

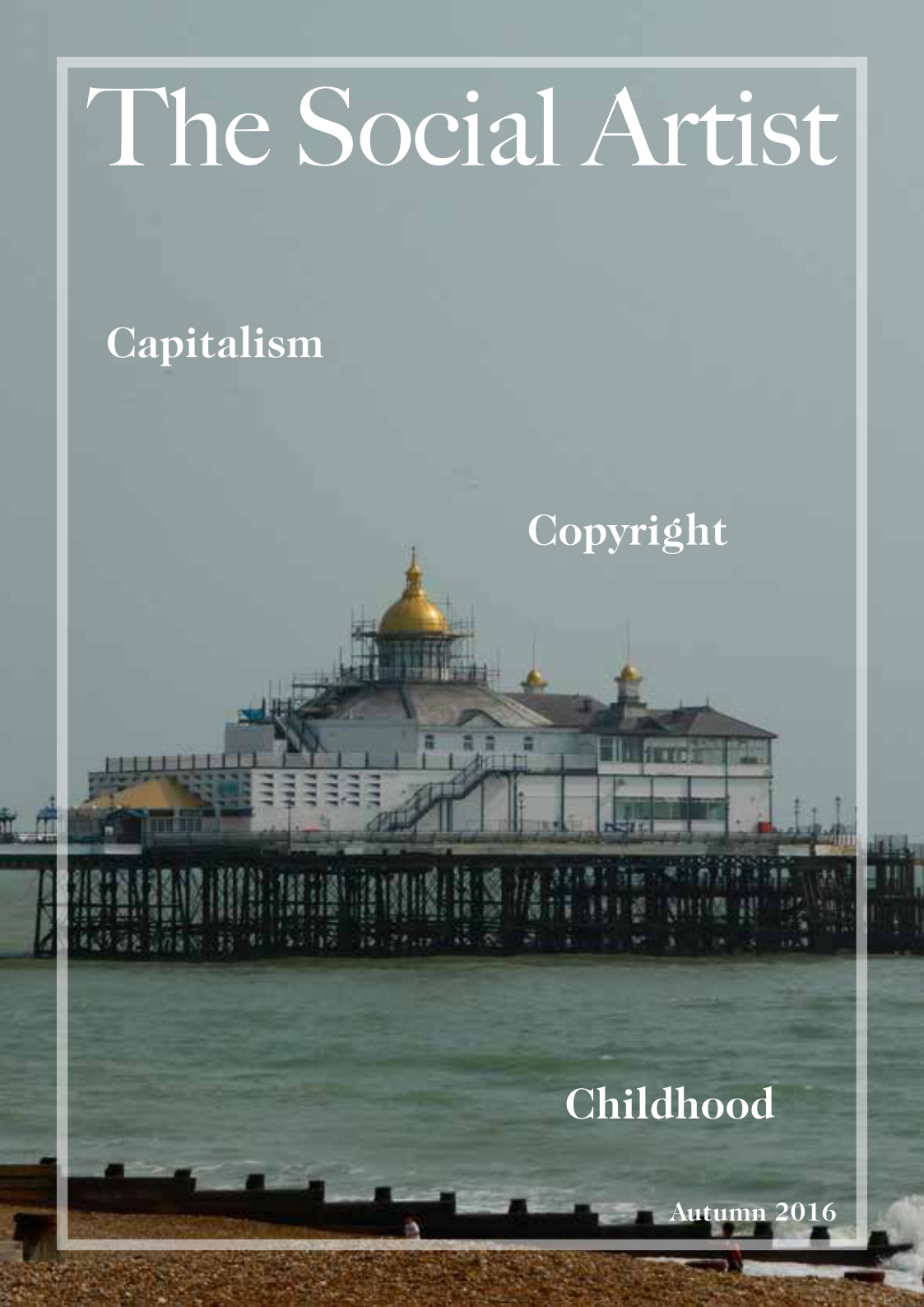
The Social Artist

Capitalism

Copyright

Childhood

Autumn 2016



The SOCIAL ARTIST

(incorporating The SOCIAL CREDITER)

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Editor: Dr. Frances Hutchinson
Mail and Editorial: The Social Artist
Willow Bank, Riddlesden
Keighley, BD20 5AN
Tel: +44 (0)1535 600356 (editor)
+44 (0)1535 654230 (secretary)
Email editor@douglassocialcredit.com
Website: www.douglassocialcredit.com

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Editorial

“Fruit doesn't grow on trees, it has to be paid for,” says Katie's harassed mum in Sue Townsend's *Mr Bevan's Dream*.

Aneurin (Nye) Bevan, Minister for Health in the 1945-51 Labour Government sought to convert 'guns into butter'. After the devastation of World War II, which culminated in the senseless detonation of weapons of mass destruction on the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Old Labour sought to provide a level playing field for all children and their families in the UK. That vision has been converted into an empty dream by New Labour's adherence to business-as-usual corporatism, with its “perverse socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor: its freedom for capital and denial of freedom to labour; its perfidious politicians and political civil servants” (John Pilger in *Runnymede Gazette*, June 2016.)

As every Labour supporter and straight-thinking capitalist familiar with social credit thought knew then, and knows now, money does not grow in trees: it is made by banks. Masses of money is created to create guns and enough 'butter' (*ie.*, the necessities and luxuries of life) to keep the population producing the guns, armaments and weapons of mass

destruction demanded by corporate power. Wars, poverty amidst plenty, ecological devastation and social malaise is the result, exactly as CH Douglas and the social crediters predicted throughout the twentieth century.

As the political events of this summer demonstrate, the political system is not working democratically. “The age of enterprise has become the age of unearned income, the age of the market the age of market failure, the age of opportunity a steel cage of zero-hours contracts, precarity and surveillance. ... Whoever you vote for, the same people win, because where power claims to be is not where power is. ... Unreformed political funding ensures that parties have to listen to the rustle of notes before the bustle of votes....” (George Monbiot, *Guardian*, 28 June 2016).

