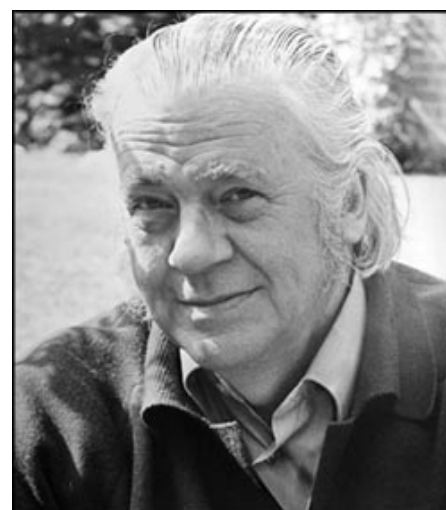


E.F. Schumacher: Small is Beautiful

If environmentalists have a rallying cry, it is "Small is Beautiful," inspired by the book Small is Beautiful: Economics As if People Mattered (1973) by the late E.F. Schumacher - one of the 100 most influential books published since World War II, according to the *Times Literary Supplement*.

In the book, Schumacher, who was an associate editor of the prestigious *Resurgence Magazine* and president of the British Soil Association, explained the need for a new lifestyle and economic structure based on ecological and spiritual values.



He stressed the necessity of living a simple lifestyle, consuming fewer resources: "If we squander the capital represented by living nature around us, we threaten life itself."

He linked simplicity to peace and nonviolence, explaining that world peace is shaken by the drive for wealth which "depends on making inordinately large demands on limited world resources" ... and leads to "western corporate imperialism."

He said, "Buddhist economics sees the essence of civilization not in a multiplication of wants but in the purification of character."

Schumacher, who was born in Germany in 1911 and later became a British citizen, also promoted appropriate technology and a decentralized, human scale and self-sufficient economy with production from local resources for local needs, rather than the system in place that exerts violence against the environment and concentrates wealth and power.

When wealth and power are concentrated among the privileged few, he said we have the problem of unemployment, dropouts who can not be integrated into society, alienation, spiritual death and soaring crime rates.

Promoting "right livelihood," Schumacher, a gentle white-haired man, decried the use of assembly lines that divide up production into minute parts: "To organize work in such a manner that it becomes meaningless, boring, stultifying, or nerve-

Localization Rather Than Globalization

To illustrate the importance production from local resources for local needs, rather than one company taking on production for a vast area, consider what happened to the Aral Sea. It was the fourth largest sea in the world before a massive project to irrigate vast fields of cotton. Today, two-thirds of the water is gone. A fishing town once located on the water's edge is now 40 miles from the coast -- and the water is too salty for the fish to survive.

The drying of much of the Aral Sea has even affected the climate. The sea once absorbed heat, making the hot summers cooler. In the winter, this heat made the weather warmer.

racking for the worker would be little short of criminal; it would indicate a greater concern with goods than with people."

Also promoting "right livelihood," Schumacher quoted Aldous Huxley saying that men and women should "become their own employers or members of a self governing cooperative group working for a subsistence and a local market. ... This would be a more humanly satisfying life for more people and a greater measure of genuine self-governing democracy."

Today, there is an E.F. Schumacher Society in Great Barrington, Massachusetts with a library of books, pamphlets and tapes and that holds lectures, seminars and conferences on decentralism, human-scale societies, regionally based economic systems, local currency experiments, and community land trusts.