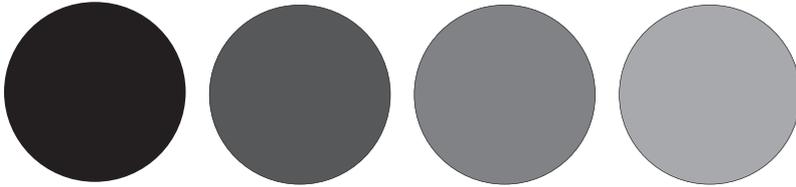


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FOR SMALL NATIONS
SMALL COMMUNITIES
SMALL FARMS
SMALL SHOPS
SMALL INDUSTRIES
SMALL BANKS
SMALL FISHERIES
THE INALIENABLE SOVEREIGNTY
OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT
AND THE TRANSITION MOVEMENT



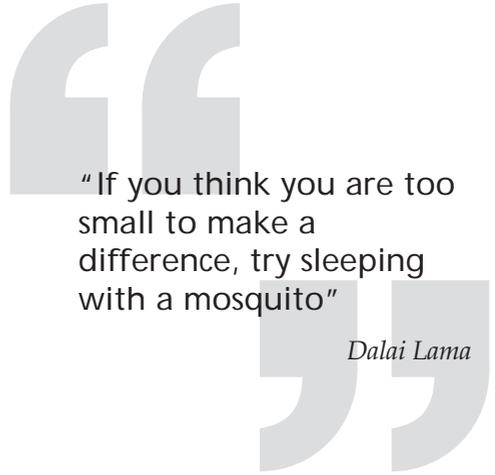
FOURTH WORLD REVIEW

A Transition Journal

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4WR – A brief history for new readers

The Fourth World was founded 40 years ago as a response to the ongoing global crises to assert the supremacy of local community power and the moral control of public affairs on the basis of that power. It believes that a mass democracy can never be other than an oxymoron, and that democratic control of global affairs can only realistically be secured by the



“If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito”

Dalai Lama

replacement of giant centrally controlled states with an organically structured dispersal of governing power into the hands of human scale communities ●

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WELCOME TO 4WR TRANSITION

Welcome to the latest edition of Fourth World Review. It is a journal in transition, which is only to be expected as myself (Jon Hughes), Tom Barker and Peter North have joined founding editor and inspiration John Papworth in its production. While there will be different voices, we will continue to adhere and expound the founding principles of 4WR.

We are for small nations, small communities, small farms, small shops, small industries, small banks, small fisheries and the inalienable sovereignty of the human spirit.

We can now add that we are for the Transition movement, and the wider revolution for which that is the clearest and most exciting manifestation.

When Rob Hopkins unleashed his transition movement in Totnes two years ago, he posed the question that will dominate our age: how do we grow small?

It is a question that has resonated with scores of thousands of individuals. Seven hundred towns, cities and boroughs are now in transition and the number is growing. Several have introduced local currencies to support local enterprises.

The Transition movement began as a response to the inevitability of the twin threats of peak oil and climate change - the first ripples of the black tide turning have been felt all too keenly recently - and how local communities can prepare for and adapt to life beyond cheap oil and gas in the context of low carbon

emissions. Its core message is simple, "that the future with less oil could be preferable to the present if we can engage sufficiently in advance with enough imagination, creativity and adaptability."

The response has been inspirational, and a withering rebuke to Westminster, yet despite the movement's phenomenal growth it remains largely invisible, unreported in the mainstream media.

In Somerset, the local transition group has reached an unprecedented accord to work with the local authority on devising an energy descent plan. An integral part of the agreement is "to leave our (party) politics at the door". This is a fascinating development. Are we seeing the first stirrings of Town Hall independence from the centre? Such a vital response cannot be ignored for long.

Growing small is an inevitability. Peak oil not only demands as much, so do the converging economic and environmental crises; and the social, political and moral malaise that has become the hallmark of everyday life. These are the symptoms of four decades of super-sizing political and commercial institutions. As economic philosopher Leopold Kohr observed in his seminal book *The Breakdown of Nations*, if the problem is big, the only solution is to grow smaller.

We no more want hair shirts than we do black shirts, but we will find ourselves wearing one and in thrall to the other if we continue with business

as usual. Yet all the evidence clearly indicates that this is exactly what is likely to happen.

As the old paradigm of left-right politics ends with a whimper, replaced by the tyranny of a "whatever works" economic ideology, a radical reappraisal is called for. We use the word radical in its true sense, being "concerned with (or tending to concentrate on) fundamental aspects of a matter; searching or thoroughgoing; favouring or tending to produce fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions, etc".

Through reportage, comment and analysis 4WR will continue to give oxy-

gen to those who are actively embracing change and confronting the myriad challenges that lie ahead; we will give a platform to those who are re-imagining the world; we will explore the political base without which the transition to local self-reliance will founder, and scrutinise the political response to localisation that is latterly emerging.

We hope and ask that you give us your support, through subscriptions (see page 31) and donations, to chronicle and support this social revolution. It has been a long time coming, but have no doubt that we are at the start of a period of social change akin in magnitude to a third industrial revolution ●

“What do we mean by the Revolution? The war? That was no part of the Revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it. The Revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was effected, from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years before a drop of blood was shed at Lexington. The records of thirteen legislatures, the pamphlets, newspapers in all colonies, ought to be consulted during that period to ascertain the steps by which the public opinion was enlightened and informed concerning the authority of Parliament over the colonies.”

*John Adams to Jefferson, pamphleteers both, 1815
The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution by Bernard Bailyn*

WAR AND PEACE

John Papworth

One of the major problems of comprehending the different conflict areas of the world is the terminology currently and customarily in use in the mass media.

The word 'democracy' for example is bandied around as though it were a dynamic reality in some countries and needs to be established in others. It is altogether ignored that the essential guts of democracy, (government by the people), has been made altogether impossible by the global development of market forces in the last 150 years or more.

These forces have an innate need to expand, despite any cost exacted from global resources (posterity's heritage temporarily in our keeping), or from local community structures, on the social and spiritual values of which democracy is a key factor and victim, from the ecological health of the planet and its natural wildlife features – of which human life itself is but one in a delicate chain of mutual interdependence, or from the cause of peace.

There is far less government by the people today than at any time in human history. People are not governing the events that are now destroying civilisation, they are being governed by

them and are being blown along like dead leaves in a gutter and are utterly unable to play any determinative role to control them.

China, for example, the biggest single political unit in the world, already far too large to be governed in democratic terms, proceeds to invade the neighbouring civilisation of Tibet, to subject its people to a ruthless degree of totalitarian rule as though the Tibetan people have committed some sort of crime in failing to be Chinese communists.

China betimes proceeds to lay claim to govern Taiwan and to make military preparations to invade and subjugate its people. The idea that ordinary Chinese people, themselves a forced colonial amalgam of hundreds, if not indeed thousands, of identifiable tribes, are remotely involved in this criminal warmongering is not the least of the catastrophic absurdities confronting us.

We may register a similar affront to democratic integrity of the USA. It now has military bases all over the world; it claims to be fighting terrorism, despite being a major global terrorist in its own right, a right based on nothing more than economic greed allied to military hardware.