From drawing our first breath to breathing our last, the money system presently plays a large part in determining our life choices. The generation who were alive when Nye Bevan and Old Labour brought in the NHS are busy fading away, and a new generation of mothers are busy going into labour. Free, gratis and for nothing, they volunteer to produce the labour-power

necessary to maintain the corporate world in the manner to which it is accustomed. While spokesmen-and-women of all creeds, persuasions and beliefs chatter endlessly across mass and social media, women take on the mothering role, performing the essential tasks of child care, education, home maintenance, cooking, washing, teaching and telling stories, placing their children in day care, with grandparents, with migrant workers, so that they can access the money income necessary to maintain the household.

In the “State of the Arts” section of this issue of TSA/C we spell out the case for a National Dividend, an income paid of right to every citizen, flowing from the common cultural inheritance. The time has come for some common sense choices between life, work and money. If we continue to rely on financial and economic experts, we will remain in the mess we're in, leaving an even worse mess as legacy for our children.

State of the Arts 1, 2, & 3

Various Authors

State of the Arts 1

Rudolf Steiner

EDITOR'S NOTE: Roughly one hundred years ago the Austrian philosopher, scientist and seer Rudolf Steiner made the following observations about commercialization of the arts:

The economic aspect of life has to a great extent overspread everything, because it has outgrown both political and cultural life, and it has acted like a suggestion on the thoughts, feelings and passions of men. Thus, it becomes ever more evident that the manner in which the business of a nation is carried on determines, in reality, the cultural and political life of the people. It becomes ever more evident that the commercial and industrial magnates, by their position alone, have acquired the monopoly of

culture. The economically weak remain the uneducated. A certain connection has become apparent between the economic and the cultural, and between the cultural and the political organisations. The cultural life has gradually become one that does not evolve out of its own inner needs and does not follow its own impulses, but, especially when it is under public administration, as in schools and educational institutions, it receives the form most useful to the political authority. The human being can no longer be judged according to his capacities; he can no longer be developed as his inborn talents demand. Rather is it asked, “What does the State want? What talents are needed for business? How many men are wanted with a particular training?” The teaching, the schools, the examinations are all directed to this end. The cultural

life cannot follow its own laws of development; it is adapted to the political and the economic life.

Rudolf Steiner (1919) *The Social Future* (1978 edition)

State of the Arts 2

Chris Hedges

EDITOR'S NOTE: About one year ago, American journalist Chris Hedges wrote the following in respect of Jeremy Corbyn's stated policy position on the arts at the time of his being elected Leader of the UK Labour Party:

The arts community in the United States, like that in Britain, is in deep distress. Actors, dancers, musicians, sculptors, singers, painters, writers, poets and even journalists often cannot make a living. They have few spaces where they can perform or publish new work. And established theaters, desperate to make money to survive, produce tawdry spectacles or plays that are empty pieces of entertainment rather than art. The war on the arts has been one of the major contributions to the dumbing down of America. It shuts us off from our intellectual and artistic patrimony, contributing to our historical and cultural amnesia. The parallel removal of the arts from school curriculums, now dominated by vocational skills and standardized testing, has cemented into place a system in which Americans have been taught what to think, not how to think. Self-expression and creativity, disciplines that make possible self-awareness, transcendence and the capacity for reverence, are

anathemas to the corporate state. The imposed dogma of neoliberalism must be unquestioned. "Under the guise of a politically motivated austerity programme, this government has savaged arts funding with projects increasingly required to justify their artistic and social contributions in the narrow, ruthlessly instrumentalist approach of the Thatcher governments," Corbyn wrote in the August statement. "During the 1980s, [then-Prime Minister Margaret] Thatcher sought to disempower the arts community, attempting to silence the provocative in favour of the populist. The current climate of Treasury value measurement methodologies (taken from practises used in the property market and elsewhere) to try to find mechanisms appropriate to calculating the value of visiting art galleries or the opera are a dangerous retreat into a callous commercialisation of every sphere of our lives. The result has been a devastating £82 million in cuts to the arts council budget over the last 5 years and the closure of the great majority of currently funded arts organisations, especially outside London."

He went on:

"Beyond the obvious economic and social benefits of the arts is the significant contribution to our communities, education, and democratic process they make. Studies have demonstrated the beneficial impact of drama studied at schools on the capacity of teenagers to communicate, learn, and to tolerate each other as well as on the likelihood that they will vote. The greater involvement of young people in the political process is something to be encouraged and celebrated. Further, the contribution and

critique of our society and democracy which theatre has the capacity to offer must be protected. To quote David Lan, 'dissent is necessary to democracy, and democratic governments should have an interest in preserving sites in which that dissent can be expressed.' ”

Corbyn says he would also reverse the government cuts that gutted the BBC. He understands that the destruction of public broadcasting, which is designed to give a platform to voices and artists not beholden to corporate money, means the rise of a corporate-dominated system of propaganda, one that now controls most of the U.S. airwaves.

“I firmly believe in the principle of public service broadcast and am fearful of following the path tread in the United States, where PBS has been hollowed out, unable to deliver the breadth of content to compete with the private broadcasters, and where Fox News has as a result been effectively allowed to dominate and set the news agenda,” he wrote. “I want to see the Labour Party at the heart of campaigns to protect the BBC and its license fee. When we [Labour] return to power we must fully fund public service broadcasting in all its forms, recognising the crucial role the BBC has played in establishing and supporting world class domestic arts, drama, and entertainment.”

