WHEN AUSTERITY IS A DIRTY WORD

Ros Coward seems to believe that austerity lessens consumption and should therefore be welcomed by environmentalists (‘Austerity Is Not a Dirty Word’, Issue 296). This is a misunderstanding. The opposite of austerity is not “unlimited consumption”, as Coward implies. The opposite of austerity is a decent public sector and welfare state.

It is wrong to draw a parallel between the present day and the thrifty ‘austerity’ of WWII. Today, there is enough to go around. Austerity is an ideological project that seeks to shrink the state, cut public services, and transfer wealth from the poor to the rich. It is not a return to a nobler ‘make do and mend’ mentality.

Nor does austerity curb consumption. The people now queuing at food banks were already consuming the least. The people who have benefited from austerity were already consuming the most. Now the super-rich consume yet more.

I have never heard an anti-austerity campaigner call for a return to growth for growth’s sake. In my experience, they mostly care about avoidable deaths and worsening poverty in a time of plenty. It is right to worry about overconsumption, but Coward ought to place the burden of belt-tightening on the richest in society, not the poorest.

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Crossword

Across
1 “We are travelers on a ______ journey” – Paolo Coelho, The Alchemist. (6)
4 He flew too close to 11. (6)
9 When one heavenly body obscures a complete view of another. (7)
10 To deduce as a consequence. (5)
11 “But soft! What light from yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the _____” – Shakespeare. (3)
12 The R in CPRE. (5)
13 “I will ______ and go now, and go to Innisfree.” – Yeats (5)
14 Bringing to an early end. (11)
15 Following 11 across, an appropriate garment for some to keep cool. (5)
16 Mother-of-pearl. (5)
18 Following 11, wear one to keep cool. (3)
24 Creator of the Cave Analogy, whereby humans observe only the shadows of reality. (5)
25 According to the Wu Xing system, the Chinese considered wood one of the five ______s. (7)
26 Following 11, a dangerous consequence of overdoing it. (6)
27 Falsely implicated in a crime. (6)

Down
1 In Japan, sakura is the much awaited season when this tree blossoms. (6)
2 and 3: Project proving the feasibility of air transport by clean energy. (5, 7)
5 The world’s biggest solar farm is in this country. (5)
6 A bully. (7)
7 Durable type of stone, much used at Stonehenge. (6)
8 Like a mosaic. (11)
15 Where to enjoy an al fresco meal. (4,3)

Solution to the crossword in Issue 296

The answers are also available online at www.resurgence.org/crossword

To comment on the crossword, email Tim at ecores_crossword@hotmail.co.uk