In Europe, its people are being

democratically suffocated by a gang of placemen operating from a Brussels parliament, (where the maximum time an elected member can contribute to a debate is 90 seconds, after which his microphone is switched off), a parliament which has neither moral nor legal credibility.

It is urged that the parliaments of these and other countries are elected by peoples' votes. It is indeed the belief that the spread of an electoral franchise is the hallmark of democratic validity, a widely contagiously shared illusion which ignores altogether the totalitarian grip by market forces on the mass media, which enables it to determine not only particular political fortunes

The people of advanced democracies have no more power over developments in their lives than a battery hen

but also the values by which people are persuaded to vote, whilst ignoring the democratic realities which people once exercised through their work; artisans were not able to claim being 'Masters' of different callings for nothing, it was a designation indicating mastery of a particular work title now emasculated into 'Mr' to designate anybody. Ignores too the extent to which local communities exercised their own powers by

virtue of their degrees of economic self-sufficiency and independence.

The people of 'advanced' democracies have no more power over questions of war and peace, of economic policies or of major social policies or planning developments in their lives than a battery hen.

On the global hotspots we need to grasp that the factors involved, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, to say nothing of Russia, India, Zimbabwe, Sudan, etc., etc., are simply lines drawn on maps serving to conceal tribal realities of the utmost importance.

The tribal peoples, strangled and suppressed by these designations, are now on the march. They at least have a

grasp of democratic realities, they want government by the people, which means them and their

tribal identities. They want to govern themselves and wherever they are there will never be any sort of peace, stability or harmony until they achieve their aim.

They are not to be dismissed as 'separatists', 'tribals', 'terrorists', minorities and so on, they are the reality of the politics (and economics) of the future and they at least are concerned to make democracy the cardinal feature of their existence ●

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth glancing at

– Oscar Wilde

GM crops and eugenics

Sir Julian Rose makes an impassioned call to arms to halt the march of genetic modification

Resistance comes in three shades: passive, occasionally active and active. The corporate and political powers which aim to take a controlling influence over the food chain count on the majority of civil resistance being of a passive ‘dumbed down’ nature. They can tolerate a certain amount of ‘occasionally active’ interference in their master plan, but they do not tolerate genuinely active resistance. So those of us who hammer continuously on genetically modified corporate doors are monitored, harassed and generally marginalised by the prevailing ‘status quo’ and its media poodles.

We should have little doubt that the prevailing corporate-backed government agenda is financed by big agribusiness and pharmaceutical corporations, who turn in annual combined profits in double figure billions and who do, indeed, aim to wrest total control over the human food chain.

“Control oil and you control the State. Control food and you control the people,” said Richard Nixon’s ex secretary of state Henry Kissinger.

Question: What is the best way to control the food chain?

Answer: Control the seeds.

For seeds are the starting point of

our genetic resource base and the foundation of the biodiversity of the planet, and all its edible (and inedible) products. The true battle lines of the GMO (genetically modified organism) resistance and acceptance war are being drawn up around the future of our right to grow our own food and to live lives independent of the crushing conformism of corporate greed.

Food sovereignty

Food sovereignty is the absolute right of every citizen and every human community on this planet, and those historically most actively engaged in defending this sovereignty are the world’s peasant farmers.

They are a breed of humanity professionally engaged in the maintenance of permanently evolving living seed banks, set in the fields and community plots that are responsible for feeding the great majority of the world’s ever expanding population. It is for this reason that, for the corporate-controlled status quo, they remain amongst the most denigrated working peoples of our divided planet.

Peasant farmers are the last line of absolute resistance to the global corporate take over of the food chain. The red

blood that runs through their prominent veins is the most valuable human asset mankind possesses – it is quite literally the key to our survival as sentient, loving, humane beings.

No wonder then, that the World

Peasant farmers are holding up the ultimate submission of mankind to the great genetic experiment

Trade Organisation, The International Monetary Fund, The United States Department of Agriculture, the European Union and virtually all national governments and self-declared dictators wish to see the last of them.

They are, infuriatingly, holding up the ultimate submission of mankind to the great genetic experiment, with its accompanying tool kit of overt and covert mind control techniques and technologies, mindless materialism and psychopathic, unbridled megalomania.

Beware health claims

We need, at this point, to be fully aware that the devil's brew does not stop at genetic engineering of our crops and animals, it is about to embark on the genetic modification of human babies.

The British government is now debating *The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill* which is being introduced with one of its aims being to legalise production of genetically modified human embryos – a techno-science that can lead on to the unrestrained creation of patented GM babies. Without a major outcry, this bill will pass into UK

law sometime this year. Where is the resistance?

Should it fail to be blocked, the passing of this act will constitute another big step towards the establishment of the Orwellian society familiar to readers of *1984*. It is currently by-passing most opposition by making claims of eradicating otherwise untreatable sick-

nesses. This is the reasoning that can open the Pandora's box for unrestricted eugenics. The same health benefits are increasingly being claimed for GM crops, and ultimately the consequences could be the same.

The imminent introduction of a new generation of 'climate engineered' GM seeds, currently awaiting a green light from the European Commission (EC), include the infamous 'terminator' (self destructing) seeds. A host of new patent applications are currently awaiting official clearance which, it is claimed, will provide a whole new range of novel, patented GM seeds capable of providing our 'food future' in the oft predicted extreme conditions of drought, flood and salinity.

The EC, in the mean time, is winning some muted public applause through pretending to declare a certain level of opposition to first generation GMOs while keeping an 'open mind' on the second.

Covert pressures

Joining forces with peasants, as has happened in France, India, South

America, Poland, Romania, Turkey and all across the world, helps form a powerful alliance against these forces of sterility and destruction. Indigenous farmers often have very little contact with the outside world and easily become victimised by smooth talking seed salesmen and government primed subsidies.

Civilian activists, who have been resolutely defending the future of GM free 'Real Food', can offer crucial support to peasant farmers; not least by informing them of the tactics of predatory transnationals and helping to link them in to the international resistance movement. Via Campesina has set an excellent example in this field, but much more can be done and needs to be done by a wide cross section of NGO's.

In Poland, The International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside and the Coalition for a GMO Free Poland are jointly engaged in confronting government and corporate covert – and sometimes overt – attempts to slip GM seeds and plants into the system under the cover of darkness.

The current Polish administration is playing with adopting classic EU 'co-existence' rules of the game. Faced with a Commission fine for failing to lift the current GM seed ban, introduced by the previous administration in 2006, the Polish government's Environmental and Agricultural ministers are juggling consumer resistance with corporate and Brussels based pressures to accept

the ludicrously described 'safe' adoption of barrier zones that, it is claimed, would prevent cross pollination between GM and non GM crops. All this, long after science and common sense have shown that pollen travels hundreds of kilometres on the wind and via bees, insects, birds, human feet and lorries.

The fight for freedom

Poland's 1.5 million peasant farmers are only dimly aware of the battle going on above their heads, including a call upon the Black Madonna – made at a conference in April organised by the Coalition for a GMO Free Poland in the famous shrine at Jasna Gora – to (once again) support the cause of the defence of Poland against the forces of repression.

The conference was presided over by a Franciscan Father and marked what we hope may be a more open intervention by the Church in what is clearly a critical test of the fortitude of classic

How can sentient human beings ignore the fate of the gene pool, which is our common inheritance and responsibility?

Judeo Christian moral and ethical beliefs.