Chris Hedges, Posted on *Truthdig* <http://www.truthdig.com/>

State of the Arts 3

Authors Various

A key plank of Social Credit thought is the consciousness that all economic

activity relies upon the *Common Cultural Inheritance*, a bedrock of inherited knowledge and skills, of techniques and know-how, the ownership of which is common to all citizens. It follows that all citizens are entitled to a *National Dividend* or *Citizen's Income* as of inalienable right. Presently, the ownership of, and hence the right to use, aspects of this common heritage is held by powerful private companies and global corporations. Intellectual 'property rights' are assigned in law to the *designated owners* of creations of the intellect, owners who probably did not create the creations. Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) include trademarks, copyright, patents, industrial design rights, and in some jurisdictions, trade secrets. Artistic works including music and literature, as well as discoveries, inventions, words, phrases, symbols, and designs can all be protected as intellectual property. Originally such protection in law was granted to the creators of intellectual property, so that they could benefit financially from their creations. While intellectual property law has evolved over centuries, it was not until the 19th century that the term 'intellectual property' began to be used.

Selective ownership in law over common resources was first established when exclusive private property rights were given to individuals claiming ownership of the land, humanity's most basic resource. Originally expressed as laws of inheritance, land ownership conferred rights not only on the landlords, but also on the serfs and free peasants who lived there, so that the attachment of these persons to their means of livelihood

was secured. It acted as an important guarantor of income from the soil; it provided a general social right to draw on the resources of the land. But once the ownership of land was made the exclusive possession of private individual owners it became the principal means for dispossessing the rural population of their rights to a livelihood. In the UK the enclosures and the highland clearances gave rise, over the last four centuries, to the phenomenon of landless labour, forced to seek a money wage as the sole alternative to starvation. Worldwide, during the 20th century, the propertyless citizens of every land became the vast army of waged and salaried slaves working for the financial/industrial corporations.

By the late 20th century 'intellectual property' became commonplace in the majority of the world. Intellectual Property Rights created a new category of commodity: knowledge itself. The communication or application of privately-owned knowledge became a crime. The universal nature of this fundamental change was by no means restricted to a small hi-tech sector. Agriculture, the occupation of more than half the world's people, was transformed, bringing an end to the self-sufficiency of world agricultural production. Producers are now obliged to abandon natural production from their own seed and pay premium prices for genetically engineered seeds; indeed these seeds are neutered so that they do not reproduce. It must be stressed in case of misunderstanding that this change, like all new social institutions, is transforming earlier institutions into something entirely new. As a means of

providing authors, artists, musicians and their publishers with an income, or as a means of providing a modest return to permit inventors to ply their personal guild or craft activities, the old copyright and patent laws were by and large unexceptionable because they allocated the income from creation onto specific persons. But social institutions that are specific to persons become something entirely different when the titles to the incomes concerned are alienated, or made generally alienable, and bought and sold by corporate bodies. At that point the institution actually becomes corrosive of the very relations it was established to protect and is in this case indeed becoming one of the principal devices for crushing the small inventor, the musician, the writer and the small publisher, gradually subordinating all personal creativity to the impersonal rule of capital.

The modern tradeable patent or copyright agreement is not aimed at the inventor or author, but on the contrary at the current owner of the right to exploit the inventor's work, who generally usurps the inventor and is more often than not a company. Any software writer (and, increasingly, any writer) who enters employment as such, signs away all rights to the fruits of her or his mental labour by consigning copyright to the employer. A device initially intended to protect a specific person — the originator of a work or at most its immediate reseller — has become a means of alienating that knowledge from this specific person, and making it a marketable object. Microsoft does not trade in the ideas of Bill Gates

— not even the most dedicated nerd does \$8 billion worth of thinking — but, in a certain sense, the ideas of everyone *but* Bill Gates, to which however Bill Gates has obtained the exclusive rights.

Writing a century ago, Clifford Hugh Douglas, originator of Social Credit economics, observed that money is purely a man-made phenomenon. Money is nothing more than an accounting system created by society as a whole. It follows that whatever is physically possible can be made financially possible, given the political will. He argued that the question of ownership of resources is crucial. Like the natural resources of the land, the common cultural inheritance is common property, and cannot rightly be appropriated by private individuals or corporate bodies. No individual or corporation can stand alone, producing marketable goods independently of the political economy as a whole. As a follower of Douglas' theories explained:

“Imagine one man tending a machine that prints circuits: is the value of the printed circuit his labour time? The value of the printed circuit is design value: the design of the circuit, the design of the machine. Men turn out resistors and capacitors and transistors: these would be utterly worthless curiosities did not designs exist for television sets and computers and amplifiers. Or a Boeing 747 carries twice the load of a 707, but the crew works no harder. What has multiplied the value of their work is design done once and for all. Douglas called it the cultural heritage. It includes many esoterica: the results obtained by mathematicians long dead, the formulae of anonymous metallurgists,

even, we may hazard, Brancusi's sense of form, which in a time of motorized box kites anticipated the aluminium cylinders we fly in today. (Kenner, quoted in Hutchinson and Burkitt, *The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism*, p60)

Wealth, in short, is created in common, through cooperation in the use of material and intellectual resources, and cannot rightly be said to be the exclusive property of private individuals or corporations. It is possible to imagine an entire country, the citizens of which are shareholders in the common property. In their capacity of shareholders citizens hold the ordinary stock, which is inalienable and unsaleable. It can be seen as supplying a dividend sufficient to purchase the whole of its net production. Each individual is a 'tenant for life' of the cultural life handed down through the generations. Instead of patenting scientific discoveries, even genes, for speculative investors to collect a rent on them, the National Dividend would contribute to gear down the drive to maximization of the financial sector. It would encourage alternative life styles that would cultivate other goals than the consumption of highly promoted items of little or negative usefulness.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For a full discussion of finance, the common cultural inheritance and the National Dividend, see the texts available at www.douglassocialcredit.com

Glimpses of Eden [Dandelions]

Jonathan Tulloch

Gardeners of the Western world, why this relentless war against dandelions? Dandelions are one of nature's good guys. Growing in such profusion, they're a vital food source for wildlife; often the only food source. During our early, cold spring, I lost count of how many half-starved queen bees I found clinging to the yellow flowers like shipwrecked sailors to a life raft. Today, after a few dry weeks, our goldfinches are feasting on the seeds. Their generosity extends as much to gardeners as it does to garden visitors. Far from ruining lawns or veg patches, dandelions offer a bespoke horticultural service. Not only are the golden flowers ravishingly beautiful, but their leaves are

a ready-made peppery lettuce. Those deep tap roots are also a gardener's friend; bringing up nutrients from the soil, they assist shallower-rooted vegetables, and also help keep the lawn green. And by emitting ethylene gas they help fruit to plump. But it's their loyalty that's perhaps the dandelion's most endearing characteristic. Originally a scarce plant of forest clearings and grasslands, it was human agriculture that created their ideal environment. And they've been with us ever since. Enemies? No, companions. Faithful as dogs, they follow our heels.

