

OUR SHRINKING WORLD

In this age of wondrous advances in electronic and telecommunications, it is commonplace to speak of the world as getting smaller. With the end of the Cold War and the lifting of the Iron Curtain, global shrinking has accelerated.

And information is not the only thing flowing rapidly across borders. So are people. Some migrate toward lands that they or their ancestors once called home, but long ago lost. They seek their heritage, a renewed sense of their identity among the remnants of shattered cultures and dispersed kinsmen.

And they are not always welcome. Multicultural regions of Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Middle East have achieved political stability in the post only by military force or totalitarianism. Lacking there, they have no viable political institutions. unifying leadership, Or common values with which to achieve social coherence and ensure survival. Whether part Of an ethnic minority or majority, those in power dare not share it, And those denied plot their dreams of ethnic homelands.

Others from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union move in search of opportunity to the more successful western economies. They also are not always welcome/ In France, the tolerance for immigrants and foreign workers seems exhausted. France for the French. In Germany, similar nationalist sentiments are played upon by skinheads and neo-nazis seeking “respectability” for their hatred.

Meanwhile at home, our political leaders play on public fears and inflame prejudices with their rhetoric—urging economic protectionism and international isolationism

At a time when the “new world order” is spinning dangerously close to the edge of chaos, We ought to be leading it back from the precipice, not pushing it farther. We ought to be Demonstrating to other nations the power, not of our weaponry not of our economy, but of Our ideas and our principles.

Our great experiment in multiculturalism has survived and flourished for over 200 years because the normal value of justice, fairness, decency, and compassion that unite us are stronger than the racial, ethnic, and religious differences that would divide us. Let us repair to those moral principles to govern ourselves more responsibly and to lead, by example, a world that otherwise will grow still smaller, without growing closer.

For Ethics At Work, this is Gray Edwards.