So far, signs of solidarity from the Church have been few and far between, but how can sentient human beings, who also claim religious guidance, ignore the fate of the gene pool, which is our common inheritance and whose health and welfare is our incontrovertible collective responsibility?

As we all battle on to expose the grinding poverty being exerted upon the world's food producers by the GM monoliths, cotton farmers in the Indian province of the Punjab and elsewhere on the continent have been taking their lives, tragically unable to cope with the repeated failure of their much hyped (Monsanto) GM Bt cotton crops to produce a viable harvest.

Left with no home-saved seeds to fall back on, these farmers have been exposed to the ultimate betrayal of their human dignity and right to life. Their death constitutes a direct 'crime against

humanity' perpetrated, as it has been, upon innocent farmers struggling to earn just enough income to support their families from day to day.

How much worse does it need to get before the 'passive' resistance finally rises up to join the fight for the freedom of mankind and our liberation from the forces of global repression? ●

Sir Julian Rose is an organic farmer and President of The International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside. He was for 20 years a member of the council of the Soil Association.

And now you live dispersed on ribbon roads
And no man knows or cares who is his neighbour
Unless his neighbour makes too much disturbance,
But all dash to and fro in motor cars,
Familiar with the roads and settled nowhere.
Much to cast down, much to build, much to restore.
I have given you the power of choice, and you only alternate
Between futile speculation and unconsidered action.
And the wind shall say: "Here were decent Godless people:
Their only monument the asphalt road
And a thousand lost golf balls."

When the Stranger says: "What is the meaning of this city?
Do you huddle close together because you love each other?"
What will you answer? "We all dwell together
To make money from each other"? or "This is a community"?
Oh my soul, be prepared for the coming of the Stranger...
Oh my soul, be prepared for the coming of the Stranger.
Be prepared for him who knows how to ask questions.

TS Eliot, Choruses from the Rock

Why we should care about ecosystems

Tom Barker

An often unnoticed cost of modern industrial society is the replacement of the natural benefits long gained from ecosystems with substitutes furnished from elsewhere. The received role of ecosystems in modern society is to provide some respite from the invasive intensity of the rat race.

They can be peaceful places, characterised by the wild beauty of plant and animal interactions, where one can find relaxation and solitude amid the bustle of 21st century existence. We need such places. In reality, however, ecosystems are much more than this. They are pervasive, existing in a range of states from the near pristine environments of remote areas to very degraded agri-industrial, urban and industrial landscapes.

What do they do?

Ecosystems could be considered akin to model societies. They use their natural capital (soil, rock, topography etc.) to the full, making the most of inputs of water, minerals and sunlight for production of plants and algae in ways that can accommodate without harm wide variations in the rates of supply of these materials. All this capital, income, and production are then recycled again and

again into animals, bacteria, fungi, and other secondary products from which emerges the dynamic, vibrant interplay of life that we recognise as nature. Scientists call the physical, chemical and biological interactions processes, and it is these that combine to provide the services that human societies find useful.

Environmental economics is a discipline that places financial value on 'ecosystem services' (to use the jargon). If, say, a woodland can trap and store enough rainwater to prevent the flooding of a town downstream, as devastated Sheffield and other places last year, that service is worth a lot of money. It saves the government from funding the default option of building barriers and concrete channels and cleaning up afterwards.

If an ecosystem provides pollinating insects, predator control of agricultural pests, timber, reeds, food, birds, an educational resource – the list is quite long – then it is worth money as it is, even without converting the land into a supermarket.

I know what you're thinking: such places should be protected because of their inherent value and that of the species comprising them, but grim experience tells us that 'should' does

not count for much in today's mercenary world. Society rewards the ruthless, and these are the very people who make and have always made the rules.

A force for change

The Native American John Mohawk, in comparing primitive tribes with industrial society, observed that whereas people in primitive cultures do a lot of thinking about their environment – the sky, animals, spirits, and interrelationships – modern people think very little because all is done for us, “the individual's lot is to pay taxes and leave thinking to those in the know”. This is recognised as a problem even by those in power, or at least by those in opposition, when they complain about a ‘nanny state’.

Central policy has obliterated local community and replaced it with social security, cars and television, and it has razed ecosystems and replaced them with imported food and goods, shopping centres and chemicals. Regaining control over our communities will be an opportunity to rediscover ecosystems, their inherent beauty and value, and the goods and services they can provide for us.

There is a great force for change operating in the UK presently. It arose out of the immense vacuum in public life created by the destruction of community and suppression of human interactions. This morning I read a

report of a man found lying in his bed two years after he had died; nobody had called to see him.

Centralised political and economic control, along with the environmental problems and lack of community this causes, is leading our present society towards its closing stages. What surely must follow is a grand localisation, such as is now being led by the Transition movement. Integral to it will be the optimisation of ecosystem services, and their re-incorporation into our daily lives.

Regaining control of our communities will allow us to rediscover ecosystems, their inherent beauty and value, and the goods and services they can provide

The societal changes will occur and originate locally, so how could one start? An environmental map of your own local neighbourhood is not hard to make. What areas of green space are there? What derelict or unused land? You may be surprised to find your local council to be very cooperative.

Such an exercise could form the initial stages of a local plan to produce food, enhance biodiversity, treat waste, generate electricity from renewables, and increase access and contact with nature for the wider public; in short, to retrieve from the corporate centre the means to live with greater self-reliance as a community. The goods and services provided by ecosystems are central to this recovery. It is time we stood up and counted them ●

TRANSITION TODAY

The Transition Movement's founder Rob Hopkins tells us where it's at

When we started Transition Town Totnes in 2006 little did we know where it would all lead. Within weeks of us getting underway with a launch event for the project, which we called the 'Unleashing', a host of towns and cities started getting in touch to ask us what we were doing, and how exactly we were doing it.

Given that we were making it all up as we went along, drawing together eclectic ideas, influences, tools and inspirations, it was a hard question to answer. I think that now, two years later, with over 100 formal Transition initiatives and nearly 1,000 'mullers' (i.e. those at an early stage of the process), it is fair to say that we still struggle to answer those questions, but some clarity is starting to emerge.

What for me is so exciting about all of this is that there is an essential honesty to the process, that we really are inventing this approach by doing it (or perhaps 'making it up as we go along' might be more correct). At the heart of Transition is a simple purpose, which is "to support community-led responses to peak oil and climate change, building resilience and happiness". Over the last two years we have come to identify seven principles which make the Transition approach unique, and which really start to pin down how it works. They are, in no particular order:

Positive Visioning

Transition Initiatives are based on a dedication to the creation of tangible, clearly expressed and practical visions of the community in question beyond its present-day dependence on fossil fuels. Our primary focus is not campaigning against things, but rather on positive, empowering possibilities and opportunities.

This does not exclude the possibility that at a future stage, perhaps when the community has developed its Energy Descent Action Plan (Edap), it may find it useful to campaign against things that have been identified and which have emerged as being obstacles to the Plan's implementation. The generation of new stories and myths are central to this visioning work.

Help People Access Good Info and Trust Them to Make Good Decisions

Transition initiatives dedicate themselves, through all aspects of their work, to raising awareness of peak oil and climate change and related issues, such as critiquing economic growth. In doing so they recognise the responsibility to present this information in ways which are playful, articulate, accessible and engaging, and which enable people to feel enthused and empowered rather than powerless.

