

A photograph of a tree with exposed roots by a stream in a forest. The tree's trunk is light-colored and textured, with a large knot hole. Its roots are exposed and spread out over the ground, which is covered in fallen leaves and twigs. The stream in the foreground reflects the tree and the surrounding foliage. The background shows more trees and a dense forest. The entire image is framed by a thin grey border.

The Social Artist

Money

Machines

Mothers

Winter 2018

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Contents

Editorial		61
The Machine Stops	Frances Hutchinson	62
The Coming Collapse	Chris Hedges	69
Women in Social Credit Economics	Frances Hutchinson	70
Social Credit Economic Thought	Frances Hutchinson	75
Economic Democracy		77
Politics	Richard Rohr	78
The Frequently Asked Question	Frances Hutchinson	79

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Editorial

In the final years of the First World War Clifford Hugh Douglas and the Guild Socialist A.R. Orage formulated the financial analysis of the economy that gave rise to the worldwide Social Credit movement of the 1920s and 1930s. A century later – as the article entitled “The Machine Stops” demonstrates - we face unprecedented uncertainty on a world scale. Like the Sorcerer’s Apprentice, we have allowed the financial system, potentially a useful tool, to take on a life of its own. Men and women therefore find themselves working for vast, world-wide bureaucratic networks that dictate policies but defy understanding. ‘They’, in some nebulous way, bring changes which are beyond the understanding, and hence out of the control, of the ordinary citizen. Yet it does not have to be that way. We can, perhaps, learn from the past.

In the immediate aftermath of the War to End All Wars, women and men from all classes and walks of life came together in study groups to inform themselves on economic matters so that they could campaign to provide economic security for all families. Trade union branches, university extension classes and an infinite variety of church groups studied Social Credit and literature on related issues of the time. The Welfare State which emerged after the Second World War did not follow Social Credit principles. Nevertheless, Social Credit

literature made an essential contribution to popular debate.

At its very simplest, Social Credit literature can be reduced to three basic observations:

1. That finance is a man-made system, and as such can be consciously adapted and made to operate for the common good.
2. That money and work are two different kinds of value which cannot be exchanged. That is, the very basis of waged and salaried slavery is challenged.
3. That orthodox economists are hopelessly out of touch with the financial economics of the technological age which has moved beyond simple barter.

Popular throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Social Credit spread through a host of study groups in towns and cities of the UK and throughout Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The quest of ordinary men and women was to study Social Credit literature in order to understand the causes of war that led to poverty amidst plenty. In the process, the whole system of waged and salaried slavery was brought under scrutiny. Today there are signs of renewed questioning of the underlying assumptions of mainstream economics. Once again, like the women of the Social Credit movement, it is the women who

are central to the pursuit of alternative studies and lifestyles, seeking to provide appropriate Household care from childhood onwards. Solutions to the general malaise will not come down to us from above. They must be worked at from the grass roots upwards. A vital essential in the spread of Social Credit in Alberta was the work of the women of the farming communities in the rural provinces of Canada. A key factor in the spread of Social Credit was the strength

of self-help study in local groups. Offers of help and inspiration in the preparation of updated study group material would be most welcome.

“Systems were made for men, and not men [and women] for systems, and the interest of man which is self-development, is above all systems, whether theological, political or economic.” Clifford Hugh Douglas, *Economic Democracy*, 1919.

The Machine Stops

Frances Hutchinson

The question is ... can human nature be changed in such a way that man will forget his longing for freedom, for dignity, for integrity, for love—that is to say, can man forget that he is human? Or does human nature have a dynamism, which will react to the violation of these basic human needs by attempting to change an inhuman society into a human one? Eric Fromm: ⁽¹⁾

First published in 1909, E.M. Forster’s novella *The Machine Stops* anticipated with remarkable accuracy the revolution in information technologies and the changes in lifestyles that were to come. Forster shows how blind faith in technological progress could lead people to hand over power willingly to The Machine, which they worship as the source of all the necessities of life and, indeed, the source of life itself. Neil Duffield, who, in 2016, adapted the story for York Theatre Royal’s stage, notes how

much modern technology it anticipates – and how sharply it observes the effect the new technology will have upon its users. Forster foresees, “with astonishing accuracy, the effect the technology has on our relations with one another, with our bodies, with our philosophy and culture. It’s a warning for now of what we might be getting ourselves into”.

As Forster wrote, the vast majority of childhoods across the world were spent on the land, in homesteads which were managed according to ages-old wisdom handed down from generation to generation. Whether in town or countryside, homes were normally run by a housewife or lady-of-the-house, aided by extended family and servants. At that time, in an English middle class family, food, hot water, clean clothing, bed-making and the other essential comforts of home life would be supplied by a fleet of servants. Hence the author of *The*

Machine Stops imagines a world where machines have replaced the workers, childhood has been abolished, parenting is redundant and the natural world is reduced to a mere matter of historical interest.

The story

The story tells the tale of a future world in which human beings no longer live on the surface of the earth and there is no contact with the natural world. Individuals live in isolated cells. At the mere touch of a button, everyday necessities appear in the cell. Food, beds, washing facilities and medical requirements are standardised and are fed to the individual occupants down the tubes of the world-wide Machine. Travel is permitted, but is unpopular, and resorted to only when necessary, as it brings individuals into messy physical contact with other humans and the world outside their cells. From within their cells, individuals communicate through the ‘speaking apparatus’, an instant messaging, video conferencing machine. People spend their whole lives sharing ideas and second-hand knowledge through the apparatus.

The two main characters, Vashti and her son Kuno, live on opposite sides of the earth. Like most of the inhabitants of the artificial world of the Machine, Vashti is perfectly content with her life. She gives lectures through the video-conferencing device, exchanging second-hand ideas in a constant state of urgency. In the world of the Machine, everything has speeded up, so that time is consistently short. Kuno, however, senses that humanity once lived on another plane of existence. He questions the authority of the Machine over human lives and lifestyles,

but he dare not say so through the public medium of the speaking apparatus for fear of being overheard by the nebulous authorities. A very reluctant Vashti is persuaded to make the unpleasant journey, by almost redundant airship, to join Kuno in his cell. In the privacy of the cell Kuno can speak of things not permitted by the Machine. He tells Vashti of his disillusion with the all-embracing mechanical world and his belief that, enclosed within the Machine, humanity has lost the meaning of life, of what it is to be human. And he tells her that, illegally, without formal permission from ‘them’, the mysterious ‘Committee of the Machine’, and without the breathing apparatus supposedly necessary to survive in the toxic outer air, he has visited the surface of the earth. There he thought he saw signs of human beings living free from the Machine. Vashti is horrified. Her son tells of his recapture by the Machine. He has been threatened with ‘Homelessness’ because of his challenge to the authority of the Machine. Expulsion from the underground world of the Machine is to face death in the hostile outer surface of the earth. Being a ‘normal’ citizen of the Machine world, Vashti dismisses her son’s concerns as lunatic. She returns to the comfort of her cell in her part of the world.

