

Fourth World News



A medical journal predicts a flu pandemic could kill 360 million people worldwide in default of adequate vaccine. • Villagers in Gloucestershire have created their own police patrols after failure of official police to stop burglaries. • One major growth industry in Baghdad is coffins. The makers can't cope with the rising number of dead in Iraq's bright new democratic dawn of peace and freedom. • *The Times* recently published a facsimile of its issue of 60 years ago, prompting a farmer to point out that the then price of wheat was about £15 per ton whilst the price of the paper was three pence. Today the price of wheat is about £60 per tonne – a fourfold increase – whilst the price of the paper is 55p, an increase of some 44 fold! • A pub chain is installing calculators for younger darts players because play was being slowed down by slow maths. • A 'scramjet' flew above the Pacific 10 times faster than sound. If and when commercially developed New Yorkers will reach London in 2 hours. • Iran is producing nuclear weapons at a secret site. So is Britain, Russia, China, USA, France and others. • The Federation of Sub-Postmasters has warned the UK postal service is in danger of extinction. It lost 40% of its business when the government decided to pay pensions directly into bank accounts. • 6% of 11–15 year olds in UK are reported to sniff nail varnish and deodorants in order to get a high. • Russia's

President Putin says they are developing a new type of nuclear weapon other countries do not have. • China's booming economy is burning nearly 7 million barrels of oil a day. Its state owned oil company CNOOC has made a bid of £10.2 billion for share control of Unocal, a Californian-based energy company. • Student debt totalled £13 billion in 2003-2004 – a sevenfold increase in nine years. • Almost 10,000 pupils have been expelled in UK schools and violence is escalating. • Europe's largest media company, the German firm Bertelsman AG, is taking over most of the public administration of the East Riding of Yorkshire! This new venture is an ominous indicator of future developments where market forces are extending their reach into a whole new swathe of domination of citizen life. • The unelected EU Commission has decided to backtrack on environment protection policies because of fears of job losses and of a downswing of the European economy. • A bus bombed by Maoists in Nepal killed nearly 40 and injured scores more in a nine-year civil war in which over 11,000 were killed. • Melting Himalayan glaciers are opening the floodgates of an ecological catastrophe in which millions will drown or starve as flooded farmland cuts food supplies. Sir Edmund Hillary wants Mount Everest put on the UN danger list. • Tony Blair's War in Iraq has now spread to London. – SAM HAINS

Fourth World News



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



**Nos. 133 & 134
2005**

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The Simpler Life

WILLIAM SHEPHERD
All Quiet on the Local Front

GEORGE PYLE
Stalin's Revenge

Editorials:
Cause and Effect
The EU plot

FOURTH WORLD REVIEW Nos. 133 & 134

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other forms of boardroom brigandage, and increasingly government finds it has a 'youth problem' on its hands, which it proceeds to wring in endless futile and expensive attempts to solve. The size of the school is only half the problem; deep down there is a vast pervasive range of social malaise where relationships, roots and identity of place and person are ignored or disrupted by the general energetic drift of market greed.

SIMONE WEIL, that remarkable French-woman who virtually starved herself to death in wartime London rather than eat more than official French food rations, even though her compatriots were generally having access to the black market, had this to say in her remarkable theological work *Waiting On God*: 'To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognised need of the human soul.'

Not an insight likely to find an echo in the soul of any bureaucrat.

MORE ABOUT THAT NEW MAGAZINE another time; but the village, any village, every village anywhere, is the core of any serious concern to arrest the herdlike stampede to ultimate forms of disaster now in train everywhere, for if we cannot change the world view of those around us and persuade them of the need to take decent democratic local control of their lives whilst there remains a chance to do so, there is unlikely to be any worthwhile future for anyone. Meanwhile, if you want to see a copy of *Purton Today* kindly send me an addressed A4 envelope.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, a friendly neighbour has given me a large greenhouse. After several weeks of inaction after the initial offer, four of us carried the aluminium frame across

the road, and after siting it near my kitchen window I then had to fit over 40 panes of glass. Modern gardeners have the benefit of an enormous technological heritage and in this case, standardised glass panes and special wire clips to hold them fast. The clips were tricky but I got the hang of them and now it sits awaiting my next gardening move. It has a sliding door and every now and again I go outside and slide it to and fro just to admire my own handiwork. But the ultimate refinement is a hinged roof panel which rises and falls according to the interior temperature. I have planted some peas in fibre pots (which just need to be buried *in toto* when ready) in the hope of a late crop. Since we are on a ridge, the view from my kitchen is one of my majestic greenhouse on the left, and to the right a vista of open countryside stretching for 50 miles or so.

RECENTLY THEY PERFORMED *Die Walkurie* on the Proms. I know Wagner is not everyone's cup of tea, but he has certainly become mine. People tell me, with heavy inferential emphasis, that Hitler was fond of Wagner, as though my taste links me with Nazism. But Hitler was a vegetarian and also fond of animals, so where does that leave us? I once heard a refined lady declare Wagner's music contained an indefinable element of vulgarity, and who am I to quarrel with those who are so much better informed? But as I sat at the kitchen table, watching the remaining rays of a July sunset suffusing with such unspeakable loveliness the remoter reaches of an English landscape, and heard the final cadences of Wagner's passionate magic describing a circle of fire around the sleeping Brunhilde, I felt myself transported to realms of boundless possibility and of endless wonder and enchantment. ■

zine? The truth is it is rather an editorial challenge putting things together in a readable form, but a challenge is one thing, alerting people to what is coming up and what might be done to avoid it, is quite another. I suspect in former times 'village opinion' was a fairly substantial element deeply rooted in traditional attitudes and generational relationships, whereas today that voice tends to be diffused, incoherent, confused and rather more superficial, thanks largely to the pressures of TV, the tabloids, overcentralised government and a prevailing but largely unconscious spirit of cynicism and non-attachment. The very word 'politics' is still seen as suspect, to do with electoral bribery and party maverickism, so serious issues, even when recognised, tend to be kept at bay. It is not that they are ignored but that they are seen as probably not quite respectable even to be involved in them, so that pursed lips behind lace curtains is a fairly standard logo for much of village moral life even across the world, especially related to anything novel or unusual; nonetheless, it here at least goes hand-in-hand with a lot of pub punch-ups, casual sex, vandalism, hedonism and general non-attachment to any serious moves to confront the real problems of the adult world.

The contrast is all the more remarkable in my own village given the range of voluntary organisations that flourish. With a population of 4,000 we have nearly 80! They include the usual sports clubs, but apart from them the age divide is manifest; hardly anyone under 40 will be seen at meetings for charities or for serious social concerns. I rather wonder whether any former generation of youngsters has been so distinctly aloof and non-involved in the general stream of affairs as our youngsters are today.

ONE REASON FOR THIS is surely the general drift of the centralised political process. We have a monster school for older children in the village; it is not run by our Parish Council but by a bureaucratic structure deriving its authority from the kingdom of Blair in London. Despite its excessive size its head, a man of talents and enterprise, made secret moves to get funding to make it even larger; this despite the ecological lunacy, the social devastation and the psychological disruption of daily bussing in from other areas of over 1,000 children! Attracted by skillfully promoted slightly higher exam result percentages, parents from Swindon and elsewhere seek admission for their kids here, to the general disregard of their own local facilities. The promotional talents for our school make no mention of the prevalence of the drug problem or that litter collection is inhibited by the danger of drug needles, nor that last year two of its pupils committed suicide. In opposing the move for enlargement at a public meeting I mentioned a report from the American conference on 'Youth in Crisis' which unanimously concluded that one of the main reasons for the general malaise of American youth lay in the fact that its schools are too large (available on the web at www.americanvalues.org). I was bawled down on this and generally made to feel I had been guilty of bad manners. So the decision was put in the hands of what was termed an 'independent adjudicator'. But who was he? Well, of course, another educational bureaucrat. So despite the opposition of both our elected village and Swindon councils the bureaucrats won.

Well, the youngsters are on the receiving end of all this official chicanery and the daily insulting intrusiveness into consciousness from TV, the tabloids, advertising and

CAUSE AND EFFECT

THE WORLD TODAY witnesses a great many efforts, by individuals or through organisations, to combat one effect or another of the global crisis; people devote their lives to 'peace' in a war-savaged world, to abolishing nuclear weapons, to saving energy, to 'fair trade', to 'making poverty history', to opposing GM crops, and to promoting organic food production, to cancer research, to ending the mass cruelty to animals in the quest for cheap food, to opposing the destruction of the rain forests, to name but a few of the areas of concern.