Transition initiatives focus on telling people the closest version of the truth

that we know in times when the information available is deeply contradictory. The messages are non-directive, respecting each person's ability to make a response that is appropriate to their situation.

Inclusion and Openness

Successful Transition Initiatives need an unprecedented coming together of the broad diversity of society. They dedicate themselves to ensuring that their decision-making processes and their working groups embody principles of openness and inclusion.

This principle also refers to the principle of each initiative reaching the community in its entirety, and endeavouring, from an early stage, to engage their local business community, the diversity of community groups and local authorities. It makes explicit the principle that there is, in the challenge of energy descent, no room for 'them and us' thinking.

Enabling Sharing and Networking

Transition Initiatives dedicate themselves to sharing their successes, failures, insights and connections at the various scales across the Transition network, so as to more widely build up a collective body of experience.

Building Resilience

This stresses the fundamental importance of building resilience, that is, the capacity of our businesses, communities and settlements to deal as well as possible with shock. Transition initiatives commit to building resilience

across a wide range of areas (food, economics, energy etc) and also on a range of scales (from the local to the national) as seems appropriate – and to setting them within an overall context of the need to do all we can to ensure general environmental resilience.

Inner and Outer Transition

The challenges we face are not just caused by a mistake in our technologies but as a direct result of our world view and belief system. The impact of the information about the state of our planet can generate fear and grief – which may underlie the state of denial that many people are caught in.

Psychological models can help us understand what is really happening and avoid unconscious processes sabotaging change; e.g. addictions models, models for behavioural change. This principle also honours the fact that Transition thrives because it enables and supports people to do what they are passionate about, what they feel called to do.

Subsidiarity: Decision Making at the Appropriate Level

This final principle enshrines the idea that the intention of the Transition model is not to centralise or control decision making, but rather to work with everyone so that it is practiced at the most appropriate, practical and empowering level.

One of the initial influences on the Transition concept was Seth Godin's concept of the 'Ideavirus', that

of an idea which spreads with a viral degree of contagion. One of the things that has been most fascinating to observe with Transition has been how it has spread in the way Godin describes.

It really struck home to me when, before the *Transition Handbook* was published and before many films were available online, two people in New Zealand posted on YouTube (1) films of themselves giving presentations about Transition, suggesting it as a route their own communities might like to follow. It was clear that they deeply understood the model, and that they had really got it.

This leads to the observation that Transition is spreading in fascinating ways, helped only slightly by the mainstream media. The blogosphere has been very useful, as well as the use of Wiki websites, which enable collaborative information building. The concept of collaborative working set out so brilliantly in Charles Leadbeater's book *WeThink* has become a key organising principle.

Transition Network is now co-ordinating the creation of 'The Transition Movie', a film made by people working in Transition initiatives, supported by training and a hotline, and also the second edition of *The Transition Handbook* will be done as a Wiki rewrite, with those with practical experience of working with the model being invited to incorporate their experience.

Transition Network recently passed the 100th formal Transition initiative, Transition Fujino in Japan (the country's first), and the international aspects of it all are becoming fascinating. New Zealand is awash with them, it is spreading fast across Australia and the US, and starting to emerge in Germany, Chile, Italy and many other countries. Translations are being made into Spanish, Japanese and German. Transition Training, which has been set up to deliver training for those starting such initiatives, is in huge demand,

We are surrounded by doom and gloom.

What Transition does is paint a powerful

vision of how the future could be

most training selling out weeks ahead and a number of new trainers starting to run their own courses.

It is also starting to emerge as an idea at a range of levels. Somerset County Council recently voted to become the first Transition Local Authority in the UK. The *Transition Handbook* was joint 5th in Waterstones' survey of books MPs were taking on holiday with them this summer. Even *The Archers*, BBC Radio 4's long running soap opera, now has a Transition storyline.

So the question I want to pose here is what is going on? Why does there seem to be such a degree of interest at so many levels? My sense, although each person who is involved will have their own take on this, is that Transition is growing into a vacuum. As awareness

Power is shifting from institutions that have always been run top-down, hoarding information at the top, telling us how to run our lives, to a new paradigm of power that is democratically distributed and shared by us all

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised by Joe Trippi (Harper Collins)

getting dooier and gloomier, and the sense of powerlessness that it engenders really leaves us in no place to respond creatively. What Transition does is to paint a powerful vision of how the future could be, and to offer tools to maximise the potential of engaged optimism.

We may never really get a complete sense of what we are actually doing, but for now, it seems to be working, and feels like this is only the beginning ●

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(1):<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z13FyTykky4> & www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtcGTIsR964
– Some interesting blogs that explore issues around Transition include my own www.transitionculture.org and also www.yesterdaysfuture.net/blog www.zone5.org www.poweringdown.blogspot.com

of climate change grows, and as peak oil enters the consciousness, and the havoc it is wreaking on the economy becomes clear, there is not much out there that offers a positive vision of where all this might go.

The idea that life beyond oil dependency and carbon intensive living might actually be an improvement on the present is one whose time appears to have come.

As Mark Twain said, “those of you inclined to worry have the widest selection in history”. We are surrounded by doom and gloom that just keeps on

Man has been endowed with reason, with the power to create, so that he can add to what he’s been given. But up to now he hasn’t been a creator, only a destroyer. Forests keep disappearing, rivers dry up, wild life’s become extinct, the climate’s ruined and the land grows poorer and uglier everyday -

Anton Chekov

QUID PRO CO-PRODUCTION

Professor Edgar Cahn

Co-production is the public service delivery concept de jour in Whitehall. It's creator, however, emphasises the wider ideals as a fundamental requirement of a democratic society

My development of the concept of co-production stems directly from examining the core principles underlying timebanking. And my development of timebanking stemmed from an appreciation of the limitations of government efforts to empower people for whom the market had no use and who did not enjoy the same rights to subsistence or to care that are a birthright in England.

That journey began with my involvement in the civil rights movement, my co-founding of the National Legal Services programme, my work in the War on Poverty and my subsequent efforts to address disparities which seemed destined to persist and to grow, so long as those who were disenfranchised were viewed, at best, as objects of pity and charity.

The challenge was: how to value the labour and contribution of those whom the market excluded or devalued and whose genuine work was not acknowledged or rewarded.

Universal values

First comes a rejection that money and market price is the sole acceptable measure of value (although the value of household work in 1998 was estimated to total US\$ 9 trillion – about one quarter of the size of the US gross domestic product (GDP) of that year).

Timebanking rejects price, valuing all hours equally, because price equates value with scarcity relative to demand. Timebanking values what it means to be truly human and to contribute to each other as humans – as members of the human family. Those are the universals that enabled our species to survive and evolve: our willingness to come to each other's rescue, to care for each other, to stand up for what we believe is right.

There are domains we all recognise are beyond price: family and loved ones, justice, patriotism, spirituality, the environment. We cannot allow a rejection of market price to mean a denial of economic value. From that, it follows

that co-production need not and cannot be limited to the labour wanted by professionals to make their human service delivery systems work better. If co-production focuses exclusively on the types of labour needed to enable public systems work better, it will tend to undervalue the significance of the effort invested in giving love and comfort, approval and disapproval, caring and mentoring – and equally the effort involved in civic engagement, ranging from attending meetings to making phone calls to mobilising social protest.

