable thoughts... and walk their talk.

**A SOLAR WORLD**, by David Elliot;  
**BEFORE THE WELLS RUN DRY: IRELAND'S TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY**, edited by Richard Douthwaite.

 Reviewed by Professor M.W. Thring  
BOTH books are concerned with the twin problems of burning fossil fuels: firstly their effect on the environment and, secondly, as a finite resource, the fact that we cannot use them at the present rate for more than a few more decades. However, neither book faces the ultimate problem that civilisation will have to find a way of enabling all humans to have the opportunity of self-fulfilling lives without any fossil fuels at all.

It will be the year 2092 by the time the youngest of my three great-grandsons reaches my present age. There is no chance that he will have a good life unless both the

rich and poor countries start quite soon to develop the technology necessary to give all people the genuine benefits of the Industrial Revolution.

Ireland is to be congratulated on having held a conference on ‘Ireland’s Transition To Renewable Energy’, on which this second book is based. I quote: ‘Even leaving climate change considerations apart, the world’s transition to non-fossil sources of energy must not start too late or proceed too slowly. If it does, there could be insufficient energy left to be spent on the construction of energy sources to replace fossil fuels.’

One contributor concludes that Shell’s discovery record since 1885 ‘tells us that they have found about 80% of all they can ever hope to find no matter how hard they try’. He shows that US oil discovery peaked in 1930 and production in 1971. He adds: ‘It explains, incidentally, why the United States Government officially states that access to foreign oil is of vital national interest, justifying military intervention.’ Campbell expects the world’s oil production from conventional sources to peak in the next five or six years, and fall to just over half the 2010 level by 2050. Gas usage will, he suggests, rise to a global plateau about 2015 and have a steep decline about 2040.

Nuclear power is a perfect example of the Victorian definition of ‘Vice’: ‘enjoy now, pay later’.

The speaker from Shell completely rejected the idea that the world’s output would decline in the foreseeable future, and maintained that oil production would not peak for at least 25 years. On the other hand, the view of Exxon-Mobil was that the global discovery of oil peaked in the mid-1960s, followed shortly thereafter by gas.

hesitation Tawapuh continued:

"Well, then, your chief is not a real chief or he would not need men with guns to guard his village. How can you return to this after having been with us?"

"Will you tell the tribe what you have seen?" I asked Tawapuh.


"No," he said, "they would not believe me, and they would be unhappy to think of you having to live here. The chief is an old man and it is better that he doesn't know.

Perhaps one day I will tell my son about your tribe. Perhaps not."

Tawapuh's intuitive ability to perceive the problematic nature of our society is not unique to him.

What can we do to halt the desecration of these people's lives and the destruction of their mythical furniture? Not much perhaps, but to do anything we must first be informed, and this book and its description of the folklore of these peoples can help us and enrich us.

**THE EARTH POLICY READER**, by Lester R. Brown, Janet Larsen, Bernie Fischlowitz-Roberts. EARTHSCAN PUBLICATIONS, 2003. £12.95. ISBN 1 85383 970 1.

 Reviewed by Edward P. Echlin

LESTER BROWN, formerly of World Watch, directs the Earth Policy Institute. This book is a collection of 'updates', with projected technological solutions (or fixes?) to unsustainable trends. Trends include population growth, climate, erosion, grain harvest, fishing, forest destruction, carbon emissions and ice melting, with proposals for solar cells, wind turbines, bicycles, economic growth, water.

The Institute commendably includes

suggestions for population stabilisation, a no-go area for opportunist politicians and their media. Less bold is Brown's silence about food and air miles, and airport destruction of arable flatlands desperately needed for grain, wind power and water. The Institute uses macro, globalised airborne solutions, and, with some good exceptions, ignores local, neighbourhood sustainability. Like most agro-chemical economists, Brown shrinks from getting his fingers into that fabulous backyard, 3ftx20ft organic bed.