There is no need to question the merits of such concern, even if there is a disposition to promote remedies of a kind which merely enlarge or bypass the problem, rather than helping to resolve it; what needs focus is the need for a clear grasp of the distinction between the causes of the global crisis and its effect.

In nearly all cases we are grappling with the effects of the crisis, the effects of power being deployed in forms which are anti-democratic, anti-social and indeed anti-human. Knee-jerk reactions to one effect or another of the crisis are one thing, but the failure to recognise the basic cause of all these crisis factors is another and is the reason for the ineffectuality of so many good people in seeking to resolve them.

After generations of ardent pacifism and peace campaigning the war danger today is greater than ever, the rain-forests

continue to be destroyed despite the obvious perils of global warming, vehicle production continues to soar, extravagantly consumerist lifestyles continue to be promoted and all major economic activity continues to be based on an endless counter-productive concern for 'growth' regardless of the effects on society at large.

Boardroom Power

This is the cause of the crisis. Boardroom power, unelected unrepresentative, unbridled and unprincipled, now dominates global affairs; its grip on money, trade and the media enables it to promote its own consumer-expansionist values, to drive industrial operations to ever greater levels of suicidal insanity and, not least, to suborn nominally democratically elected political leaders to their purposes regardless of the interests of their electorates.

It is boardroom power which needs oil and which engenders wars to ensure supplies; it is the same power which has established control of nominally communist China, which is promoting a global energy crisis; a global armaments trade; debasing agriculture with chemicals and mass cruelty to livestock, wrecking farm finance with the pricing manipulations of monopolistic supermarket chains; and so on and so on.

This dominant and ever enlarging power is not only creating the global crisis but actively opposing and aborting all moves to counter the effects it is creating. It now bestrides the world like a colossus.

It is the failure to grasp the full nature of this largely hidden and secretive power which negates so much well intentioned attempts at reform. It is a failure to grasp that street campaigns, protests, petitions, mass demonstrations and the like achieve nothing if the object of the action is contrary to the concerns of boardroom power.

Electoral Casino

Today a mere handful of boardroom tycoons owns most of the main global media outlets, including newspapers and TV. Coupled with its grip on trade and finance it means politicians today can only compete for electoral votes on terms which do not conflict with boardroom power; if they choose to do so they are at once in peril, as Mrs Thatcher found to her cost when in her 19?? Bruges speech she opposed Britain's membership of a Federal European state. She was soon out of office and it is noteworthy that in a recent UK general election, despite the increasing hostility by a majority of the electorate to the entire EUropean project, a hostility which would have secured any of the three major parties an easy victory had it voiced it, none of them dared to make it an election issue. Their silence enabled a tiny and fairly new fringe party, avowedly aiming for UK independence from EUrope, to attract a significant margin of support even though all the heavy media guns were focussed on domestic issues as though the EUropean threat to British freedom and independence did not exist.

Public consciousness remains fixated on the validity of the existence of giant states and giant economic operations despite the lessons of history, despite two world wars and all the burgeoning factors of the pre-

vailing global crisis. The sheer impossibility of vibrant democratic government on mass terms is still not widely understood and the lesson of the failure of millions of people demonstrating opposition to the intended invasion of Iraq by marching in city streets to stop it, continues to be ignored.

We have yet to digest the imposing fact that in the modern world the direction of policy is no longer in the hands of electorates or their elected leaders. The leaders are in a casino between the boardroom boys and the voters, and since the boardroom controls the mass media it enables it to load the dice for its own purposes.

It is the existence of the mass itself and the centralised government controls which enables the free play of democracy to be aborted so decisively despite the regular totemistic exercise of mass elections.

When will we wake up? When will we face our real problems which centre on the curtailment and control of boardroom power and to secure the effective and untrammelled expression of democratic choice?

For nearly half a century we of the Fourth World have sought to indicate that the work of the late Leopold Kohr constitutes a signpost we ignore at our peril. It is a signpost indicating unmistakably that there are no global solutions to global problems – there are only local solutions – and it is the failure to exercise effective local control over local economic and political affairs which is creating the global crisis, for it is only on a local basis that an effective relationship between moral precept and practice in public affairs can be established.

All else is wind in the willows, for it is the absence of that relationship which is at the heart of the global crisis and only its

imagined her work could move people generations later in such physically improbable conditions? But that novel speaks of conditions of life, of relationships, of beliefs, assumptions, observances, habits and rituals that have utterly vanished. Yet she conveys unmistakably how rich and full life was for all classes, and we who live to make the contrast are left only with an awareness of the modern emptiness.

I HAD ANOTHER LETTER in *The Times* recently and my score now must be around ten or so. I mention it here not because of its content, which was short enough, ('Sir, Your front page headline today announces "Fight To Save Constitution After Dutch Vote 'Nee'." Who is fighting to save what for whom?' John Papworth, The Close, 26 High Street, Purton, SN5 4AE) but because of a far from insignificant change that followed, for the letters' page that day was the last on which the full address of the writers was given. The next issue of the paper merely indicated the name of a town and county under the signature. In making this change the paper foreswore one of its most distinctive aspects. Why is this worth comment? Because it virtually abolishes the identity of the writer, it is another stride towards depersonalised relationships and because it is a reduction of the power of the reader. If today we write to a published letter writer via *The Times* and the truncated address *The Times* will not forward it; the most they will do is, if you so request, inform the letter writer of your desire to make contact. Under the full address practice any amount of networking was possible, today almost none. Almost, but not quite none, for they are developing the practice of printing e-mail addresses. My informant at *The Times*

indicated that the reason for the change to truncated addresses is that the degree of unpleasant consequences that arose from publishing the full addresses was increasing considerably and they 'did not like taking responsibility for it! When I suggested giving readers the option about the matter I was assured this had been much discussed at length and that it was deemed impractical.

So we take another step towards the big brother depersonalised state with the abandonment of this long-standing (well over 100 years) networking possibility and its consequent reader disempowerment. Well, *The Times* is one of the big media heavies falling into line as might be expected, but what is one to say of all those 'alternative' magazines? I regularly receive nearly 30 from all over the world who continue to block such vital networking possibilities by using truncated addresses on readers' letters?

I HAVE STARTED a new village magazine and I call it *Purton Today*. I helped to restart an older one when its production team decided to pack it in, but some months after the restart a phone call informed me I was a rather disruptive influence and suggested, mellifluously mark you, that the Committee had had enough of my company and wouldn't it be better if ... and so on. Several times Committee members had asked in some exasperation, 'Why don't you start your own magazine?' But I think when in the event I did just that some of them were rather shocked. It was even suggested I had acted in a fit of pique and just run off 'like a spoilt child' to do so. Well, the fact is people do have their hobbies. Edward Heath spent fortunes in running a yacht, others go for racehorses or poker, so why not run a maga-

FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR



STANSTED AIRPORT is the epitome of the one-liner 'organisation is hell'.

Immense swarms of people, us, herding or queuing under a lofty plastic roof apparently the size of several football fields. Notice boards, screens, shops, cafes, access gates, luggage trolleys, loudspeaker announcements, movement and more movement of more and more people. We wait and wait, we queue; first a queue to book in and check in luggage, then queue for security check. Hand luggage, plus keys and small change through a scanning thing, then one is frisked, presumably for weapons, then queue to board. One has the sense that far from elevating us, modern technology rather brutally demeans and diminishes our humanity. Salzburg airport is a quite different experience; fewer people, faster functioning, less queuing. But then of course, it is smaller. On leaving for my return flight the security check was even more rigorous. A stout, officious, uniformed woman officer made me empty all my pockets. She stared at my belt buckle and told me to put my belt on the scanning tray too. 'But,' I protested in mock alarm, 'my trousers will fall down.' She gestured angrily to me to do as bid. Despite the speed we travel being faster than known to any former generation, no one

seems to have any time to spare, and airports are the last place to indulge in idle banter with officialdom. She then asked me how long I had stayed in the city and where I had stayed. The classic response to this sort of pointless cross examination is to enquire whether the questioner wants to know the name of one's grandmother's cook; but this female Stalin seemed to have scented blood and after she had made me twice step through another scanning device I surrendered into that state of spineless, dim-witted conformity that passes for freedom, democracy and the inoffensive pursuit of happiness on the basis of silence and unquestioning obedience that reassures the virulent spirit of suspicion in minor bureaucrats to achieve some sort of sedation.