From *The Tablet*, 4 June 2016, Vol.270 No.9154.

What is Capitalism?

Martin Parker

Capitalism is difficult to define not only because it has taken and continues to take many different forms, but also because it is not really a thing that one can point to, but more a set of social and economic relations. At its most basic level, capitalism is an economic system whereby capital is invested in order to make more capital; in other words, capitalism is a process through which capital gets

accumulated. There are various ways of accumulating capital, but since the first industrial revolution of the late eighteenth century in Europe, the dominant way has been through production. Here capital is put to work by hiring labour to produce goods that are sold on the market for a profit. In order to illustrate the various elements and sets of relations that go into the making of capitalism, let's take

the example of this book [*The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organization*]. Ironically, this book is a capitalist product, but what does this mean?

This book has been produced by a private publishing company, Routledge, itself owned by Taylor & Francis, itself merged with Informa plc. Informa plc is a multinational company with operations in 40 countries and has developed through the acquisition of ‘brands’ in the world of publishing, conferences and exhibitions.

In 2010 the group reported a total turnover of £1,226.5 million, an operating profit of £164 million and after-tax profits of £98.9 million. On its website, Informa plc boasts its ‘strong track record of creating value from organic growth and acquisitions’. But we need to be clear about what sort of value we are talking about here. Value refers to profit that can be distributed to shareholders in the form of dividends, or return on investment. On this count, Informa has indeed created much value; in 2010, its academic publishing produced a net profit margin of 27.6 per cent, well above the average for non-publishing sectors. In order to produce ‘value’ or profit, Routledge/Informa plc assembled sufficient capital, in the forms of office space, computers, paper, desks and so on; it also hired labour (maybe a lot of which was subcontracted) to manage the relations with the writers, proof read, design, print and market the book. The aim of the whole process is to sell the book on the market for a profit. Ironically, the authors of the book won’t get paid, because most of us are paid by universities, and this will help Informa to make greater profits. There are various

points worthy of note about this process.

First, the book, or copyright on the book, is the property of Routledge/Informa (i.e. the owner of capital) rather than of the people who worked on its production (be it the academics who wrote the chapters for ‘free’, or the people hired or subcontracted by Informa to format, print and distribute the book).

Second, the book is only of value to Routledge to the extent that it can be sold on the market for a profit. So what matters here is what the book can be exchanged for in the market (exchange value) rather than the value the book may have to users (use value). Commodities such as this book are only a means to the end of capital accumulation or the pursuit of profit. So the content or quality of the book only matter to the extent that they confer exchange value. This brief example serves to highlight some of the main principles of capitalism which we will explore in the next section.

Extract from: Martin Parker *et al*, *The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organization*, p3-4

Martin Parker is Professor of Culture and Organization, School of Management, University of Leicester.

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The Queen's Speech: a reality check

Bernadette Meaden MAY 19, 2016

Watching the Queen's Speech was like observing the behaviour of an absentee landlord who, having allowed a property to fall into disrepair, puts up some bright new curtains and stands back, waiting for the cold and miserable tenants to express their gratitude. The gap between the country spoken about in the Queen's Speech and the country in which many of her subjects now live was so wide it felt almost unbridgeable.

Here are just a few examples of that gaping chasm.

“To tackle poverty and the causes of deprivation, including family instability, addiction and debt, my government will introduce new indicators for measuring life chances.”

The reality is that we can expect the biggest increase in child poverty for a generation, thanks to cuts and freezes to social security benefits. The government is attempting to almost ‘rebrand’ poverty, by constantly associating it with alcoholism, drug addiction, or other factors which can be seen as personal shortcomings, and little or nothing to do with income. They want us to think that poverty is about anything except money, whilst they steadily take money from the poorest families.

Just to add insult to this injury, the speech continued,

“Measures will be introduced to

help the lowest-income families save, through a new Help to Save scheme”

The idea of the lowest income families being able to save would be laughable if it wasn't so tragically out of touch. When there is a seven week wait for a first payment of Universal Credit, when even low-income working parents can have their benefits sanctioned, and when Hardship Loans are now fully repayable, Universal Credit seems almost deliberately designed to put people into debt. Saving, for the lowest income families, will be an impossible dream. Staying out of debt will be quite an achievement.

“My government will support aspiration and promote home ownership through its commitment to build a million new homes.”

In the midst of a housing and homelessness crisis, a commitment to build new homes is essential. But if homes are to be built solely for the fortunate people who can afford to buy, they will not help the growing numbers of people who cannot find anywhere to live. Last year, tenant evictions reached a record high, with over 170 people per day being evicted from their homes by bailiffs. Housing charity Shelter blames a lack of affordable housing and "short sighted welfare cuts". The word 'homelessness' did not appear in the

speech, so we can only assume it is not a major concern for the government.

“My government will legislate to reform prisons and courts to give individuals a second chance. Prison Governors will be given unprecedented freedom.”

A press release from the Ministry of Justice explained this meant that legislation would be passed, “enabling prisons to be established as independent legal entities with the power to enter into contracts; generate and retain income; and establish their own boards with external expertise.” This is the ‘academisation’ of prisons. How long before we have profit-making prisons, bidding for contracts and undercutting conventional businesses by employing prisoners on very low wages? Or governors paying themselves and their friends inflated salaries, as we have seen with academy chains?