This collection illustrates yet again the central importance of water for human and planetary continuance. Seventy per cent of mined water goes to irrigation, 20% to industry, 10% to homes. Population growth, industry and urbanisation increase demands on the latter two. Urbanised car culture takes massive land out of agriculture, irrigation, rain permeation, forestation and wind farming. Every five cars in gas-guzzling America devour a football field of asphalt. There are three cars to every four Americans, two to four in the EU. Brown thinks the hydrogen economy 'will power the nation's vehicles'. But how will hydrogen cars fertilise asphalt? 'Asphalt is the land's last crop', says environmentalist Robert Cutler. Sixteen million hectares (160,000 sq. miles) of US land are roads and car parks. Only 21 million hectares grow desperately-needed wheat. The Chinese Academy of Sciences recommends light rail, buses and bicycles for China's transport. The government, however, prefers to imitate the US – and as dust storms from its eroding, deforested north ring cities, China, lemming-like, descends the asphalt Gadarene slope. The Israeli 'Berlin Wall' is

our concept of paganism, 'the other name for original participation, in all its long-hidden, in all its diluted forms'. That was the reality at the core of *Erectus* existence.

That worldview, that essential identity with the natural world, that inherent harmony with living creatures, was what made *Erectus* society so enduring. They were a people who, no matter where in the world, whether in tropical or temporal ecosystems, whether at savanna waterholes, Javan shorelines or Chinese caves, preserved the earth because they knew they were part of it. For nearly 2 million years.

### In our genes

And that, so I am arguing, was what we need to learn, somehow. *Erectus* societies could not have been successful for so long in so many parts of the world unless they were doing something right. We have to start doing it, too.

No, I don't mean that there is any way for us to live an *Erectus* life in the world as it is now, even if substantial numbers of people wanted to and there were not 6 billion people covering the earth. The defenders of the present who say 'you can't go back' are of course absolutely right, and any attempt to do so would end up looking like the French aristocrats of the 18th century who dressed up as shepherds and milkmaids to celebrate a romantic sense of Nature and the goodness of 'primitive' life.

However, in the deepest sense we already are back. The *Erectus* way of life is in some sense encoded in our genes after 1.8 million years, and we have more or less the same genome that the first *Sapiens* possessed 200,000 years ago; and just as we have the same grasping hands and colour vision, so too we have the same brains and

psyches, and they can be used to perceive the world the same way. As Carl Jung once said, 'Every human being has a two-million-year-old man within himself, and if he loses contact with that two-million-year-old self, he loses his real roots.'

That does not mean that we are now about to create a foraging life of small mobile bands living in harmony with nature all over the world. But it does mean that there are aspects of *Erectus* consciousness that we are capable of comprehending today and adapting to our present lifeways to one degree or another. We may not be able to create a full-fledged *Erectus* society or imitate contemporary harmonious tribes like the Mbuti and the !Kung, but, as the eminent ecologist Paul Shepard puts it, 'removable elements in those cultures can be recovered or recreated, which fit the predilection of the human genome everywhere'.

### Dead certainty

Thus it is a matter of will, not of ability, and as to the imperative of modern society coming to exert its will in some such direction there is no doubt: 'Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness,' Czech statesman Vaclav Havel told the US Congress in 1990, 'a more humane society will not emerge.' Nor one more grounded, more stable, more secure, more harmonious, and more integrated with the natural world, such as *Erectus* consciousness might lead us to.

Let me give an example, to suggest that this is not all frivolous. Our contemporary culture, certainly in the West, is saturated with an antagonism to and fear of death, and a fantasy of an afterlife (or botox) to escape it, and much of our time and ingenu-

ity (not to mention money) is devoted to staving it off at any price. An *Erectus* worldview would accept death as an ordinary part of life and not endowed with any special fearsome or unusual severity: 'When you're dead you're dead,' say the Mbuti. There would be no complicated measures to keep people alive when terminally ill or injured; no second thoughts about putting to sleep an extraordinarily deformed or deficient baby; no laboratories devoted to creating drugs or technologies to extend a normal life; no institutions to keep people alive when they have lost mental or bodily functions: a return, in short, to natural selection. There would also be a great many fewer people, of course, and fewer making an enormous drawdown of money and resources, and hence a more reasonable balance of the human impact on the earth's finite treasures.