IF YOU HAVE NEVER FLOWN you may suppose it to be an ultimate form of excitement and exhilaration; but it would be wise not to bank on it, for the end result of all experience gestated by technology seems to be merely tedium. At 30 or so thousand feet I finished reading George Eliot's *Adam Bede*. The mystery of life, that a century and a half ago a woman can pen a novel that can bring tears to the eyes of an old man in an aeroplane 30 thousand feet above mainland Europe. Could George Eliot have ever

affirmation and exercise can resolve it.

The problems relating to following the Kohr signpost are of course immense; how is local power to be enabled to function in terms of currency, taxation, police, hospitals and schools, the media, transport, trade and much else? Simply to pose the question is to be aware of the enormous gulf that exists between radical aspirations and the practi-

cal measures needed to achieve them. This is why we have sought through a series of Fourth World Assemblies, through Academic Inn discussions and Radical Consultations (Radcons) to promote focus on these vital questions, for without some answers that relate directly to prevailing crisis conditions we will never generate the steam needed to apply them. ■

THE EUROPE PLOT

IT IS ONE THING in a free country for a group of misguided citizens to band together with the avowed intention of persuading a majority of the rest that it would be a good thing for it to transfer its sovereignty to an assembly of like-minded countries into a collectivity run by a non-elected commission in another country.

Freedom means they would be free to promote their views, and the rest of us would be free to listen and to participate in a civilised debate on the matter.

In a free country they might labour ardently for many years to promote their view; perhaps before long groups would come together to support them with money, membership, campaigning zeal and so on, until at last they might win a majority to their cause, gain enough electoral victories for seats in parliament and proceed to legislate the sovereignty of their country into a united limbo elsewhere.

That, one might suppose, is what democracy is, the voice of the people expressing its wishes to ultimate effect in the top levels of government. That is what a free press is for, that is why elections are held and why those who win them gain

power to act in accordance with the mandate they have argued for at the hustings.

Given the enormity of the issues at stake, the transfer of a thousand-year-old sovereignty to an unelected body in another country and all that is involved, one might have expected just such a process to have engaged the attention of the electorate for many years, that every aspect of the change would be examined and discussed until no detail had failed to be subjected to a searchlight of citizen scrutiny.

In the case of EUROPE there has been not a whisper of any such process. No band of citizens has emerged to campaign for the abandonment of British sovereignty, not a single branch of any mass political party or trade union has called for it or campaigned for it, there have been no mass demonstrations in favour of it and the citizen voice in promoting it has been wholly remarkable for its absence.

Then how has it been able to proceed? The answer is simple, by secrecy, deceit and chicanery, by silence or evasion on key issues, by the abuse of power at the centre and by using centrally controlled media outlets, especially TV to project a distorted and one-sided picture of the realities, and

not least by the deployment of huge sums of taxpayers' money to swamp media channels with EUro propaganda.

Despite all this massive one-sided boosting by top political leaders, despite massive tabloid and TV pressure, the French and the Dutch electorates – the first to be able to register their views – have flatly rejected it.

What we are witnessing is a play of forces demonstrating that a mass democracy is an impossibility, that on a mass basis power is deployed not by the citizen

but by central controlling forces, forces which have their own boardroom-controlled agenda they are determined to impose. On the rare occasions when the electorate have any chance of registering their views, they do not hesitate to reject the entire package once they grasp what is involved.

What is missing here, as the central powers deploy their force with Lady Macbeth's insouciance

'What need we fear

When none can call our power to account.'

Quotes

Burke rightly described society as a partnership between those living, those who are dead, and those who are yet to be born: implying thereby that those who repudiate the dead and discount their claims on us repudiate also, in that very act, their unborn successors. Their lives are lived for the present only, and just as they lay waste the accumulated wealth and wisdom of former generations, so they mortgage the entire future of their country, in the interests of policies that have no foundation other than ideology. In short, the totalitarian project leads not only to the disestablishment of the dead, but also to the disenfranchisement of the unborn. The very philosophy which tells us to march into the future, consumes the future in the fires of its present emergency,

The supreme evil of modern industrial society is not poverty. It is the absence of liberty, i.e. of the opportunity of self-direction: and for controlling the material conditions of a man's life. This produces poverty, because it produces hopelessness, irresponsibility, recklessness. 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 depends, that is set them free.

The fundamental idea of Liberty is Power. Power to control the condition of one's own life. Whether this [is] thought of as a removal of restrictions imposed by the state and minor sanction (individualism) or as the imposition of restrictions (collectivism) is a matter depending on the economic and political circumstances of periods and classes of people. It took men 150 years and two revolutions to arrive at some working conception of religious liberty. It may take us as long to work out our idea of economic liberty.

R H Tawney

empowerment. So let us have a global campaign for people's empowerment as a meaningful political objective, one in which people control their own destinies in their own localised communities across the world.

This is the real radical challenge of our time. Everybody and anybody who feels remotely concerned with the global crisis

needs to ask, 'What am I doing to raise consciousness among my neighbours in my local community about the dangers looming up'? About the bogusness of 'democracy' on a mass basis which effectively disempowers us and makes us helpless to combat the evils the power-mongers are promoting? ■

SELF-GOVERNING NEIGHBOURHOODS

I used to be bewildered by the validity or otherwise of arguments about politics or economics. It seemed to me that any proposition could be proved, even if it contradicted another equally proven.

I found a way out of this maze by always applying a proposition to the workings of my local neighbourhood on the assumption that it had the power to be self-governing.

For example, if somebody advanced all the arguments to prove motorways were necessary, efficient, economic and so on, I would ask myself whether my neighbours would spend our local currency on one – ditto with nuclear power stations, newspapers full of consumerist propaganda and TV full of moronism. Abstract arguments about economic matters suddenly became translucent. Would we vote to do away with our local shops and shopkeepers in favour of a giant multinational supermarket in the next neighbourhood but seven? Would we watch our neighbours lead bleak lives because they were 'unemployed', when all we had to do was to print a little more of our money to set them to work on schemes which would improve neighbourhood facilities? If this caused modest neighbourhood inflation, would we not tax our better-off neighbours a bit more and make other minor adjustments? A lot of little inflationary ripples are easily managed, whereas giant national tidal waves, of inflation cause untold havoc.

Medieval city states did just this and as a result they are still among the most beautiful urban centres on earth.

John Papworth

This concept stays in my head every time I read my morning newspaper.

With acknowledgements to Seize The Day, 366 Tips for Living, edited by Stephanie Wienrich & Nicholas Albery

mulate the questions. The booklet ends by asking 'do we reform the global strategies where democracy on the global level is not (yet?) feasible?' 'Do we need a global Truth and Reconciliation Commission to restore mutual trust?' and 'How do we build and sustain a strategy and coalition capable of implementing the reforms needed to protect our global diversity?'

It will be noted there is no reference here to the power of the people to achieve control over their own lives, no reference to the fact that global affairs are effectively in the hands of huge boardroom agglomerates, the members of which are elected by themselves and their fellow shareholders, no reference to the extent to which their major weapon – the media – is effectively in the hands of five such global groupings. No reference to the nose-on-your-face fact that the global crisis is the work of these globalised forces, answerable to no popular tribune whatsoever, and whose power is so omnipotent as to make them effective masters of any leaders that emerge from the general franchise. These vast, unelected powers are destroying the environment; destroying our prospects of peace with their armaments industry; destroying finite resources such as oil at an accelerating rate which can only bring civilisation to its knees; and destroying our own local community structures through supermarket chains and the incessant war on consciousness they are waging with the non-stop consumerist propaganda of advertising. Nor is there any reference to the fact that all the major religions of the world have vast hierarchies of priestly concern who have been raising the moral issues voiced in these questions for many centuries; no recognition of the struggle of Green move-

ments for more than half a century to win recognition of the perils our boardroom culture is creating and not a hint of a suggestion on how the power of the boardroom boys can be dissolved into local community hands before that power accomplishes its own global nemesis of all that decent people down the ages have sought to achieve. What we have here is a pedestrian lack of intellectual integrity masquerading as a moral renaissance.

Water not being the only element that is able to find its own level, we must expect this kind of pretentious poppy-cock to attract a fair amount of attention from those kindred souls who appear to believe that the world can be saved by international conferences of the good, the great and the gullible, especially as the kind of crisis confronting us must be expected to promote such knee-jerk reactions as a matter of course.

The first requirement for a 'reform of the global strategy' is some bedrock intellectual integrity such as Leopold Kohr provided over half a century ago. He didn't waste time dwelling on the moral beauties of a 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission to restore mutual trust'. He urged that if you wanted society to avoid the evils of giant wars, economic excess and collapse the first need is to achieve control of society. To do that, it was his life message to urge that it was only possible by a deliberate restoration of the human scale, the adoption of smaller units which were controllable and controlled by local people and responsive to their moral promptings to a degree no mass giant structure could ever hope to be.

So if there is to be any moral renaissance it will emerge from human scale societies in which people have learned such societies are the urgent prerequisite to their own

STALIN'S REVENGE

American agriculture increasingly resembles a Soviet failure

George Pyle

The author is an editorial writer for the Salt Lake Tribune.

WHEN THEY DECIDE to build a Cold War Memorial in Washington DC, leave a spot for the American farmer.

No political ideology or economic system can succeed if it cannot feed its people. And one of the largest contrasts between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War was the success of American farming and the failure of Soviet agriculture.

Our independent farmers thrived during this period, while the Soviet farm-workers were little better off than czarist serfs, with no ability to make planting decisions, no motivation to improvise or even succeed. Indeed, in 1972, in tacit acknowledgement of their agricultural system's failure, the Russians sought to buy wheat from the American farmers.

If Stalin could see American agriculture today, he'd assume his forced collectivisation had caught on. Like its Soviet predecessor, modern American farming is characterised by centralisation; an absence of open markets; decision-making by distant officials; and growing techniques that poison and exhaust the land.

Take the example of the modern chicken farmer. This year, 42.5 billion pounds of

chicken will be raised in America by contract growers, using a system that starts with the chicken and not the egg. The only eggs a chicken farmer sees are in the supermarket. What he does see are truckloads of baby chicks that pull up to his built-to-corporate-specifications barn, the one he went a half-million dollars into debt to buy. Ninety days later, more trucks come to take the slaughter-weight broilers away for processing.

Because the processing firm owns the birds – as many as 90,000 of them in one barn – they impose myriad rules. The chickens, for example, can only be fed a particular kind of feed, one usually purchased from the processing firm. If disease or a heat wave wipes out the flock, there's no pay for the grower. He has little to gain and everything to lose.

Ninety-five percent of the chickens Americans eat are raised this way, by growers under contract. Many economists argue that a four-firm concentration of even 40% of a market effectively gives those four the power to set a commodity's price. And 50% of those chickens belong, from egg to supermarket, to one of four food giants. For the contract grower it means all the processing firms pay almost exactly the same price.

There's no incentive to improvise or raise healthier chickens to fetch a higher price – indeed, there are penalties. The market is locked up and these farmers are locked in. In the beef and pork business it's worse, with four firms controlling 84% and 64%, respectively, of those two markets.

Like Soviet collectivism, American agricultural monopolism is justified by one word: efficiency. And like loyal Communist Party members, we sit still while corporate agriculture justifies its control of food production by promising a quality product at the lowest possible cost.

Lowest cost to the corporations, yes. But what isn't factored in is \$200 million Americans spend yearly to treat water polluted by runoff from animal wastes and

crop fertiliser. Or annual obesity-related healthcare costs the Centres for Disease Control estimates at \$117 billion, thanks, in part, to corn fed, fatty food. Or what happens when rural communities, newly devoid of independent farms, die off.

Stalin is reputed to have said that the death of one man is a tragedy, while the death of millions is a statistic. The loss of one independent farmer is a statistic. The loss of millions of them is an ecological, social, and economic disaster. ■

Adapted from *Raising Less Corn, More Hell*, published in June by Public Affairs, a member of the Perseus Books Group. With acknowledgements to Orion.

Quotes

I passionately believe that the human spirit has a profound need for a sense of belonging and community. That quest for identity, something that is intrinsically of a human scale, is bound intimately to that which we build. The depressing spectacle of soulless housing estates, windswept industrial 'parks' and bland shopping malls both corrodes the human spirit and diminishes the natural environment.

In my travels around the country it has become more and more apparent to me that when people feel excluded from their community and unable to make a contribution, the whole fabric of those communities is at serious risk. When that fabric starts to disintegrate then we all suffer – whatever our position. It seems to me the best way of starting to tackle the problems is to provide practical help which will encourage people to do something for themselves to regain their self-belief and once again feel part of the community.

The Prince of Wales

threaten nothing or nobody except, if they but knew it, the masses themselves, and as such is an ultra-ripe candidate for funding from that major institutional seedbed of democratic corruption, the European Union, or even perhaps from that equally energetic love-nest of self-enrichment, the United Nations.

Apart from projecting another talking shop, what on earth are these people talking about? Granted all the concern for environmental and other crisis problems, there is not a breath of a whisper of the fundamental problem of the age, how to revitalise local community power as the only feasible answer to the monstrous sweep of boardroom power that now has human destiny in its claws.

Do these beautiful World Future dreamers suppose for one moment that the boardroom brigands are going to listen to them? The only answer to the abuse of power the power mongers are perpetrating is a countervailing power; but far from organising localised opposition to the centralised powers that are currently running and ruining the world, our world changers are seeking to join them. What is afoot here is a fatuous, top-down attempt to hijack the radical agenda.

It might be wise not to underrate the organisational skills at work. Our friend has already set up his own 'Alternative Nobel Prize' scheme, which ensures that each year some names of grateful recipients (tree huggers in India, anti-gold mining organisers in Turkey, rainforest protectors in Latin America, etc.), who achieve brief global prominence from his 'award' are added to his army of grateful admirers. For this Jacob's ladder the sky of international stage strutting is clearly the goal, he obviously loves to be prominently in the swim, even if

he is happiest when confining himself to the shallow end. If enough people fall for this latest endeavour he is clearly in line to become some sort of global president of a structure of his own creation.

What is clear is that however many conferences give him a standing ovation in reward for funding the global jetting and five-star hospitality of the great, the good and the wise, not a single oil well will cease to function, not a single automobile will cease to roll off the production line and not a single African child will be comforted with any morsel of badly needed food or any drop of clean water.

Why do people want to achieve global prominence by organising diversionary short cuts to global problems which lead nowhere? One Austrian school suggests that such untoward adult behaviour of this attention-seeking character has its origins in childhood traumas related to infant bed-wetting. However that may be, the defect in this emphatic top-down approach and general lapse into 21st century totalitarian Fabianism is a failure to recognise there are no global answers to the problems that plague us. None at all. However global their dimension and effects the solutions can only be local because it is the institutional disempowerment of the local which has created the global crisis. So the funding, the organising, the objectives and the inspiration can only be local. All else is hogwash and wind in the willows, cosmetic politics designed not to solve the problems but to attract the gullible and enable them to feel they are in the swim of do-goodism without actually being involved in doing anything.

This exercise in self-promoting political adventurism will find no answers to the global crisis because it does not begin to for-

umph from exile to what became an independent Zambia. He was in turn government adviser, cabinet minister and supporter of new movements to counter the government corruption he was witnessing.

Despite a shift of views to embrace market disciplines rather than socialism, still his earlier socialist credo gripped his appraisal. He swallowed completely the very existence of 'Zambia', giving no ground that it was essentially a colonial creation, as are indeed most of the other 'countries' of the continent, believing 'tribalism' was some sort of outdated evil, far from being the African way of expressing African political realities as it had prevailed from the times of the Egyptian Pharaohs.

He was and appears to remain blind to the transient and unworkable nature of the political forces colonialism has created. Zambian independence was ushered in under the presidency of Kenneth Kaunda, who, like Simon Zukas himself, was one of nature's gentlemen. But Kaunda, despite his Gandhian gentleness and moral integrity, found himself impelled to introduce the humbug of 'one party participatory democracy' simply to hold the country together after the collapse of copper prices, its financial mainstay.

In due course, after 27 years in office, Kaunda was voted out, to be replaced by a crook who, when he in turn was ousted, was investigated concerning the embezzlement of around \$100 million from government funds. The author served under him as a cabinet minister promoting free market policies, for by now he had become opposed to nationalisation, but ends his account with this unconsciously essentially defeatist credo: 'Given a period of decent government, we can diversify our economy

and, with good leadership and hard work, our people can be led back to prosperity.'

Tell it to the marines, Simon.

SHAPING OUR FUTURE, CREATING THE WORLD FUTURE COUNCIL, by Jakob von Uexküll & Herbert Girardet. GREEN BOOKS, 2005, £5.00, ISBN 1-903998-65-4

Reviewed by John Papworth

SO we are going to have a grand World Council of the good, the wise, the independent, the learned, the spiritual and the loving, 100 of them, who will deliberate on our major problems and decide about the future of the planet, and all presided over by that eminent scholar, philosopher, futurist, thinker and organising genius, Mr Jakob von Uexküll. What more could anyone possibly want?