Meanwhile, the reality in our prisons is that in the last year there have been six murders and a hundred suicides, with soaring rates of self-harm. With 7,000 prison staff cut since 2010, prisoners are increasingly being warehoused, with serious mental health needs going unmet. And whilst the speech assured us that Mr. Cameron’s government will **“continue to bring the public finances under control so that Britain lives within its means”** it will also **“act to secure the long-term future of Britain’s nuclear deterrent.”**

This means committing to future spending which has recently been calculated at £205 billion. Now with that kind of money, the government really could **“tackle poverty and the causes of deprivation”**. If it chose to.

This article first appeared on *Ekklesia*: www.ekkleisia.co.uk and is reprinted here with the kind permission of the author.

Home Economics

Frances Hutchinson

One of the tenets of classical economics is that tasks undertaken in the home, and therefore lying completely outside the economic system are of secondary significance and of no intrinsic value. Such thinking fails to appreciate that considerable areas of work have supported the economic system and added directly to material value, whilst remaining outside classical economic calculations for no better reason than pure historical accident. It further fails

to account the non-economic values which motivate a large proportion of human social actions. Economists point to the three factors of production – land, labour and capital – as the sources of all wealth. The combination of the three factors is said to result in increases in the total material welfare of human beings, bringing corresponding increases in well-being.

If we consider the factor of labour we will see that labour never did, as

economists tend to assume, spring from nowhere, fit, adult, male and healthy, rattling the factory gates and raring for employment. All human labour initially emerges on the scene as a human infant, speechless and helpless, requiring several years of carefully nurtured physical and intellectual growth before it is even ready to embark upon the first leg of its years of training and preparation as a unit of labour within the formal education system. This early production and preparation of 'labour', and the later tending of its needs outside school and working hours, the preparation of its food, washing of its clothes and maintenance of the domestic quarters generally, has never been included in the complex of calculations devised by economists. It has been estimated that roughly as much unpaid work takes place in the home as in formal, paid employment outside the home. The entire economic system would collapse if this work were to be withdrawn, or came to be dependent upon an appropriate economic reward within the existing system.

Global finance rests upon the assumption that only prestige male roles, male tasks and male achievements, dignified by the award of cash payments, and therefore capable of inclusion within the classical economic system, are worthy of note. Female tasks, traditionally undertaken in the home are, in this view, seen as merely supportive of the main male enterprise. This is to put the cart before the horse. For in human life, caring has been the true cement between the human bricks of the community. Industrial society has been built upon the destruction of these human qualities in the living community.

Increasingly expensive remedial social measures are necessary to shore up the system. Highly paid experts fight a rear guard action in social, psychiatric and health care to patch up the results of inner city deprivation, drug, child and alcohol abuse.

Household management

As the First World War was ending, the *Labour* Party was formed to provide economic justice for the labouring or *working* classes. The leading figures in the new political party, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, who drew up the first Constitution, came from the upper classes and gained their unearned income from inherited wealth. Many of the rising stars in the new party received their education at the London School of Economics, founded by the Webbs (Webb 1956, p27). Through the process of economic growth, it was believed, Labour would provide for the poor and destitute out of the economic surplus. But where the workers came from, how they emerged from the miserable households of the urban poor, was not even recognised as a valid question. In her *Diaries*, Beatrice Webb made the following entry for 17 May 1924:

"During these last days of London life I have had two miners' wives from the Seaham Division [of the Women's Institute] staying with me for the Women's Conference (1,000 delegates from all parts of Great Britain). What interested me was the moral refinement and perfect manners of these two women who had never seen London before and never stayed in a house with servants. ... They were completely at their ease, and their attitude to their host and hostess was more that towards a class teacher and a minister of religion than to social superiors. I don't think they had

any trace of feeling that they belonged to a different class though they realised that we had greater knowledge and a wider experience of life.”¹

At the time when Beatrice Webb was in her forties, an “*Encyclopaedia of all Matters relating to the House and Household Management*” was published by Gresham Publishing Co. in London. Edited by H.C. Davidson, assisted by “over one hundred specialists”, *The Book of the Home* ran to four volumes of roughly three hundred pages each, including illustrations. This remarkable document is described in the 'Prefatory Note' as being the complete work on the subject, comprising contributions from specialists “entitled to speak with the highest authority on their several subjects”. The document provides an intriguing glimpse into the home lives of the upper classes and their servants.

The fourth volume is perhaps the most fascinating and, of the four volumes in my possession, it is the most well-thumbed. It “gives sound systematic and practical counsel on the management of children from their earliest infancy to the time when they are started in life on their own account”. Subjects include the first baby, management of children, children's dress, amusements, health and sickness, invalid cookery, education (of boys and of girls), home gymnastics, music, recreations (outdoor and indoor), choice of a career, holidays, Christmas and other festivals, coming out of a daughter, and a wedding.

Instructions on the selection of servants is particularly revealing of the conduct of the bourgeois household into which

the vast majority of public figures of the twentieth century were born. Of particular interest in the fourth volume is the care with which the children's nurse should be selected. The mother is expected to supervise the care of the newly born very carefully until the competence of the nurse is established. But she was not expected to breast feed. A section entitled “Wet Nurses' Qualifications” advised that “as a rule wet-nursing is better for infants than hand-feeding because no artificial food can ever come up to that supplied by nature”. However, the prospective wet-nurse should be thoroughly examined by “an experienced doctor”. She should be between twenty and thirty years old:

“and should be a strong, cheerful and healthy-looking person, with a healthy-looking child. Her hair should be glossy, her eyes bright and teeth sound, as these characteristics are signs of health. If her child is puny and peevish, it hardly needs to be said that she ought not to be engaged.”

The author of this section further notes that a “peasant woman makes an infinitely better nurse than a town-bred woman”, and comments in detail about the characteristics and treatment of suitable wet-nurses.