'Fewer people' contains other aspects of an *Erectus* consciousness. It accepts the idea, as the science of ecology phrases it today, of a 'carrying capacity', a limit on the human use and depletion of natural resources consistent with the survival and flourishing of all the other species, plant and animal and natural, in a given ecosystem. This will at some point mean the regulation of human population growth, fitting the number of people to the needs of the carrying capacity of the region, so that too many animals are not killed, too many plants uprooted, too many toxins spread, too many systems abused. This was the practice of all successful *Erectus* societies – if they exceeded the limits they would inevitably not be successful, and would have to migrate if they did not perish – and of most simple tribal societies we know about, which is why on the one hand they would prolong breast

feeding, have customs to spread out the years between births, use abortifacient plants when necessary, and let infirm people detach themselves from the village to die, and on the other take care to assure that vital species were not overhunted or overharvested.


### Intimate lifestyle

The ideas of population control and limited consumption – ideas quite common today, despite advanced capital's resistance to them – also link to ideas of scale. The scale of *Erectus* society centered around bands of about 25 people, interacting with perhaps six or seven other bands as an occasional tribal assemblage, and that set into a total known universe of maybe 400 to 500 people with the same dialect and culture, the usual size of most historical tribes we know of. That wider number would be enough to provide a sufficient number of mating partners for youngsters reaching maturity – a mating network much smaller than that is likely to produce inbreeding and genetic defects – and to exchange information on environmental or resource crises and means of overcoming them.

The number 500 actually seems to be pretty much the maximum level at which people can effectively maintain any kind of intimate network, and our brains may have evolved for 2 million years to adapt at that level. According to Hans Blumenfeld, who has studied this area as an urban planner, the level at which 'every person knows every other person by face, by voice, and by name' fades out 'with much more than a 500 or 600 population'. The Society of American Architects recommends primary schools of no more than 500 pupils, because that is the limit at which a principal will be

## BOOKS

**XINGU, THE INDIANS AND THEIR MYTHS**, by Orlando & Claudio Villas Boas. SOUVENIR PRESS, 2004, £ 10.99, ISBN 0-285-64748-2.

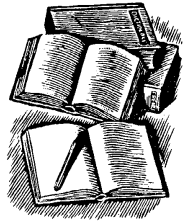
 Reviewed by John Papworth

THE Xingu Indians comprise 15 tribes in what is now a National Park of more than 5.6 million acres in Central Brazil. It was established by the Villas Boas brothers in an attempt to preserve the tribes from the deadly advance of the white man's intrusion. This book describes the varied and beautiful myths of those isolated and self-sufficient peoples, what the authors call a 'legitimate society of nations'.

The first explorer was the ethnologist Karl von den Steinen, as recently as 1887. When the Villas Boas brothers arrived in 1940 they found the population had been nearly halved. Some border tribals had ventured into a white man's town to purchase tools; unwittingly they found themselves exposed to strange diseases, such as influenza and dysentery, against which, they had no defence; in travelling back to their villages they were carriers and the infections leap-frogged to neighboured villages with terrible, death-dealing conse-

quences. This book is an eloquent testimony of the sort of disasters that civilisation is inflecting on defenceless peoples the world over. One of the authors describes how he accompanied the son-in-law of a tribal chief, a man named Tawapuh, on an air journey to San Paulo, where he was seeking treatment for a hernia. He wondered what Tawapuh would think of their enormous polluted city until... but let the author continue:

After almost a week Tawapuh pulled my face close to his own and, looking sadly into my eyes, very quietly said: "How can you breathe this foul air or sleep with these terrible noises [the traffic]? How can you eat this food made to have tastes which are not its own? Why would you want to have intercourse with these women who seem afraid to be women and hide themselves and cover their eyes? And who are these men with guns who stand in the paths of the village [the ever-present Brazilian military police]?" "They are the men of the chief," I replied, and without a moment's



Democrat, I feel as though I should really get to grips with the Green Party's policies (there aren't really any alternative as far as I can see) to see whether have an answer.