It seems our current world changers, despite living in this age of democratic enlightenment, are planning a programme that will inspire and uplift the multitudes; they, in their turn, will gratefully give freely of their pennies, cents, pfennigs and other minor coin which, collectively, will enable the beautiful members of the World Council to jet around the world to attend those ever-so-vital and urgently needed conferences, with their workshops and plenary sessions, their passionate oratory, their thunderous bouts of applause, and even their standing ovations for those whose genius has enabled them all to come together and arranged who will foot the bill.

But the multitudes are not being addressed at all. The descriptive booklet is brutally frank: 'After a 3-5 year initial phase the World Future Council will become a key part of the global governance structure, able to attract major institutional funding'. Of course it will. This is another manipulative exercise of the masses which will

RUNNING OUT OF FOIL...

Kirkpatrick Sale

Hudson Valley, 2034, New York State, USA

IHAVE found an old typewriter, vintage 1950 I'd say, but without a ribbon and of course there are none to be had around here anywhere, not even at the dump, which is our main supply house these days – I guess the Machines that ran everything before the Collapse didn't need any.

So I came upon this roll of aluminum foil, Reynolds Wrap, 50 square feet originally but down to probably half of that now, and I can just feed it into the typewriter. I'll type on to that, and you can read the impressions and copy it on to whatever you're putting out a magazine with these days.

I'm going through all this trouble because it is important that you get the word out about the real reasons for the Collapse. There's a lot of silly theories going around, and because it happened when there was no global or even national communication networks still working many people cling to them.

A lot of people where I am, back East, for example, really believe that it was caused by an alien invasion, creatures from an Alpha Centauri planet, or Mars, descending en masse to find a new home. Who else, after all, would be powerful enough to overthrow the Machine Empire, which by 2035 had amassed the greatest firepower the world had ever known and had the whole global population of 12 million people in its unrelenting grip? Of

course no one has ever seen any of these aliens, though there are enough mutants and freaks around, survivors of the resurgent diseases that washed over the world in the last years of the Empire, that one might be convinced they are Martians and such.

And then there are the people who think that the Collapse was caused by the Great Flood, when global warming reached the point where the major ice sheets of South America melted into the ocean and the sea level rose 132 feet. That did wipe out a lot of people, true, and coastlines everywhere moved in hundreds of miles and thousands of cities were inundated (though many people over the 11th floor in most buildings in the big cities survived and escaped by boat). But that only served to halve the world's population, making control of the rest easier, and the Machines themselves had long ago been bunkered in safe and waterproof places where the rising seas could not affect them.

Another popular theory around here is that the rebel militias, which had cropped up everywhere in the final years and were increasingly well-armed with nukes, were finally successful. I was in one such group, operating in the Appalachias, and we had plenty of successes in wiping out this Machine centre or that, but I can tell you we never came close to making much of a dent in the Machines' power and we never could penetrate any of the half-dozen command centres on this continent where we knew

the crucial Machine systems were based. I of course don't know how militias on other continents fared, since global communications (except of course for the Machines' own systems) ceased well before the collapse, but I have no reason to think they were any more successful than we were here.

No, it happens that none of these theories – and plenty more based on the multiple disasters that accompanied the last crumbling years of the Empire – has any foundation whatsoever. The disasters – resurgent diseases, epidemics, polluted air and water, global warming and freezing, loss of the ozone layer, it goes on and on – were real enough, but they were the symptoms of the eventual Collapse, not the cause of it.

The cause of it was the Machines themselves.

When the supercomputers slipped from the grasp of the scientists and programmers around 2020 and somehow managed to set up a communication system among themselves, humans shortly became superfluous. Not only that, but expendable also. We had made the Machines so powerful and so ubiquitous in every phase of society and government that they literally controlled our lives, so when they managed to interconnect they were in command of every technical system and operation in the world. The Machines had control over all communications, including worldwide webs and all telephone circuits, over all munitions systems and the missiles and planes to deliver them, over all transportation including highways and the automatic vehicles linked up with them, over biotech foods and the industrialised farms, over all commerce and banking, over most gradeschool and all uni-

versity education and research, over most energy sources and refineries and electric grids – in short, over all human lives that had become integrated with modern technology at its most potent and pervasive, which is to say 90% of the world.

At first, when the great linkup occurred, no one seemed to mind very much and life went on pretty much as before, except that the Machines decided to put an end to war and dismantle all nuclear weapons, because that was the one technology that might destroy them if it was unleashed during a major conflict or if it somehow got into the wrong hands. Politics, too, at all levels slowly withered and in most places eventually disappeared when it became clear that legislatures and executives had no influence whatever on the Machines' decisions – not that many people minded its absence. The Machine regime was relatively popular, especially in the most technologically advanced societies, since most of life went on as before and, as they say at the baccarat tables, 'No decisions are necessary.' It wasn't until perhaps two or three years into the Machine Empire that some few people began to chafe at the relentless uniformity of the bread-and-circus life we were leading and at the total inability of humans to have any say in what went on in the world. Some people like the rebels, who did what they could until it became obvious to most of us that we were only self-indulgent protesters, like the anti-globalists who made themselves feel good but who didn't really effect change.

It might have gone on this way forever, despite the accumulating natural disasters over which the Machines had no control. *But the Machines began to disagree among themselves.* Of course we didn't know this at

Without realising, or even perhaps considering, it he had a choice: to help Africans to restore their ancient tribal customs, cultures and identities, which colonialism had so rudely ignored or suppressed, or to follow the colonial pattern of centralised government control of local life on a mass basis regardless of local tribal feelings and affinities. Like me, (for I also knew no better at the time), he chose the colonial pattern, so in the event, after all the struggles, the ordinary African saw no essential change in the distribution of power with 'independence'; it was simply that with independence and 'freedom', he now had a black boss instead of a white one. Because the scale of operations was non-local and enormous, he had no more control over his black bosses than white people had over their white ones. This happened in Zambia and all over colonial Africa; the consequences, in terms of bloodshed, impoverishment, tyranny and loss of life, is not only beyond compute, but continues to this day at an accelerating rate. European and American liberals need to recognise that not only are their oxymoronic concepts of mass democracy bogus, but that to use what power they have to import them to other countries simply multiplies problems rather than solving them.

Nevertheless this book describes the well-meaning, idealistic and utterly selfless and decent attempt this formerly stateless Lithuanian's made to do just that. He endured eight month's imprisonment in a Northern Rhodesian jail in his campaigning days, marked down as a dangerous and disruptive influence, before being exiled to Britain for several years.

But his efforts to achieve justice for African people helped to bear fruit. The whites in the area, in an attempt to preserve

their privileged position, cooked up a 'Federation of North and South Rhodesia and Nyasaland', and Simon Zukas's clear analytical gifts and campaigning skills played their part in its demise, which of course was why he was imprisoned and deported.

What brought the hated Federation down was not only African militant hostility and the efforts of white sympathisers such as the author of this engrossing account, but the loss of nerve of the British Colonial Office, (or was it a simple recognition of the inevitability of African self-rule?). Indeed, it would be interesting to know at what stage the Colonial Office loss of nerve occurred, for in retrospect it rather seems that the liberation movements in the African colonies, as well as the Movement For Colonial Freedom in London, were really pushing at an open door and that the colonial power was preparing to scuttle out of Africa as fast as it could go.


I have an abiding memory of a visit to what was called Leopoldville shortly after the Belgians had suddenly pulled out of a colony about 20 times larger than their own country. The main street was eerily empty, and in the shut-down cafés the chairs were visible through plate-glass windows, neatly stacked on tables as their owners had left them and before the looters moved in. Since those days of 'the wind of change' Africa has been through 186 coups, 26 wars and suffered over seven million dead.

The author is very much a product of his time, a one-time communist sympathiser, a believer in socialism, freedom and racial equality, gifted with a deep sense of justice, idealism and considerable analytical skills, as well as being a first class engineer. He followed the path of the left-wing forces of his time, and in time, returned in tri-

research and development'? Blair, like Gordon Brown, the British Airports Authority and most Tories, seem to think we can import food via air and lorry forever. Like anthroposophists everywhere they divorce economics from ecology. Unfortunately Tudge, himself a keen jetter, skirts the climate damage of air travel and food miles. Moreover, he should say more about government plans, unopposed by Me-Too opposition, to cover precious remaining hinterland with houses and runways. If our children are to have a future, we need militant preservation of the hinterland around our settlements, upon which we depend for local food, woodlands, water, and recreation.

Notably missing is an unambiguous endorsement of sustainable organic family farms, holdings, allotments, and gardens, and Tudge is ultimately ambivalent about the value of organic small-scale family farms. Small and medium-sized organic farming, like the Prince of Wales' Highgrove home farm and Newfields Organics in Fadmoor, is surely a necessary step to sustainable partial self-sufficiency, a means whereby we preserve soil, woodland, wildlife and water for the future.