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists

About the same time as *The Book of the Home* was published, Robert Tressell, author of the working class classic *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, was working in a team of painters and decorators employed in the houses of the rich in return for a pittance of a wage. He lived in poverty and constant fear that he and his daughter would be

consigned to the workhouse if he fell ill and was unable to earn the wage they lived on to keep a roof over their heads. The book was a detailed, scathing and at times humorous discussion of the relationship of working class people to their employers. The 'philanthropists' of the title are the workers, who acquiesce in their own exploitation as they work in service to upper class households.

The capitalists and upper classes do not work, wrote Tressell: they set the propertyless workers to work on the land and in the houses and factories that they, the capitalists, own. And the propertyless workers fall into line, accepting their apparent powerlessness whilst resignedly accepting the meagre wages they are paid in order to feed their families. Although he does not use the terminology of Social Credit, early in the book the author sets out the case for a National or Social Dividend, *i.e.*, the inalienable right to an income by virtue of citizenship.

“... What we call civilization – the accumulation of knowledge which has come down to us from our forefathers – is the fruit of thousands of years of human thought and toil. It is not the result of the labour of the ancestors of any separate class of people who exist today, and therefore it is by right the common heritage of all. Every little child that is born into the world, no matter whether he is clever or dull, whether he is physically perfect or lame, or blind; no matter how much he may excel or fall short of his fellows in other respects, in one thing at least he is their equal – he is one of the heirs of all the ages that have gone before.”²

Deprived of the ownership of the

means of production, the labourer in household, farm or factory becomes powerless. But, as Tressell observed so shrewdly and despairingly, his fellow workers succumbed to the overwhelming temptation to accept the *status quo*. The line of least resistance is to take what is on offer, on the principle that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Taken as a whole, household production forms the primary economy of humanity. The household works directly for the satisfaction of essential human needs – material, social and cultural needs – in ways which can be duplicated by no other institution. It produces “goods” that are not available on the market and cannot be purchased for money, “such as the feeling of being somebody, closeness, encouragement, recognition and meaning in life. All this is realized in connection with living and doing things together; cooking, eating, cleaning, playing, watching TV, sleeping, sharing joy and sorrow, and transferring human traditions. In this sphere, every man, woman and child is a subject, recognized as a person; everyone is indispensable”. Attempts to calculate the hours of work involved in household maintenance in terms of money value or opportunity costs have been made in abundance, from Marilyn Waring³ onwards. But when all is said and done, one can no more put a value on caring for a sick loved one or a newborn child than one can value a glorious sunset.

Based on extracts from Chapter 10 of *The Economics of Love* (forthcoming).

¹ See Beatrice Webb's Diaries 1924-32, 1956, p27-8

² Tressell 1914/89, p28-29

³ *If Women Counted*, 1989

Child development, parenting and household management skills are areas of social policy which have been sorely neglected making life very difficult indeed for both poor families and for professionals. If any of our readers would like to pass on their thoughts or suggestions on these issues to us, we would be delighted to hear from you.

The Eeyore Effect

Benjamin Hoff

Mentally, emotionally, and physically, the human being is designed for a long childhood, followed by a short adolescence and then adulthood – the state of responsible, self-reliant wholeness. What we see children experiencing now, however, is an ever-shorter childhood, followed by a premature, prolonged adolescence from which ever fewer seem to be emerging.

Rather than help children develop the abilities needed to overcome the difficulties immediately confronting them, in the natural order in which they need to develop them, the Eeyore Educational System (with a good deal of help from parents and the entertainment industry) is forcing too much inappropriate information on them too soon, concerning — and causing — problems they can do nothing about. Then the children get stuck. In response to the declining Test Scores of recent years, the educational system has brought in vastly expensive *machines* to do the teaching – a sign of trouble if there ever was one. Learn to write from a computer, and so on. (Of course, it *could* have brought in people who knew how to write, or whatever, to teach how to write, or whatever — on a volunteer basis, if

necessary. But that would have been too simple, we suppose. Cheating, almost.) Now this costly Teaching Technology is bankrupting the system. So, in order to Cut Costs, the Eeyores are eliminating what *they* consider unnecessary classes — Art, Creative Writing, Drama, and so on — classes that help students observe, reason, and communicate, as well as keep their spirits and the right sides of their brains alive.

The Eeyore Educational System sees childhood as a waste of time, a luxury that society cannot afford. Its response to the problems of vanishing childhood is to speed up the process — give the students more information, give it to them at a faster rate, and give it to them sooner. Put children in school at the earliest age possible; load them down with homework; take away their time, their creativity, their play, their power; then plug them into machines. That'll whip them into shape. Well, it'll whip them, anyway. Over two thousand years ago, Chuang-tse described a similar situation:

The ancient emperor Shun encouraged rivalry in the minds of the people. Children were born the usual number of

months after conception; but five months after that, they were being taught to converse. Soon they were calling people by their titles and personal names. Then men began to die while still young... This governing provided order in name only. In reality, it produced chaos. It ran contrary to the light of the sun and the moon, brought harm to the mountains and rivers, and poisoned the fruit of the four seasons. It proved more deadly than the sting of a scorpion, or the bite of a dangerous beast.

The more that children are Educated by Eeyores, the more problems they develop. And the more problems they develop, the more the Eeyores insist on Educating them, at an ever-earlier age. The Educator Eeyores' answer to the problems that the Eeyores create is: Crack Down. The children's response is: Crack Up.

From *The Tao of Pooh and the Te of Piglet*, by Benjamin Hoff, Egmont; London, 2002, pp246-248.

What They Learned at the University of Boob

Eimar O'Duffy

CUANDUINE and his friends, slogging it afoot with the rest, came at last to the great city of Boob, the capital of Assinaria; and, walking past the stream of high-powered cars and buses, jammed tight in the roadway after the manner of the Age of Speed, they presently found a cheap hotel, where they put up for a few days, Mr Robinson having just received a cheque from his paper.