**Nick Stockbridge**

*Eastwood Manor, East Harptree, Bristol,  
NE Somerset BS40 6AH*

*The political stance of The Fourth World is always explicitly stated on the front cover. – Ed.*

## DENIAL

FROM robbery to concussion, you had a lively year in '03. I hope '04 will be pleasanter! You read *The Ecologist* and probably *New Scientist*, so you will be well up on the oil futures. We North Americans still haven't a clue; as George Mombiot might put it, we are a civilisation in denial.

The bleak patch between the onset of oil decline and its replacement by renewables – probably 50–60 years; and also why bioregionalism makes more sense than ever – pace Kirk Sale.

**Colin Graham**

*598 Meldram Drive, Sidney, B.C. V8L 5V8*

## CONSCIENCE

I THINK Kirkpatrick Sale has given an accurate description of the chaos that modern industrial capitalism and its high priests – the large corporations – is creating (FWR 125). I find his eight-fold path of Buddhist Economics an excellent plan for a sustainable world order. I also agree with his statement that the problem is not in what members of the Establishment *do* but in what they *are* – their low level of Being.

However, I disagree entirely with his criticism of the efforts of those 'well-meaning reformist activists and academics'. The only hope of getting enough people to have

the strength to affect the necessary change from MIC Chaos Economics to Buddhist Economics is to enlist the help of those whose conscience is already aroused and get them to work together on finding a way of arousing the latent conscience in the younger generation. Once enough youngsters see clearly the harm we are doing to Mother Gaia, which may well make their lives untenable, they will be properly motivated.

**Meredith Thring**

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Suffolk IP13 8BL*

## UNTYING THE KNOT

I WAS disturbed by your reference to the UK Independence Party (FWR 124). I do not think that anyone within or outside the party imagines that even in the unlikely event that it formed the next government it would come anywhere near to producing an ideal world of independent local communities, but it would achieve something if it could simply demonstrate that substantial numbers of voters were seriously opposed to Britain's EU membership. Withdrawal from the EU could be seen as just a small step towards reform. As things are at present, if the administration doesn't want to do something the minister concerned can always wring his hands and say that he personally has enormous sympathy with whatever cause is being promoted but of course 'we' are tied by our treaty obligations to our 'partners'. At least withdrawal would remove that excuse for ignoring issues which are clearly exercising many people.

**Angela Bates**

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

able to know every one by name; the scholar John Feiffer notes that 'the memory capacity of the human brain probably plays a fundamental role of some sort since that influences the number of persons one can know on sight'. Tribal societies, *Erectus* included, clustered around that number for a reason.

Now I would be the first to acknowledge that resettling modern populations in villages of 500 people, though consistent with our evolutionary history and mental capacities, might prove difficult to do – only one more proof that the human species has vastly overexpanded itself. But that certainly could be a guide for architects and urban planners, even in setting out units within large cities, and could be a model for suburban developments and 'new cities' projects. And within a society drastically cutting population, as our *Erectus* heritage suggests is necessary – and our environmental destruction suggests is inevitable – such a resettlement to the scales we are hardwired for does not seem untoward.