INTO EXILE AND BACK, by Simon Zukas. BOOKWORLD PUBLISHERS, Box 32581, Lusaka, Zambia, 2002. ISBN 9982 24 020 X

 *Reviewed by John Papworth*

A BEGUILING if somewhat sketchy account of one man's odyssey through some of the turmoil of the winding down of Britain's huge colonial empire in the aftermath of the Second World War. A wartime spell in African regiments operating in several African colonial territories opened his eyes to the realities of colonial rule, and

opened his heart to the cause of African liberation. A student spell in Cape Town for an engineering degree saw him active in (largely communist) student politics, with which he sympathised 'despite my misgivings about Stalin and the Soviet Union'.

It is instructive to compare the preoccupation of radical reformers then and those prevailing today. The end of the Churchill war saw a Labour Government in overwhelming majority power for the first time. There was a clear chasm between Tory Right and Labour Left, and the Left was itself a spectrum ranging from Marxist Stalinist Communism to the milk and water socialism of the Labour 'Right'.

The Labour Party was imbued with a conviction that socialism meant the national ownership and administration of public services, as distinct from the wicked Tories who believed in private ownership.

How easy it is to be wise after the event? Not a hint in this highly political account, reflecting very much the prevailing progressive assumptions, of the least concern for the impact of industrialisation on the environment, of the rundown of finite resources, the way nationalisation destroyed local government and undermined local community life and didn't work anyway. All this was in the future, as was the realisation that giant centralised governments, especially of empires, destroyed historic tribal relationships and ancient cultural complexes which had proved their worth over generations in ensuring human survival and development. The author is, or rather was, an old-fashioned left-wing socialist who rightly saw that the colour bar was an inexcusable expression of human prejudice and an affront to any decent social order.

first, since the Machines didn't communicate much with humans except through their controlled media. But it soon became evident that a constant throughput of the same information so as to have the same results and the same behavior produced algorithms that just fed on themselves and had no good way, most of the time, of processing additional outside information, often not even when it was supplied by other Machines. Some Machines, however, had all along been programmed exactly to measure change and adopt new processes that would adjust the Empire to them – weather sensors, for example, and electric grids – and they kept feeding new information into the system. But they were generally ignored.

The result was that after a few years the Machines were at odds with each other. The weather Machines, for example, tried to warn the rest of the Machines that severe weather caused by global warming and ozone loss was increasing the number of earthquakes exponentially – and earthquakes were one of those natural systems that could do severe damage to the large majority of machines, even those bunkered – but the Machines that might have done something about global warming had been programmed not to pay any attention to it because that was just the normal state of affairs when they were created. Not only did the majority of the non-weather Machines never receive this information but the few that did and might have adjusted were incapable of doing so. Thousands of Machines sent millions of

warnings, complete with computer models that predicted disastrous earthquake cycles in the near future, but most of the Machines were in a never-receive or never-change mode and nothing was done.

The earthquakes that came in 2034 were like nothing seen before and literally tore up the earth over 60 per cent of its surface, accompanied by tsunamis and tidal waves that engulfed large parts of every continent. After two weeks of the most intense convulsions and shocks, an eerie quiet settled in – and it was then that we realised *nothing* was working. The whole mechanical world had come to an end. The Machines stopped working. The Empire was over.

Those of us who survived the Collapse, and who knew enough to go on surviving by adopting, or in some cases inventing, primitive skills have been remarkably successful in keeping human life going at an appropriate scale and pace. I have no way of knowing how many people are alive at present around the globe, but if it is anything like it is here in the Hudson Valley, where we are down to maybe 5,000 people, there can't be more than a couple of million. At last the human species has taken its place as just another species on the earth. We are living as we once did, a million years ago, and should have lived all along.

I write this so that once it is published and distributed, everyone will know. And they will vow to never go again down the path of mechanical technology in which the human is subsumed by the technological, and the Machines take over. I trust.

I have run out of foil.

The regeneration of Russia will only come through its villages.

Solzhenizytn

ALL QUIET ON THE LOCAL FRONT

William Shepherd

ONE OF THE MORE damaging half-truths of our age is that because a problem is big the solution must be big. This is true as far as it goes. But it does not go far enough.

The question is how you counter the bigness. In Japanese *Aikido* for instance you use your opponent's weight and momentum to your advantage. Dealing with bigness means wrestling with a world of very big problems. 'When something is wrong, something is too big,' to quote Leopold Kohr. But how? There are many ways.

■ The big problem can be broken down into all its *problem* parts and solved one by one. This might work. You are hollowing out the structure from the inside until the whole edifice tumbles. *Government* leans towards this approach. Government is first put under pressure to do something so they do anything. Not for them the Ronald Reagan quip: 'Don't just do something, stand there!' But eventually doing something turns out to be inadequate so further pressure is put on Government to solve the problem too.

■ The alternative movement's slogan '*think globally, act locally*' is another approach. The wisdom of this is that it recognises that the big problem is actually an arithmetic sum of myriads of little problems of an essentially similar nature. Sometimes this is so. Where it is, think globally, act locally works very well.

■ A third approach, which also comes from within the alternative movement, reverses the slogan from 'think globally, act locally' to 'think locally, act globally'. The giant financial and trading collectives such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trading Organisation also approach things in this manner. These financial global institutions are unashamedly 'top-down' in that they work with a global theory such as orthodox economics – often either wrong or self-serving to the wealth and power elites – and then impose the rules they derive from this theory locally. Jakob von Uexkull, a *Topsider*, to use J.B.Priestley's expression, sees things in these terms in proposing his World Parliament. His approach is deceptive because it gives the illusion of being 'bottom-up' by seeking to gather together common denominators from the local level and addressing them at the global level. But, as Anton Pinschof has pointed out, he 'ceases to be so when organising private secretariats and prizes and councils, far away from here, wherever here is, always only identifying the visible elite, like adolescents do, and ignoring the underlying immanent dynamics of human life'. Nowadays almost all centralised organisations pay lip service to the grass-roots and to addressing democratic deficits. The devil is in the democratic detail and the small print really matters. It is

BOOKS

SHAMANIC WARRIORS NOW POETS, edited by J N Reilly & Ira Cohen. R&R PUBLISHING, Glasgow. £30 ISBN: 0-9534280-1-X

 Reviewed (well, sort of) by John Papworth


THEY sent me this 400-page, beautifully bound book of poems, paintings and prose to review, and they even sent a review along with it with a request to print it. The fact is, I find most of the poetry incomprehensible and the review an incomprehensible description of the incomprehensible, so what to do? If I write about the poetry as though I do understand it I may end up being even more incomprehensible myself. On the other hand this may be a tome full of verses and concepts which will ring down the ages and mark my failure to comprehend as the reaction of some flat out philistine whose lack of imaginative response is due to a dim-witted inability to grasp the essence of greatness when he is greeted by it (the editor, whom I have never met, sends it inscribed 'For J.P. with love and dreams'). I mean dammit, the ball is hard enough to hit at all anyway. So I can only tell you that I will send a copy of his review to anyone applying and to select here one short poem from the hundreds in the volume.

Khezir's Gift

To me
the hemp beaten man
the man who harnesses lines
illumination.
standing here
stringing words
in the centre of the golden stream
always at the axis of the worktable.
My eyebrows scribbling away.

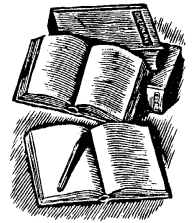
Florian Vetsch

SO SHALL WE REAP, by Colin Tudge. THE PENGUIN PRESS, 2003. ISBN 0 713 99640 4.

 Reviewed by Edward P. Echlin

THERE is little new in this otherwise convincing indictment of globalised industrial agribusiness. Tudge advocates regional partial self-sufficiency in food. 'It makes sense on all levels – ecological, nutritional, gastronomic, financial, social and strategic – for almost all countries in the world to become self-reliant in food.' He thinks even the UK could be easily self-sufficient.

But how does sufficiency square with Tony Blair's dismissal of farmers as 'only 5%' and his advocacy of transferring subsidies to 'science and technology and



SMALL IS INTERESTING

A journal that stands up for the little guy everywhere

The word 'unconventional' gets thrown around quite carelessly these days, generally being used to describe the most recent reincarnation of the same old stuff. But if you're seeking genuine 'unconventionality' – ideas that bravely challenge the economic, social and cultural assumptions of our time – let me introduce you to *Fourth World Review* and its charming, feisty proprietor John Papworth.