And it will tend to overlook the contribution that co-production can play in redefining the labour force needed to rebuild community and reclaim habitat for our species – a labour force that must include children, teenagers, persons on public assistance, the disabled, the elderly and even the bed-ridden and housebound. Because timebank initiatives have consistently valued the hours expended by all making such a wide variety of contributions, it broadened my understanding of the labour force and the types of labour that co-production would entail.

Third, time-banking has illuminated and heightened our awareness of the scale and magnitude of a critical portion of the non-market economy – the core economy. It is a genuine economic system of vast magnitude.

Appreciation of that goes back before my work – to Hazel Henderson and the love economy; to Neva

Goodwin who coined the term, the core economy. Marilyn Waring tried to wake us all up to that in her book: *If Women Counted*. The women's movement and more recently, Nancy Folbre, have stressed the significance of caring work. *Future Shock* author Alvin Toffler reminds us of the obvious in his question to Fortune 500 executives: "How productive would your workforce be if they were not toilet trained?"

Different efforts to quantify the value of productive labour not reflected in monetary indices vary – but at a minimum they equal or exceed at least 40 per cent of the GDP. A calculation made in 2002 of the scale of unpaid labour in the United States that keeps seniors out of nursing homes topped \$250 billion dollars – six times what is spent on the market for equivalent services.

9-5 regeneration can't work

Robert Putnam, professor of public policy at Harvard, has certainly tried to alert us to the decline of social capital. If social capital is critical to the well-being of society, then we must ask what its

The household, the neighbourhood, the community and civil society – that is the economy co-production seems to rebuild

home base and source is. Social capital is rooted in a social economy – and surely, the home base of that economy is the household, the neighbourhood, the community and civil society. That is the economy that co-production seems to rebuild and to reconstruct.

Democracy itself requires co-production in order to work if the people are to exercise their theoretical sovereignty

The extent to which that core economy has been eroded came home to me personally when we looked at 786 young people who had committed some offence and been sent to the Time Dollar Youth Court. Only 14 of them were being raised in a two-parent household.

Co-production is more than making social programs work. We see entire neighbourhoods depopulated in the States: a majority of young African American males are in prison; welfare reform sends the mothers elsewhere to work; and the neighbourhoods are populated by the gangs, the drug dealers, latchkey children, seniors – and a handful of neighbourhood workers sent in to regenerate the community from 9–5 on weekdays.

Co-production involves reclaiming territory for the core economy – territory lost to the commodification of life by all sectors of the monetary economy, public, private and non-profit.

We will be unable to create the core economy of the future so long as we live in a bifurcated world where all social problems are relegated either to paid professionals or to volunteers whose role is typically restricted to functioning as free labour within the silos of the non-profit world.

It will take massive labour of all kinds by all to build the core economy

of the future – an economy based on relationships and mutuality, on trust and engagement, on speaking and listening and

caring – and above all on authentic respect. We will not get there simply by expanding an entitlement system which apportions public benefits based on negatives and deficiencies: what one lacks, what disability one has, what misfortune one has suffered.

Hell-raising is critical

We have to begin creating a new species of entitlements: earned entitlements that vest by virtue of how one contributes to rebuilding the core economy. That is the new path we must blaze through co-production if co-production is going to transcend professionally defined domains of problems and rebuild an organic world of community that reunites the human family. Timebanking supplies a tool and a medium of exchange to help do that.

Finally, because timebanking and co-production grow out of my own life and work in the civil rights movement, I have to add that hell-raising is a critical part of co-production and of the labour that it entails and must value.

Those with wealth, power, authority and credentials hold those assets as stewards for those who came before and in trust for those yet unborn. They must be held accountable – and sometimes that requires the creation of new vehicles that give rise to scrutiny, to questioning, to criticism, and to social

protest. Timebank programmes can create those vehicles in ways that enlist the community; and that tap the knowledge that the community has about what is working and what is not working.

Youth court turns tables

In Washington DC, 13 teenagers who had served as jurors on our teen court dealing with delinquency were organised as a Youth Grand Jury to investigate what the city was and was not doing about teenagers and substance abuse. The Youth Grand Jury undertook a six-month investigation.

In a report titled, *Speaking Truth to Power*, the Youth Grand Jury indicted the mayor, the drug agency and the District government for failure to fund any prevention or treatment programs for youth. It recommended specific roles for young people as co-producers of a more adequate system of preven-

tion and treatment for substance abuse, including training and certification of teenagers as drug peer counsellors.

To make it cool to be drug free they called for the creation of a drug-free club where dues were paid in Time Dollars earned doing community service and where membership carried rewards. I add this only by way of illustration of the more fundamental point: democracy itself requires co-production in order to work if the people are to exercise their theoretical sovereignty. Native Americans have a saying: 'We did not inherit this land from our ancestors; we borrowed it from our descendants.' Co-production embraces the exercise of that stewardship ●

This is an edited version of Professor Edgar Cahn's introduction to the New Economics Foundation's Co-production: A manifesto for growing the core economy

A few Americans, but very few, still have extended families. A husband, a wife and some kids is not a family. It's a terribly vulnerable survival unit. I met a man in Nigeria one time, an Ibo who had six hundred relatives he knew quite well. His wife had just had a baby, the best possible news in any extended family. They were going to take it to meet all its relatives, Ibos of all ages and sizes and shapes. It would even meet other babies, cousins not much older than it was. Everybody who was big enough and steady enough was going to get to hold it, cuddle it, gurgle to it, and say how pretty or handsome it was. Wouldn't you have loved to be that baby? I sure wish I could wave a wand, and give every one of you an extended family, make you an Ibo or a Navaho – or a Kennedy.

Now you take George and Laura Bush, who imagine themselves as a brave, clean-cut little couple. They are surrounded by an enormous extended family, what we should all have – I mean judges, senators, newspaper editors, lawyers, bankers. They are not alone. That they are members of an extended family is one reason they are so comfortable. And I would really, over the longrun, hope America would find some way to provide all of our citizens with extended families – a large group of people they could call on for help.

Kurt Vonnegut from A Man Without Country (Bloomsbury)

ALTERNATIVE CURRENCIES

End our money monoculture, says Peter North

Just a few months ago credit offers dropped like confetti through most letterboxes. Today they are conspicuous by their absence. Credit has crunched. You might wonder where has all the money gone. You might be happy to blame a few crooked bankers. But the truth is that under our monetary system the money was never physically 'there'. It was assumed to be 'there' because, pre-crunch, bankers used to believe that the things they were investing in had value. And now, they don't.

People who could not afford mortgages they should probably not have been sold could not pay them back, and as these mortgages had been chopped up and sold on, to spread the risk, now no one knew who had the bad debt. The banks did not trust each other, so would not lend to each other and the whole system seized up.

Since the end of the gold standard (for the US dollar, 1972, for the pound sterling, 1932) the money we use (notes and coins) is *fiat* money. It is money because the state says it is. It has no other intrinsic value. We know that most money is created when banks issue loans and mortgages, so, some say, they can, and do, create it at will. If

this is the case, why have we got a credit crunch? The answer is that banks can and do issue credit, but it is not at will – it must be for something either tangible or which the banks have faith in.

Once the faith goes, the money goes: the etymology of the word credit is 'to believe'.