Time passes. Vashti continues her daily routine underground, isolated from the sun, the moon and the stars, ignorant of the changing seasons, never feeling the touch of wind on her skin, never seeing another person, save on the flickering screen. But there are two important developments in the world of the Machine. Firstly, the life support apparatus necessary for visits to the surface of the earth is abolished, making

it impossible for individuals to verify any existing scientific observations of the natural world. Most people regard this as progress. They fear first-hand experiences and regard those who seek such experience with suspicion. All that needs to be known has been documented and is available for anybody to see through the apparatus of the Machine. Secondly, although religion has long ago been banned by the Machine, a new form of religion is established in the guise of worship of the Machine itself. Having no past and no history, people have forgotten that the Machine is man-made. They treat it as a living mystical entity who must be propitiated, and whose needs supersede their own. To refuse to worship the Machine is to be labelled 'un-mechanical' and run the risk of being expelled into the outer air as one of the 'Homeless'.

Kuno is moved to a cell nearer to Vashti's. He notes warning signs, which indicate that the Machine is breaking down. Since nobody knows any longer how it was built – or, indeed, *why* it was built - Kuno's observation to Vashti that 'the Machine stops' is met with sheer incomprehension. It cannot be. But the signs become unmistakable, as defects in the Machine appear with increasing frequency. At first, human beings accept the deterioration in the quality of life as mere whims of the all-powerful Machine. But as the inconveniences mount, panic and terror ensue. The final apocalyptic crash of the Machine brings 'civilisation' to an end. Kuno struggles through the wreckage to reach Vashti's ruined cell. They perish with the dawning realisation that humanity cannot survive as a series of isolated individuals separated from the natural world and its physical and spiritual life support systems. It is left

to the surface dwellers still surviving in the remaining pockets of natural life on the planet to take the responsibility for determining the ordering of the commonwealth of human society for the future.

The historical context

Only two hundred years ago – a mere century before Forster put pen to paper – the fastest modes of communication then available were horse and sailing ship. Nobody had electric lights, telephones, dishwashers or fitted kitchens in their Households, and virtually all foods were locally grown. Over the course of the following two centuries, mass transport and mass communications evolved into a mass bureaucracy, orchestrated by international finance. From the 1830s onwards steam railways were developed throughout Europe and the British Isles. Railways, together with steam ships, carried passengers and the produce of the new machine age all over the world. The motor car came into use late in the nineteenth century, with the first aviation flight across the English Channel taking place in 1909. The development of cameras and film projection resulted in the public screening of motion pictures by 1896. The first film theatre opened in Pittsburgh in 1905. The mass media developed from the weekly and daily newspapers, first circulating in the seventeenth century, and becoming popular with the universal growth of literacy in the late nineteenth century. Broadcasting of sound through radio began in the 1920s and images through television in the 1930s. Telegraph systems were developed from the mid-nineteenth century alongside the railways and, by the early twentieth century when Forster was writing, many middle

class homes in cities and small towns were connected to the telephone system through a series of local exchanges which reached out beyond the local community and towards the rest of the world.

Forster's Machine encapsulates the logical end product of the Machine Age. Locked away in their individual cells, human beings have nothing to do but endlessly suit themselves, playing with ideas that occur to them as they surf the net. All knowledge has been processed and recorded and there is nothing further to do but juggle ideas in endless permutations. Vashti is portrayed as a typical rational, progressive individual with no time for sentimental nonsense about the beauty and spiritual values of nature and the wider universe. For her, the Himalayas, as she flies over them, are boring. They contain no machine-age ideas and she shuts them out of view. She longs to return to her cell, where all her electronic messaging is rooted. Forster's portrayal of the powerlessness of individuals to think, feel and act for themselves is alarmingly prophetic. For many in the twenty-first century electronic communications have come to seem more real than the human need for physical, emotional and spiritual contacts with family, community and the natural world.

As Kuno observes despairingly, the Machine can only allow humanity to die. It cannot sustain life. For all the marvels of scientific invention, the Machine is no more than a pile of technological hardware. What is lacking is the technological software – the cultural, political and economic ways of working together – that would enable humanity to gain control of its hardware. The unavoidable speed limits to what

is physically possible using the out-of-control technological hardware is fast becoming all too apparent.

The Machine Stops is one of a series of imaginings of the future of society shaped by 'progress' in science and technology. Each twentieth century dystopia emphasises different aspects of the dysfunctional social system resulting from rejection of virtually all ethical considerations which do not sit cosily with capitalist growth economics. Each dystopia – *Brave New World*, *Nineteen Eighty-four*, *We*, *Asses in Clover*, *The Handmaid's Tale* – notes the eradication of the family, the absence of good work, alienation from the natural world and the elimination of the spiritual/ artistic dimension to community life as a whole⁽²⁾. These themes resonate throughout the films, plays, operas and ballet productions of dystopian fiction, indicating their ongoing relevance as social commentary on the dysfunctional nature of corporate capitalism.

In his blog, "A Brave New Dystopia", posted in December 2010, American Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Chris Hedges quoted George Orwell:

"Do you not see, then, what kind of world we are creating?" Orwell wrote. "It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear, and treachery and torment, a world of trampling, and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less but more merciless as it refines itself."⁽³⁾

Orwell foresees the emergence of a totalitarian corporate world, dominated by repressive surveillance in a security state using crude and violent forms of control. Huxley predicted that humanity

could be entranced by entertainment, technology and the comforts of consumption. Hedges observes the latter metamorphosing into the former. The central theme of the dystopian novel is the collusion of the common people in their own oppression. It would seem that humanity as a whole is prepared to hand over absolute power for the sake of a quiet life and a few perks in the short term. Chris Hedges uses the term ‘inverted totalitarianism’ to describe how the corporate state, “hiding behind the smokescreen of the public relations industry, the entertainment industry and the tawdry materialism of a consumer society, devours us from the inside out”⁽⁴⁾. In past eras the tyrant could be identified and opposed. But corporate power is anonymous and faceless.

“The result is a monochromatic system of information. Celebrity courtiers masquerading as journalists, experts and specialists, identify our problems and patiently explain the parameters. All those who argue outside the imposed parameters are dismissed as irrelevant cranks, extremists, or members of a radical left.”⁽⁵⁾

The range of acceptable opinion is very narrow. All who deviate from the norm are ignored, as the corporate spokesmen cultivate a world of cheerful conformity and fatal optimism. “We busy ourselves buying products that promise to change our lives, make us more beautiful, confident or successful as we are steadily stripped of rights, money and influence.” A century after publication of Forster’s prescient dystopia we continue to be mesmerised by continuous technological advances, creating elaborate fantasies about celebrity culture, celebrating individual prowess, eternal youthfulness, and connections

measured in nanoseconds, whilst lacking the technical ability to change a light bulb. As Forster so accurately predicted, the new communications technologies did not herald an age of leisure. On the contrary, Vashti has no time to spare as she switches from one topic to another in her empty room. The technologies that our money can buy offer speed and emptiness, with the illusion of leisure⁽⁶⁾.

The brutal money-centred social order

The Machine has been labelled “the brutal money-centred social order” which has no use for people, save to serve it in work and worship. It has no room to welcome the new-born into this world in a fitting manner. It has no use for parenting skills. For all too many mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and the local neighbourhood, child care is tacked onto the daily routine of getting and spending money. Meanwhile, the Machine takes no account of the needs of adults for an interactive relationship with the living planet and the cosmos.

