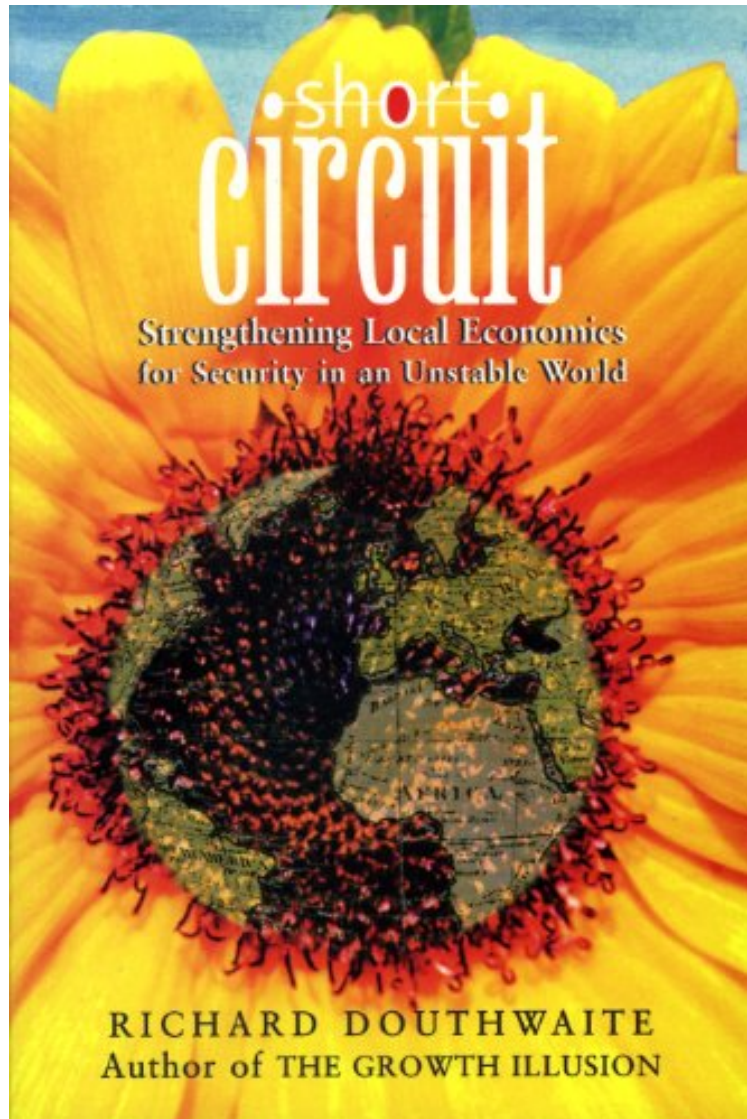


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Short Circuit: Strengthening Local Economies for Security in an Uncertain World

Richard Douthwaite

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Richard Douthwaite : Short Circuit: Strengthening Local Economies for Security in an Uncertain World
before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Short Circuit:
Strengthening Local Economies for Security in an Uncertain World:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Economic development for sustainability By Rashomoan Though written for an audience in the UK or Britain, the concepts in the book are applicable in any industrialized country. Douthwaite pulls no punches in defining sustainability, basing it in part on his work in The Growth Illusion (1992/99)

and the book is fundamentally about short circuiting the global structures and developing a local functional sustainable economy. I particularly enjoyed the rationale for including a local currency. (This despite the fact that the type of local currency chosen for his community eventually suffered the same fate as most LETS systems worldwide, still his reasons for using a local currency are compelling - Google Bernard Lietaer/Gwendolyn Hallsmith Community Currency Guide for a great local currency design workbook)The concept of conventional economics focusing on the firm vs. the community and family is the primary reason we see so many communities go for trying to lure a major corporate savior (at fantastic expense in foregone tax revenues and numerous social, environmental and economic costs) instead of trying to develop a sustainable standalone economy. Douthwaite states it all so clearly and simply but so many of us are so caught up in the lemming-like race to the bottom that we don't even see what is happening around us.If you work on economic development in any way this book is a short, simple read with an eye-opening message and will help you understand why following the herd is not working.11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. The Only Sane Future PossibleBy Jeremy RaymondjackFor years, I wound my way through the literature of critique. Any honest assessment of our current situation will result in pessimism and cynicism. To grasp the nature of our environmental, demographic, economic, and ideological trajectories is to look insanity and collapse square in the face. But eventually, one must turn from critique to creation. This is what it means to have a social imagination: the ability to understand the present and envision realistic possibilities for the future. And social imagination is what is almost completely absent from our present situation. Instead, we have ridiculous techno-optimism, reckless free-marketism, and jingoistic flag-waving. That is why Richard Douthwaite's book is so impressive. It is an incredible blend of intelligent criticism and embodied social imagination. Unlike so many works on the ills of society, which are usually 95% analysis and 5% half-hearted wishful thinking, "Short Circuit" devotes ample space to solutions that are in place right now. He chronicles the many efforts by regular people to recapture their economies and their resources from sprawling, globalized systems. Read in conjunction with E.F. Schumacher's "Small Is Beautiful" and Michael Shuman's "Going Local," this book is one of the three pillars of contemporary decentralism. Decentralism is the logical end-point for serious thought on the perils of globalization. Buy this book, read it, re-read it, give it away, and then repeat.13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. An excellent guide for action toward a crash-proof economy.By Richard A DavisIrish economist Richard Douthwaite has written this excellent book as a handbook for people who wish to start rebuilding their local economies to protect their communities from the risks of being tied into a fragile global economy. The fundamental changes we need to make are to use local resources to meet local needs and reduce our dependence on the world economy for either markets or raw materials.Following introductory chapters covering these matters, there are activist chapters detailing things that can be done to gain greater self-reliance. These are the establishment of Local Exchange Trading Systems, locally owned financial systems, locally-based energy generating and saving schemes and low-external-input agriculture. Accompanying these tangible changes will be more cooperative commercial attitudes.Each chapter has case studies that give contact details for those interested in pursuing the ideas in the book. This is an essential book for those who are interested in how one can transform the world by doing small but radical things.

With the deregulation of international trade and a free movement of capital, the world economy is more unstable than ever and liable to economic collapse. So precarious is it that it should no longer be relied upon to provide all the goods, fuel, food and services we need to live. As unemployment rises in every industrialized country, increasing numbers are excluded from participation in the market economy and face the reality of a world without job security. The solution proffered by Short Circuit is that each community should develop an independent economy capable of restoring full employment to its area and ensuring the supply of goods and services should the mainstream economy collapse. The book demonstrates how this can be done by supplying details of local energy-generation, currency, banking and food-supply systems. It contains case-studies of local communities at work in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia and the USA, as well as in Britain and Ireland. Extensively illustrated and referenced, this annotated guide will identify sources of more specific information, and appeal to all concerned with how competitive forces are squeezing the life out of their environment. More broadly, it demonstrates how power can be returned to the community. "No lasting solutions to the problems of war, social disorder and environmental degeneration can be found without abandoning the high-energy, high-mobility, intensively individual style of life developed by the advanced industrial nations."—Malcolm MacEwan (1911-1996)

About the AuthorRichard Douthwaite is an economist and writer with a special interest in climate and energy issues and in local economic development. His best-known book, *The Growth Illusion: How Economic Growth Enriched the Few, Impoverished the Many and Endangered the Planet* explores the effects that the pursuit of growth has had on the environment and society. He is a co-founder of Feasta, the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability, the Dublin-based international network of people who believe that the world's sustainability problems are due to the use of dysfunctional systems and are trying to develop better ones. His current projects include the design and introduction of novel financing arrangements for community energy projects and the management of the Carbon Cycles and Sinks

Network which explores ways in which land-based greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced. He lives in Westport, Co. Mayo.