'And what will man be a trillion years hence? Will his present upward and onward progress continue? Or will he go backwards, downwards or even sideways? Hitherto he has been the unconscious puppet of circumstances. Natural forces have impelled him forward. But can he afford to be their plaything any longer? Must he now

endeavour to control his own destiny? The answer, I am afraid, is in the affirmative; and the question at once arises—will conscious rationalised exertion advance him any further than blindly and passively following Nature's guidance?'

Mac ui Rudai, hitching up his trousers, waited anxiously for the answer. 'But that remains to be seen' said Professor Jawbone. 'But I would venture to say this. So long as our people are willing to work full time, to co-operate with each other (preserving, of course, the competitive spirit so necessary for further progress), and to maintain a growing population (in moderation, of course), we may consider our civilisation to be on the upward slope of the wave. If

anyone has any doubt on the matter, let him remember the last general election.' Cheers. 'On that occasion millions of workers voted for the reduction—nay, even the abolition—of their wages in order that the world might be restored to prosperity. So long as a civilisation can produce men and women like that, it is not only on the ascent. It is at the very crest of a wave.' Cheers.

Cuanduine and his friends left the room,

much enlightened; and it cheered Mac ui Rudai no end to think that in another billion years or so people might actually be able to eat the bread they grew, and wear the trousers they manufactured. So with a stout heart he picked up a bit of string that was lying about and tied it tight round his middle, for he had lost all his buttons.

Extract from Eimar O'Duffy *Asses in Clover*, p92-95

Economics on a Desert Island

Eimar O'Duffy

Another important point to which I wish to direct your attention is this. So long as our working classes believe that we can tax business profits indefinitely in order to provide subsidies and doles and other alleviations of that kind, so long must our present downward course continue. And the reason is obvious. Why are people employed, and how do they become employed? Simply because someone with money saved from personal consumption employs them to produce something which he can sell at a profit. If there were no incentive to such people to save and invest their money, there would be no employment for anybody. We should simply stand about with our hands in our pockets and starve. That was what actually happened in primitive times. There were no capitalists to employ the people, so they just sat down and died.

Suppose a party of people were wrecked on a desert island, what do you think would be the first thing they'd do? Obviously they would look around for a man with money to employ them in gathering fruit. If there were no capitalist among them, or if he didn't see his way to make a profit out of the business, they would all remain unemployed and starve to death, no matter how fertile the island might be. If therefore we want to have plenty of employment, we must give every possible incentive to entrepreneurs - encouraging them to get as much of our money from us as they can, so that they can spend it on employing us to make more for them. The accumulation of the birds in the Goshawk aviaries illustrates this principle perfectly. Upwards of ten thousand people are employed in that magnificent industry, who would otherwise be condemned to perpetual

destitution.

You must realise, therefore, ladies and gentle men, that, quite apart from ethical considerations, any attempt to increase the amenities of life for the majority by raiding the profits of the minority, must be quite ineffective. The remedy for our present troubles lies not in redistributing the cake that we have, but in increasing the size of the cake. We must work harder, consume less, and produce more.

In that task the constant singing of innumerable birds would be a distraction and a hindrance. Let us therefore go on pinching and squeezing and cheeseparing for as long as is necessary to tide us over the present unfortunate depression and get back to normal trading conditions. Then, and not till then, we can have all the birds we want.

Asses in Clover by Eimar O'Duffy (Jon Carpenter, 2003)

Economic Freedom, Equality and the Right of Ownership

Niels I Meyer, Helveg Petersen & Vily Sorenson

It is an old liberal dogma that it is the consumer who ultimately decides what is going to be produced. In theory the market mechanism ensures that there will be a proper balance between supply and demand. When demand for a product exceeds supply the price rises and the least interested parties cease to purchase. When supply exceeds demand the price falls; if the product still fails to attract enough buyers then production must be cut or halted altogether. In this way the wishes of the consumer will control production by way of the market mechanism.

In practice things work out quite differently. The consumers who are the first to stop buying when prices rise are not those who have least need for the product but those who can least afford

it. In a society dominated by economic inequality the market mechanism ensures that the well-to-do are the last to give up the scarce goods. According to its theory, or rather according to the ideas of the earliest liberal economists, the market mechanism can only function fairly in a society where there is economic equality.

Something similar applies to the other governing principle of the liberal economists: free competition. In theory this ensures that the nation does not waste its resources on inefficient production methods, since the more efficient producer eliminates its less efficient competitors: only healthy companies survive. However, free competition will only be economical for society as long as the losers can be put to use in other areas of production

(and do not require social support), and competition will only be free as long as the companies involved are roughly the same size, as they were in the time of Adam Smith when the theory was new and sensational. Free competition results in the well-known principle that 'to him who hath shall be given ...'. Competition will, so to speak, outcompete freedom.

The question of social control of production calls into question the right to private ownership of the means of production, which sometimes emerges from liberal tradition as the major democratic right, although a right which is reserved for a tiny minority can hardly be described as democratic. On this point it is sufficient to refer to E. F. Schumacher's reasoning:

(a) In small-scale enterprise, private ownership is natural, fruitful and just.

(b) In medium-scale enterprise, private ownership is already to a large extent functionally unnecessary. The idea of 'property' becomes strained, unfruitful and unjust. If there is only one owner or a small group of owners, there can be, and should be, a voluntary surrender of privilege to the wider group of actual workers . . .

(c) In large-scale enterprise, private ownership is a fiction for the purpose of enabling functionless owners to live parasitically on the labour of others. It is not only unjust but also an irrational element which distorts all relationships within the enterprise (*Small is Beautiful*, p. 223). The same line of argument can be used against the absurd private ownership of others' housing and of the world's resources.