A quick biographical sketch of the Revd Papworth will convince you that this magazine couldn't be ordinary even if it wanted to. Raised in an English orphanage, Papworth attended the prestigious London School of Economics where he was groomed for a career in politics. He stood for Parliament as a Labour candidate in 1955 and did well enough to earn the promise of a safe seat in future elections. But the hierarchical leanings of the party began to alienate him, and he traded the corridors of power for a different kind of politics. In 1955 he founded *Resurgence* magazine as a voice for England's burgeoning alternative movement and convinced a respected but hardly well known economist E.F. Schumacher to write a column. These musings turned out to be a rough draft of the international bestseller *Small is Beautiful*.

In the early 1970s he moved to Zambia to become a special advisor to President Kenneth Kaunda (who once rented a room from Papworth while a student in London), which was where he was ordained an Anglican priest. Upon returning to England, he launched this journal to stand up for what he calls the Fourth World – 'Small Nations, Small Communities, Small Farms, Small Shops ... & the Inalienable Sovereignty of the Human Spirit, as it announces on the cover of each issue.

A slim publication with a homemade look, *Fourth World Review* is nonetheless fearless in going after globalisation, multinational corporations, Tony Blair, the EU, US foreign policy, chain stores and anything else seen as disrupting common people's abilities to ensure that life in their local communities remains *vita*. Papworth's sly sense of humour and elegant command of the English language prevents the magazine from becoming either shrill or dreary. He's careful to balance the critique of what's going wrong in the world with a celebration of what's great about life in neighbourhoods and villages everywhere (I recommend all bloggers study his *Fourth World Spectator* column for tips on writing personal commentary that is both full of both passionate opinion and high spirits.)

Each issue of the magazine is rounded out by dispatches from fellow Fourth World travellers across the globe and a comprehensive book review section, offering us attractive glimpses of what human-scaled alternatives to globalisation look like.

Jay Walljasper

*With acknowledgements to ODE, an international news journal for the creativity of mankind.
USA LLC, Puneet Ahluwalia, 8300 Arlington Boulevard #D3, Fairfax, VA 22031, USA*

How
others
see us

often quite edifying to go through a constitution or a treaty and put a 'no' or a 'not' into each clause and then ask yourself what the two versions mean. The structure of the power relationships and the direction of the power flow matters. Power only flows one way at a time and the patterns formed by these flows are the real giveaway. Does power flow to and from the centre or does it flow within and around the periphery? Is subsidiarity real?

■ A fourth approach is to identify the root cause of the problem, the driving force behind its growth, and seek to do something about that. One example is John Papworth's analysis (see *Small is Powerful*, Adamantine, London, 1995) where scale itself is the needle in the haystack. Another is Tom Greco's analysis (*Money: Understanding and Creating Alternatives to Legal Tender*, Chelsea Green, Vermont, 2001) where the growth imperative comes from a specific defect in the debt-usury mechanism. The response to a fourth way analysis is usually to fix the problem. John Papworth calls for a return to the human scale in human affairs, for instance. Tom Greco has chosen to campaign for local currencies.

■ The anarchist tradition represents a fifth option. There is a valid approach captured in the idea that the best government is the least government, and John Stuart Mill's liberalism was grounded on similar principles. Unfortunately, the anarchist analysis provides a rather partial view of the real world and is based on an 18th century assumption about the relative power of government and the absence of any equivalent organised countervailing power. Adam Smith was much less sanguine, understanding the power that the East India Company was capable of wielding both for and

against governments. Until the anarchist analysis is extended to embrace the other power centres in modern life, such as the money power, the war business and the global corporations, it will remain irrelevant. However, Peter Kropotkin plus John Papworth plus Tom Greco provide a promising avenue for young political philosophers. John Bunzl's *Simultaneous Policy* proposals ('I will agree if everybody else agrees') on specifics such as nuclear weapons also fits this category. Whatever the merit of any specific proposal, they are designed for adoption at national and multinational levels. This is not entirely true as there are some suggestions about targeting political parties. The potential behaviour of individual voters could then get interesting.

■ There is a sixth approach which lies at the heart of the radical tradition. The focus of this approach is the little individual thinking for himself – although not by himself. The Jewish tradition can be regarded in this light. John Wesley was one of its proponents. Tom Paine's writings also point in this direction. Anybody who makes the personal political and publicly displays their lifestyle is unwittingly supporting this sixth way. Doing this in the suburbs, as in the BBC sitcom *The Good Life* or scriptwriting for a middle class audience such as BBC Radio 4's soap *The Archers*, can have long-reaching effects on society and its mores and taboos. One interesting modern re-statement of the sixth way is John Seymour's Call to Arms. His Knights of Gaia approach is vintage Seymour – but also vintage Wesley and indeed characteristic of most successful people's movements. This is also the way behind Anton Pinschof's call for the opening of a Local Front.

But I share James Robertson's view as first presented 25 years ago in *The Sane Alternative* that the more fronts the merrier. Let's proliferate away. There are no bottlenecks and no shortages. If there is one thing the world has it is plenty of people. Indeed, personality type is a better basis than most for what a person should do to help things along. If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution, or inversely, even if I cannot dance, I still

want to be part of your revolution. The alternative movement as a whole and many of its more effective parts such as Greenpeace International and anti-globalisation demonstrations tend to look at national and international organisations. The sixth way claims there is a lot to be done locally by individuals and that the coalescing of these individuals into lots and lots of local fronts may be a more effective strategy for change. ■

Quotes

ENTHRONED CORPORATIONS

'The money power preys upon the nation in times of peace and conspires against it in times of adversity. It is more despotic than monarchy, more insolent than autocracy, more selfish than bureaucracy. I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. Corporations have been enthroned, an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavour to prolong its REIGN by working on the prejudices of the people until the wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the republic is destroyed.'

President Lincoln in 1863, facing the Civil War that killed him.

Monitored by Peter Cadogan

In a series of 232 numbered paragraphs, with accompanying notes, a document, titled 'Industrial Society and its Future', argues that 'the industrial revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race', in part because, by definition, organised modern society 'has to force people to behave in ways that are increasingly remote from the natural pattern of human behavior'.

'We attribute the social and psychological problems of modern society to the fact that it requires people to live under conditions radically different from those under which the human race evolved, and to behave in ways that conflict with the patterns of behaviour that the human race developed'.

The purely 'natural' world 'provided a stable framework, and therefore a sense of security. In the modern world it is human society that dominates nature ... thus there is no stable framework'.

Monitored by Bob Jones

TT: Well, because, with electricity, many places have got a lot of sun and a lot of wind and so on. The huge problem there is the variability of those sources and the limits that puts on how much of it you can use, even if you've got a huge quantity. We've just had a report in South Australia where the officials have said, we must not increase wind input to 10% of electricity demand, or it will razz up the supply network, e.g. how do you – what do you do if you build a lot of wind and there's a day when there's no wind blowing? You know, you've got to turn up lots of coal on that day. So those problems of integration and variability are very difficult and they confuse the quantities we could get from electricity – but for liquid fuels...

LC: So let's just stop there for a minute and talk about wind, 'cause in NZ at the moment, on the one hand we have predicted problems with our electricity supply and we have a number of state-owned enterprises in NZ putting a lot of emphasis on wind energy and the creation of wind farms. So the problem with wind is, you can't rely on wind alone because it's not always windy – that's what you're saying?

TT: Yes, that's one of the major problems.

LC: Is there also a problem with wind in terms of the amount – if you like, the number of wind turbines you need?

TT: Sure. Now, I don't know a lot about NZ. My understanding is, you're pretty lucky with wind...

LC: We're very windy!

TT: Yep, that's right, and you may do pretty well. And Iceland for example, has got a lot of geothermal and hydro power. There'll be a few spots around the world that may make it, but of course that's not much consolation if the industrial world as a whole can't chug

on the way it is now, because you I'm sure are enormously dependent on imports of just about everything, as we are in Australia, so it's not much good if you've got plenty of energy, but all the places where your goods are manufactured in China and so on, don't have it. So to me, the focal concern is the global scene and the situation of the rich countries and whether their energy-consuming ways can be maintained, as distinct from just looking at those few sites that are very favourably endowed with wind and so on.

LC: Yeah, although, you know – start small. If each country could look after itself then there wouldn't be a global problem would there?