A diverse ecology of monies

Our present predicament comes in part as we have a monopoly of money. We have nothing to substitute for the money that the banks have just decided should be scarce. When the economy is going well, this is not a problem. Universal money means I can buy as widely as I want, but when the big money system fails, we are all stuck. The solution would be to have a diverse ecology of monies so we can move easily between them when one fails.

There is a long history of this. Before the centralisation of states in the 19th century, money was far more local. It would be issued by local banks for local needs, and as most people did not travel, that worked just fine. Others wanted non-capitalist forms of money based on people's time, not what they felt their time was worth. Robert Owen in the UK and Josiah Warren in the US both

created money based on time taken to produce something. Across the south and west of the US millions of poor farmers sought to escape from debt slavery by setting up local treasuries to give them cheap credit.

In the Great Depression, small communities in Europe and the US responded to that credit crunch by setting up newspapers through which they swapped goods and, eventually, their own forms of money. The Social Credit movement in the UK, Canada and New Zealand argued for everyone to be given a social dividend, a form of basic income, to make up the difference between their low wages and what they needed to buy. The banks would be nationalised, and prices set logically rather than through markets.

In the 1990s, the recession saw a range of local money schemes emerge across the developed world. The biggest response to the financial crisis was seen in Argentina, where millions of people traded notes called 'creditos', produced by community-based organisations. There are, then, real alternatives, but their experiences are mixed.

While millions of people did use creditos in Argentina, for reasons that are contested, issuance of credits got out of sync with the real goods and services that could be bought with them, and the result was inflation and then a spectacular loss of confidence. Over-emission enabled the authorities to cast doubt about the quality of goods and services, and the motivations of the organisers. Confidence in and use of credits dropped off over night.

You can't just print money. If there is

too little money to lubricate economic activity, then a little more might be beneficial, but too much would be fatal. And getting the balance right is difficult.

'Dangerous phenomena'

Some of the more successful alternative currencies have taken measures to protect its value and manage its circulation. In North America, local banks have got involved. Circulation has been managed, with people who could earn more than they can spend helped to find new outlets, thereby strengthening the local economy. Credit limits have been established. Trust can be engendered if a well-known, respected or loved local person or institution is known to be associated with it. There is no reason why a trusted and respected local authority, community business or voluntary agency could not back an alternative currency, if people believed that the currency would thereby be well managed.

Money, however, – or more correctly the need to earn it – is a central disciplining mechanism of capitalism. The processes of enclosure that forced an independent peasantry off the land and into the hell of the early factory system was accompanied by the destruction of the ability of the common person to sustain themselves independently. Things that would be provided freely or communally were commodified. The small local banks and monies were centralised. Elites are uninterested in anything that would undermine capitalist disciplining, by enabling people to refuse wage slavery by recreating local self sufficiency.

Most local money schemes have stayed too small scale to come on the radar, but they have all been attacked by elites as dangerous, communist phenomena when they have strengthened local independence and offered a real alternative to selling your labour.

A fatal flaw for many alternative currencies is that they fail to look, act and feel like 'money'. States invest money with authority by putting national or hierarchical symbols on them, by designing them right, and by having anti-counterfeiting measures built into them. Many of the currencies created by Local Exchange Trading Schemes in the 1990s failed this test of 'moneyness', so they stayed small scale and provided

Most local money schemes have been attacked by elites as dangerous, communist phenomena when they have strengthened local independence

access to few goods and services. A lot of thought has been put into some of the Argentine currencies, the North American scripts, and the recently launched Totnes and Lewes Pounds.

A fruitful strategy

The major obstacle to alternative currencies taking off is that global brands have no interest in supporting something that challenges their often monopolistic position. Marx famously argued that ordinary people could not be expected to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and by their own

private resources while elites control the means of production.

For the 19th century proletariat of Marx's day, prospects were truly bleak. But today, perhaps the future is a bit more optimistic? More and more people are working in small businesses not to make a huge profit, but to make a livelihood, and sometimes producing valued things that we all want and need but cannot afford given limited capitalist money.

I can go to Wal-Mart and buy a jumper made under sweated conditions of next to nothing, but could not afford the locally-made, more funky artisan alternative – unless I can pay in part with alternative currencies. Add credit

unions, and ways of recycling and re-using existing goods and services like freecycle, build in more local worker-run and co-operative enterprises, small and

family businesses, non-profits, all trading locally and using alternative currencies, and we perhaps to have at least the beginnings of an alternative.

Creating new forms of money that enable us to enlarge the un-commodified, non-capitalist part of our lives is a more fruitful strategy than trying to persuade big business to accept something that undermines their very rationality ●

Peter North is author of Money and Liberation: the micropolitics of alternative currency movements (University of Minnesota Press)

SUPPORT GROWS FOR SECESSION

Nearly half of all American's believe the system is broke. Christopher Ketcham reports

According to a Zogby poll conducted in July, more than 20 per cent of US adults -- one in five; about the same number of American Colonists who supported revolt against England in 1775 -- agreed that 'any state or region has the right to peaceably secede from the United States and become an independent republic'. Some 18 per cent 'would support a secessionist effort in my state'.

The motivation of these quiet revolutionaries? As many as 44 per cent of those polled agreed that 'the United States' system is broken and cannot be fixed by traditional two-party politics and elections'. Put this in stark terms: in a scientific, random sample poll of all Americans, almost half considered the current political system to be in terminal disorder. One-fifth would countenance a dissolution of the bond.

This is not a hiccup of opinion. In an October 2006 poll conducted by the Opinion Research Corp and broadcast on CNN, 71 per cent of Americans agreed that 'our system of government is broken and cannot be fixed'. No surprise that the disquiet finds a voice in popular movements. In 2007, a small

group of delegates to the second North American secessionist convention -- the first was in Burlington, Vermont, in 2006 -- met in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to discuss how to foment the collapse and destruction of the United States of America.

They came representing 11 rebel groups in 36 states, under banners such as the Republic of Cascadia (wedding Oregon and Washington), Independent California (forging the world's fifth-largest economy), the United Republic of Texas (returning the Lone Star State to its aloneness), the League of the South (uniting the secesh states of old Dixie) and the Second Vermont Republic (separating the Green Mountain State from the US).

The dominant idea among the delegates was that the US experiment had failed; it had become impractical, tragically ridiculous, its leaders and institutions bought off, whored out, unaccountable and unanswerable to the needs of citizens. The United States would have to be reborn smaller -- our loyalties realigned to the needs of localities -- if the American dream was to survive. The convention presented, in effect,

a marriage of progressives, paleo-conservatives, libertarians, Christian separatists, Southern nationalists, all united 'to put an end to the American empire and re-establish freedom and democracy on the state and regional level,' as organiser Kirkpatrick Sale put it.

The delegates settled on a list of principles they called the Chattanooga Declaration. "The deepest questions of human liberty and government facing our time go beyond right and left, and in fact have made the old left-right split meaningless and dead," the declaration read. "The privileges, monopolies and powers that private corporations have won from government threaten health, prosperity and liberty, and have already killed American self-government by the people." The answer, it went on, was that the American states

'ought to be free and self-governing'.

The Declaration of Independence 250 years earlier asked for a similar dedication to self-governance: "Whenever any form of government becomes destructive ..." wrote Thomas Jefferson, "it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government."