It is, of course, no coincidence that there

is no freedom of consumer choice where there is no freedom of political choice. . . . Just as constraints are imposed upon economic freedom for social reasons, so should economic inequality be narrowed down for democratic reasons. Standardization of income does more to further economic equality than an uneven distribution of wealth followed by counteractive measures in the form of graduated taxation and various subsidies and allowances, many of which achieve the opposite effect. During the affluent 1960s the gap between the highest and lowest incomes remained the same; in a situation where there was more for everybody inequalities gave rise to less discontent.....Although efforts are made to keep pace with inflation through index-linking, the distribution of wealth is [now] as one-sided as ever.....

There is no evidence that economic growth leads to a fairer distribution of wealth. But economic equalization is one of the crucial preconditions for restricting the growth in material consumption both nationally and internationally. Attempts have been made to justify inequality in liberalist theory: offering the highest rewards to the most important functions in society will summon up the most outstanding ability and qualifications to the benefit of all..... Closer analysis of such businessmen will probably reveal, however, that their chief quality was a special talent for exploiting the rules of society to the utmost (and a little further), for buying land and property at the right time, for buying cheap and selling at a profit. This is very much in the spirit of the system but not to the advantage of society.

In a society where levels of education are high, people with professional

qualifications and management ability are not rarities to be courted; indeed most of those people who have made original contributions to the fields of research, technology and the arts are not motivated by the desire for economic gain. There is a great deal of evidence that the greed for wealth is more a psychological disorder caused by the social environment than an

original human driving force— there may well be a hint of this too in the capitalist myth about the least in society who becomes the greatest.

Extracts from: *Revolt from the Centre*, Niels Meyer, Helveg Petersen and Villy Sorensen (Marion Boyars 1981, p38-42.

Book Review

How Did We Get Into This Mess?

George Monbiot

Verso 2016 £12.70 pp352

ISBN: 978-1784783624

In his book ‘Seeking Justice’, Anglican priest and social justice activist Keith Hebden tells the story of a community event in a Sri Lankan village, which took the form of an exorcism.

‘The aim of the elaborate rite was to expose a deception against the community. In this instance the possessed person reveals that a local grocer has been cheating people by selling them damaged milk cartons at full price. The money-demon is ridiculed and the injustice is exposed, “calling the devil by its name”... Possession allows the community to name the problem and the community begins the process of becoming free from its power.’

I was reminded of this story as I began reading George Monbiot’s excellent book. He speaks of ‘the ideology that now governs our lives. Not only is it seldom challenged; it is seldom even

identified. As a result, no one seems to know what to call it. Neoliberalism? Market fundamentalism? Laissez-faire economics? Though it is a clear and consistent belief system, though it is the ideology to which most governments and major opposition parties subscribe, and though it determines everything from the distribution of wealth to the treatment of the living planet, it has no standard or widely recognised name... What greater power can there be than to operate namelessly?’

Through the fifty essays in this book, Monbiot sets out how this ideology, which places competition above co-operation, individualism above community, wealth above welfare, has had a devastating effect on our wellbeing as people, and the viability of our planet. If we are to survive as a species and as a planet, it is essential that we reject the dominant political and economic philosophy of our time, and offer alternative values which are truly pro-life.

The detail with which the author delineates the scale of the crisis we

face could make the book pessimistic and overwhelming, but it isn't. It tells us not only how we got into this mess, but how we could get out of it, proposing actual policies which could be adopted to reverse inequalities and waste - a Land Value Tax for instance. And through it all the distinctive voice of the author, passionate but rational, angry but kind, leads us on, with an admirably clear and highly readable prose style. The book could be heavy going and depressing, but it is stimulating, though provoking and inspiring. We have the solutions to most of our problems at our fingertips, if only we would grasp them.

Reading this book shortly after the UK's EU referendum campaign, in which we seemed to tumble headlong into an era of 'post truth politics', the final essay resonated strongly. Monbiot cites a report by Tom Crompton of the World Wildlife Fund, which examines recent developments in the field of psychology. Human beings, it says, are not as rational as we would like to believe. They do not assess data and come to a logical conclusion. Regardless of truth, people accept information which confirms their identity and values, and reject information that conflicts with them. This is how politicians can get people to vote for things which are not in their own interests - how working class people in the USA can be persuaded to reject universal health care and demand billionaires pay less tax. The way forward for progressive activists is not to try to beat neoliberals at their own game, but to 'argue for the policies we want not on the grounds of expediency, but on the grounds that they are empathetic and kind; and against others on the grounds that they are selfish and cruel. In asserting our values we become the change we want to see.'

Monbiot has no time for religion, which he sees as mainly concerned with oppressing and controlling people, particularly women. There is, for instance, a scathing essay about the Catholic Church's attitudes to contraception, which he persuasively argues serves only to contribute to higher levels of abortion, causing great suffering amongst women in the developing world who do not have access to safe abortions. Yet, whilst he is staunchly opposed to religion, there is almost a spiritual dimension to Monbiot's passionate connection to his fellow human beings, the planet, and all the living creatures that share it with us. He would probably be horrified at the comparison, but at times it is tempting to see him as a modern-day secular Saint Francis. He is certainly a prophet, who fearlessly speaks truth to power. We can only hope that he is not a voice crying in the wilderness, but a voice that will be heard before it is too late. I would highly recommend this book.

It should be said that readers of the Guardian may have come across some of these essays before, as many of them appeared there first. However, that should not be a deterrent to acquiring this book. It is useful to have all the essays collected together in order to see how they present a comprehensive, wide - ranging critique and a coherent philosophy. It is also useful to have the extensive notes and references in order to appreciate the quality of research that goes into each essay.

Bernadette Meaden writes on political and social issues, and currently blogs for *Ekklesia*, the beliefs and values think tank. <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/blog/1251>

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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www.dougllassocialcredit.com

secretary@socialcredit.co.uk



Anon?

**If we want to achieve a different society
where the principle of money operates equitably,
if we want to abolish the power money has over people historically,
and position money in relationship to freedom, equality, fraternity ...
then we must elaborate a concept of culture
and a concept of art
where every person must be an artist ...**

Joseph Beuys *What is Money? A Discussion*, Clairview Press, 2010.

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