TT: Well of course the whole business of starting locally is very important, and our Simpler Way vision is of course essentially about localism – developing economies that use local resources and local skills to produce goods for local people in self-sufficient – highly self-sufficient local economies. It doesn't mean you can't have any international activity, but localism's the key thing. But, we go back to my key claim and that is to do with the sheer quantity that you're going to get in these various energy areas, and we do not think you're going to get anything like the amount you'll need to keep this voracious consumer society going. If tomorrow, all the people in the world were using petroleum the way we few in rich countries do, the annual consumption rate for the world would be six times what it is now. And if we get to a population of 9.4 billion, as we're likely to in this century – the middle of this century, and they're all going to live the way you and I do, then you're talking about petroleum production and consumption, every year, 10 times what it is now. ■

THE SIMPLER WAY

TED TRAINER

Ted Trainer is a senior lecturer at the University of New South Wales and author of a number of books on sustainability. This is part of an interview he gave to Linda Clark on NZ National Radio.

LC: Switching our oil dependence to other forms of energy – will it be enough? Are alternative fuels a good alternative to oil?

TT: They're a terrific alternative. There's no doubt we've got to move to renewables in all forms as quickly as we can, partly obviously for greenhouse reasons and partly because a lot of people think that we're close to the peak of oil supply. But my view and the view of many people is that we cannot run an energy-intensive, industrially-affluent, consumer way of life on them the way we've got used to. We'll have to dramatically reduce the amount per capita that we use.

LC: Well that sounds much more difficult, because that's real culture change, behaviour change.

TT: It certainly is. It's a change in many dimensions that would be required. Most obviously the economy – we've got an economy now that thrives on the maximum amount of throughput and has to have growth all the time. We've got settlement geographies designed to run on cars and oil and so on, and a great deal of international trade and transport, and most difficult of all, we've got a mindset that's about wealth, affluence, acquisitiveness and competition. The way we see it, we can't solve any of the big global problems, and energy's only one of them of course – we can't solve problems like the environ-

ment and third world deprivation till we do achieve an enormous and radical shift, especially in culture to what many of us are calling 'The Simpler Way'.

LC: Yeah, but when we talk about energy, when we talk about running our lifestyles using energy, if we have a combination of the alternative fuels like biodiesel and ethanol, and we combine that with solar energy, wind energy – one of these things alone isn't a solution, but if we had this whole portfolio of alternatives, would that not meet all of our energy demands?

TT: No. We think quite emphatically, no. The answer is quite complicated. For a start, you've got to divide electricity off from liquid fuels and gas on the other hand. Electricity is going to come from photovoltaics, from solar thermal and from wind. The liquid and gas component will have to come from biomass and or hydrogen. Now each one of those is a very complicated story. In a nutshell, my team, the people who – the very few people who've looked critically at the potential of renewables, mostly I think – and very few of us – don't think that in either of those categories you're going to make it. The story is much more clear cut for liquid fuels and gas than for electricity. We could deal with them one by one if you like...

LC: Yeah, lets. Why is it much more simple – for liquids?

FORUM

This is your slot, the place where you sound off and express your views...

NUNC DIMITTIS

This must be the ending of our long friendship. I wish you joy in your new venture. I am 98 now and have to have all my reading and writing done.

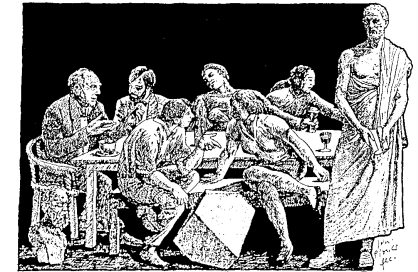
Julie Wood

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ANSWERS

Back in 1987 I came to the conclusion that 'protest' (born again in 1956 over Suez and Hungary) was dying or dead. The way in which the huge anti-Iraq war demonstrations in Hyde Park and throughout the world were later totally ignored by US and UK Governments only confirmed that assessment.

There has to be an end to saying 'No! No! No!' to everything and saying 'Yes! Yes! Yes!' instead. We need answers. A million people, on their feet, can discover or invent nothing. Einstein, on his own, produced five papers in 1905 that were recog-



nised by colleagues as breaking entirely new ground. He belonged to no party, he didn't even have a professional structure to work through, but his few contacts were enough; they put the word about and, as they say, the rest is history.

It all points to the critical importance of creativity and communication, of top-down meeting bottom-up at climactic moments. Such a moment is today, with the US splitting into two camps, as the one in power leads the world into interminable war – and calls it 'peace and freedom'.

Peter Cadogan

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NEWS SERVICE

Home Rule Globally is a think tank that at one time aspired to obtain adequate donations merely by having a website at home.comcast.net/~decentralist and is now contemplating abandonment of activities

unless it can manage to create an adequate donor base. Marjorie Ewbank is 91 and John is 89. During the past 70 years the Ewbanks have seen many worthy causes that died when a few of their advocates encountered aging problems. John Papworth merits praise for obtaining sufficient donations to employ an adequate staff for prolongation of *Fourth World Review*.

It was in 1944 that my disdain for mass media prompted my substantial boycotting of TV, radio, magazines and newspapers, and reliance upon 'alternative press' whose prejudices I could more reliably discern.

Congratulations for publicising your Radical News Service. My suggestion is that you recognise that 'exchange subscriptions' provide your most hopeful route toward any collaboration. The funds available to all promoters of the 'alternative press' are so limited that many editors and publishers are extremely jealous concerning those who might collaborate.

John R. Ewbank

1150 Woods Rd, Southampton PA 18966-4545

The 'adequate staff' of Fourth World Review consists of one part-time computer assistant. – Ed.

CIVILISATION TRAP

Civilisations and empires have vanished, but people prevail. But industrial civilisation monopolises resources of the earth, and seems to be in a great hurry to wipe out all living beings, including humans. It takes the role of god-the-creator to create enormous wealth and enormous waste with tools of science, technology and economy.

It, too, of course, whether in big or small nations of societies, shall vanish, by its 'over-specialisation'.

Thankfully, the majority of the world still sustains outside the capitalist/socialist economy, though the industrial civilisation, through its puppets, tries hard to bring them into its dragnet. It has created an enormous number of institutions to control almost every aspect of personal and collective living and destroy autonomy of decision-making and action, therefore identity.

In such a situation, can I be autonomous? Not until I reflect upon what I eat and wear and patronise, and why, until the end of all rationale. Then there is possibility of creative action/inaction. That's what 'local' means.

Remigus de Souza

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CLIMATE CHANGE?

Good to see Zac Goldsmith's excellent article on the follies and dangers of the nuclear industry (FWR No .132). But I'd like to point out, once again, that while he and all the 'green' lot babble on about the non-existent problem of carbon dioxide and climate they are playing into the hands of the nuclear maniacs. Yes, nuclear power is a stupid and ineffectual response to the mythical climate problem. But in this age when all science has become political, all the nuclear lot need to keep their menace going until the next 'Chernobyls' that are bound to come, is that lousy excuse.

The climate conspiracy began in 1988 when Margaret Thatcher found nobody to

NOTICE

There was a printing glitch with the last issue (132) so that some copies had a couple of blank pages.

Please notify if your copy was defective and we will replace.

Editor

buy nuclear horrors. Sir Bernard Ingham, her press secretary, started tilting the windmills soon after, and then revealed his ties to the nuclear power 'group'. Seventeen years later, I'm still looking for any sign of real climate change – cooling, heating, flooding, whatever. We've had extremes in places, as always. It was, indeed, clever of Ingham and his allies to use the weather, which, like the Bible, can be used to 'prove' whatever one wants.

Climate changes, if any, are likely to be responses to solar variations, as described in Nigel Calder's 1997 book, *The Manic Sun*. I do have some concern too about the role of aircraft, especially now that chemtrails are becoming so conspicuous in this area. But tiny changes in a gas that makes up 0.35% of the atmosphere, and, unlike water vapour, cannot absorb 540 calories for every gram evaporated, this is unbelievable, however many scientists have been bought. If James Lovelock has gone over to the nuclear lot, at least we have David Bellamy joining Prof. Philip Scott as a climate change denier – and there are others. Why am I the only conspiracy theorist?

Oil is not the key to my view here – not oil, but the nuclear lobby. And the key to climate is, 'It's the clouds, stupid!'

Roger Franklin

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STAND FIRM

It seems to me that the long term plans of our politicians for us to join the Euro are dead and gone, much like the constitution. How strange, that whilst all the nations of the 'Old Empire' days have opted for independence and self government, is the UK it that is in danger of losing its own! It must not happen.

Eric Sheppard

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TOPS

Hearty congrats for your huge contribution over many years. *Fourth World Review* always goes to the top of the reading pile when it arrives.

Ted Trainer

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Pessimism of the mind but optimism of the spirit.

Schopenhauer