*Erectus* consciousness, then, is approachable in modern terms and possible – and clearly desirable – in a good many areas. There are others. The *Erectus* diet, for example, would serve as one even more

appropriate for the modern age than the guidelines suggested by the Agriculture Department, as some 44,000 sites on the internet attest, which together prove that a regimen based on lean (wild) meat, high fibre, a wide variety of vegetables and fruit, and no milk, cereals and sugar would be infinitely healthier than the average human intake anywhere in the world today. Or the idea of simple tools and minimal possessions, freeing people from the materialistic trap of modern technology and turning them to what certain New Agers have been calling (and apparently what millions of them are living) 'voluntary simplicity'. Or the practice of close mother-child bonding, with lengthy breast-feeding and regular physical intimacy, for long periods of childhood, along with child-rearing shared with grandmothers, aunts and friends, which many recent studies have shown are not only important but indeed essential – because, after all, they are *Erectus*-rooted – to both physically and mentally healthy adults.

*Erectus* consciousness in the end is not so foreign, and much of it is nothing more than a guideline to human health and sanity, so deeply rooted in our genes that even now we know it to be true. ■

*A man is nonetheless a slave because he is allowed to choose a new master once in a term of years.*

**Lysander Spooner, 1870**

*As soon as you say what you think and not what some other person has thought for you, you are on your way to being a remarkable person.*

**J.M. Barrie**

## GIFTS AND GREEKS

### Peter Dollins

*The author worked on the railways, lived for 10 years in Greece and now lives in London.*

**I**N GREECE of 1974 dozens of cellar tavernas dotted cities and villages.

Here was brought raw foods to be cooked at a token service charge. Cellars roofed in barrels sold the local retsina and cheeses. Wooden tables and bench seats lined narrow aisles. On a few carafes of retsina sent over to his table the local musician started his favourite song or latest composition. The cellar grew quiet, the music peppered by a few 'Uppa's' until local fishermen, labourers, and gravediggers came in on the chorus and the verse. If the musician had no *kefi* (spirit), the men created a poem. The first man invented the opening two lines, the next man followed, then on around and around the table. That or just a simple buzz of talk and crackling laughter leavened the meals. By 1977, the rise in costs had undermined the cellars. By 1979 and the plunging of Greece into the EU, prices became a *fotia* (fire) – the Greek nickname for inflation. By the time I left Greece in 1984 not a single cellar taverna survived.

The village on 'my' island is a hilltop *castro* (castle). Built against the time when pirates roamed the Mediterranean it circles the peak, its walls overlooking a jade Aegean like the boss on a shield, only whitewashed. The village doors are forever open so women, child and men walk in one another's kitchen and living room. All the

villagers are related so in some ways this is a large family. The women come in to give their tips on cooking, to watch the children, exchange or share problems, gossip, trade intrigues – a constant love in Greece. For the village is one big house made up of many rooms.

The local café-neo, the Star, acts as telephone exchange, food store, café, taverna, fishmonger, herbalist and gossip shop. Children play at the adults' feet until one or more in the morning, then collapse into a dead sleep. The Greeks love children, excuse poor behaviours, laugh at any wailing, pet or swing the tots up to coo away all tears and rages. 'She is just a small child,' is a refrain often heard. Then again a mother can tease her children, pretending an easy task is difficult, nudging rules to ensure her child's defeat and then laughing at the squalls of anger, rage and tears. At around fourteen, the father comes down on the teenager like a village wall, then after a few months inches back until a new understanding has grown between child and adult.

Stavros, my 86-year-old landlord, came up a winding path of whitewashed solid-set concrete steps on his donkey to leave tomatoes at my harbour cottage door. I knew him by his singing that echoed up from the scimitar beach below. I heard him heading up the valley to work the fields or drive his sheep to new pasture. Mornings I'd hear his

*cility, coupled with a similar destructive climax in environmental degradation, the consolidation of globalised economic power at the price of our disintegrating social structures and our traditional civil liberties, to say nothing of the general collapse of civilisation.*

*We could halt this process in its tracks if we had a realistic grasp of the nature of the forces promoting it, and I have not been alone over recent decades in seeking to pinpoint what they are and how they might be countered; yet repeated appeals to 'peace' organisations to revamp their focus and to revise their strategy have been met with a blank wall of total unreceptiveness.*

