

# THE SOCIAL CREDITER

## FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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### Social Credit in Australia and Overseas

*In January 1954 we published an address by Dr. Byran W. Monahan given at Melbourne in December 1953 to the members of the Douglas Social Credit Movement of Victoria, by invitation. By request we republish this address together with questions put at the close and Dr. Monahan's replies:*

This is the second time I have had the pleasure of addressing a meeting of Social Crediters in Melbourne. I am invited to speak to you on Social Credit in Australia and overseas since the death of Major Douglas, and it is because I think that in Melbourne is to be found the best of the existing embodiments—incarnations—of the Social Credit idea in Australia that I have this pleasure in addressing you.

I am going to interpret the subject nominated for this address widely, for a start, in order to provide a frame of reference for more particular remarks. I want you to think of what Social Credit in fact is.

Social Credit is primarily an idea. In the platonic sense an idea is defined as an eternally existing pattern, of which individual things in any class are imperfect copies. That is the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* definition, but I think that "expressions," or "embodiments," would be better descriptions than "copies." For example, *Economic Democracy*, Douglas's first book, is not Social Credit itself; it is one expression of the idea Douglas had, and after that, from time to time he expressed the same idea in different ways, emphasising different aspects on different occasions, applying this idea to different circumstances.

I suppose most of us came to Social Credit first of all through the technical side—financial technique. We could see that things in the world were wrong, we could see—thanks to Douglas's analysis—how they were wrong and we could see how to put them right. It seemed that the obvious thing to do was to capture the machinery of government, and apply our patent cure for the ills of Society. We had the same touching faith in our ability to set things right as have the Socialists—amongst whom we must include the Liberals—today.

But, of course, we can't do that any more than can the Socialists.—And the reason is that Society is an organic and living thing. It is no more possible to plan Society than to plan a tree—even with a Social Credit plan. You can stunt it, or prune it, or encourage its growth one way or another, or kill it. But you are dependent all the time on the inherent life of Society itself, and that life is subject to, or rather in accordance with, Laws which, as Douglas emphasised, we can discover but neither invent nor alter nor circumvent. "Society is primarily metaphysical."

Now broadly speaking, Social Credit is simply that way of regarding Society—or, for that matter, the Universe. And

so is Christianity. Christianity is concerned with the Law of the Love of God; Social Credit with the Law of Society.

I believe that the most important spiritual revelation ever disclosed was that the nature of God is love. It is quite evident that even the slight love of God, and love of neighbour, that have so far been realised on earth has nevertheless transformed society. There is such a thing as Christian civilisation, which is different from any other civilisation past or present of which we know. Chinese civilisation, which largely embodied Lao-Tse's idea was similar.

But the Laws, or facts of the universe, revealed in Christianity cannot be imposed on society. You cannot make a man love his neighbour. But as love does replace the competition and jealousy and envy which seem to be the more primitive relation of man to man, so society grows, becomes, Christian. It is the existence and the example and the influence of Christians which make society Christian.

I trust it is clear to you that I am speaking not as a theologian, but as a scientist, a sociologist, a Social Crediter, in making these remarks about Christianity. In my present capacity, I do not, and need not, go further than to state what is evident on inspection, so to speak. After the recent outbreak of war, we all know the difference between a society impregnated with hate, and a society impregnated with love, even if the latter is not much in evidence. There are, indeed, only individuals, and little societies within Society, inspired and living in love.

Now all this has a bearing on the position of Social Credit—everywhere. Social Credit is, of course, a religion, in the sense Douglas defined it—"a binding back to Reality." Social Credit is in fact a revelation of the nature of Society, and of the laws appropriate to that nature. But remember that these laws are not inventions or impositions; they are statements of perceived facts. They are not statements of what 'ought' to be, or even guides to conduct. What the knowledge of natural laws means is that the knower knows what will happen if he acts in accordance with them, or contrary to them.

Someone once remarked that events behaved as if they were in Douglas's pay, or words to that effect. And it is true that Douglas foresaw with remarkably detailed accuracy the general course of events. That was because he understood the nature of society, and the general laws of that nature, and therefore could know whether a given policy was in accord or not with those laws, and therefore what the result would be. This, indeed, is the sort of thing that the doctor and the engineer are doing all the time; to the extent that they know the nature of the thing they are dealing with, they know what will happen next in particular circumstances, and how they can co-operate in bringing about a desired result out of a number which may be possible if

some of the circumstances can be varied. But I know very well as a doctor that I never 'cure' anything. The body heals itself whenever it is possible; and all that a doctor can do is to provide what may be lacking to make that process possible. Or, knowing what particular thing is happening, he may be able to say that what is being done is inappropriate to the desired result, and to say what the real result will be. And so Douglas made it plain in his first book, *Economic Democracy*, that disaster would follow the attempt being made to use Society as the vehicle of the will-to-power of a relatively small group of men. He said that an imposed pyramidal organisation of Society was *wrong*—wrong because it was contrary to the actual nature of Society, and would in consequence lead to what it has led to, which is what we have now.

