

SOCIAL CREDIT IN THE NEW ERA By Geoffrey Dobbs *New Times* - Jan 1985

The following is the full text of the paper presented by Dr. Dobbs in Calgary and Vancouver, Canada.

We have come together to commemorate an event, which took place half a century ago — Douglas's visit to Western Canada — not out of mere nostalgia, but because of its historic consequences. It is good to look back at our past, sometimes, but mainly for one purpose: as the French put it, to "*reculer pour mieux sauter*". It is as well to be sure of your ground before taking a 'great leap forward'.

So, although my title looks forward, I am going to be mainly looking backward, briefly to outline how we arrived at our present situation. Not, of course, that I have much to say about Social Credit in Canada, which would be absurd in the present company; but I did intervene once, with Douglas's permission, when I wrote an article in *The Social Crediter* (7 Sept. 1946) to warn Albertans that the then proposed Alberta Bill of Rights possessed elements clearly derived from the Beveridge Plan for the British Welfare State, especially in the conditions imposed upon the poor, in receipt of social security handouts, depriving them of the right to supplement their income without penalty, introducing the notorious 'poverty gap', enforcing indigent idleness on many by discouraging all earning except full-time for inflated wages. The article had quite an impact; but there is no time to go into that here.

Why me, you may ask? Because at the time I was teaching at King's College, London, round the corner from the London School of Economics of which Sir William Beveridge was then Director, and not long before I had been a resident for the better part of a year, at Toynbee Hall, in the East End of London, the mother of a huge growth of University Settlements among the poor (600 in the U.S.A. alone) and perhaps even more than the L.S.E., the cradle of the socialist, social security or 'Welfare' State, which has been copied so widely — though its real historic origin was to be found in Bismarck's Germany — a nation with which we were bitterly at war just then.

My contact with L.S.E. was trivial, but useful. Because the King's gymnasium had a low ceiling and theirs had a higher one they used to invite us to play in theirs, and Beveridge was a regular (and cunning old) player. After the game there was tea and chat, quite often about the great Plans for after the War, which were in everybody's mind then. Mostly I stayed mum and listened, but at Toynbee Hall I had greater opportunities for challenging with Social Credit ideas. It was indeed stony ground, but to my surprise I often found unexpected support from the Warden, Jimmy Mallon — a lifelong socialist, but a man of quite exceptional character and integrity, as well as wit and loving kindness.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

We have to remember that no great Movement or Institution can be wholly evil, because evil is a perversion of the real, which is good. It is not the feebleness, stupidity, cowardice etc. of those who oppress us with the 'best' intentions, which enable them to succeed in doing so, it is the strength of their goodness, intelligence, courage and determination, perverted from their true ends, which we are up against. Our task is to find men and women with that quality of integrity which is now facing the disastrous reality of present policies, and which, when it becomes aware of the suppressed alternative of which we are the bearers, will have the courage to adopt it.

The L.S.E., though financed by Sir Ernest Cassel to 'raise and train the bureaucracy of the future socialist State'; was by no means homogeneous. At that time it was the home not only of such as Beveridge and Laski, but also of von Hayek, the champion of free enterprise and the free market, whose book *The Road to Serfdom*, a denunciation of socialism, was published in 1944. He is now said to be the 'grey eminence' behind Margaret Thatcher. But when Elizabeth and I met him and his followers a few years ago in California, he, and they, were still blind to the existence of potential plenty, and to the fact that there is no 'free market' for unmoneyed and unpropertied men. Toynbee Hall was originally a Christian enterprise, started by an East End Anglican vicar (Canon Barnett) to bring the middle and upper classes (mainly Oxford undergraduates) in living touch with that vast sea of poverty and job-dependence which constituted the East End. It was founded in 1884, the same year as the Fabian Society, with which its objectives soon, in practice, became aligned, though its doors have always been open to all political beliefs (except, I think, fascism). I have just been reading its Centenary Volume, and almost every name, prominent in the early Labour Movement is to be found closely associated with it: Beatrice and Sydney Webb, Attlee Tawney, George Lansbury, Harold Laski, Hugh Dalton, J.H. Thomas, G.D.H. Cole, Margaret Bondfield, Seebohm Rowntree, Arthur Greenwood, and so on. Beveridge was an early Sub-Warden. How did this swing from Christian charity to a generally agnostic socialism come about in the late 19th and early 20th century?

WHY DID POVERTY GROW WITH WEALTH?

