
Book Reviews

Jimmy Goldsmith's little 'trap'

by Jacques Cheminade

Le Piège

by Jimmy Goldsmith

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Opposition in France to unbridled free trade has been growing and passions are running high, especially as the U.S.-dictated Dec. 15 deadline for France to ratify the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade approaches. Farmers, workers, textile businessmen, and even actors have taken to the streets against GATT, and Rural Coordination, an independent grouping of farmers, has played a key role. Even some financiers have come out opposing GATT and are attempting to co-opt the legitimate opposition to forestall close examination of their precious "free market." Jimmy Goldsmith is exemplary. The following review of his book The Trap was translated from French. Goldsmith is planning to publish an English-language edition some time next year.

Big noise in the microcosm of Paris: Jimmy Goldsmith has come out as an "adversary of global free trade"; is denouncing "without inhibition" the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade; rejects the united Europe of Maastricht; is calling for "another choice for agriculture"; and skewers the "bureaucratic and corporatist carcass." Everywhere, people shout about his reconversion (or conversion), they celebrate the "opponent of circular thinking," they flatter "the originality of his words." But it's much ado about nothing. This "Franco-British citizen" is simply trying to sell to the French public the old carcass of social Darwinism, accompanied with the proper sauce to excite French palates.

If ever one might be in agreement with some elements of the analysis contained in the first chapters of his book, the later ones give away what the fraud relies on.

It is true that the "logic" of GATT and the Europe of the Maastricht Treaty is, among the wealthy countries, to create

unemployment by relocating to poor countries, and to have the poor countries subsidize the wealthy, to the detriment of their own poor people and those of the wealthy countries to boot.

Behind the smoke and mirrors

So, what does Mr. Goldsmith propose? First of all, no Marshall Plan for the East: The poor folk there would be too dishonest and disorganized to make good use of it. Hence, if global free trade is disastrous, it would be completely desirable among the "club of rich countries." Mr. Goldsmith preaches "free markets among regionally homogeneous economies"; he's a liberal—and a partisan of the "free market"—but by regions, among themselves, just like the clubs in the City of London.

That means that no fundamental problem is broached, except the illusion that 20% of the world could control the rest by a sound policy of crisis management. And in order to sell this bill of goods, Mr. Goldsmith, straight from his experience at smoke and mirrors, proposes "a society flush with villages, small artisans, a multitude of small and medium-size enterprises opening up a wide spectrum of activities," the return to "non-intensive agriculture," a society "based on local development rather than urban concentration," and the restoration of spirituality and holiness. In sum, a New Age cocktail to seduce peasants from the Garonne, Auvergne, or Gers, while titillating the *salons parisiens*.

Well then, what is this "trap" hiding? The further one goes in this book, the more Goldsmith shows his hand.

First there appears a tirade against nuclear energy: It is not profitable and constitutes a weapon of the nucleocrats, the secular arm of state totalitarianism (that old song). The future is in "renewable resources" and in a "reduction in electricity consumption," for example, the so-called 55% reduction in the United States. (There is a finely tuned division of labor: Teddy, Jimmy's older brother, is a radical ecologist, whereas Jimmy has freely ensconced himself in a superb Mexican hacienda, a bit like the "familial proprietaries" so hailed these days by the ex-predator of Wall Street and the City of London.)

Next, says Sir James (a onetime admirer and practitioner of the Thatcher-Reagan shock therapy), we must return to spirituality and reestablish the balance between man and nature. The cult of science, technology, and progress has become the religion of modern western man, and therein lies the source of our ills! Acknowledging himself to be a disciple of Friedrich von Hayek—let's mention in passing, so is Jean-Marie Le Pen—Goldsmith strikes the chord of the Amerindian religions, comfortably installed with his billions.

He does not hesitate—logically, being a good malthusian, like Jacques Cousteau—to find fault with the very foundations of Judeo-Christianity, and to attack the book of Genesis: "God created man in His image. . . . God blessed them, saying: 'Be fertile and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. . . .'"

Free market 'theology'

Since he's an intelligent man and a good "son of the pubs," he both proclaims the superiority of primitive religions based on the communion between man and nature rather than the superiority of man, and declares that the "Judeo-Christian current of thought that most promotes it" comes from St. Francis of Assisi, who himself proclaimed the veneration that man owes to nature as a creation of God.