I think it is becoming more and more clear how entirely secondary the matter of financial technique is in relation to this matter. As Douglas said, the present financial system is perfect for its purpose: it is the purpose which is wrong. Those of us who have lived now for twenty years or so with the idea of the compensated price, and in general with the idea of the application of financial credit to bring about a desired result, know that there is no problem in financial technique. And so do our opponents. I think that they have demonstrated their complete mastery of financial technique in their adaptation of it to the changing circumstances of this past twenty years when we have been conscious of this technique.

I hope this broad but sketchy survey helps to show the relationship of the Social Credit Movement to the world today, which is the subject on which I am invited to speak to you tonight.

The Social Credit Movement, then, is a group of people who have had revealed to them the true, the actual, nature of Society. They are united by a sort of *credo*, which has not, so far as I know, ever been made explicit, but whose first term would naturally be the belief that Society is primarily metaphysical, and that its development is organic. Another belief we share is that the cultural heritage is the natural and unconditional birth-right of the individual. And, I think, we also share the belief that Douglas was one of those men who appear only occasionally in the history of mankind, to whom is given the power of direct insight into the nature of Reality in one aspect or another, and whose statements about Reality therefore have the force of revelation to those "with eyes to see and ears to hear."

I think those are our essential beliefs, the fundamentals of our philosophy, our faith, our credit.

Well then, as a group of people we exist in the world, and towards that world we have a policy—the policy of our philosophy—and that policy is what is generally known as Social Credit. This policy is the form that the idea of Social Credit takes in the world. It is this policy that leads to the organisation and activity of the Social Credit Movement. It is this policy that leads to the writing of books, the publication of periodicals, the giving of addresses, and the various endeavours to grow into and influence the growth of Society. We embody a vital principle which we wish to infuse into society.

These things that we do are not, of course, Social Credit itself. Social Credit is that "eternally existing idea," while the things that we do in the name of Social Credit are the

more or less imperfect copies or, a better word, I think, incarnations, or embodiments. "In the beginning was the Word."

As a group of people we are not alone. Society is full of groups of people, organised by some philosophy, and therefore having some policy towards Society. Most of these do not directly concern us; but some do, very closely. There are those whose philosophy is in accord with ours; and there are those who are actively opposed to us. The latter are those who see Society as a medium for the expression of their will-to-power.

It seems to me—and here I speak with the experience of a medical practitioner—that the will-to-power is, from a sociological view-point, the most presently important practical aspect of human psychology. It seems to be the desire—unconscious no doubt—to impose their ideas on others which attracts the great majority of politicians to their—what should one call it?—calling?

This is a long story, but its telling is not suited to this occasion. The short of it is that there is a constant supply of people, probably unconscious of their motives, who are the best possible tools for another group of people who are quite conscious of what they are doing, and why. The major fact we have to face is that there is an attempt, by fully self-conscious people, to convert, or reconstruct, Society, to a form which places that group in a position equivalent to the directing intelligence of a single organism. It is the community of bees with this difference: that the queen-bee is to be a group of conscious, knowing, organisers; but the 'common man' is to be reduced to a largely un-self-conscious part of the whole. There are, at the present time, two large processes going on: the construction of the pyramid of control, and the depersonalising of individuals. The former is comprised of the various be-lettered International Authorities, founded on essentially totalitarian national governments; and the latter is carried on remorselessly through the squalid daily Press, and various periodicals from comics to *The Economist* and *The New Statesman*, and through broadcasting and television.

Our efforts for the past several years have been largely devoted to making that situation plain; first of all to understanding Douglas's discernment of the facts, and then to spreading knowledge of those facts to the appropriate quarters—such as they are. Until Douglas died, we had his guidance on strategy, and not much else to worry about.

With his death, however, we have the responsibility of preventing distortion of the Social Credit idea as it is manifested in Society. During his life-time there were plenty of people who were anxious to convince others that they knew better than Douglas what Douglas meant. They were a nuisance in confusing the public, but no problem to those who knew what Douglas was. Where they made confusion, Douglas was always there to clarify the picture; and in fact he constantly kept the picture clear, mostly through notes or longer articles in *The Social Crediter*.