*Knee-jerk reactions to the latest war moves, with millions pouring into the streets in protest, to no effect whatsoever, firmly indicate the urgent need for a wholesale revision of outlook, and a failure to adopt one. Where are the debates and conferences that might produce it? The Schumacher legacy has been largely hijacked by reformist freakery which wallows in an aura of wishy-washy, wet-nurse posturing of 'personal development' and oriental brands of mysticism. They doubtless yield boundless gratification to numerous stressed souls, but they have no more effect on the disastrous passage of events than a fly on the wall.*

*The lesson has yet to strike home that our failure does not arise from our inability to have the least effect on the powers determining these disastrous policies as they are currently structured, but from a failure to recognise that it is the deployment of power itself which needs to be tackled if we are ever to empower ourselves for effective action.*

*This is why the peace message demands a crusade to restore full power to small nations and local communities as an essential step to restoring any kind of moral sanity before we are altogether undone.* Ed.

### THIRD CRANK

I AM surely not the only one who, on reading *Fourth World Review*, or rather John Papworth's writings therein, is certain of a chuckle or two. Wit, pith and insight; and now the odd typo and even mistake, for in my copy of Shaw's *Saint Joan*, it is Cauchon, not Joan, who asks: 'Must then a Christ perish in torment in every age to save those that have no imagination?' The Third Crank in the *Fourth World* he may be, but what a foil he is to the increasingly drab and partisan nature of much that passes as 'informed' commentary today.

**Christopher Houghton Budd**  
*Forge House, The Green, Charlton,  
Canterbury CT4 7JW*

### WHOM?

I'M TRYING to figure out whether *Fourth World Review* has a political slant. It certainly doesn't seem as though a *Fourth World* reader would side automatically with any one political party – a good thing, in my view. I like its tone because it seems broadly to share my own view of what are the most important issues today – for example, care of the planet as it's the one and only we have, and not an inexhaustible warehouse of metal, oil and plastic for making things. On the human side, reducing injustice and power imbalances seems to me to be where we should be heading, with emphasis on self reliance of nations and one man's rights not to be oppressed by another, rather than his right to enough money to buy another car.

However important and universal the issue we always seem to come up against the question 'whom should we vote for to make the world a better and fairer place' and so far having always voted Liberal

They were just as successful in schools, centred round, but not limited to, older children helping younger children with their work. As well as improving the work of both the younger children being tutored and the older child doing the tutoring, it also changed the behaviour of the children, from bullying to caring, as the children worked to earn a secondhand computer when they had earned 100 Time Credits, for 100 hours of service.

Time Banks were introduced into the UK five years ago. A book about how to set one up should be available this year. Meanwhile, I will be working to set up a Time Bank in Holyhead. When the chaos economy (destructive economy, suicidal economy) collapses, with its supporting money system, Time Banks will provide some of the seeds of regeneration.

**Patricia Knox**

*Pen Llywenan, Bodedern, Holyhead*

### SEEKING THE GOOD

AS someone who has worked alongside you, as it were, for 50 years (I believe I published your first pamphlet), in whose activities you have more than once offered to take a leadership role, and who has consistently been involved in making your work quickly available – albeit at a presumably (acceptable to you) small scale, I write with some sadness after reading your terrible comment on Housman's Peace Bookshop (Spectator, FWR 125) which I rescued from failure, and for which I have shared some responsibility since 1948.

Housman's has not set out to make harsh judgements of the countless other public spirited people who seek to make the world a better place. It is so easy to 'clever dick' each other, so challenging and different to try to encourage creative common ground,

towards which Housman's has, over the years, sent out annually a world directory of all those people, good or indifferent, who are trying to eliminate strife, cruelty, greed and indifference from human affairs.

