

of the acting president's "pious Muslim outlook."

The third individual in the triumvirate is the Premier Shah Azizur Rahman, who is well known for his strong ties with the Islamic fundamentalists. Premier Rahman was selected by the then Pakistani President Yahya Khan to plead the case against Bangladesh in the U.N. during the liberation war. Premier Rahman also raised the army of Razakars—a Pakistan government-financed organization meant to destroy the nationalist Awami League and Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighters) during the liberation war in 1971. Rahman was also identified by author V. K. Sarin in his book *India's Northeast in Flames*, as a close friend of the CIA agent Nolton who was declared persona non grata by the Indian government for his association with various anti-India forces.

The Islamic fundamentalist group Al Badr, which was involved in mass genocide in collaboration with the Pakistani Army in 1971 has been re-established in Bangladesh with the help of financial and political support from the Persian Gulf region. Another key person among the fundamentalists is Khondakar Mush-taque Ahmed, who was directly involved in the assassination of the founder of Bangladesh, its first President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. Recent press reports indicate that Khondakar is meeting with the Acting President Sattar frequently.

In spite of this apparent control, the oppositionists' voices can be heard. Recently, when two cabinet ministers and former freedom fighters Nurul Islam Shishu and Akbar Hossain were summarily dismissed by Sattar, the press reported a split within the ruling party. The *Times of India* reported in June that Shishu and Hossain had a "wordy altercation with the prime minister in the Parliament, each holding out threats against the other."

Moreover, Pakistan's efforts to establish control over Bangladesh will depend on removal of the nationalist political opposition centered around the Awami League Party founded by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and headed by his daughter Hasina Wazed.

The Awami League has called for boycotting the presidential elections scheduled for October because of growing indications that the elections will be rigged by the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party under Acting President Sattar.

In a recent mass rally at Dacca, the capital of Bangladesh, thousands of Awami League members threatened to launch a "massive and relentless movement" against the Sattar government. The protest featured League demands to withdraw the state of emergency imposed after President Ziaur's death, to guarantee free and fair elections, and to shift the election date to the end of November so that Hasina Wazed will be eligible to run as the Awami League's candidate.

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## Book Review

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### The old Colonial Office mentality

by Ramtanu Maitra and Susan B. Cohen

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#### *Small Is Possible*

by George McRobie

with a foreword by Verena Schumacher

Harper & Row Publishers, Inc.

New York, 1981 \$5.95, 351 pages

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There can hardly be a more painful reflection on the state of humankind in 1981 than the spectacle of a grouping of leaders of nations, some among the poorest in the world, deliberating on how to build windmills. But that's what happened in Nairobi this month at the U.N.-sponsored conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy. At the "North-South" summit meeting in Cancún, Mexico in October, heads of state of North and South will be given a dose of the Brandt Commission's particular version of the "appropriate technologies" doctrine.

This book presents a kind of international directory of "appropriate technology" projects and think tanks, written by an associate of the late E. F. Schumacher, author of that benchmark manifesto of zero-growth environmentalism, *Small is Beautiful*.

With a foreword by Schumacher's wife giving a personal touch—"Fritz would have valued this book"—McRobie proceeds to outline the development of the "appropriate technologies" movement before getting into the directory proper.

There is little new here, except the reminder that when Schumacher proposed the "appropriate technology" package of low-technology, employment-creating economic programs to the Indian Planning Commission in 1961 he was turned away out of hand. How Mr. Schumacher secured the invitation to regale Nehru's planners in the first place is not mentioned, but one senses the hand of Lord Mountbatten, the Earl of Burma, in the wings.

In any case, it took the British Foreign Office, that repository of old colonial hands for whom the sun has yet to set, to recognize the merits of Schumacher's approach. In 1963 Schumacher was given the go-ahead by Britain's Overseas Development Institute (ODI). The ODI hosted establishment of Schumacher's Intermediate Technology Development Group in 1965—what McRobie describes as "an action group" to promote appro-

priate technology—simultaneous with the London *Observer's* August 1965 publication of a major popular tract by Schumacher, titled "How to Help Them Help Themselves."

Smallness was off and running, and hardly by dint of its own bootstraps, McRobie's insistent disclaimers about financial support notwithstanding. Five years later the Club of Rome and its *Limits to Growth* publicly took up the mission.

McRobie faithfully restates the original doctrine to prevent development of the Third World and turn back the clock on advanced industrial civilization in the developed countries, citing Schumacher's speeches and writings. Technology must meet four criteria: 1) smallness; 2) simplicity; 3) capital cheapness; and 4) "nonviolence." As McRobie paraphrased Schumacher:

The support being given to concentrations of large-scale industry could only exacerbate the twin problems looming over virtually every developing country; mass rural unemployment and underemployment, and mass migration to the cities. Moreover economic growth, a purely quantitative concept without any qualitative determination, cannot be accepted as a rational objective of policy.

Exhibiting a perverse fascination with primitivism. Schumacher repeatedly described Third World, and especially rural, tribal peoples as "survival artists" who—unlike urban populations—could certainly endure any ecological or other world calamity.

This is nothing but the old "happy native" routine drummed up by British colonialists, that is at the root of all philosophies, most prominently environmentalism, based on a hatred of man.

Schumacher's perverted view of man becomes shrill when McRobie reviews for us his views on the subject of violence:

Modern technology has become increasingly violent. Violence is not just a matter of one person hitting another person over the head, it is employing violent means. We have this in agriculture, where we scatter around very violent chemicals, we call them pesticides, which means killer substances. . . . Of course the greatest readiness to resort to violence we are now experiencing is in our attempts to cope with the energy problem, where we are prepared to put into the world large amounts of plutonium, a substance of a really unbelievable ghastliness, which the good Lord never made. He knew where to stop. It is a man-made thing.

Schumacher and McRobie are apparently oblivious to the violence of famine and widespread depopulation that will follow from their prescription. Or not precisely

oblivious: Schumacher explains that in the natural order of primitive tribal ritual culture such periodic scourges are both expected and accepted as part of "life." It is this cultism that allows Schumacher et al. to degrade the notion of employment to "keeping people busy," and then to elevate that principle above all others in so-called development policy-making.

In a several-page section on the myriad contributions of appropriate technology to developing-sector farming—the discovery and carving of primitive hand tools—there is not a word about the effect of such utensils on production of food, or *productivity*.

The greatest resource in the world, the capacity for human self-development, does not exist in the Schumacherian universe. In that universe human beings are social *animals*, a variety of talking beast for whom large and complex technologies are an oppression and not a means for improvement. As McRobie puts it: "For a developing country, generally speaking, the larger and more complex the technologies it gets, the greater becomes its dependence, economic and cultural, upon the rich industrialized nations."

Schumacher and his cothinkers' "development" doctrine—to opt for an ox instead of a tractor to till the land—is now backed up by volumes of mathematical and theoretical justification churned out by kept economists and "development theorists" at Oxford, Sussex, and the London School of Economics. Buried under the heap of evil rationales concerning the "cost-effective" merit of such an investment program is the fact that the ox driver is forced to live at approximately the same standard of living as his ox.

What does become apparent in the book is that McRobie and Schumacher have quite a few friends in the Third World—who are dedicated to ensuring that it remains the "Third World"! There is a detailed directory of the spook networks in the Indian subcontinent, Africa (especially Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania), and Latin America. The proliferation of backwardness projects in the advanced sector is also noteworthy, not so much for their direct impact but for what their existence says about a process of decay of civilization right under our noses. Britain and the United States are featured.

McRobie would like people to believe that small is possible. It is not; and the human race need not prove that once again by deliberately fostering a process of devolution in the name of "small is beautiful."

To cult members this book is nothing new. We recommend it highly for the directory of operatives within the government of former colonial nations for purposes of identifying foreign subversion of national sovereignty—the United States included.

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*A briefer version of this review appeared in the Indian newspaper New Wave.*