But now we have a situation where anyone can say "my 'interpretation' of this or that is just as good as yours," and then go off and endeavour to win public support on the best party lines for that 'interpretation'; and, of course, get his own prestige involved, so that it becomes a personal issue.

There may be occasions for 'interpretation' of Douglas some time in the future. I believe ideas do need re-stating when there is a sufficient change from the environment in which they first became known. But you have only to think of Christianity to realise how slow that change is. Mostly we find only that we understand more deeply the profundity of the sayings of Jesus as the world changes and we know more about it.

It is certain that there is no present need for us to 'interpret.' Our task is to understand as well as each of us can the idea of Social Credit, and to embody that idea as perfectly as we can in whatever we do that touches on Social Credit; and practically that means anything we do 'in association'—anything from social intercourse to politics.

There will, of course, be heresies. They started, indeed, long ago. Even were it not an all-too-human characteristic to differ, our enemies—our conscious enemies—would sow discord and divisions. The Government of Alberta does not receive the blessing of the world Press for being truly Social Credit! nor does the Social Credit Secretariat receive "the silent treatment" for its divergence.

You cannot entrust a real idea to the mob. Somebody must be responsible. Douglas took the precaution of founding the Secretariat, and of bringing it up, so to speak, to be responsible for the idea of Social Credit. Now I don't think Douglas regarded Social Credit as *his* idea. It was, as he put it himself, "a glimpse of Reality"—an insight into one aspect of the nature of things. And his whole attitude was one of responsibility towards that idea. I don't think he had any desire to see a Social Credit world, except in the sense of seeing things 'right' instead of wrong. He had no personal feelings about the matter, I am sure. He had humility. "Not my will, but thine be done."

Part of the responsibility which Douglas accepted was to provide for continued responsibility for the idea to which he devoted himself. And I really do not see how it is possible not to recognise the primacy in responsibility of what Douglas recognised as the only official body for the transmission of what he had to say, and of which, indeed, he was himself a part—the Advisory Chairman.

Where it is not deliberate and malign, it is just sheer bad manners to retain the name Social Credit for an activity which is a divergence from what Douglas recognised. But malign or bad mannered, it is something that can only be faced by the existence of a group of people who so far as possible have perfected themselves in the idea of Social Credit. If we are right, if we really do know something at least of the way things are, and if we live that idea out in our lives, as Douglas did, then we are doing all we can.

I think what I have said is not quite what I was expected to say. That is because I believe that the profoundly important thing is the depth of understanding Social Credit. What matters is the existence of profoundly understanding individuals. The Chinese—or some of them, for their organic civilisation too has been poisoned—know that. They believe, as I understand it, that everything depends on the understanding and development of the Emperor: *not because he rules but because he exists.*

I think we become socialists and materialists as soon as we wish in any way to impose a Social Credit technique. We can never be a Party, seeking power. Our task, perhaps, is to keep Parties in their place. We should be able, with authority, to pronounce on what is right or wrong in relation

to that part of Reality of which we, following Douglas, have caught a glimpse.

When Douglas died, we inherited his responsibility. Whoever truly is a Social Crediter, shares that responsibility. But the responsibility is centred in the Social Credit Secretariat, and concentrated in its Chairman.[\*]

And finally: To the extent that you, as an individual, are truly a Social Crediter, you have a Social Credit world. Your relationship with Society is 'right'; you know where you stand in relation to Society; you know how to go about things. You must not want, in a personal sense, low prices and a dividend. As a Social Crediter, your attitude is the attitude of the engineers; that what is to be done must be done in accord with the nature of things.

What Douglas *was*, brought the Social Credit Movement into being; what the Social Credit Movement *is*, will, in due course, transform Society.

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. I have the impression that as a group we are drifting. Are we just to sit around waiting for the individual to do something?

A. There is no point in group activity as such. Group activity may grow out of some individual activity. If some one does something, does it well and gets clear and obvious results, what he is doing will attract support, and insofar as it is necessary, organisation will grow out of what is being done. That is organic growth.

Q. How could we better our co-operative efforts?

A. I think that behind these questions is a feeling that something has gone wrong with the Social Credit Movement; that it is not getting anywhere. But you need to see what has actually happened. Social Credit began with a great propagandist phase. The idea, which had not been known before, was carried literally all over the world, in a short time, and thousands and thousands of people everywhere became in some degree familiar with the idea. Well, looking back, we can see what that actually achieved. It so to speak broadcast the seed over a very wide area. But the important thing was for the seed to take root, and grow. Well, that has been achieved. You have Social Crediters all over the world. What is important now is not broadcasting the seed, but what becomes of the growth resulting from that seed. It is a different phase, when everything depends on the quality of the individual growth.