Jimmy Goldsmith, theologian and metaphysician—now we've seen it all! Fortunately, while financial derivatives, in dollars or pounds sterling, allow him to buy anything, including the ideology of his own victims, they do not allow him to pervert either human reason, or justice, or natural law, or even the most fundamental of religious messages.

After all, the reality of this *fin de siècle* is simple: Either the prevailing financial and monetary economic system is stopped cold and the productive economy restored to its command post, with technological discoveries applied to new industries, or, for sure—with or without spiritualism and crocodile tears—the world will head first toward disintegration, then war.

As the book of Genesis indicates, human history is characterized by the growth of demographic density, a capacity for populating the universe thanks to knowledge and mastery of its laws, in the form of new technologies. To deny this human quality, which differentiates man from animals, as Jimmy Goldsmith does in his pathos, to deny the products of the most advanced human discoveries, such as nuclear energy, which permits us to populate the universe, is to deny creation itself, to deny that man were created in the image of God. It is to project onto the world the image of a predator, repentant or not, but solely capable of thinking of the world in terms of predation or passivity.

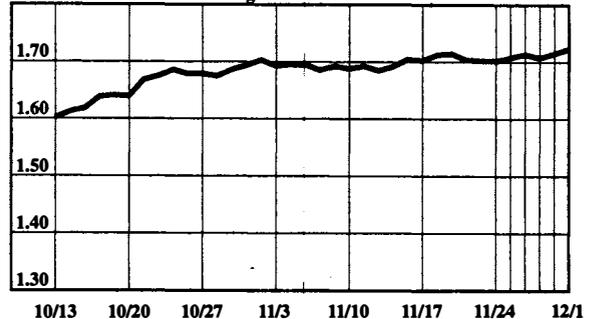
Contrary to all that Goldsmith affirms, the Franciscan current was not based on a passive veneration of nature, but went to the bottom of what makes up human nature, the respect for divine creation, and therefore, in itself, the faculty of creating. It is thus that this Franciscan "simplicity," this "goodness," awakened and inspired discoveries in science—of the divine work—bringing into being the Renaissance. We need no more than look, with a bit of sensitivity, at the works of Giotto, Fra Angelico, and Piero della Francesca.

Goldsmith proposes instead a "return to nature," an issue supposed to bring back the past, to the point of questioning the very foundations of Judeo-Christian civilization. This issue leads nowhere, except to the world of Hobbes, in which man becomes a wolf toward man. The trap of Jimmy Goldsmith is the nightmare of a predator. Remember: Those who celebrated the "savage life of the American Indians," collect their artifacts, their feathers, or their photographs, are, within the Anglo-American oligarchy, the very ones who looted the former's lands. Will the peasants of Garonne, Gers, and Auvergne be for Jimmy Goldsmith and his friends, the American Indians of the close of the 20th century?

Currency Rates

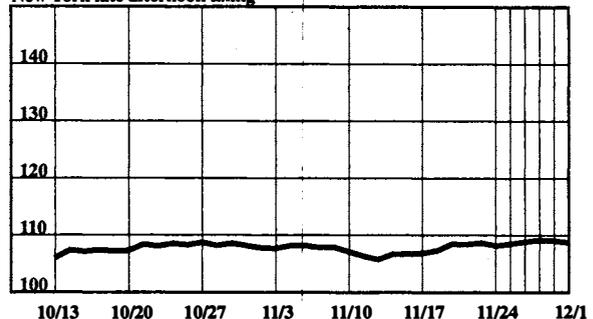
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



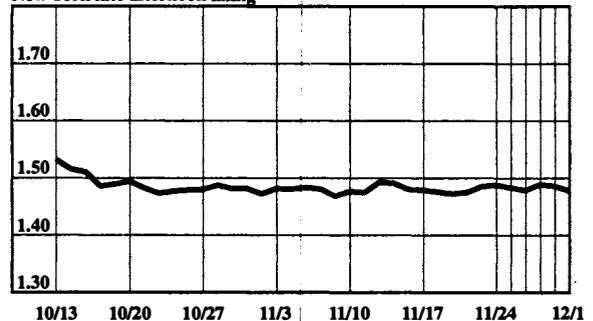
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing

