

“Tom Paine for the 21st century. A surprisingly compelling argument for applying the small-is-beautiful philosophy to the United States itself.”

--Jay Walljasper
Editor of *Ode* magazine

*“I must assure you of my pleasure in, and approval of, your views on the **Second Vermont Republic**. The assertion by Vermonters of a sensible foreign policy is wonderfully to the good. You have my agreement and my admiration.”*

--John Kenneth Galbraith
Harvard Economist

“All power to Vermont in its effort to distinguish itself from the U.S.A. as a whole, and to pursue in its own way the cultivation of its tradition. My enthusiasm for what you are trying to do in Vermont remains undiminished; I am happy for any small support I can give it.”

--George F. Kennan
Former Ambassador to Russia
and Professor, Institute for
Advanced Studies, Princeton

“A serious examination of our God given right of self governance and that right’s implication for secession. Dr. Naylor has made a persuasive case of the identical response to today’s ‘train of abuses’ that led the Founders to secede from King George’s tyranny.”

--Walter E. Williams
John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics,
George Mason University

“In 1991 the Soviet Union was peacefully dissolved by the secession of 15 states. It had become simply too large and centralized. So has the American Union. Thoughtful people from every side of the political spectrum are beginning to realize that the only check to the tyranny, insecurity, and spirit numbing mass culture that continued centralization would bring is to seriously consider breaking the American empire up into alternative unions and/or smaller polities. Professor Naylor is part of this debate and

has made a compelling case that little Vermont would be better off out of the Union.”

--Donald Livingston
Professor of Philosophy,
Emory University

“Thomas Naylor makes a powerful case for an independent Vermont. I think folks may soon be ready to consider this kind of wise and humane radicalism.”

--Bill Kauffman
Author of *Look Homeward, America*

*“Tom Naylor makes a serious case for an independent Vermont, a **Second Vermont Republic** that could immediately enter the world of nations and thereby begin the peaceful, democratic, and indeed moral process of disuniting the United States.”*

--Frank Bryan
University of Vermont Professor
And Author of *Real Democracy*

*“From the standpoint of puppeteers and their subversive papier-mâché, the **Vermont Second Republic** sounds like a very good idea to fight the megalomania of the globalizers.”*

--Peter Schumann
Founder, Bread & Puppet Theater

“There are very few radical thinkers. Thomas Naylor is one of the most courageous of these. Distinguished, deeply moral, genius wild man.”

--Carolyn Chute
Author of *The Beans of Egypt, Maine, Merry Men and Snow Man*

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Chapter 5

SOME MODELS FOR AN INDEPENDENT VERMONT

Switzerland solved the problems of minorities by means of creating minority states rather than minority rights.

Leopold Kohr
The Breakdown of Nations, 1957

If the United States is not a sustainable nation-state, as many think to be the case, then how could or should an independent-minded state such as Vermont survive successfully as a separate republic? Should it be entirely independent, or should it attempt to create a federation with other small states? Are there any examples of smaller, sustainable nation-states or federations that might serve as a role model for a state like Vermont, should it decide to leave the Union?

There is at least one nation that might serve as a viable model for an independent Vermont, or perhaps for a confederation that would include Vermont along with several other smallish states (and/or what are now Canadian provinces): the Swiss Confederation.

With a population of only 7.3 million people, a little larger than that of an average American state, Switzerland is one of the wealthiest, most democratic, least violent, most market-oriented countries in the world, with the weakest central government and the most decentralized social welfare system. Founded in 1291 near Lake Lucerne, the Swiss Confederation may be the most sustainable nation-state of all-time.

Situated in the heart of Europe, Switzerland has always existed in a state of tension between opening and closing its borders to the outside world. Even today it has nearly one million so-called “guest workers.” For centuries it has been an area of settlement and a transit region of European north-south commerce. The country’s economy has long been geared to processing imported raw materials and re-exporting them as finished goods, such as specialty foods and pharmaceutical products.

The Swiss enjoy state-of-the-art technology, and their banks and financial institutions are among the most stable and financially secure anywhere in the world. The same is true of the Swiss franc.

Swiss Federalism. Over the past seven hundred years or so Switzerland has developed a unique social and political structure, with a strong emphasis on federalism and direct democracy, which brings together its 26 cantons (tiny states), with populations ranging from 14,900 to 1,187,600, and its four languages and cultures—German, French, Italian, and Romansch. The Swiss cantons enjoy considerably more autonomy than do American states. One finds a host of local and regional cultures and traditions melded into a patchwork of sights and events that are considered “typically Swiss.” There appears to be less tension among competing cultures, religions, and cantons than one finds in the United States.

Switzerland has a coalition government with a rotating presidency, in which the president serves for only one year. Many Swiss do not know who of the seven Federal Councillors in the government is the president at any given time, since he or she is first among equals.

Direct Democracy. In Switzerland a petition signed by one hundred thousand voters can force a nationwide vote on a proposed constitutional change and the signatures of only fifty thousand voters can force a national referendum on any federal law passed by Parliament.

Several cantons still follow the centuries-old traditions of *Landsgemeinde* or open-air parliaments each spring. Others are experimenting with voting over the Internet.

However, it is at the commune level that Swiss democracy is most direct. Within the cantons, there are 2,902 communes in the Swiss Confederation, each run by a local authority. Just as the cantons enjoy a high degree of independence from the national government, within the cantons many of the communes also enjoy a high degree of independent authority and decision-making.

Swiss Neutrality. Switzerland has not been involved in a foreign war since 1515, and although it is heavily armed, it has remained neutral since 1815. It has never been part of a larger empire.

Swiss foreign policy is based on four premises: (1) Switzerland will never initiate a war. (2) It will never enter a war on the side of a warring party. (3) It will never side in any way with one warring party against another. (4) It will vigorously defend itself against outside attack.

According to the Swiss constitution, every Swiss male is obligated to do military service; women are also accepted into the military service on a voluntary basis but are not drafted. In case of an attack on the country several hundred thousand men and women can be mobilized within a few days.

Even though Geneva is home to many agencies of the United Nations, only recently did the Swiss vote to join the U.N. Although the Swiss do trade extensively with member nations of the European Union, the Swiss citizenry has consistently rejected membership in the EU, even though the Berne central government favors membership.

Neutrality does not mean non-involvement. In terms of foreign aid contributed to Third World countries, the Swiss contribute nearly three times as much, as a percentage of their Gross national income, as is contributed by The United States.

Infrastructure. Despite their fierce independence, Swiss towns, villages, and cantons do cooperate on major infrastructure projects involving the general public interest, including railroads, highways, tunnels, electric energy, water supply, and pollution abatement.

Many Swiss villages are linked by a network of passenger trains. Through efficient, high-quality railroads, village residents have easy access to neighboring villages as well as the larger cities such as Geneva and Zurich (both consistently ranked among the ten best cities in the world in which to live). The railroads provide a sense of connectedness to the rest of the country and to Europe as a whole.

Humane Health Care. In the highly decentralized Swiss health care system it is possible for patients, physicians, clinics, hospitals, and insurance providers to be in community with one another. Unlike in the United States, 95 percent of all Swiss

citizens are insured against illness by one of four hundred private health insurance funds. The Swiss health care system is second of none, as is demonstrated by the fact that the Swiss infant mortality rate is among the lowest in the world in contrast to that of the United States which compares favorably with Eastern European countries like Hungary, Poland, and the Slovak Republic.

Quality Education. Although the Swiss constitution stipulates that “the right to sufficient and free primary education is guaranteed,” there is no federal or national Department of Education. Rather, education is governed by the 26 different cantons. Swiss children are required by canton law to attend school. Kindergarten is voluntary and free. Some 99 percent of Swiss children attend kindergarten for at least one year, 63 percent for two. Instruction is given in the local national language, but each child also has the option to learn one of the other national languages. Those who plan to attend a university may go to one of three kinds of high schools specializing in either Greek and Latin, modern languages, or mathematics and science. Students who attend one of the seven public universities pay no tuition.

Decentralized Social Welfare. Swiss children are taught in small schools the virtues of self-sufficiency, hard work, cooperation, and loyalty to family and community. Since public assistance is funded locally, it pays off in visible ways for the community to discourage welfare dependency.

Aid plans are custom-designed with strict time limits. The objective is to help the client get back on his or her feet. For a few francs one can obtain any individual’s tax return—no questions asked. This helps keep welfare clients honest. Thus the Swiss practice what conservatives preach but rarely practice—complete decentralization of the responsibility for social welfare.

Alpine Villages. Scattered throughout the Swiss Alps and neighboring Austria, Bavaria, and Northern Italy are dozens of small villages in most of these Alpine villages there is an inexorable commitment to the land. A gift of land from one’s parents carries with it a moral obligation of continued stewardship. Few would think of selling their land and leaving the village.

The church is often the center of village spiritual life, as well as social life. Friends meet at the market, the pub, the inn, the post office, and the churchyard to catch

up on village news. The severe winters create an environment encouraging cooperation, sharing, and trust. The extraordinary beauty and the severity of the winters provide the glue which holds these communities together.

In these villages, in stark contrast to the rootless mobility that characterizes American life, one finds a sense of continuity where the generations are born, grow up, remain, and eventually die—a mentality which pervades all of Switzerland. Protective agricultural policies have made it financially viable for families to remain in the countryside. Conspicuously absent is the dilapidation, deterioration, and decay found throughout the American countryside—particularly in the rural South.

Swiss Agriculture. Even though only 4 percent of the Swiss people still live on farms, they manage to produce two-thirds of the foodstuff consumed annually by the entire country. So important is agriculture to Swiss culture, Swiss tourism, and ultimately the Swiss economy, that the Berne government has devised a creative system of direct payments to farmers over and above the income they receive from their produce. These payments remunerate the farmers for the services they are considered to provide to the population as a whole. These services include managing the rural landscape, managing the natural heritage, ensuring food supplies, and encouraging decentralization. Payments are made to farmers only if farm animals are kept under animal-friendly conditions, reasonable amounts of fertilizer are used, a suitable area is set aside for the maintenance of environmental balance, crops are rotated, soil quality is perfected, and plant protection products are used sparingly. The sophisticated payment formula also takes into consideration the farmer's age and income level, as well as the farm size and the number of farm animals. In Switzerland, sustainable agriculture is neither left to chance nor to the market alone.

Since small Swiss farms use fewer nitrates, pesticides, and herbicides, the Swiss wells and streams are much less likely to be contaminated than those in the United States. Swiss farmers have been pioneers in the field of environmental-friendly production methods, and serve as examples for other countries to follow. For example, recently Swiss voters passed a five-year ban on the use of genetically modified plants and animals in farming.

Environmentalism. Not surprisingly, there are not nearly as many federal government environmental regulations in Switzerland as there are in the United States. Concern for the environment originates at the village and canton level in Switzerland, not in Berne.

Although acid rain has taken its toll on Swiss forests, water pollution—with a few notable exceptions—is rare. However, Switzerland and France have recently experienced disastrous Alpine road tunnel fires. Environmentalists have opposed reopening these tunnels, arguing that heavy truck traffic pollutes the air and harms people and trees in areas of great beauty visited by many tourists. They insist that freight should be hauled in containers carried on trains rather than barreling through the Alps in convoys of polluting trucks.

Per capita energy use in Switzerland is only 46 percent of that in the United States in spite of the harsh winters experienced in the Swiss Alps.

Conclusion. Switzerland is not Utopia, and certainly the Swiss are not without their critics. Some view them as arrogant, narcissistic, racist, secretive, sexist, and xenophobic, --the latter despite the fact that they live together peacefully with many foreigners, currently nearly 20 percent of the Swiss resident population.

Swiss banks came under attack in the 1990s for the way they handled deposits of World War II Holocaust victims as well as Nazi gold deposits. Zurich has major problems with both drug abuse and AIDS. The bankruptcy of Swiss Air was also a major embarrassment to the Swiss, as was the air traffic control mishap over Swiss airspace which resulted in the midair collision of two jets.

The inescapable conclusion engendered by a visit to Switzerland is that Switzerland works. It works because it is a tiny, hard-working, democratic country with a strong sense of community. An independent Vermont, alone or in a federation with other states and/or provinces, could also work very well in much the same way.

Minority States Not Minority Rights

I grew up in Jackson, Mississippi back in the 40s and 50s under one of the most insidious socio-economic, political systems of all time—forced racial segregation. Blacks

and whites could be arrested for eating together in a restaurant, attending the same school, sitting along side each other on a city bus, going to a movie together, drinking from the same water fountain, or sleeping together. All of this was rationalized by the big lie, “separate but equal,” a lie which I had figured out by the time I was thirteen.

Beginning with the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision on school desegregation and continuing through the Civil Rights Acts of the late 60s, forced racial segregation was soon replaced by forced racial integration. The premise underlying forced integration was that we are all the same, and just in case we don’t get it, the full force of the federal government will be brought to bear on those who don’t comply.

I deeply resented the laws of Mississippi and other Southern states which precluded the possibility of significant social interaction with African Americans prior to the late 60s and early 70s. By what authority should the state be telling me with whom I could or could not associate? But a few years later the federal government began ordering me to associate with minorities whether I liked it or not. It was the law of the land. The problem with forced segregation and forced integration is that they are both deeply alienating policies. Why were they the only two policy alternatives ever considered by intransigent Southern political leaders committed to preserving the status quo and unimaginative, revengeful Washington bureaucrats? Since the Civil Rights Acts, American jurisprudence has been decidedly biased towards the view that minority rights always trump states’ rights.

But in his prescient 1957 book *The Breakdown of Nations*, Austrian economist Leopold Kohr took note of the fact that the Swiss have a completely different approach to the solution of their minority problems. To deal with conflicts between minorities, the Swiss don’t try to impose minority rights on the entire Swiss population, but rather they create tiny minority states, cantons, to sort out these problems.

When internal differences emerged within several cantons that “would have created minority problems and necessitated a greater degree of mutual submission than could be reconciled with the ideals of democratic freedom,” three cantons were simply subdivided into “sovereign halves” completely independent from one another. According to Kohr, “Division, not union, was the device by which the Swiss have preserved their unity and peace,” since the thirteenth century.

What could be more absurd than trying to reach a political consensus on anything among 300 million people in a country which possesses the cultural, ethnic, religious, and political diversity of the United States? Why does our government keep pretending that we are all the same? The Soviet Union made that mistake, and look what happened to it. So, too, did Yugoslavia. Consider the price Iraq has paid for the unsuccessful attempt by the Pentagon to unify a nation which defies unity.

Congress will never craft an immigration bill that will satisfy all of the diverse constituencies affected by such legislation. Truly an act of futility. Different regions have different immigration needs and different concerns.

Consider the case of Vermont, arguably the most radical, most democratic, least violent, and most racially homogenous state in the Union. Few Vermonters oppose abortion, civil unions, or legalized marijuana. Most are opposed to the war in Iraq, the death penalty, and gun control laws. Racial minorities are treated extremely well, even though they are small in number.

In the event of a Red State takeover of the U.S. government, should the government be allowed to ban abortion, civil unions, and marijuana in Vermont? Vermont is a live and let live sort of place. What about a Blue State takeover? What would be gained by ramming the Blue State agenda down the throats of all Red States? Different folks require different strokes.

While average incomes from African Americans have certainly gone up since the 60s, particularly in the South, race relations in both the North and South still leave a lot to be desired. The legacy of slavery and forced racial segregation lives on as does the rage of its victims.

I believe the time has come to seriously consider the possible use of minority states in America to deal with the problems of minorities whether they be ethnic, cultural, social, religious, or political minorities. Of course, participation in such states should be completely voluntary and only at the discretion of individual citizens. We are not talking about deporting people to the Yukon Territory or forcing them to move to a newly created minority state. Minority states represent new options, not a curse.

As we noted in the previous chapter, no ethnic group has a stronger claim for minority state status than Native Americans. We also suggested that independent Indian states might be sustainable in Arizona, California, and Oklahoma.

South Florida, South Texas, and Los Angeles County might each become Hispanic States or independent Hispanic Nations. French speaking Southwest Louisiana might be reconstituted as Acadia South.

The handful of predominantly African American counties in Northwest Mississippi known as the Mississippi Delta might become the first Black State or independent Black Nation in North America. Thanks to legalized dockside casino gambling on the Mississippi River in Tunica, the Delta is no longer one of the poorest regions in the country. Parts of Alabama, Georgia, Northern Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina might also be candidates for the same.

Utah, the stronghold of the Church of Latter Day Saints, otherwise known as the Mormon Church, might easily become a Mormon State. It might even be possible to carve out a tiny Amish State in Pennsylvania.

The people of the Vermont ski resort, Killington, think their taxes are too high and want to secede and join New Hampshire. Why not?

Obviously the transition from minority rights imposed on all 300 million of us to a federation of minority states is a radical departure from business as usual in the United States. One could imagine a wide variety of minority states including those for evangelical Christians, gays and lesbians, nudists, socialists, anarchists, Muslims, and those who prefer communal living to mention only a few. Some or all of the Southern states may want to go their separate way. Supporters of the New Hampshire Free State project hope to establish a libertarian state.

As theologian Paul Tillich repeatedly reminded us, not only are we not all the same, but we are separated—separated from ourselves, separated from others, and separated from the ground of our being. To cope with our separation we seek human connectedness. In the words of Albert Camus, “The thing that lights up the world and makes it bearable is the customary feeling we have of connections with it---and more particularly of what links us to human beings.” We have a never-ending longing for community—an irresistible need for communication with other human beings. A

community is a partnership of free people committed to the care and nurturing of each other's mind, body, heart, and spirit through participatory means. Small minority states offer the possibility of community not often found in meganations like the United States.

Rather than continuing its policy of imposing repressive laws on the entire nation in the name of protection of minority rights, the federal government should encourage the creation of small minority states to accommodate the needs of all sorts of minorities. We might all gain from the experience.

Among the eight Americans recognized by John F. Kennedy in his 1955 book *Profiles in Courage* was Mississippi statesman Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar. Lamar not only served in the U.S. House and Senate, but he was Secretary of the Interior and the only Mississippian to sit on the bench of the U.S. Supreme Court. Lamar was profiled by Kennedy because of a speech he delivered on the floor of the House of Representatives in 1874 upon the death of Massachusetts abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner.

Lamar was known as a former political “firebrand” who wrote the Mississippi Articles of Secession. Sumner was a thorn in the flesh of white Southerners. In his eulogy to Sumner, Lamar quite unexpectedly called for reconciliation between the North and the South and between the races.

Maybe it's high time we finish the process started by L. Q. C. Lamar back in 1874 by introducing minority states into the home of the free and the brave.

New Acadia

Some proponents of Vermont independence would like to see it become and remain a stand-alone nation, completely independent of either the United States or Canada. Others have proposed that it join Canada or an independent Quebec. My own favorite fantasy would be for Vermont to join Maine, New Hampshire, and the four Atlantic provinces of Canada to create a new nation I would call New Acadia.

If Quebec were to split with Canada, the Atlantic provinces would be completely separated from the rest of Canada. But whether Quebec secedes or not, the Atlantic provinces will still be dominated by Toronto's size and financial clout, Alberta's oil,

Vancouver's Pacific connection, and Ottawa's bureaucracy. So too are Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont virtually powerless to challenge the will of California, New York and Texas. What big states and big cities want is what they get.

To put the matter in proper perspective, consider the following question: What do Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont have in common with Boston, New York, Washington, Atlanta, Houston, and Los Angeles? The same thing New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have in common with Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, and Vancouver. Virtually nothing! But what do these Northern New England states have in common with the Atlantic provinces? A lot!

Not only do both regions share a common Franco-Anglo (and Native American) heritage, but they are both sparsely populated. Their combined population is only 5.4 million—about the size of Denmark. There are no big cities in either region, only a handful of small ones like Halifax, Manchester, Portland, Saint John, and St. John's.

Although the mountains in New England are higher than those in the Atlantic provinces and although Vermont is only indirectly linked to the Atlantic, the two regions are amazingly similar geographically and equally beautiful. Their climate is quite similar, too—in fact on balance the four provinces have milder winters than their southern neighbors thanks to the warming effects of the Gulf Stream.

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island encompass the site of what was the first permanent French colony in North America, the region known as Acadia. According to some accounts, Acadia got its name from Italian explorer Giovanni de Verrazzano, who in the service of France explored the North Atlantic coast in 1524. Verrazzano called the area Arcadia after the idyllic region of ancient Greece known for the simple, quiet, contented lifestyle of its pastoral people. The *r* was later dropped.

Although two-thirds of the people living in the Atlantic provinces have some English ancestry, French influence remains strong, particularly in New Brunswick where 45 percent of the population have some French connection. The Acadian influence spilled over into both Maine and Vermont, where there are still some French speakers today.

Neither region treated native Americans very well. The Micmac still have some influence in the maritime provinces, as do the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy in Maine, and to a lesser extent the Abenakis in Vermont.

Life is lived at a slower pace and on a smaller scale in both the Atlantic provinces and northern New England. People are more laid back than they are in the rest of Canada and the United States, and small is still beautiful. For example, Vermont and Prince Edward Island share the distinction of having banned all roadside billboards. Freedom, independence, self-sufficiency, hard work, thrift, respect for individual rights, environmental integrity, and loyalty to family and community are among the common values shared by these regions.

Although trade flows between the regions are not impressive, their economies are quite similar. In varying degrees tourism, fishing, farming, food-processing, forest products, and mining are the most important industries in each area.