Q. Should anything be done without the sanction of the Secretariat?

A. There is nothing to stop you, as an individual, doing whatever you like, but if you do anything in the name of Social Credit, you have to be sure that you are not com-

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[\*] **Whoever he may be.** While the individual as such is always responsible, form always transcends individual experience of it in the organic world. Compare Douglas's statement that individuals are more influenced by their function than their function by them. (Editor, T.S.C.)

promising that name. There are many fields of activity with which we are familiar as being Social Credit; no one has any doubt about them. But if there is a doubt, it is only fair to find out from the authoritative source, before using the name of Social Credit.

Q. Is there no other teacher but Douglas and the Secretariat?

A. Oh yes—experience, and the quality of the individual. After all, if we are dealing with something real, and *know* what we are dealing with, we will get the intended results in what we do. We are not trying to get artificial results, but to act in accordance with the nature of things.

Q. In my job I know that things are being done that are wrong, but if I tried to do anything about it I would lose my livelihood, and I can't do that. How can one speak truth under the necessity of earning a livelihood?

A. I think the only possible answer to that is the one Jesus gave—"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." After all, it is what you are, no matter what you have to do, which is important. You can only do your best in whatever the circumstances are.

Q. Can Social Credit come by the will of the people? As this seems impossible, how will it come except by organisation?

A. It will come by growth, by return to an organic form. It is not our job to impose anything on Society, but to stop the interference with its natural development in accord with its nature.

Q. Dr. Monahan mentioned the growth of Christianity. It seems to me that although Christianity has been preached for two thousand years, the world is anything but Christian. Can the Social Credit idea be directed into channels better than Christianity was directed?

A. I think it is quite beyond question that the world is absolutely different since Christianity became evident. We take so much for granted, without realising how much of it is due to the teaching of Jesus. We have no experience, no personal experience, of what the pre-Christian world was like. But it was not then known that the right relation of man to man was *love*. Now to some extent our relationships and customs and institutions are based on that insight. I quite agree that the world is far from perfectly Christian; but it is certainly different. And we also have to face the fact that the natural development of Society has been deliberately interfered with. And it is also possible, in fact, as I think, probable, that we have reached a point where Social Credit is actually historically necessary for the further development and spread of the Christian idea. There seems to me to be some complementary relation between the two.

Q. C.H.D.'s Just Price is a natural Law. Why shouldn't we get recognition of this?

A. This has really been answered historically. We can look back and see the answer to that.

Q. Is Alberta following Douglas?

A. No; it is quite obviously following the London School of Economics.

Q. Is there time to take a long-term view?

A. Growth must be slow. But you mustn't be pessimistic about this situation. You have to realise what the real situation is. We have to face the fact that there is an attempt to dominate the world. Now in order to see what the real situation is, you have only to think what we could do if we had our hands on the controls—if we had free access to the Press and radio and government. I don't think it would be hard to put things on the right track in those circumstances. But on the other hand, our opponents aren't making wonderful progress, because they are going against the grain. They *need* all those things, yet they still haven't succeeded. They are attempting to impose a pyramidal organisation. But as Douglas pointed out, that organisation is the weakest to disruption from within, and that is just what is happening. UNO is coming in for more and more criticism. There are dozens and dozens of groups attacking it in one way and another. These big things are always breaking up. Well, we have to help this process. If we are good enough, people will want our help, which gives us the opportunity to clarify the picture. But it is quite wrong for us just to want to see a sort of technical Social Credit world. We should merely want to see the proper organic development of Society; and we really don't know what a Social Credit world would be like.

## Levelling Down

"It is a ridiculous demand which England and America make, that you shall speak so that they can understand you. Neither men nor toad-stools grow so. . . ."

"Why level downward to our dullest perception always, and praise that as common sense? The commonest sense is the sense of men asleep, which they express by snoring. Sometimes we are inclined to class those who are once-and-a-half witted with the half-witted, because we appreciate only a third part of their wit. Some would find fault with the morning-red, if they ever got up early enough. 'They pretend,' as I hear, 'that the verses of Kabir have four different senses—illusion, spirit, intellect, and the exoteric doctrine of the Vedas;' but in this part of the world it is considered a ground for complaint if a man's writing admits of more than one interpretation. While England endeavours to cure the potato-rot, will not any endeavour to cure the brain-rot, which prevails so much more widely and fatally?"

—H. D. THOREAU.

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