Forster’s Machine scenario is unsustainable because it lacks the vital institution upon which all human life remains utterly dependent – the Household. The Household is the place where the child is born, to be cherished by a mother-figure during those vital early years of infancy. It is where the tasks of cooking and cleaning have meaning, where the sick and elderly are cared for, where the material, emotional and spiritual necessities of life are supplied and managed. Above all, the Household of the motherers is the bearer of culture. The acquisition of language, the key to human developmental skills in the whole realm of knowledge, science,

the arts, the religious and the social life, begins at the mother's knee. Every single patriarch that ever ran for office learned his mother tongue from the key person who fed him, bathed him, changed his nappies and sang him to sleep.

So crucial is the Household to the past, present and future of humanity, that I have marked it with a capital letter. Whatever positions we may aspire to in life, however challenging our careers might be, whether we have children of our own or not, we all, without exception, deserve first class care through the vital first months and early years of life. Over the course of the twentieth century, as Forster so perceptively predicted, parenting has come to be regarded as an unnecessary diversion from a money-making career. Nevertheless, according to the 2008 UNICEF Innocenti Report Card 8:⁽⁷⁾

“A great change is coming over childhood in the world's richest countries.

“Today's rising generation is the first in which a majority are spending a large part of early childhood in some form of out-of-home child care.

“At the same time, neuroscientific research is demonstrating that loving, stable, secure, and stimulating relationships with caregivers in the earliest months and years of life are critical for every aspect of a child's development.

“Taken together, these two developments confront public and policymakers in OECD [countries with urgent questions.

“Whether the child care transition will represent an advance or a setback – for today's children and tomorrow's world – will depend on the response.”⁽⁸⁾

I would argue that whoever the “public and policymakers” may be, the ultimate responsibility for the world's children's upbringing and welfare must lie with the parents and the local community in which they live. As the UNICEF Report shows, in the UK, USA and other countries of the developed world, parents and citizens are powerless and ill-equipped to bring the Money Machine economy into human comprehension and control.

Rational Economic Man has consigned the Household to the unit of consumption. It follows that the unpaid work of Mother-the-Homemaker is left out of account by economists. Denied money, rights, resources, recognition and training she struggles against increasing odds. Like Mother Earth, she is expected to provide her resources and mop up the mess as best she can. This is the crucial issue of our times, the one that needs to be addressed with the utmost urgency. Over the centuries of modern times patriarchal capitalist values have increasingly dominated the political, economic and above all cultural spheres of society, with increasingly devastating results.

The ‘invisible hand’ that is guiding the money economy towards social and ecological disaster is a hand that takes. It does not give. Rational Economic Man – *Homo economicus* – is born to buy, to demand, to take. To date, humanity as a whole has been prepared to go along with the patriarchal corporate world, providing it with the physical, material, emotional and cultural subsistence necessities of life free of charge. *Homo donans* – the mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles of us all, supply the vital necessities of life that Forster's technological Machine so

patently lacks.

In *The Machine Stops* the Household is reduced to a single cell occupied by a single person. All family responsibilities have been eradicated, inter-generational and community ties are not even remembered, childhood has been abolished, contact with the natural world has been eliminated, and work has become unnecessary because there is a machine to do everything. The nebulous ‘Committee of the Machine’ makes all the decisions and takes all responsibility for the management of the world’s affairs. Everything is standardised and available at the touch of a button. Food, furnishings, washing, cleaning, medicine, information and entertainment are there for the taking. The duties of parenting cease at birth. Individuals have neither need nor opportunity to glimpse the world that is “charged with the grandeur of God”⁽⁹⁾. It is completely beyond their knowledge or comprehension. Powerless as pampered lap-dogs, they have neither inclination nor motivation to exercise their physical, intellectual, artistic or spiritual powers. The logical end of the pursuit of technological progress for its own sake is the demise of humanity and

the living planet upon which we depend. Later twentieth century dystopias – *Brave New World*, *Nineteen Eighty-four*, *A Handmaid’s Tale*, were to be painted as nightmare scenarios in which the centralised powers-that-be break the will of the individual.

Up to this point in time, all civilisations have been built upon the use of force. People have been separated from their land to serve in military units or as slaves in farms, palaces, households and public services. And people have been, and continue to be, severed from their lands through enclosures⁽¹⁰⁾. Where whole families are deprived of the means of livelihood, the resultant pool of landless labour can be harnessed to the Money Machine by a power-hungry elite. Hence unbridled corporate patriarchy and materialism have resulted in disturbing hints that Western civilisation is starting to crumble. It would appear to be time for a change. The first step is to evaluate the saving features of the mess we’re in, to consider how we got here and to chart a course for less troubled waters.

This article was originally published in *New View* Summer 2018

ENDNOTES

- (1) Afterword to George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-four*, New American Library, 1961 edn, p260-1).
- (2) *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley (1932) *Nineteen Eighty-four* by George Orwell (1949). *We*, by Yeygeny Zamyatin, first published in 1924 by E.P. Dutton, translated by Gregory Zilboorg. *A Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Attwood. All still in print.
- (3) Chris Hedges (2010) “Brave New Dystopia” http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/2011_a_brave_new_dystopia_20101227/
- (4) *Ibid.*
- (5) *Ibid.*
- (6) Mark C. Taylor, (2014) *Speed Limits: Where Time Went and Why We Have So Little Left*, Yale University Press.
- (7) UNICEF (2008) Innocenti Report Card 8: https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc8_eng.pdf
- (8) OECD, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, an intergovernmental

economic organisation comprising 37 member countries founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.

- ⁽⁹⁾ A quote from “God’s Grandeur”, a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins 1844-1899. See *New View* issue 66, an article on the poem by Zoe Carroll
- ⁽¹⁰⁾ Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, (2011) Money or Life: What makes us really rich (Available free download from www.wloe.org.)

Extract from The Coming Collapse

Chris Hedges

As a foreign correspondent I covered collapsed societies, including the former Yugoslavia. It is impossible for any doomed population to grasp how fragile the decayed financial, social and political system is on the eve of implosion. All the harbingers of collapse are visible: crumbling infrastructure; chronic underemployment and unemployment; the indiscriminate use of lethal force by police; political paralysis and stagnation; an economy built on the scaffolding of debt; nihilistic mass shootings in schools, universities, workplaces, malls, concert venues and movie theaters; opioid overdoses that kill some 64,000 people a year; an epidemic of suicides; unsustainable military expansion; gambling as a desperate tool of economic development and government revenue; the capture of power by a tiny, corrupt clique; censorship; the physical diminishing of public institutions ranging from schools and libraries to courts and medical facilities; the incessant bombardment by electronic hallucinations to divert us from the depressing sight that has become America and keep us trapped in illusions. We

suffer the usual pathologies of impending death. I would be happy to be wrong. But I have seen this before. I know the warning signs. All I can say is get ready.

...

And so, to quote Vladimir Lenin, what must be done? We must invest our energy in building parallel, popular institutions to protect ourselves and to pit power against power. These parallel institutions, including unions, community development organizations, local currencies, alternative political parties and food cooperatives, will have to be constructed town by town. The elites in a time of distress will retreat to their gated compounds and leave us to fend for ourselves. Basic services, from garbage collection to public transportation, food distribution and health care, will collapse. Massive unemployment and underemployment, triggering social unrest, will be dealt with not through government job creation but the brutality of militarized police and a complete suspension of civil liberties. Critics of the system ... (to read on, see below)

Chris Hedges, spent nearly two decades

as a foreign correspondent in Central America, the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans. He has reported from more than 50 countries and has worked for *The Christian Science Monitor*, National Public Radio, *The Dallas Morning News* and *The New York Times*, for which

he was a foreign correspondent for 15 years. The article from which this extract is taken was originally published by *TruthDig* (<http://www.truthdig.com>), subsequently by *COMer* (www.comer.org), and is reprinted here with the latter's kind permission.

Women and Social Credit Economics

Frances Hutchinson

According to recent reports, women worldwide are opting out of childbearing, due to the impossible financial demands placed upon parents in general, and mothers in particular. Babies are currently born into a family household, sent to school and trained for the waged and salaried slavery that is officially termed 'employment'. A breakdown in health or employment availability can all too easily result in homelessness and joining the queues at the Food Banks. It does not have to be like this. Over the past century, women in the Social Credit movement have studied and taught the history of finance-driven economics, and spent their lives exploring sound alternatives to business-as-usual corporate growth economics. Their voices echo down the decades, denying the necessity to serve the mega-machine of international finance by rearing children to be the waged and salaried slaves of that machine.

In her pamphlet *The Soul of Man in the Age of Leisure*, (1935) popular

novelist Storm Jameson investigated the development of 'the machine-enslaved mind'. The majority of ordinary people seemingly have little choice but to obey the financial "forces which control all our lives from birth to death. . . . The army of us who serve the machines, either by minding them or by giving orders to the minders, or by purveying ideas, religions, a literature, apt to amuse without unsettling, have really only one choice offered us at birth – obey, conform, or starve".

Farmers, home makers, artists and all children

Social credit's most powerful appeal was to the vast sections of society whose income insecurity precluded their active participation as mainstream actors in the political economy. Industrial capitalism and organised labour had clearly defined economic roles. Mothers, the unemployed, small farming families, artists and craftsmen had essential supporting roles. But these roles were

less easy to specify within the terms of the formal economy. The ‘artist’ could include all whose work springs from internal motivation, not only the fine artist but also the writer, the musician, the craftsman, the inventor and the engineer, without whose work Western ‘civilisation’ would not exist. Throughout Canada, Australia and elsewhere, women in farming families were active in promoting the study of social credit economics.. These were the mainstay of support for the worldwide social credit movement.

The futility of securing political freedom without economic freedom is stressed throughout the extensive literature. A key topic of debate was the feasibility of a National Dividend payable to the individual rather than to the family unit as a whole, as a means to secure women’s civil rights. To date the involvement of many thousands of women in the study and promulgation of Social Credit lies hidden by male command of public platforms and academic publications. Nevertheless, women’s presence is evident. Men’s responsibility for ‘the mess’ was not at issue. The debate centred on the extent to which men had usurped women’s role as providers and protectors. ‘Woman, when she does not imitate man, is a realist’ observed a writer in *The New Age* in 1934.

The question of the value of labour was presented in novel form in the pages of the popular national weekly, *The New Age*, in 1934. In assessing the value of work, whether paid or unpaid, how is an hour’s work to be valued? What yardstick may be most appropriate to an evaluative comparison between the hourly value of the work undertaken by:

- (1) a Professor at the London School of Economics,
- (2) the Editor of *The New Age*,
- (3) the late Mrs Norman for her feat in bearing and rearing her son, our Montague [Governor of the Bank of England]?

The Professor received a comfortable and secure salary for teaching the unsound but orthodox economics of the corporate world. The Editor of *The New Age* was financially insecure as he questioned the necessity for poverty and war amidst plenty. And, as every mother knows, Mrs Norman, mother of Montague, who rose to the prestigious position of Governor of the Bank of England, received nothing for playing her key role in the nation’s affairs.

Women’s emancipation?

Women’s emancipation into ‘salaried slavery’, observed a writer in *The New Age* in 1934, had done nothing to ameliorate women’s status or conditions. The quest of the 1990s women’s movement to free both women and men from the wage slavery of capitalism is echoed throughout social credit literature, not only in the pages of national weeklies such as *The New Age* and *Social Credit*, but also in numerous pamphlets and local presses throughout the country. John Hargrave presented the case for Social Credit as follows:

Q. How will Social Credit affect the position of women in general?
By giving every woman a birthright income – i.e., the National Dividend based on the productive capacity of the community – it will ensure economic independence and freedom, for it will

release her from being:

- 1 Tied to the home when she wishes to lead her own life.
- 2 Treated as a drudge, or as an inferior – i.e. the ‘chattel’ status.
- 3 Driven to marry for the sake of economic security.
- 4 Bound to some man who ill-treats her, or is in some other way unsuitable as a person to live with.
- 5 Driven into work-wage slavery in competition with men in order to keep alive.

Q. Will women get ‘equal pay for equal work’?

Yes, they will. (1) Because a Social Credit Government will naturally stand for fair play for all citizens without distinction; (2) because employers will no longer need ‘cheap labour’; and (3) because each individual woman will be able to say – ‘If I do this job as well as a man could do it, I shall want the same pay as a man.’ And if the employer says, ‘No,’ she will be able to say: ‘Very well, I refuse the job. After all, I can live on my National Dividend.’ This places every woman in a very powerful position. (It will apply equally, of course, to badly paid male workers.)

Following from women’s growing interest in the social credit economics of Clifford Hugh Douglas across Britain and Canada, and ‘more noticeably in Australia and New Zealand’, American women were encouraged to banish the notion that economics is a ‘man’s subject’. Man’s lust for power could be countered if women applied the simple test to all economic proposals: ‘Is it good social housekeeping?’

National Dividend

Through housekeeping and child-rearing, families have made a vital contribution to the money economy. Yet, while other contributions are evaluated in terms of money and subsidised where considered necessary, the work of rearing children and caring for the sick is left out of account. Meanwhile, high salaries and perks are paid out to those who make guns and weapons of destruction.

Prominent women social crediters like J.C. Willett advocated economic independence for women as a means of creating emotionally stable Households for the benefit of sound child rearing practices. A National Dividend would go far towards removing two of the most insidious foes of understanding between men and women – masculine arrogance and feminine coquetry. Where either party is entirely dependent financially upon the other, true values may become distorted, unworthy artifices for gaining things desired may be resorted to, and honesty and understanding give place to reservations and strain. Writing as early as the 1930s, Willett expresses her concern at the psychological stress caused by the unhealthy financial system. Much poor parenting is due to families having to live in poor economic circumstances. Equally, the abusing father and violent husband can be better dealt with by a woman who is financially independent. Willett explores the illogicalities of a financial system in which poverty exists alongside ‘overproduction’. Women work for low pay in poor conditions, with disastrous consequences for their mental and physical health. Poverty can also lead to prostitution. The real cure is to remove the financial necessity for women to sell themselves into service to a

male-dominated institution, be it a multi-national corporation or a Household in which the man is the predominant breadwinner.

Education also suffers when it merely serves the temples of ‘Sound Finance’. “Everything becomes subservient to the need of finding a living. Education for leisure, and to produce liberal [imaginative] minds, is either ignored as not paying or voted out as too idealistic.” In words which could have been written six decades later, Willett documents the ills of an education system governed by financial considerations: oversized classes, inadequate equipment, old and unhealthy buildings, physical and mental stress on teaching staff and nervous strain reflected in the children themselves. Formalism and routine replace the freshness which is all-important in the teaching profession. Many are forced into teaching for financial reasons, unable to secure financial support for the university research they are capable of producing.

Under a Social Credit system all children should be able to stay at school to pursue a ‘more liberal, less exam-ridden education – an education for the leisure in which they must one day share – and face after-school life with the assurance that they will not be confronted with the mad rush for employment for employment’s sake’. Willett urges women to resist the pressure to train their sons for war, which has ceased to be a matter of religion or politics but has now become ‘a financially controlled affair’. She concludes that poverty and misery are not inevitable. It is against the iniquity of the existence of poverty in the midst of abundance that women should direct the power given them by

their votes. Let us vote for the one thing needful, the abolition of poverty; let us insist upon it in no uncertain terms. ... A National Dividend can usher in an age of ‘prosperity and anxiety-free leisure’. All that will be lost is ‘an archaic and false monetary system’.

During the so-called ‘interwar years’ of the 1920s and 1930s women in the world-wide Social Credit movement sought to create a sane social order, a ‘commonwealth’ in which justice and peace could end the poverty amidst plenty that had brought ‘civilised’ warfare of the 20th century. They were early proponents of ecology, respect for the land, care of the natural world and the rights of children to excellence in community provision of education. Their work was brought to an end by a financial system which favoured profitable preparations for warfare, the consequent rise of Hitler, World War II, Pearl Harbour, Hiroshima and the global post-war trance of materialism in the machine age. Nevertheless, the work of Social Credit writers and activists lives on, and is available for profitable study. By this is not meant *financially* profitable, in the sense of furthering a lucrative career in business or the professions on terms dictated by the financial system. Since study for money degrades the human body, soul and spirit, it is necessary to develop the skills and talents needed to create a sane monetary system, a tool in service of humanity to replace the Machine that demands to be served by all.⁽¹⁾

Parents and children still struggle to the present day, trying to learn, live and work within the ‘archaic and false monetary system’ that has pervaded the political,

economic and cultural spheres of the social order. The political, cultural and economic institutions by which we live today would collapse overnight if finance ceased to flow through them. Since those institutions are entirely man-made, their evolution can be studied in preparation for the introduction of sane, sensible and workable adaptations capable of taking account of all the factors concerned in freeing the political, economic and (above all) cultural spheres of the social order from the oppressive hand of high finance. Social Credit monetary analysis provided clear and concise answers to the frequently asked questions about the working of the economy in the twentieth century. It was, however, persistently misinterpreted by career politicians, bankers and academics as also by many socialists whose career interests demanded compliance with corporate finance.

The real and the financial economies

What exactly is “the economy”? When we speak about “the economy”, concepts of money, incomes, jobs, production, profitable trade and wealth creation in general spring to mind. Yet the word ‘economy’ derives from the Greek word ‘oikonomia’, the management of real resources to provide the necessities of life. Separating useful production from wealth creation follows a very old tradition and can be traced back to Aristotle. Herman Daly and John B Cobb define *chrematistics* as:

“the branch of political economy relating to the manipulation of property and wealth so as to maximize short-term monetary exchange value to the owner.”

Oikonomia, by contrast, looks to the management of the household:

“so as to increase its use value to all members of the household over the long run. If we expand the scope of household to include the larger community of the land, of shared values, resources, biomes, institutions, language, and history, then we have a good definition of economics for community.”

Mainstream, neoclassical economic theory, as taught in universities and business schools in preparation for careers in banking, finance and commercial practice, has fused *chrematistics* and *oikonomia*, concentrating upon the former, whilst leaving the real world management of social resources and the earth’s natural resources out of account. These would include the unpaid work of families within their Households, and the products of the ecosystem. Economics has lost touch with reality, accounting money values whilst ignoring how we live in our house, the living world. Economists argue that prudent self-interest motivates people to produce the goods and services needed by society. However, economists who followed this lead draw a sharp distinction between needs and wants. Needs include all the necessities of life, including food, shelter and clothing. But *needs* do not register in the study of economics, only *wants* count. Wants are effective demand, that is *demands backed by money*.

And so arises the question of the day – where is the money to come from? In the inter-war years of the last century women in the Social Credit movement asked – and answered – the key question – where does money come from? It certainly

doesn't grow on trees, nor is it found under gooseberry bushes.

This article forms part of a series of

articles introducing the Social Credit analysis of the financial system.

ENDNOTE

For detailed references to the material presented here see Frances Hutchinson, *Understanding the Financial System: Social Credit Revisited*, Jon Carpenter, 2010. Also Frances Hutchinson and Brian Burkitt, *The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism*, Routledge, 1997. This article is formed from extended extracts from these works.

⁽¹⁾ Frances Hutchinson, "The Machine Stops", *New View*, Summer 2018

Social Credit Economic Thought

Frances Hutchinson

It was a characteristic of the twentieth century that ideologies abounded in which the cultural, political and economic organisation of society were perceived as being merged into one identity.

Socialism, Capitalism, Communism, Liberalism and various religious cults seemed to suggest a unity, a common belief system, to be imposed on all members of society. Hence people did not readily recognise the urgent necessity for a clear separation between the political and the economic spheres. A little thought reveals that politics and economics have entirely different origins historically.

In pre-industrial times such economic associations as existed held their power from the political. The political, in its turn, held its rights from the spiritual powers, at least this was so in theory. The order is now reversed: economic power is supreme. The development of steam power and modern productive

technologies has changed human society entirely, by the formation of multinational companies and the financial powers that have grown up with them.

These bodies, with their secret councils and purely economic interests, were quite unforeseen by the ages from which we have inherited our instruments of law, politics and culture. They are strong enough to use law and politics and culture in their own interests. ... As citizens of the world we find this to be the fact. But it remains unforgivable that so many thinkers and theorists have accepted it as the everlasting truth about human society, which it certainly is not. Our very idealism, which is Socialist, and our Socialism, which is all more or less Marxian, is based upon the assumption that economic power is the supreme power, and that a just and equitable system of economy is all that is needed to give birth to a new life and culture.

Distribute the loaves and fishes and all else will be added unto you! And yet, when we try to represent this new and just economic system, we must perforce fall back upon a political, and not an economic idea. We have nothing to suggest but the organisation of industry upon political lines. All Socialist schemes for the common, or the National or the proletarian 'ownership of the means of production' boil down to the same thing – the political management of production. And political management kills production, as surely as the entrance of industrialists and financiers into political life is killing politics. Few people any longer really believe in Parliaments, because they are run by rings of economic interests. And the most determined Socialists can now hardly keep their faith in the idea of running factories by democratic committees.

Mairet's observations, printed in a national weekly in 1925, are quoted at some length because they demonstrate that very little has changed since they were written, except, perhaps, that people are even less well informed as to the true state of affairs than they were nine decades ago. Academics still espouse Marxism as a political, economic and cultural ideal. Secret councils meeting behind close doors are regarded as a figment of the conspiracy theorists' imaginations, while all aspects of society are run on pseudo-democratic, i.e., bureaucratic lines. Above all, the biggest danger which Mairet identified in 1925, the control of Parliament by economic interests, continues unabated to the present day.

Mairet continues :

"Now, quite apart from the backstairs, the fact is that finance is too openly and visibly organising itself into the life of politics. Much might be said about this, but it would not be to our present purpose. Certainly, it is true that the human Commonwealth is threefold already, in fact. Human society is eternally threefold in fact. The mischief is that we have begun to think of it as a unity, and if this thought is long continued, as it already has been, there will be an actual coalescence into chaos. The idea that human society could be expressed by the Unity State is a social insanity. The appearance of this idea ought to alarm us for the health of the State, just as much as a man's having the idea that he was a tea-pot would concern us for his reason. The further 'separation' that we would propose, therefore, is a separation in thought. For the real value of a work like Steiner's Threefold Commonwealth is that it is founded upon thinking in accordance with the realities of life instead of upon operations with abstractions."

Steiner's work was not considered acceptable in Labour circles because it is fundamentally opposed to the notion that human labour is a commodity, such that all had the right and duty to work for money, to sell their labour. The socialist view of economic 'democracy' was totally unacceptable to Steiner, who, like Marx and Douglas, distinguished between honourable service and wage slavery.

This extract is taken from *Understanding the Financial System*, p251-3)

Economic Democracy

Reviewed in the *Oxford Chronicle* (1925)

The appearance of Major C. H. Douglas's new book, 'Economic Democracy,' recalls his visit to the Oxford Labour Club in the early part of the term. Readers of THE NEW AGE have for some time past been familiar with his piquant style and heterodox theories, but very little attention has been paid to them. This is a vast pity, because in Major Douglas the Labour movement has a severe critic, who is yet as deeply opposed to the present system as any of our so-called Bolsheviks. If his case is demonstrable it will mean that an entirely new orientation is necessary. The substance of his book is an exposition of the way that 'Anarchism' can be applied economically even to a highly industrialised community like England. Starting out from the basic anarchist propositions – (a) that it is impossible to determine any just distribution of the product of industry on the basis of what each factor or man has contributed, and (b) that lust for power, in whatever way manifested, is the real enemy – he is as vigorously opposed to the Marxian position that all wealth is created by labour as he is to private ownership of the means of production. He claims that the potential wealth of the world is so great that the quarrel over the existing supply is beside the point. The Labour movement in its attempt to appropriate a great share of the product for the worker, and to secure control over administration, is merely tilting at windmills. The object of the struggle must be control over policy.

Control over policy can only be obtained by gaining control over finance, through the means of the banks. Credit is the property of the community, and should be administered by the community. (Note this is not necessarily the State. A State banking system is only jumping out into the fire of the second evil, centralised power.) Therefore the community, instead of collecting taxes, should pay dividends, so that we get the delightful and true anarchistic proposal that the community should issue credit to the consumer as such! The individual, in short, should draw an income for merely being a citizen. For how this is to be brought about, readers must be referred to the book itself, which is so compact that any précis of the economic theory is impossible in a shorter account. The importance of the book lies firstly in its bearing on the increasing centralisation which is obvious all around us. Financial amalgamations on the one side and triple alliances of trade unions on the other are but manifestations of a tendency to crush out the individual beneath some vast cosmic force – a force which threatens to become stereotyped for centuries in a League of Nations with a lie in its soul. The book is intensely worth study; even the unbeliever will be able to spend many a happy hour trying to detect flaws in the author's reasoning –

C.L.T. - Oxford Chronicle

Extract from *Understanding the Financial System*, p206-7

Politics

Connecting Inner and Outer Worlds

Richard Rohr

Go down to the palace of the king and declare, "Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place."
Jeremiah 22:1, 3

The primary role of religion and spirituality is to reconnect, the very meaning of the Latin word *religio*. The Greek word polis—which led to the word politics—simply means city or public forum, where people come together. Why have religion and politics become so antagonistic when they have similar goals?

The Hebrew prophets and Jesus clearly modeled engagement with both faith and the public forum. However, unlike its Jewish forbears, in its first two thousand years Christianity has kept its morality mostly private, personal, and heaven-bound with very few direct implications for our collective economic, social, or political life. Politics and religion remained in two different realms, unless religion was uniting with empires. Christianity looked to Rome and Constantinople for imperial protection; little did we realize the price we would eventually pay for such a compromise

with Gospel values.

"Separation of church and state" is important to safeguard freedom of religion and ensure that governments are not dominated by a single religion's interests. But that does not mean people of faith should not participate in politics. Today many believe that "inner work" is the purview of spirituality and that we should leave the "outer world" to politicians, scientists, businesses, and workers. Most of the negative feedback I receive is "Don't get political!" Yet how can I read the Bible and stay out of politics? Again and again (approximately 2,000 times!) Scripture calls for justice for the poor. The Gospel is rather "socialist" in its emphasis on sharing resources and caring for those in need. Like it or not, politics (civic engagement) is one of our primary means of addressing poverty and other justice issues. I am not talking about partisan politics here, but simply connecting the inner world with the outer world. As a result of our dualistic thinking, the word "partisan" has come to be synonymous with the word "political." And so many church-goers do not want to hear the Gospel preached—as it might sound political!

To be a faith leader is to connect the

inner and outer worlds. In the United States' not-so-distant-past, Christians were at the forefront of political and justice movements to abolish slavery, support women's suffrage, protect civil rights, and establish and maintain Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Today I am encouraged to see many of my Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist brothers and sisters actively engaged

with the political realm, speaking truth to power, and holding our political leaders accountable. Being political is a basic civic, human, and spiritual duty!

Adapted from Richard Rohr, "Introduction," "Politics and Religion," *Oneing*, vol. 5 no. 2 Center for Action and Contemplation: 2017, 11-12. (<https://cac.org>)

The Frequently Asked Question

Frances Hutchinson

Over modern times, scientific thought has been developed and conveyed through the use of words, words which become symbols, things to be spoken about in their own right. Thus experience is replaced by hypotheses, which are then built upon. Scientific experiments are conducted in laboratories in which certain conditions are maintained as constant. It is then assumed that the same or similar results will occur when the experiment is repeated in real life, outside the laboratory in the living world where there are real plants, animals and people. Gradually, over the course of the last couple of centuries or so, *Homo economicus* has built himself a man-made laboratory of the city, with its factories, office blocks, residential housing and infrastructures, moderated by the artificial culture of the urban environment. And he has assumed that *Homo donans* and the entire living world will continue to supply him with the necessities of life so that he can continue to live in the manner to which he has become accustomed.⁽¹⁾

The artificial urban environment is the brainchild of neoclassical economic theory. Following the pattern established by the natural sciences, the social 'sciences', replace experience with hypotheses which are described in words, then substitute words for the hypotheses, so that the words become the subject of hypotheses as if they were the observed objects themselves. Things are replaced by symbols and signs which now operate *as if* they were the real thing. Hence economic theory, which dominates not only the social 'sciences' but society as a whole, is based upon a series of prior assumptions that do not necessarily relate to the real world in any meaningful way. As they monitor markets, exchange rates and economic growth - as measured statistically in terms of finance alone - they *assume* they are studying the real world. Economic theory, in other words, is nothing but a series of dreamed up hypotheses divorced from the living economy of the real world, devoid of sense or meaning.

Nevertheless, it is the dream of economic ‘progress’ that has created the nightmare of the new electronic ecosystems, with all their instant communications, their radiation, their robot bees and 5G. As European culture spreads across the world it continues to be greeted with dismay by the indigenous peoples whose lands it plunders and whose peoples it has dispossessed. Western peoples have lost all meaningful connection with the living world of nature, and with the inner presence of the spirit within nature. The only thing that seems to be of value is money and monetary profit. On this altar everything of human or natural goodness can be sacrificed. Presently, there appears to be no alternative to proceeding on the path to greater and greater separation from the world of spirit and nature. The old understanding of, and identification with, the natural world has been replaced by the “onlooker consciousness”. The entire world is coming to be viewed through the electrically-powered screen, so that nothing is real, living and tangible. An ecologically insensitive value system has given rise to the ecologically insensitive electronic machine technology, which is capable of turning humans into robots and threatening, in due course of time, to wipe us off the face of the earth.

The FAQ

A frequently asked question is - is there an alternative? And if so where is it to be found? And the answer is – Yes! There are loads of answers. Writers galore point to history, archaeology, the anthropology of indigenous peoples and the women-led farming movements of the third world which are so eloquently described by Vandana Shiva and the ‘women and life on earth’ movement.⁽²⁾ Published in 2014, *The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organization*, fully documents a host of

alternative ventures and organisations. These include Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and other communes and intentional communities, many of which are run on principles sympathetic to anthroposophy. But such is the world today, that, in order to ‘drop out’ into an alternative it is necessary first to have enough money, or enough savvy as to where to get the money, for oneself and one’s dependents to survive. It is an incontestable fact that an individual human being cannot live a meaningful life as a total outcast, living a full-time existence in the wilderness. Somewhere along the line, the financial question looms large. One can exist on the margins, but only so long as the mainstream financial economy can continue with business-as-usual.

The money question looms large everywhere today. It emerges even in the very heart of every alternative scheme or movement. Always and everywhere decisions on financial expenditure influence policy outcomes. Economists tell us that finance is value-free: it merely facilitates the exchanges that are essential in advanced industrial society. But, as indigenous peoples observed when their ecologically sensitive cultures were steam-rolled aside by the juggernaut of Western financial interests, money – the financial system – is very definitely a value system. If you are paid to do something, it must be right, because a money payment carries the stamp of authority. You are not expected to think outside the box. Financial value is all that counts. Hence all *paid-for* work is by definition good work, because it is recorded as a plus on GDP.

Indigenous peoples form an integral part of the living world, and they know this to

be the case. From generation to generation they observe how nature works, building up a compendium of knowledge of soils and water courses, of flora and fauna, weather patterns, seasons and migration. Observations of the medicinal properties of plants amongst surviving indigenous populations have continued to supply pharmaceutical companies with the knowledge necessary to develop sophisticated products for sale on the market.

We cannot return to the original conditions in which virtually the whole of humanity has lived prior to the industrial revolution and the electronic age. But we can give ourselves chance to think through our priorities, as many people are in fact doing. Do we really need to be searching for new energy sources to power the production and use of increasing numbers of electronic gadgets and disposable material gizmos? Now is the time to consider afresh the satisfactions offered by economics. Do we really want to allow our bodies, minds and intellects to be invaded by a succession of electronic images that rob us of our time on earth and hence of our very humanity?

Currently, the necessity to secure finance dominates policy formation in the institutions of all three spheres of society. As the fish swim through the sea, they take the existence of the water for granted. As the birds fly through the air, they are equally unaware of the air's existence. And as we humans interact with each other in the economic, political and cultural spheres of urban society we are largely unaware of the all-pervading presence of finance. Every action we take, every decision we make, is moderated by the financial system. Often, it is only

when we don't have enough money for a desired end that we turn our attention to the business of acquiring a fresh supply. But we assume that there is some money to be had from somewhere. You may need food, clothing and shelter. But in urban civilisations, the supply of the very necessities of life is dependent upon the availability of finance. Though it is not immediately obvious to most of us, finance is currently involved in every interaction between human beings, and between humanity as a whole and the natural world. The role of finance is so all-pervading that it is easily overlooked. Like the birds in the air and the fish in the sea, we take the flow of money through our hands for granted. Yet money is an entirely man-made phenomenon. As the worldwide Social Credit literature explains, money is created by human beings through the banking system for very specific purposes.⁽³⁾ The knowledge that this is so is the key to understanding the task ahead.

Reform of the existing money system, with all its complex structures, networks and institutions, is presently beyond the scope and capability of us ordinary mortals. Many and various are the experimental alternatives that have been tried, including Mondragon, the Triodos Bank and the so-called 'Bank of Dave'. But these have all depended upon the prior existence of the world's financial system, and have, to date, failed to divert the core institutions of the world economy from the ecologically, socially and spiritually disastrous course upon which they are currently set. We can protest and demand change, but it is highly unlikely that the powers that be in banking circles will slap their foreheads, admit their fault, and agree to change their ways. Finance

forces us to produce the material goods advertised to us, to provide the necessary infrastructures for their distribution, and to man the vast bureaucracies which document all the complex movements and transactions necessary to maintain the world market.

What we can do, however, is to reform our own relationship to the money system. And that starts by reviewing our personal patterns of getting and spending money. Fortunately, the practice is nothing new or revolutionary. Many and varied are the alternative lifestyles embarked upon by groups and individuals over the course of the rise of the industrial economy. From Diggers and Levellers to William Cobbett, to the Amish and other intentional communities, to the various downsizing movements, individuals and families, all have sought to break free from the all-embracing financial economy. In the meantime, however, the vast majority of individuals have settled down to follow, as best they can, the lifestyle of emulative consumerism handed down to them by the preceding generation. And they wouldn't want it any other way. They enjoy the perks the system provides because they have never been shown the possibility of thinking differently.

It follows that today the vast majority of children are being brought up in a world of man-made THINGS. They emerge to consciousness surrounded by mass-produced electrical gadgets, clothes, machines, furnishings, cars, plastic toys, televisions and computer screens. A series of little boxes serve as homes, each with their standard, mass produced toilets, bathrooms and kitchens created to conform with bureaucratically determined standards. Even the food they eat is mass produced. Sealed off from

the outside world for virtually every moment of their lives they grow towards adulthood, cocooned from the reality of nature's terrors and splendours. In the absence of "the sense of wonder" (see Rachel Carson's *The Sense of Wonder*), the electronic media offer nothing but an illusion of connection to the spiritual dimension of human life on earth.

Just enough of us escape into pockets and hollows of cultural comfort to create the illusion that all must be well. But all the while, the very fabric of society, and the natural world upon which it is built, is in process of irreversible disintegration.

It is time to take stock and change direction.

But how do we set about it? It is so much easier to take the job – just for now – to set up a household – just for now – and to raise the children, just until we see which way the wind blows. And anyway, what can I do? If you want to waste your time carping on about imaginary scenarios, count me out! Almost more insidious is the tendency, over recent decades, for individuals to direct their energies into raising funds for a single-issue cause. Yes, the world is in a mess. So much needs to be done. So I'll focus on a project that is saving the whales, building a school or fighting cancer. That much I can safely accomplish from within my little boxed, business-as-usual existence. No need to rock the boat.

Which is precisely why we're in the mess we're in.

The tragedy of the 20th century is that most educational institutions throughout Europe and across the world ignored (or were unaware of) the teachings of

Rudolf Steiner on the Threefold Social Order. Steiner's basic observation was that urban society is organised according to three sets of institutions, the political, the economic and the cultural. He likened the body social as a whole to the human body. The body contains three systems, the circulatory system, the nervous system and the bone structure. Each operates independently, but there are overlapping features that enable the body to function as a healthy whole. In the world economy of modern times, however:

the political organization has completely merged itself in the course of recent centuries in the powerful interests of the economic body. It has happened unnoticed, but in reality the two have become one. Economic interests and needs have found expression in public laws, and these are often held to be human rights.⁽⁴⁾

As the 20th century progressed, the cultural-spiritual life of society came to be dominated by a political-economic belief system which conflates human progress with the development of artificial intelligence, electronic information technology, and technological progress in general. As a result, massive worldwide networks of bureaucratic institutions determine what people think and feel and know about the world around them. Inevitably, this affects how people want to act within them. Hence the dominant and dominating political, economic and cultural institutions of the world are run by people who have been reared to accept a particular world view. Under the illusion of choice, they find themselves prone to manipulation through images which trigger desires for endless artificial physical and emotional satisfactions. Words become empty symbols reinforcing

the desires. In the absence of the meaningful story told by real people through the written and spoken word, workers lack the ability to discover why cleaning has meaning.⁽⁵⁾

The all-pervading perception is that corporate capitalism is here to stay, and that it is everybody's duty to serve the system in return for the rewards offered to them *by* the system. This is slavery. Under such a system individuals are not expected to think things through so that they can take full responsibility for their individual actions. Individuals are taught to assume that if they play their cards right they will be rewarded, and if they mess things up they have only themselves to blame. The system can tolerate a certain number of enclaves, where like-minded families or businesses come together to create social and cultural alternatives, so long as they offer the illusion of choice but do not threaten to wreck the capitalist boat. Individuals who thoughtfully question the morality, rationality and acceptability of the system – the Daniel Blakes – find themselves seemingly powerless to effect change.

Steiner's teaching on threefolding in the social order helps to explain why cleaning has meaning. Like all forms of good work undertaken in Household and local community, cleaning undertaken under one's own volition, in a spirit of love, generates the intrinsic satisfaction of a job well done. - Whether creating a work of art, engineering a bridge, teaching a group, tending the sick, running a farm, writing a poem, caring for a child or cooking a meal, a task freely undertaken for love is more worthwhile than one undertaken under orders for a money reward. The task ahead is to develop this theme amongst the population at large,

so that is no longer met with derisory laughter.

That task can only be undertaken if we open ourselves and our children – indeed, *through* our children – to an appreciation of the world around us and our role within it. For this to occur we must take time to study the written word, and to practice the spoken word in order to allow the free play of the spirit to inform our actions. The conscious awakening of our consciousness needs to occur not only in the cultural sphere, but also in the economic and rights spheres of society.

The three spheres are inextricably intertwined. In order to operate at all in the cultural sphere we need the physical necessities of life. Food, shelter, clothing and cleanliness are not, and never can be, supplied by the Machine. However sophisticated the technologies available to humanity, men and women must continue to cooperate to provide the necessities of life through good work undertaken in love and joyful respect of the needs and intentions of others. For the foreseeable future, *Homo donans* must continue to produce the material goods and services in cooperation with the natural world.

In order to work in the economic sphere, and to be free to exercise our skills in the cultural sphere, we need a system of rights, of equity, so that all have equal opportunities to work in the economic and

cultural spheres.

The tragedy of modern times is that *Rational Economic Man*, the hero of the economics textbooks, has been given a free hand to develop and use the toys of modern technology. The rule of thumb has been the simplistic ‘I can, therefore I must’. With dazzling rapidity new scientific discoveries have led to practical outcomes, including the new information technologies, explorations of space, new reproduction technologies based upon embryo research, pesticides and herbicides blighting the lands, genetically modified organisms released without checks and balances, drones and driverless cars developed just for the hell of it. In the corporate nightmare world thus created, individual freedom of choice is eliminated. The population as a whole finds itself condemned to being one huge workforce in service to the new machine technologies. When economic interests and technology alone determine the social framework, the cultural life upon which humanity depends for inspiration and enlightenment is extinguished. The task ahead is to turn economically determined technology from master to servant. That cannot be done through the political or economic spheres. Change must come from within the smallest, most intimate and basic institution of human society: the well-run Household, where every child has a right to be born.

ENDNOTE

(1) Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, (2011) *Money or Life: What makes us really rich* (Available free download from www.wloe.org.)

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) See Frances Hutchinson and Brian Burkitt *The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism*, Routledge 1997.

(4) Rudolf Steiner *The Social Future*, Anthroposophic Press, 1972 edition. Lecture II.

(5) Linda Thomas, *Why Cleaning Has Meaning: Bringing Wellbeing Into Your Home*, Floris Books, 2014.

Social Credit literature currently available in print or online.

Over the century (virtually) since Clifford Hugh Douglas first put pen to paper, a vast literature on the subject of Social Credit has appeared in print. Douglas' own works were translated into many languages, and most of his books can still be bought over the internet.

The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism

Frances Hutchinson and Brian Burkitt, (2005)
£12.99

Social Credit: Some Questions Answered

Frances Hutchinson £3

The Grip of Death:

A study of modern money, debt slavery and destructive economics

Michael Rowbotham £18

Understanding the Financial System: Social Credit Rediscovered

Frances Hutchinson (2010) £15

What Everybody REALLY Wants to Know About Money

Frances Hutchinson £12

Asses in Clover (Fictional dystopia)

Eimar O'Duffy (2003) £11

This Age of Plenty

A new conception of economics: Social Credit

Louis Even (Pilgrims of Saint Michael)

The Social Artist

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We recommend

the journal *New View* as an excellent source of in-depth reflections on major issues of the day
www.newview.org.uk

The body of economic theory known as 'social credit' was studied across the world in the inter-war years of the 1920s and 1930s, as ordinary men and women struggled to understand how it was that the world could afford the waste and horror of war. The Social Credit movement was supported by leading figures in the arts, sciences, the church, politics and social activism, all of whom presented the case for peace based upon social justice and environmental sustainability.

**What is physically possible
and socially desirable
must be financially possible**

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The Social Artist is a quarterly journal dedicated to breaking the boundaries between Christian Social teaching, Anthroposophical Social Renewal, and the institutional analysis of money as presented by the Social Credit movement.