Few New Englanders have ever visited their bucolic neighbors to the North. Public transportation options connecting northern New England and Canada's Maritime provinces are minimal, and there are no good roads linking Maine and New Brunswick. Passenger train service between the two regions ceased to exist years ago (although those living in northern Vermont do have access to "The Ocean," a first-class overnight train between Montreal and Halifax on Via Rail and one of the best-kept secrets in North America). Unfortunately, attempts to connect the two regions with airline service have consistently failed.

On the more positive side, and perhaps a precursor of things to come, 300 business and government leaders from the Atlantic provinces and northern New England met in Saint John, New Brunswick in June 2006 to discuss ways to expand business and trade between the two regions. Discussions focused primarily on tourism, transportation, and energy.

My imagined new little country of New Acadia would be a threat to no one. It certainly would not possess the power to impose its will on meganations like China, Japan, or Russia. Why pretend otherwise? Power of that sort has certainly not proven necessary for such highly successful nations as Denmark, Finland, and Switzerland.

Isn't it high time for the people of these similar regions to tell the United States and Canada to bug off? Shouldn't we seriously consider forming New Acadia, combining our two regions into a new independent confederation? Our role model, Denmark, has the eighth highest per capita income in the world. Of the nine other richest nations in the world, two-thirds of them—Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Bermuda, Norway, Iceland, and Ireland—are even smaller than Denmark.

Even if New Acadia's average income remained below that of Canada and the United States, the quality of life would be considerably higher. The new nation would have less traffic congestion, less urban sprawl, less crime, less pollution, and less urban decay than most places in the world. In my vision it would certainly be a sustainable nation-state.

Our two regions are too small and unimportant to the United States and Canada for us to be able reasonably to expect either of these huge national governments to appreciate or celebrate our uniqueness. If we want to take control of our destiny in the twenty-first century, we must start now to develop a vision of what we could build.

Chapter 6

THE GENTEEL REVOLUTION

*You can say you want a revolution
Well, you know we all want to change the world.*

John Lennon
Paul McCartney

The headline of an Associated Press release dated 2 June 2007, seen around the world read “In Vermont, Nascent Secession Movement Gains Traction.” Across the Green Mountains there is a whiff of revolution in the air - - a quiet and thoughtful revolution in which the revolutionists are well-educated, articulate writers, artists, academics, blue collar workers, doctors, farmers, lawyers, merchants, publishers, and other rebels committed to the belief that the United States of America has lost its moral authority and is unsustainable, ungovernable, and, therefore, unfixable. These genteel rebels have called for the peaceful return of Vermont to its status as an independent republic as it once was between 1777 and 1791 and the dissolution of the American empire.

Taking their cues from the 1961 Broadway musical “Stop the World - - I Want to Get Off,” these modern day secessionists want to free themselves from a technofascist state which condones a convoluted war on terrorism, a foreign policy based on full-spectrum dominance and imperial overstretch, the rendition of terrorist suspects, prisoner abuse and torture, the suppression of civil liberties, citizen surveillance, corporate greed, pandering to the rich and powerful, environmental degradation, pseudo-religious drivel, and a culture of deceit.

These radical intellectuals recognize the importance of the village green as a metaphor for Vermont - - a place where people meet to chat, have a coffee, a locally brewed beer, a glass of wine, or a bite to eat; read a newspaper; listen to music; smell the flowers; and pass the time away. They know that the village green is all about the politics of human scale - - small towns, small businesses, small schools, and small churches. The Vermont village green is neat, clean, democratic, nonviolent, noncommercial, egalitarian,

and humane. It is a mirror image of the way America once was, but no longer knows how to be.

Among the principles to which supporters of Vermont's genteel revolution subscribe are political independence, human scale, sustainability, economic solidarity, power sharing, equal opportunity, tension reduction, and community. The very essence of the village green is a strong sense of the community among its citizens and their neighbors. It is this sense of community which makes Vermont so radical.

Vermont provides a communitarian alternative to the dehumanized, mass-production, mass-consumption, overregulated, narcissistic lifestyle which pervades most of America. In Vermont the politics of human scale always trumps the politics of money, power, size, speed, greed, and fear of terrorism. Living in Vermont is a lot like living in a small European country.

America, too, needs a genteel revolution. Vermont separatists stand ready to help save Vermont, America, and the rest of the world from the American empire by leading our nation into peaceful disunion.