Do you not realise how much can be achieved by helping the good in other people's endeavours, and how much is lost in denigrating them? When just common human goodness brings two million family people out to challenge the abuse of power so flagrantly evident by the US/UK attack on Iraq!

I could elaborate this attitude in many ways in response to your always stimulating views, so crack-on in reiterating essential human values, and yet so often negative. I can assure you that whenever *Fourth World Review* arrives it takes priority in reading over breakfast for this 90-year-old fellow pilgrim!

Please get off you high horse a little bit, John. Avert your gaze a little from the worthy but aversely over-endowed, feudal usurpers, the farming Tories who are enriched by vast government allocations of the public purse, the established Church with so dreadful a history of resenting its own magnificent powers.

Like you, those so ugly people you so caustically deride want a more co-operative and fairer world. Tragically, maybe also as you do, they often too want power over their fellows – the serpent in the garden of Eden!

**Harry Mister**

*Hornbeam Cottage, 67 Postern Green,  
Enfield EN2 7DE*

*If after 50 years Harry is happy with the achievements of the 'peace' movement, I am desperately unhappy. Global affairs are clearly moving towards a monumental apex of militarised imbe-*

songs echo in from the bay as Stavros stood, leaning full-weight onto his oars, sculling out to the fishing grounds. His skin was centuries-old sandpaper though his eyes never lost gaiety. Stavros had many great-grandchildren, yet at the fiesta on the mountaintop monasteries it was Stavros who held the dance floor first.

From 1977 the islands beaches were packed like sardine trays, women came wandering into the cafés in their skimpiest outfits. Couples made love on the beaches. Yet on this island local married couples did not even hold hands in public. If the tourists had ceased the graceless jerking they thought of as dancing they might have seen the Greek men dancing so gracefully to the music of the *Nissia* (Islands). For the tourists Greece was a beach, a café, a tourist restaurant, a pick-up joint, a sex-shop. If they had looked they might also have seen that the locals never became drunk. Once almost 'merry' in my taverna I stretched out for one extra glass of wine. The widow owner came, stood over my table and stared until I stopped, paid and left,

exchanging our customary *yahara's* (good-bye, happiness).

The café-neos bought in televisions, replacing the poetry and the deaf-mute who acted out his little playlets, builders speckled the island – known by architects internationally as home to the finest of Cycladic art – in concrete vomit blobs. Margarita of the 'Star' exclaimed, 'Most beautiful!' at a TV sighting of a 'Dallas' motel. The Western and EU bulldozers swept away a purity of island taste formed over a thousand years or more, into kitsch. Along with the cellar bars, the fiestas of wine, food, dance and music, low rents and mutual self-help. If we think it a fair exchange to replace a local music, a web of human contacts and culture going down to a depth of three thousand years, to replace poetry yet older, to replace all local handicrafts with money, plastics, kitsch and pollution, we are deluded. So what have we lost in throwing away the pearls of human wisdom in human-scale fulfilment built upon the thousands of years of suffering, poverty, and need? ■

*The population explosion is attributed to poverty and insecurity. The only solution proposed today is to increase economic development to make Third World people rich and secure. The trouble is that economic development, by destroying peoples, families and communities and pushing them off their land to accommodate development projects, is the main cause of insecurity and thereby the main cause of the population explosion. Unfortunately our politicians need the money generated by this process to keep themselves in power by appearing at least to be solving the problems that confront them. If we are to extract ourselves from this fatal chain reaction, we have no alternative but to create a very different sort of society: one that is highly decentralised, based on the family and the community in which economic activities are conducted on a much smaller scale, catering for much smaller local and regional markets. It is only in such a society that the impact of economic activities can be sustained by the global environment.*

**Edward Goldsmith**

# THE VERMONT MANIFESTO: THE SECOND VERMONT REPUBLIC

**Thomas H. Naylor**

*The author is professor emeritus at Duke University, North Carolina, and the author of many books, including, with William H. Williamson, Downsizing the USA. He lives in Vermont (where else?) and is a leading player in the Vermont independence stakes.*

**T**HERE IS IRONY in the fact that former Vermont Governor Howard Dean is running for president of the United States, yet hundreds of thoughtful Vermonters think Vermont should once again become an independent republic. They believe that the United States has become unsustainable, ungovernable, and unfixable.

Our government is too big, too centralised, too powerful, too intrusive, too materialistic, too high-tech, too globalised, too militarised, too imperialistic, too violent, too undemocratic, and too unresponsive to the needs of individual citizens and small communities. It is owned, operated and controlled by Corporate America. National and Congressional elections are bought and sold to the highest bidder.

It matters not who the next president will be. The results will be the same. We have a single political party, the Republican Party, disguised as a two-party system. The Democratic Party is effectively brain dead, having had no new ideas since the 1960s.

Many Vermonters have become disillusioned with the so-called American way – corporate greed, the war on terrorism, homeland security, the denial of civil liberties, pandering to the rich and powerful, full spectrum dominance, and imperial overstretch. Enough is enough. Vermont wants out!

As Thomas Jefferson said in the Declaration of Independence, ‘Whenever any form of government becomes destructive, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government.’ Just as a group has a right to form, so too does it have a right to disband, to subdivide itself, or withdraw from a larger unit.

This is a call for Vermont to reclaim its soul – to return to its rightful status as an independent republic as it once was, between 1777 and 1791. In so doing, Vermont can provide a kinder, gentler, more communitarian metaphor for a nation obsessed with money, power, size, speed, greed, and fear of terrorism.

Long live the Second Vermont Republic!

*Although even small communities are sometimes guilty of causing serious erosion, generally as a result of ignorance, this is trifling in comparison with the devastations caused by gigantic groups motivated by greed, envy, and the lust for power. It is moreover obvious that men organised in small units will take better care of their bit of land or other natural resources than anonymous companies or megalomaniac governments which pretend to themselves that the whole universe is their legitimate quarry.*

**E.F. Schumacher**



## FORUM

### CORPORATE DYNASTIES

THANK YOU for yet another 24 pages of sanity (*FWR* 125).

I was particularly interested in your review of *Radical Prince* by David Lorimer. I agree thoroughly with your sentiments that you express but I fear that it is precisely those qualities of roots, of identity, of belonging, engendered in the people, that are an anathema to our present global, corporate capitalism within which democracy, most certainly, has no place. Royalist or not, such residual local structures as the ‘Royal business’ can now be seen to act as bulwarks against unbridled subjugation and exploitation by corporate interests.

It is neither the Left nor anti-monarchist anarchists that will bring down monarchies but new, dynastic corporate interests eager to remove the last remaining impediments to their free range. I’m off to buy my copy of the *Radical Prince*.

**Alan Turner**

*Pen Arth, Pennant, Llanon,  
Ceredigion SY23 5JP*

### TIME BANKS

IN response to Kirkpatrick Sale’s article ‘Schumacher and Survival Economics’

(*FWR* 125): The New Economics Foundation (3 Jonathan Street, London SE11 5NH, tel. 020 7820 6300) is a UK-based non-government organisation that has already mapped out what sustainable economies would look like, as well as initiating small-scale alternative economies. I am working with the help of the Foundation to set up a Time Bank system in the economically depressed town of Holyhead in North Wales.

A Time Bank is a community currency in which an hour of my time is equal to an hour of your time. One equals one equals one. Hardly rocket science.

It is about building community, sharing skills, helping people and having fun. It builds self-esteem by valuing a person’s time, even when they have been consigned to the scrap-heap of unemployment.

Time Banks were introduced in the USA by Edgar Cahn. They became very successful when used by old people: as they helped one another and the wider community, they had a new purpose in life, and became more healthy and less likely to need old people’s homes. It saved so much money that the providers of the old people’s care homes support Time Banks financially.