The answer I think is that no one, except Marx and Engels, had asked the question (until 1918) why, as the wealth and productivity of Society grew, the problem of poverty should have grown with it, far beyond the scope of the old Poor Law, and Christian charity, to deal with it? And Marx and Engels gave the wrong answer, implying that the poor were poor because the rich were rich and exploited them by making profits out of their labour. Hence the call for State intervention, and the new motto of the Labor Party: "Curse your charity, make us officials!" and the perversion of the whole radical movement as personified, for instance, by William Cobbett, away from 'independence' to 'full employment', glorifying job-dependence provided it is on 'officials', and 'workers' control and dictatorship over people as private persons, consumers, and citizens. Of course, some employers were bound to exploit the pool of helpless 'labour', deprived of their independence by being driven off the land, and from their cottage manufacturing to become a job-dependent city proletariat. Because this catastrophic change was brought about by the huge increase in wealth and productivity in the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions, attributable to the replacement of human labour by human invention, including the invention of paper credit money, available to the employer but not to the poor who could get it only as wages, means could and should have been found to prevent such mass-impoverishment. Something was owing, but it took over a century to discover just what. Meanwhile, the concept of free enterprise in a free market worked so splendidly for all who could participate in it (and still does) that it was all too convenient to forget that the pool of impoverished, job-dependent 'labour' was excluded from it. Indeed, if it is a product of the free enterprise system as the Marxists maintain, it condemns it. But to pretend that, when the alternative was starvation or the workhouse, a worker could make a free bargain for his labour, is nonsense.

EVEN SLAVES HAD MAINTENANCE

The other name for forced labour is slavery, and even the slaves of the Southern U.S. States, when liberated, were deprived of their maintenance, and merely exchanged a legal bond for one enforced by hunger and deprivation. Slavery is a very ancient human institution, with built-in attitudes of dominant bossiness and resentful dependence, which may both be combined when slaves become masters, as in the bureaucratic workers' State. Socialism is essentially an expression of slave-mentality which, instead of trying to abolish the proletarian condition of helpless employer-dependence, tries to glorify and universalise it, resenting the independence of those, such as housewives or people with private incomes, who can choose their work, despising the 'small' employer, and yearning for the power and status it thinks is conferred by being the hired underling of some mighty monopoly, preferably the State itself. (Make us officials!).

At the same time, slave-envy and resentment of all bosses and managers remains and has been ruthlessly exploited by certain members of the managerial class, notably the employer Engels and his bourgeois intellectual remittance-man, Karl Marx, and their many followers. Those they now refer to as 'the working class' (implying that they were born to be hirelings) are now collectivised into Unions under centralised control by mob-psychology, with the implicit acceptance that it takes thousands, if not millions, of 'workers' to stand up to one employer. The venom in the bitter yell of 'Scab!' against any worker who betrays the 'solidarity' of the depersonalised worker-Lump by daring to make his own contract with the employer and to decide when he shall work or withdraw his labour, is perhaps the ultimate expression of the slave-mentality. Who does he think he is — a human being? He is not one of us, and we won't work or even speak with him!

That there are historical reasons for this attitude, dating back to the days of deprivation of the means of independence, does not alter the fact that the mentality then induced now threatens to take over our Society completely unless that natural instinct for independence can find effective expression, which is so clearly physically possible in our technological culture.

DOUGLAS AND THE FABIANS

We come back now to the origins of the Fabian Socialist 'Welfare' or 'Social Security' State and to the remarkable development which followed the publication, in 1918, of an article entitled "*The Delusion of Super Production*" in *The English Review*, by an engineer with no approved training in the theory of economics and politics; merely a practical knowledge of the realities of industrial production and costing, and, incidentally, a pioneering experience of automation.

In this article he pointed out several things, all obviously true and quite contrary to the prevailing accepted opinion: that production was not wealth unless it satisfied the real demands of individuals; that the limiting factor was not the power to produce, which was vastly increased, but the power to absorb (i.e. buy) the product; that this arose from the lengthening of the processes of production so that the final cost always greatly exceeded the incomes paid out and available to buy the product; and that this must result in a continuous rise in the cost of living, as well as a desperate struggle to sell in unemployment, labour troubles, strikes for higher wages, and a national struggle for markets which was bound to culminate in war.

All this was rejected with contempt by official opinion, and would probably have got no further but for its effect on another man of intellectual integrity, A.R. Orage, the editor of *The New Age*, the leading intellectual journal of the time in Britain, which is now a part of literary history. What is more, it was a Fabian Society journal but had become such a focus of active thought, that the perversion of socialism, in so far as it aimed to be the champion of the poor and the oppressed, into

a movement of State centralisation and the will to power, had already been perceived by Orage and many of its writers and readers, who were inclined to look back to mediaeval times for a simpler and happier life and to reject the dreary works of mass-production.

Douglas brought them exactly what they lacked: a practical knowledge of modern industry, and an explanation of why a vast increase in productivity was resulting in greater stress and destroying the quality of life.

During the next few years his thesis was developed and expanded in *The New Age*, and in his books, starting with *Economic Democracy*, and despite a press boycott, the movement spread spontaneously throughout the English-speaking world and somewhat outside it (notably in French Canada) activated by its manifest truth alone.

With the focus on the money system, as the means of correcting the deficiency, various proposals were put forward by Douglas, notably the Just, or Compensated Price, the distribution of the National Debt, and the National Dividend. All of them were *ad hoc*, to meet the current situation. None of them was a Scheme or Manifesto, to be sold to, or forced on the public. But the National Dividend was something more than a technical proposal to correct a monetary defect. It had a moral content. It restored the cultural inheritance, and made good, at last, the deprivation imposed by the Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions. Moreover, it re-inverted, back to their proper sense, those key phrases which have induced so many people of good will to take up socialism: common ownership, equality, social justice, collective responsibility. All these are satisfied by a dividend based upon real current productivity, and are denied and frustrated when turned upside down into their current meanings of: Government control, human homogenisation, forced redistribution of incomes, and numerical 'democracy'.

THE MAIN STREAM OF DEMOCRATIC ADVANCE

The historic importance of this return to the main stream of progress towards individual freedom and genuine democracy can scarcely be exaggerated. It is in line with that gradual liberation of the serfs which took place in feudal Christendom, with Magna Carta, with the great creative outburst of the Renaissance, with that humble science which bent its mind to the precise way the world is, rather than to dominate it, with our balanced Constitution and the original Great Reform Bill which gave the vote to responsible citizens, with the abolition of the slave trade, and with the many voluntary movements which spread education and a Christian culture during the 19th century. This was the main stream of our cultural inheritance to which Douglas and his followers strove to return. Why then was he so despised and rejected for what looked, at the outset, like some merely common sense suggestions for correcting a defect in our accountancy system? It took him a few years to discover that he had cut down to the very core of the matter, a total opposition of policy, that is, of long-term objectives, often covered over by the use of the same words.

Politics determines policy on the national scale. It thus became clear that the worldwide interest in Social Credit, the discussions, meetings, study groups, books, journals and innumerable pamphlets would not, by themselves, achieve their objective. Nevertheless, they recruited an army, which he rallied during his World Tour, and sent into action with the Buxton speech of *The Nature of Democracy* as soon as he got home. That army fought its fight during the next five years, with a different history in each of the four countries of the Crown Commonwealth, under the general direction of Douglas. It was a thrilling time of tremendous advance which has left a greater mark than is realised on our separate countries, but in Britain especially, that advance was blocked and

the troops scattered by the call-ups and evacuations of World War II, although, as I hope to show, action continued.

THE PRESSURE OF EVENTS

I believe that events have now brought us to a time, which is ripe for the raising of another army. The 'electronic revolution' with consequent displacement of human labour, with the much-publicised threat of nuclear war in the background, presents us with an even more desperate dilemma than did the 'poverty amid plenty' of the 1930's, which was decided then in favour of war. All Douglas's chickens are now coming home to roost, and we have something critical to contribute to every major public discussion. The pressures are such that now is the time to break through the boycott, if ever again. Public discussions of our policy, whether labelled 'Social Credit' or not, is essential to recruitment of a new generation of social crediters, and we are now in a much stronger strategic position, since, after 60 years the issues have become even cruder and more blatant . . . No one, for instance, now thinks that bank money is backed by gold coinage. Consumer credits are now an essential part of the economy without which it would collapse, clearly demonstrating the time-lag of incomes behind prices, and a built-in, continuous rise in the cost of living, denounced as nonsense when Douglas explained its absolute inevitability in 1918, is now a taken for granted fact, with all the labour troubles, strikes, bankruptcies struggles to export, and international bickering accompanying it, now openly moving towards terrorism, violence and revolution.

As an authentic and vital part of the main advance of Christian civilisation we have no right to remain silent, and while words, writing, study, discussion and thought will not alone achieve anything without action, they are a necessary preliminary to a correct grasp of the policy which directs it. Moreover, bearing in mind that our Movement was nurtured and brought to birth originally out of the womb of Fabian Socialism by men of integrity who had discovered the retrograde path taken by that Movement, we have a special duty to resolve the conflicts which threaten its product, the 'Welfare' State which, in Britain at any rate, still carries some signs of being a corrupted version of Social Credit.

While the political terms Left and Right now refer merely to the Vanguard and Rearguard of socialism, if we want to change its direction it is to the Vanguard we should direct most of our attention. It is there we shall find most of the youth and energy and honesty of purpose, emotionally cheated and misled perhaps, but still flexible enough to turn to what we have to offer them — and that is Hope. The best that the Conservative Rearguard has to offer is, as Douglas said, a rearguard action, which may give us time to recruit, but in itself, offers no hope.

A NEW CONCEPTION OF POLITICS

But to return to those tremendous five years after Douglas's World Tour, when exciting things were happening in Alberta, even more thrilling things were happening, under Douglas's direction in Britain, where the foundations of a new conception of politics were being laid. His was a mind, which was completely consistent in policy, but completely flexible in regard to methods; the exact reverse of that 'consistency which is the hobgoblin of little minds'. Every step we took under his direction was experimental, to be assessed and adjusted closer to its purpose; but even more, it provided evidence, positive or negative, for the improvement of our understanding of the relationship between means and ends in the sphere of human association.

His first step into politics, the Electoral Campaign for a National Dividend, was a radical departure from the accepted party politics, but a logical development of the policy of returning power to the individual, considered collectively, rather than to the centrally controlled, collective mob. It involved discovering the relationship between the participants in the political process: the electors, their representatives in Parliament, and the 'experts' who would be responsible for specifying methods of achieving given objectives, and for carrying them out. The question had only to be raised for it to be clear that neither the electors, collectively, nor the M.P.'s, could be competent to specify or administer methods. In a democracy their function must be to specify the objectives, or results, required to their representatives, whose job it should be to convey these requirements to the Government, whose duty it would then be to give the necessary orders to the specialists with the knowledge and capability to carry them out.

Douglas, as a true engineer, on perceiving that the mechanism of Parliamentary democracy, won by our ancestors for us after much bloody fighting, was working very badly, analysed its working as he did that of the money and price system, and applied the corrective. In earlier times, when processes were simpler, there was not this huge gap between knowing what we want and how to produce it. Douglas explicitly put himself in the main stream of the advance towards democracy, and pointed out the next step, which would bring it up to date in a technological age. This was in strong contrast with the retrograde policy of socialism, which turns us back towards centralised monarch-ism and civil war, increasingly aborting the democratic process with resort to violence.

At that time of gluts of unsaleable produce and unused human and plant capacity in the face of widespread penury and unemployment, what was wanted was obvious: effective access to this wasted wealth, which constituted a 'dividend' (that which ought to be divided). While in one sense a National Dividend is one among other technical methods of balancing incomes with prices, it differs from the others in being a primary means so closely linked with its policy objective (access) that it can be identified with it in the absence of any alternative proposal. There is a great need for further research in refining Douglas's pioneer outline on results and methods, especially as we are now again confronted with a similar, though different, and even more critical situation.

NATIONAL DIVIDEND VS JOBS FOR ALL

By March 1936, the time of Douglas's Westminster Speech (*The Approach to Reality*) it was clear that time was running out before the prevailing policy of 'jobs for all' achieved its necessary condition in total war. By that time 17 M.P.'s had responded to the Electoral Campaign by undertaking to take the instructions of their electors in respect of the National Dividend when a majority of them had pledged their vote to this end. In practice, the majority, which mattered as a sanction, was the majority by which they were elected. I believe that ultimately the number rose to 37; not impressive, perhaps, in the light of the aim of securing a majority in a Parliament of 600, but in itself a significant event in the history of democracy.

It was in this speech also that Douglas firmly rejected the idea of a Party to achieve our objectives on grounds of its complete ineffectiveness, due to the confusion of means and ends and responsibilities, as well as its political impossibility in Britain. This was only a few months after Aberhart's sweeping Party victory in Alberta. It is typical of the man, however, that he bent his mind to making the most effective possible use of this opportunity, whether he approved of its initial steps, or not.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ASSOCIATION

Seven months later in Liverpool (Oct. 30 1936) under the sombre title of *The Tragedy of Human Effort* he gave us the first modern, practical outline of the principles of Human association under the headings: Policy, Administration and Sanctions. If he had given us no other gift, we should be immensely grateful for this one, which opens up a great vista for study, application and refinement, and gives us a valid contribution to make in practically every situation. We simply have not the right to keep this knowledge to ourselves.

An immense amount of creative thought and preparation went into these major addresses to social creditors, each one of which marked a deeper penetration into reality, and often took us hearers a year to assimilate. The next one was in London (June 26 1937); *The Policy of a Philosophy*, which went deeper still, giving us his famous definition of religion, which is the key to the defence of Christianity and its restoration to reality, and even to courage and militancy. This is now the 'key' front, too important to deal with here; it needs far more time and attention, and, again, great vistas are opened up.

LOCAL OBJECTIVES AND RULES

In this speech also Douglas redirected the Movement towards smaller, more attainable, local objectives with concrete, recognisable results, as a means of training in the use of the electors' sovereignty, of gaining confidence, and experience in the correct use of association for a purpose, before tackling larger objectives. This Local Objective Campaign took off with astonishing vigour, spread spontaneously because it gave results, and before we knew, there was widespread demand that the method of voting pressure used in the Electoral Campaign should be applied to local councillors to make them resist the threatened general rise in rating assessments on houses. This had the public turning to social creditors for advice on how to gain their objectives, which is the right situation, and its astonishing success is still a fabulous memory, which shows what can be done if correct means are used. Douglas set up a separate office with just one man (Mr. John Mitchell) to advise ratepayers, and within about a year the thing had achieved a national result in a Government Bill to postpone the re-assessment until 1941. In fact the War caused its postponement for 15 years in all, which must have amounted to an enormous saving in aggregate to the British public. Nothing succeeds like success, and the ratepayers then moved on to apply the same democratic pressure to the reduction in rates without loss of services. This had a similar success, and as a bonus, directed the attention of thousands of people, spontaneously, in their own interest, to investigate and discover the large proportion of their rates, which went to the payment of loan charges. It looked as if Social Credit had taken off and nothing could stop it; but there was one thing, the ultimate sanction: War, with its instant dictatorship — call-up, allocation to jobs, wholesale evacuation, rationing, and general control of all our lives, which could, and did, and began to do so even when its shadow fell upon the nation about a year before.

DOUGLAS'S WAR

Nevertheless, those few of us who retained some freedom of action, carried on, by no means without effect. It was the widespread spontaneous action, which was strangled. Meanwhile Douglas, in retirement in Scotland, launched that formidable sequence of exposures of the enemies of mankind in the *Social Creditor*, which were then published as pamphlet-like books under severe wartime restrictions, beginning with *The Big Idea* in 1942 and ending with *The Brief for the*

Prosecution in 1944. This was Douglas's war-work; and war is a forced surrender to dualistic confrontation. They are full of typical flashes of insight, but for the most part give a vivid picture, often in terms of bitter irony or cutting invective, of the operations in history of the will to power, mainly through International Finance and politics, and especially by people enslaved by the Chosen People Myth, originating with Jews, but spreading to many others, Nazis, Judaeo-Christians, socialists and bureaucrats. 'The Brief' gives the most consistent account of the origins of World War II.

In my view these books are 'advanced reading' for social crediters which should be left till last, since they express a philosophy Manichaeic rather than Christian, and need to be read in the light of Douglas's deeper-seated and final Trinitarianism. Despite his tremendous insight into the relation between a religion and its policy, he often confessed his lack of learning in theology, which is perhaps why, as in economics, his original, practical approach could be so fruitful. For instance, his denial of 'original sin' has worried many good Christians, but his definition of what he meant by it (*The World after Washington*, found in *The Social Crediter* archives, July 13th 1968 & 10th August 1968) makes it quite clear that what he meant was something quite different. What he denied was the 'depravity' or essential 'badness' of mankind, calling for constant prohibition, rather than that corruptibility and imperfection which we all inherit, of which he was fully aware and would not have dreamt of denying.

As the War went on, at least one element of Social Credit was introduced by the Government, namely the food subsidies which kept down the price of rations, and which, in a different form kept our food prices down right up to Britain's surrender to the Common Market inversion of that policy. Social Crediters were the first to expose the aims of Federal Union, the start of the drive towards the European Economic Community at the very beginning of the War.

NATIONAL INSURANCE: THE RIGHT TO CONTRACT OUT

It was at this time also that I myself matured from being a follower, a writer and speaker on Social Credit to being an initiator and elaborator of Douglas's pioneer approach, especially in the field of the Voters' Policy and the Voters' Veto, and later, the Civil Service of Policy. This happened at Bristol, and would take another hour to describe. After that came my residence at Toynbee Hall and my contact with Beveridge just after he had produced his blue-print for the Welfare State in 1942. Here the handful of social crediters who were free to act played a critical role in that they alone demanded the right to contract out and opposed the concept of totalitarian compulsion on grounds of principle. Well! not quite alone, we had the Chestertonian Distributists of the *Weekly Review* with us. Though we encountered almost complete suppression of our case by the public media, we managed to get about 7000 signatures to our Declaration and succeeded in getting the question of opting out raised in Parliament. Though rejected it is at least on record that it did not go by default. In the medical profession a group of Social Credit doctors formed the Medical Policy Association, which had considerable impact.

Just to lighten this a little — I remember hearing Beveridge at Toynbee Hall in September 1944, address the Social Security League, mainly on the splendid career prospects and rates of pay proposed for the coming National Insurance Service, and proceed to commemorate the occasion with the following doggerel:

Drink you up your Beveridge cup,

Don't pour it down the drain!
Sir William he knows better than we,
So don't you dare complain!
His interest it wears no vest
As other people's do,
For good Sir William he knows best
What's good for me and you.
So say not nay to lots of pay
Quite free from profit's stain
For taking people's money away
And giving some back again.

However, we didn't content ourselves with lampoons. On Douglas's instructions during the 1945 post-War Election we selected certain 'key' figures in the Plan of whom Beveridge was the chief. And when, at the height of his fame as the Father of the Welfare State he put himself up for Parliament at Berwick-on-Tweed, a group of Social Crediters, using a pamphlet I had written called 'The Beveridge Plot' pursued him relentlessly from meeting to meeting with quotations of the mean conditions from his own Report (never publicised) causing him to gibber with rage so badly that his wife had to intervene, and he lost the election for which he was considered a certainty. This again, is worth putting on record.

THE PHONEY EXPERT AND HOW TO DEAL WITH HIM

This leads on to consideration of the role of the expert and the need for a Civil Service of Policy, that is, of people with technical or professional knowledge to advise the public when their requirements are blocked by technical arguments, especially from politicians, who get them from the bureaucracy. It is on this that the electoral demand frequently breaks down through being diverted into technical arguments, which it is fatal for members of the public to be drawn into. This does not apply to people with the required technical background, who should be able to distinguish a genuine technical point from a piece of jargon covering the imposition of a policy that can then expose it. Often it is merely a matter of being able to distinguish a real expert from an official exploiting his status to talk or write nonsense quite outside his own field.

This is the reason I have spent so much time on the minor matter of fluoridation of public water supplies. It provides a simple example, in miniature, of the working of democracy in its negative form which, once we get away from very small, local, concrete examples (Mend this hole in the road!) is more likely to be a valid expression of the voters' policy than positive results which they have not experienced and may well be illusory. But people can agree on not wanting something though they positively want different things.

Genuine democracy, wrote Douglas, can be very nearly defined as the right to atrophy a function by contracting out. Fluoridation, by its nature, is totalitarian. Every household on the water supply must have it, or none. For one to contract out is impracticable and atrophies the whole business, as they discovered in the Netherlands. It therefore provides a favourable field for the working out of the Voters' Veto, the clarification of policy, the distinction between objective and technics, and an opportunity to study the reaction of the enemy, both in successive centralisation of decision-making away from the people, and in the most blatant frustration of democracy under cover of pseudo-

expertise. This last called for intervention by someone with some experience in the field of environmental pollution and the chemical treatment of large populations, who could expose the fact that the alleged 'experts' were blundering into fields outside their knowledge and that no expert whatever could recommend fluoridation of every consumer's water supply on grounds of his own specialism, including every aspect of health or disease.

In other words, what was needed was a Civil Servant of Policy, who would need to be a Social Crediter if he is to disentangle technics from policy; which is where I had to come into it, not as an 'anti-fluoridator', but as a political educator. And tough going it has been trying to wean people from their passionate desire to inflict their views on the physiological effects of fluoride on everyone who disagrees with them, especially on professionals in medicine, when the point is that, since opinions differ so widely, what really matters is whose opinion counts, when it is applied to one's own body.

Broadly speaking, where we have kept to the policy we have won, and where it has been diverted into 'health' arguments, we have lost. In Britain, after 30 years, we still have only 9 per cent fluoridation. In the U.S.A. it is over 60 per cent because they will fight it on health scares, which unfortunately constantly invades us and blunts our efforts, even at this crucial stage when fluoridation has been judged illegal in Scotland on correct grounds of freedom of choice, and we are now threatened with having the law changed to legalise it.

THE VOTERS' VETO - SUCCESS AND FAILURE

The Voters' Veto was originally so successful in stopping fluoridation that the Government has had to take it out of the hands of elected councillors and vest it in nominated 'Health Authorities', backed by an indemnity against legal costs if their right is challenged at law. When I rang up a member of our local 'Health Soviet' about this he thumped down the phone, after saying: "I'm not answerable to you; I'm answerable to the Minister." This is, about my body! The Government, which arranged this, was called 'Conservative' and was the same one, which surrendered Britain to the European Community.

The Voters' Veto was also brought into play against this great act of betrayal, and at first seemed to be working well, but the weapon broke in our hands. We got the signatures and the promises to oppose the Bill of Accession to the E.E.C. from the M.P.'s and the other candidates, but enough of them cynically broke their word under Government pressure to pass the Bill in Second Reading by only 8 votes — in itself a gross outrage that a thousand years of history should be cast aside by such trivial arithmetic. Perhaps some of you may now understand why the word 'Conservative' has a tendency to make me vomit!

'CONSPIRACY' — OR 'TYRANNY'?

But I must return to Douglas. Just as before the War started he made a last effort to avert it by writing direct to Herr Hitler, hoping that he retained enough sanity to see that the losers would be Germany and Britain, the only winners what are now called the two Super-powers (and how true that was!) — so during his War phase he evidently still entertained a desperate hope that a ruling class which could run a successful war against odds would be prepared to deal with a vulgar and deadly conspiracy rather than commit suicide. In this he was proved wrong, and as always, faced the facts, moved on, and went deeper.

In my view too much attention has been monopolised for too long by this phase in Douglas's thought and it is time that we too moved on. A 'conspiracy' is a secret plot against legal Government, which has only to be exposed to be put down by its superior power. What we are now up against is not a conspiracy but a tyranny, which largely controls governments, though the occasional politician of integrity at the second level (e.g. the Premier of Queensland) may stand out against it and is well worth our backing. There is a much-quoted sentence of Douglas's to the effect that "defines the task which society must face or perish. First, to attack and defeat the Money Power, then consider the reorganisation of the money system." 'Society' has not faced this task, and is perishing. But we are not 'society' but a leaven working within the new society, which is coming to birth, and until we 'leaven' it, it will not face the task, though as soon as it is faced it can be accomplished. But never alone by us as a separate movement.

CHRISTIANITY — REAL OR OPINION

What Douglas moved on to was religion, which is now the vital front, under the bitterest attack, especially on the Anglican Church. His last major work, short as it was, was *The Realistic Position of the Church of England*. It contains that mighty assertion: "It must be insisted that Christianity is either something inherent in the very warp and woof of the Universe, or it is just a set of interesting opinions...." Typically he does not say, "It is so" but "There is your choice. It is up to you." The bitterness has gone. The incisive division of the false from the true remains. In it he acknowledges the reality of the doctrine of original sin, and challenges the Church to 'realise' the doctrine of the Incarnation in the living world rather than to retreat into Liberal Judaism. In a few sentences he gives us clues, and opens up avenues for advance and exploration and adventure in the restoration of Christendom.

I suppose I must be almost the last survivor of those who were privileged to hear Douglas's last address, not to Social Crediters, as such, but to a small, private audience in a London hotel in May 1947. The subject was *Realistic Constitutionalism*, and about a third of those present, including the Chairman, were elderly, intelligent, highly respected, but no longer politically influential, hereditary members of the House of Lords. In this address he related our Constitution to the Trinity and the Athanasian Creed and our Common Law to the Church, as expressed in Magna Carta, and as a final gift, gave us the concept of the responsible vote, with taxation allocated in accordance with what is voted for — as original and seminal an idea in politics as any he put forward in economics, pointing the way forward. Incidentally, readers of *The Social Crediter* had previously been given an opportunity to participate in its formulation.

If this was his last gift to humanity, there was one more to us Social Crediters, namely, what some people call The Chart, or Specification of Social Credit — a condensed statement that requires intense study and expansion. It is not for beginners, but in time past has proved a valuable subject for a week's seminar. Like everything else of Douglas's it is an outline. He has done the pioneering work, but its second stage of development is left to us, and requires an initiative second only to his. Indeed, he desired nothing more than that his successors should surpass him — a desire which every good teacher shares. Neither is there anything wrong or conceited about such an ambition, for, remember! we ride upon his shoulders.

THE COLLAPSE OF WORK

So here we are, with this history behind us, facing this new era of the microprocessor, automation and computers, which, incidentally, are at present being grossly and clumsily misused to destroy both human quality of work and the quality of the product or service offered to the consumer.

At least, we no longer have to face unbelieving jeers when we assert the possibility of an age of leisure, or that continuous inflation and growing debt are features of the money system, both nationally and worldwide, or that no advanced economy can function on wages alone, without consumer credits on a large scale, or that mass-unemployment has come to stay.

All Douglas's chickens are coming home to roost, and these things are now taken for granted. They have even been 'discovered' by trades' union leaders with much publicity (e.g. *The Collapse of Work*, and *The Leisure Shock*, popular books by Clive Jenkins and Barrie Sherman, who want to share out the work and plan the leisure. Some years ago, when Steel was nationalised, a Times leader suggested that, since the Industry had been acquired with public money, the shares should be distributed to the taxpayers. Our present Conservative Government is working hard at trying to sell the shares of such quasi-nationalised Bodies as British Telecom, British Airways etc. to the public, on a very large scale, and it remains to be seen how this works out. Dr. David Owen of the Social Democratic Party has outbid them by suggesting the free distribution of shares in the nationalised industries to all citizens over 18.

THE CHOICE — SOCIAL CREDIT OR COMMUNISM

It is becoming clear that, if the present rate of displacement of labour continues, our social security system, which requires the hired to support the unhired, not only physically, but financially, must break down. All sorts of plans are being constantly discussed: a Super-Beveridge Scheme with even more conditions and regulations than the present; negative income tax, i.e. the reversal of a tax into a hand-out at a certain level of penury; and even a 'social dividend' though it is more fashionable to call it a 'social wage', since a wage normally has a requirement attached to it. It is on record that such a proposal was put forward to Beveridge in 1943 by Juliet Rhys Williams — and that he refused even to read it! Now at long last the taboo is weakening. There was even an article on Douglas in the Leftish journal *New Society* (24 Jan. 1980) and correspondence on Social Credit in the Right-wing *Daily Telegraph* (22 and 29 Sept. 1984). The substantial oil-dividends recently paid out in Alaska to its residents is another sign of the times. In Britain the massive redundancy payments enforced by law in the process of disemployment are providing many with enough capital to provide a sort of social dividend, and many professional people have welcomed early retirement on favourable pension terms.

So far so good! But the crux as always is money, which is assumed to come out of taxation however the 'leisure' is distributed and financed, and there is a point beyond which that will not work; so the thinking goes back onto the old treadmill of 'full employment, public works, exports etc.'

Moreover, slaves are not easily adapted to freedom and personal responsibility after centuries of having their lives controlled for them. Behind the blatant Marxist organisation of the current Miners' Strike in Britain, which is being maintained by violence and intimidation for revolutionary aims, lays a deep conservatism and fear of the changes, which the new era may bring with it. Bleak as it is in actuality, there is a spurious cosiness about the 'Work-for-all' State in which the vast majority have no responsibility except to do as they're told. For the next few years the thing is in the balance, and the intervention of Social Crediters along correct lines could be crucial. Though this can scarcely be the much-quoted 'Critical Moment' referred to by Douglas at the end of 'Social

Credit', written in 1924, which must be long past now, it is undoubtedly 'a' critical moment in which we have a special role to play. While the monetary side of Social Credit can at times be the least important, events have once more brought debt-finance to the forefront, where it blocks any sane resolution of our predicament at every turn.

WE ARE ACTIVATORS NOT ACTIVISTS

Urgent as may be the money-and-employment question, it is but a small part of our task, which goes much deeper. Since we cannot by ourselves defeat the Money Power, which is a task for Society within which we are merely 'catalysts', what we have to do is to 'leaven the lump' with understanding of the social credit, which is not ours, but is a property of Society in time, past and present and future. The cultural inheritance with our present increment of association and the way it works (policy, administration and sanctions), the place for democracy and the place of the expert and of hierarchy, how to distinguish results from methods, the importance of contracting out, and the essentially negative nature of a valid collective vote — all these and much more have to be made known among the public, as well as the proper function of money as a wholly symbolic enabling system. They call for a new phase of discussion, study and research spreading the ideas with active enthusiasm and interest because they apply so obviously to the current situation; but now we know more than did those original pioneers of the Social Credit Movement who recruited the first 'troops', which Douglas led into action fifty years ago. We know more than he did then. We know that words and ideas alone will not lead to a real understanding without being 'bound back' to the real world by trial and error, and that our job is not to attack the Great Insoluble World Problems, but to fragment them until they become 'soluble'. Our job is resolution, the only answer to revolution. We have no Plan, no Scheme for other people. Our aim is to discover what they really want and show them how they may get it for themselves, and there will always be some level of action at which this is possible.

While small-scale local action is an essential part of beginners' training in Social Credit, the trained Social Crediter is equipped to offer something of value in almost every situation, and to almost every group, faction or party. What we are looking for is men and women of integrity, and that is the clue to our approach. Nor need we be too solemn about it. It can be great fun if we make our contribution with charity and good humour.

SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE FOR EVERYONE

Take, for instance, the political parties! They all cadge (sponge, scrounge) votes and members with a display of splendid aims, which are, in fact, a part of the social credit divided and set against the other parts, and which they then proceed to betray. We know that it is fatal to align ourselves with any one party and to be smeared with their disintegrity, as some Social Crediters were once inclined to do with the Left, and now rather more with the Right. But I have sometimes wondered whether, instead of standing snootily apart from the whole nasty lot, it might be fun to join the lot, and see how they react. No doubt we should be chucked out, but we should have made our point.

To the Conservatives the Social Crediter would say: I do so agree with your principles — heredity, the cultural tradition, patriotism, discipline and hard work and personal responsibility. Jolly good! So why, when offered a choice between socialist security handouts, making people into idle layabouts and criminals if they commit work without reporting it to get fined, and a share in our cultural inheritance of productivity which leaves them free to do the work of their choice, which

they are sure to do better, do you always choose the dole. Incidentally, nothing could so bring home the state of the national economy to everyone, and personal responsibility for it, as a correctly issued national dividend.

To old-fashioned Liberals who believe in a free market and free enterprise, we can say: Splendid — it's the only thing that works and gives us economic democracy. So why do you exclude the proletariat who were driven off their inheritance on the land? What sort of a 'free bargain' have they in the sale of their labour! How can you blame them if they resent their servitude and gather into great labour monopolies and exploit their power with strikes and threats? People with an independent income can make their own bargains and contracts, and this has obviously become possible for all in this age of excessive productivity.

As for all the force of the Left, from Liberal-Democrats to Labour-socialists and Marxists — Yes! we are indeed with you as champions of the poor and the oppressed, demanding 'social justice' and basic equality. So why do you refer to the proletariat as 'the working class' or the 'workers' and glorify the status of job-dependent hired underling, demanding 'full employment' instead of joining us in trying to liberate them? Where is the 'social justice' in an idleness-dole taken from deductions from the 'workers' pay, when 'the wages of the machine' remain undistributed? And where is the 'fairness' in trying to force 'equality' upon different people who contribute different work and ability to society when it so obviously applies to that common inheritance of invention and science, which owes nothing to our own merits, and therefore should be equally distributed?

To Women's Libbers we can say: we agree that women are that half of mankind whose independence in the home from wage-slavery was our chief hope of emerging into a better world than that of the present male-dominated community of hirelings fighting against the power of technology to achieve 'jobs-for-all, including women driven out of the home onto the 'labour market'. Why then are you acting as the agents of the enslavement of women?

And to 'Peace Women' and other pacifists we say: Of course we are with you. Only the insane want war, let alone nuclear war. So why do you with your demonstrations and propaganda act as agents of the Bomb Terror, and run away and hide from the knowledge that war alone, in the face of modern technology, can provide 'jobs for all'?

To the ecologists: we are with you against the squandering and pollution of our Planet's resources, most of which are committed for monetary, not real, reasons. Will you not join us in exposing the money Power and in demanding that money be made to correspond with reality?

HOPE

And so on. We have something vital to contribute in practically every field of current concern, but above all in the churches and in Christian thinking, which is being corrupted mainly because the 'everyday reality' of the world distorted by symbolic debt-money is taken to be the reality created by God to which, therefore, we must adapt our beliefs. I cannot deal with this here, it is, too big; but it demands our deepest meditation, prayer and action. With gratitude we can remember the lead, which Douglas gave us: the binding back of religion to policy, especially in the Religion of the Incarnation, which requires 'binding back' to God's reality. And the saving balance and stability and realism of the Holy Trinity.

In conclusion, let me sum up in one word what we have to offer to the coming generation. It is something of which they are in dire need, and have been given all too little. Its name is HOPE.