It could be argued that secession is the primal American act, as old as the concept of the states themselves. What else did our founders accomplish in 1776 but secession from the tyranny of England? In other words, what the secessionists would argue is that although they are anti-United States, they are most certainly pro-American ●

Christopher Ketcham is writing a book on American secessionism.

www.christopherketcham.com

**ANNOUNCING THE THIRD
NORTH AMERICAN SECESSIONIST CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 14-16, 2008
IN MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

The Middlebury Institute will stage the Third North American Secessionist Convention in Manchester, New Hampshire, on November 14-16, 2008.

Delegates are expected from a majority of the three-dozen current secessionist organizations in the United States and Canada. As in the two previous conventions – in Burlington, Vermont, in 2006, and Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 2007 – delegations will give reports on the activities in their areas in the previous year and trade information on strategizing, organizing, and politicking.

Both meetings issued declarations of purpose and policy, available on the website, MiddleburyInstitute.org. One highlight of this year's meeting will be a presentation of the idea of an independent Atlantic federation of Canadian maritime provinces and northern New England states.

In addition to delegates mandated by individual secessionist groups, individuals with a general interest in secession and separatism, or who might be considering organizing such a group, are invited to attend. All who intend to attend must contact the Director@MiddleburyInstitute.org

FORUM

ANNOUNCEMENT

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

It is limited to a meagre one page this edition as we have no letters due to an interruption in production. We encourage you to use it. Please send letters to: Letters, Fourth World Transition, 96 Gayton House, Knapp Road, London E3 4BY; or via email to hughes.jon@btinternet.com

Please note it is the policy of Fourth World to print correspondents' names and addresses. In the meantime...



FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENCE

Last year, in response to legal threats and freedom of information requests from the Guardian and its columnist George Monbiot, the government made a frank admission about Peak Oil: "HMG has no contingency plans for peak oil."

Now after a tumultuous year and with the best international experts and most conservative organisation's openly admitting there is a very real crisis, Fourth World correspondent Graham Ennis asked the minister responsible for oil, under the aegis of the Department for Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (there is no dedicated energy portfolio) Malcolm Wicks, what the government's current assessment is.

It seems to be a classic case of crisis? What crisis? "The hydrocarbon

resources around the World are sufficiently abundant to sustain likely growth in the Global energy system for the foreseeable future," he writes. And: "On the balance of the available analysis and evidence, the Government's assessment is that the World's oil resources are sufficient to sustain economic growth for the foreseeable future."

"So," Mr Ennis concludes, "no need to worry then. Until, er, the next time the big international oil markets start a massive price surge, which might not drop, not ever, in our lifetimes... as the last burning of ancient sunlight, laid down as oil in the time of the dinosaurs, flickers, and slowly dwindles.

"What began with the dinosaurs, ends with one, sitting in a government office, carefully avoiding what Al Gore called 'An Inconvenient Truth'" ●

BOOKS

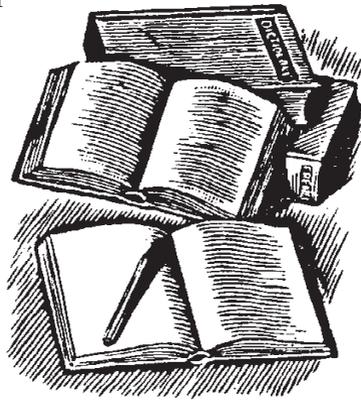
AGAINST CIVILIZATION; READINGS AND REFLECTIONS Enlarged edition Edited by *John Zerzan* (Feral House, Los Angeles).

Zerzan has collected a series of sixty-five short essays, grouped into five sections, in order to explore and elaborate the various costs of the human move from hunter-gatherer to settled agricultural societies and the inevitable power games and exploitative relationships that have characterised every major civilisation since. After extolling the innocent virtues of primitive tribes and their natural vulnerability to invading forces, the book surveys the destructive powers inherent in the state before ending in an entertaining, if rather impotent, call to smash it all up!

At turns, it is mediocre and muddled, progressive and intriguing, inspiring, brilliant, and completely bonkers. Altogether an education and a refreshing examination of what lies behind the human urge

to find roots in nature.

Multiple contributors yearn, and even call, for a return to this garden of Eden, and seem to think that such an undertaking could be achieved, but the book is no manifesto for any kind of change. Nevertheless, for those seeking understanding of why we find solace in wild places, I think I can



recommend *Against Civilization* as ultimately a thoughtful and entertaining read. ● TB

CAPITALISM 3.0: A GUIDE TO RECLAIMING THE COMMONS by *Peter Barnes* (Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco). Peter Barnes is a hugely successful entrepreneur, with an insider's knowledge of financial servic-

es, the money markets and corporate power.

He is also a 'liberal' (in the US sense of not being against a role for government in society).

'Yet,' he writes, 'history has convinced me that representative government can't adequately protect the interests of ordinary citizens. Even less the interests of future generations, ecosystems and non-human species.'

'The reason is that most of the time, government puts the interests of private corporations first. This is a systemic problem of a capitalist democracy, not just a matter of electing new leaders.'

So if capitalism is flawed and inherently destructive, as it's in their self-interest to be, and governments extol growth above all else, where's the hope?

Barnes' answer is simple: we must strengthen the commons – those creations of nature and society we inherit and must preserve for our children. In itself this is not original thinking. What

is, is Barnes' way of making it happen.

He doesn't fanny about with more regulation and corporate social responsibility reports.

He puts the commons on the balance sheet – not subordinate to or separate from a corporation's annual accounts but right there in the profit and loss columns.

He achieves this by creating commons trusts, market-based legal entities with the power to limit the use of scarce commons – such as rain-forest, clean air, water – charge rent and pay dividends.

Barnes argues they would 'institutionalise our obligations to future generations, fellow citizens and nature'.

As Carl Pope executive director of the Sierra Club says, 'Currently business take from the commons without paying and then make the rest of us buy back what we already own.'

Barnes makes a compelling case in this eminently accessible and readable book. His new operating system for capitalism could be enshrined in law overnight. The fact that

it isn't even being discussed depressingly validates Barnes' original analysis ● JH

AFTER THE WAR, IS FAITH POSSIBLE?

Edited by *Kerry Walters* (The Lutterworth Press) Being the edited writings of a first world war padre, this curiously titled book is eminently readable but in conveying the futility and horror of all that carnage, just unbearable.

Thousands upon thousands upon thousands of young men scarcely out of their teens, if that, mown down like dead grass, in a conflict thought at the time to be some sort of historic climacteric when in fact it was but a prelude to an even more terrible war and the mass aerial bombing of helpless civilians, the first use of atomic weaponry, the onset of yet more wars. Wars which go on and on as more and more governing gangsters acquire ever more terrible weapons which they will inevitably use.

Is faith indeed possible? Only, it would seem, if we have the humility to acknowledge

God's problem; how can anything created have any intrinsic meaning without acknowledging the existence of its opposite?

What is the meaning of courage without cowardice? Of love without hate? Of faith without doubt?

The problem is insoluble because we are prisoners of the limitations of our own mortal powers of perception.

We are not Gods.

What taxes my faith is the plummy, soporific, equinamity of the casual acceptance by my fellow Christians of our savagely anti-Christian lifestyle; a genteel round of weekly worship services whilst the world is so evidently going to pot in a welter of wickedness we do nothing to stop.

A single week-end newspaper contains hundreds of pages of consumerist propaganda which fill our wastebins to overflowing; products of an economic system in defence of which we are ready to fight nuclear wars to combat what we call terrorism whilst we ourselves are star players on the terrorist stage ● JP

FOURTH WORLD SPECTATOR

TWO POINTS ABOUT

the US banking crisis: The first is that no amount of public money can save a system of institutionalised greed from its own innate disposition to excess. For years a variety of pundits, including your humble servant, have been indicating the inevitability of a crash in the light of the non-stop growth of the public indebtedness and the readiness of the banking system to accommodate and profit by it. Only a new ethic can rescue the system and, as Adam Smith was at pains to assure us a couple of centuries ago, the assumed self-regulatory character of the market had no need of ethics at all.

The second is to indicate how the work of Leopold Kohr is being vindicated. The USA is the first ninepin to topple because it is the biggest and when others topple it will be from the same cause, they are too big for any human agency to be able to exercise effective control.

A RATHER IMPERTINENT YOUNG MAN

asked me recently, "What is it like being old?" I ask you! I should have asked him what it is like being young? But I was young when pupils were justifiably afraid of their teachers; today teachers are afraid of their pupils. What a turnaround. But one advantage of being old is you no longer have any inhibitions about speaking your mind. After all, you don't have long to go, so say it like it is rather than what political correctness (another name for social cowardice) conditions you to accept.

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS

OF getting old in a world of breakneck technological development is of keeping pace with one or other of the gadgets which erupt into our lives. So often they seem to have been created by young people to torment

their elders. I was trying to change the channels on my TV set, but whichever button I pressed nothing seemed to happen and it was my ever-helpful daughter who tactfully pointed out that to effect the changes I needed it was no good at all to press buttons on my mobile phone.



I HAVE BEEN READING

A LOT about the Black Death. Swelling under armpits and in the groin, oozing pus, agony, and death in two or three days. It wiped out half the population of Europe in a few months and decimated the population of Purton. People fled from the Church area and settled around The Peak to escape it. Now it seems they are going back to around the Church. One of my benign family members has suggested the return is to escape from me. Well they should feel relief when they consider they only

have me around an hour or so a day, whilst I have to put up with myself round the clock.

I WALK THE LENGTH OF my village High Street at least twice a day. It is really a narrow winding cart track which now it is paved still has hardly any pavements. With the advent of motor and lorry traffic on a major scale it has become an accident waiting to happen. I wonder if people are waiting for it to happen before they introduce proper measures to slow down the traffic? As a pedestrian I find a walk is not a form of relaxation; it is an ordeal of constant apprehension, as wing mirrors of speeding vehicles whizz by a matter of inches from my shoulder.

WHAT IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE in public affairs to have occurred in my lifetime? It is surely the lack of serious public discussion about the general shape and direction of our social orders. Even those who talk about party

politics and try to appear to believe what they are saying don't seem to be in anyway concerned, or involved. (*The Spectator* with its constant empty gap-year politics is as good an example from a multitude as any). There is no real seriousness, no sense of commitment, no conviction and no spirit of hope or conviction.

I FOUND MYSELF AT this immense garden party at Buckingham Palace, actually the Lord Chamberlain had been commanded by Her Majesty The Queen to invite me, which when you think about, is rather nice. I had never been among so many holy Bishops in my life, there they were from all over the world and all in purple robes, very awesome.

One of them, from England, asked me rather loftily why I had come, (I think he was really fishing for my non-bishopric status), so I explained I had come to convert my beloved Anglican Church to Christianity.

Whilst his jaw dropped I urged that although attending

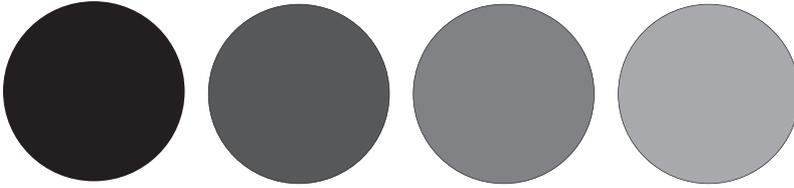
church services could be important, if you were not fighting with all your force to rescue us from gigantic global forms of commercial greed, or from the vast perils of militarism gone mad, from the mass mind-poisoning dangers of advertising, from the wicked assaults on God's creation by mass motoring and mass air travel, and the insane trivialisation of news in mass newspapers ...

Actually I had to pause for breath there, and since the Bishop was staring at me with alarm I was able to add, and if we are not seeking with young people to recover the future they now don't have, then whatever name we choose to give ourselves we are not Christians at all and we are more in league with Satan.

The Bishop suddenly saw someone he really must talk to and hurriedly made off ●



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FOURTH WORLD NEWS

Britain falls from 12th to 16th in the annual corruption league table compiled by Transparency International. Cash for honours, MPs expenses, the dropping of the investigation into the BAE bribery allegations were cited as part of a 'wretched and woeful record'.

● Unable to compete with the march of the multiplex, an independent cinema in Puglia, Italy, is staving off closure by showing residents' wedding videos. ● New research has found that people who live on streets with high levels of motor traffic are far more likely to be socially disconnected and ill. More than five million extra cars are expected on the UK's roads by 2031. ● Household energy bills rise again; the average increase since January is between 34% (EDF Energy) and 46% (British Gas). ● Soon going down the 'local' won't refer to the pub but the supermarket. Under pressure from the smoking ban and aggressive supermarket discounting, 3,600 pubs have closed since the millennium. ● Advances in neuroscience will change the way wars are fought, a study by the US defence intelligence agency has concluded. Chillingly echoing George Orwell's Big Brother, scanners could be used to identify the enemy 'from brain activity'. ● The Dept. of Health announced plans to contact by letter parents of overweight children, to let them know their child's weight is above the healthy norm. Councils say they are having to adapt furniture to cope with heavier wider children. ● War erupts between Russia and Georgia, re-igniting the Cold War. ●

Denmark abandoned plans for a referendum on the status of its EU membership after a referendum in Ireland rejected the Lisbon Treaty. ● The town of Lewes launches a local currency 'to strengthen what's good about our community'. It's one of 9,000 now operating worldwide. ● Prince Charles warns that GM crops will end in 'ecological disaster'. He accused unnamed corporations of 'conducting a gigantic experiment with nature and the whole of humanity which has gone seriously wrong'. ● 240,000, honeybee hives (30%) did not survive the winter. The 'mysterious' collapse could cost £50m in lost ecosystem services. ● The government is offering grants to corner shops to sell more fruit and veg. ● The Chinese Olympics was the most expensive ever at £22.5 billion. London next. ● Plans for a 'snooper's charter', giving hundreds of public bodies the power to access details of everyone's personal text, emails and internet use, are announced by the government. ● Sweden scraps laws stopping parents naming their children after global brands, saying 'there's nothing negative about a name like Coca Cola or McDonald's'. God remains disallowed. ● The world economy goes into freefall. Banks here and in the US are nationalised; laws to protect the consumer are suspended to allow mega mergers and the creation or monopolies; a \$700bn (that's 700,000,000,000 in full) rescue package is debated. ● When Lehman's collapses, \$2.5bn is set aside to pay bonuses.

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