

The Social Artist

A vertical, bare tree branch with two birds perched on it against a cloudy sky. The birds are silhouetted against the lighter sky. The branch is dark and has several small, bare twigs extending from it.

Health and work

Why war?

Autumn 2013

The SOCIAL ARTIST

(incorporating The SOCIAL CREDITER)

THE JOURNAL OF THE SOCIAL CREDIT SECRETARIAT

Quarterly Review for Economic Democracy

Autumn 2013 * Vol.1, No.1

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Front Cover Photograph: Colin Davis

Typeset and printed by Imprint, Victory House, Dalton Lane, Keighley

Back cover woodcut: Fritz Eichenberg (Chicago Catholic Worker)

Editorial

Over the period of modern times warfare has become the lifeblood of the formal money economy. As debt-created finance flows through the system, workers are employed to design, produce and ‘deploy’ tanks, aircraft carriers, bombs, munitions, delivery systems and all the paraphernalia of war. Other workers produce the food, housing, clothing, entertainment, infrastructures necessary to maintain the war economy. And teachers, doctors, welfare workers, bankers and bureaucrats of all kinds train and sustain the workforces of the world. The end product of the money-driven economy is the wholesale deaths of unarmed civilian populations, the ruthless destruction of the natural environment and the spiritual degradation of humanity.

Meanwhile, the common people, women and men, struggle to bring up children with the time and scarce resources left over from their service to the money-driven economy.

The Social Artist is based upon the conviction that it is possible for every ordinary individual to take proactive responsibility for their own roles in the overall scheme of things. In order for that to happen “we must elaborate a concept of culture and a concept of art where every person must be an artist”. That can

only be achieved when money ceases to have the power to prevent people from unfolding their capacities and realizing their aims. The new, independent thinking essential for social change will emerge as circles of people begin to engage in the new artistic and creative process.

If they are to challenge “the power of money”, ordinary people will need to take an informed stand. The question is, where do we turn to for solidarity, information and support in the battle against the grip that finance has over our daily lives? The Church is the one and only institution which was founded for the specific purpose of challenging the worldly powers. The tragedy of modern times is that Christian social visionaries have allowed themselves to be divided into separate, distinct camps. With no time to listen to each other, still less to get to grips with what is actually happening in the world at large, clergy and lay people alike engage in endless rounds of ambulance work, whilst failing to address the causes of the war itself.

The time has come for ordinary people to take matters in hand. If you have time for nothing else in this first issue of *The Social Artist*, do read John Papworth’s seminal article on War, Money and Power.

Faith and Society

Maurice Reckitt

The colossal challenge of a catastrophe [World War I] which swept religion aside as an irrelevance or sought to harness it as an auxiliary must have shocked the Christian communions in every nation into an awareness of the volcanic fires that blazed beneath the placid hillocks of secular progress. Religion had in no clear fashion foreseen that catastrophe; it was powerless to forestall it or to abridge it; almost powerless to assuage its physical terrors or its spiritual evils. Its influence upon the resulting settlement was not conspicuous. However we may assess the culpability of Christianity for this impotence – and it made, on the whole, no worse showing than the other moral forces in the world – it must be clear that a religion which resigned itself to a recurrence of war as something normal and inevitable to modern civilization, or to an acquiescence in conditions which might naturally lead to it, would be one which had plainly and fatally surrendered to the forces of a world it was pledged to overcome.

* * *

The repair work of that creaking and deteriorating mechanism which we know as industrial civilization is carried on, year in, year out, in slums and in Britain's decaying countryside, by priest,

parish nurse, health visitor and boys' club leader, through agencies that have for their dynamic the spirit of Divine Love and the conscious service of Christ through the service of His poor.

Social service, pursued without patronage, complacency or self-seeking, is assuredly an exemplification of Christianity in action in society. **But while it may convey an implicit rebuke, it implies no direct challenge to the values and objectives of the social order to which it is offered. And it is precisely such a challenge, the grounds for it, its formulation, and its goal, which forms my subject.** The ambulance work of the Church, its service to the sick and wounded in the social deadlocks and conflicts of the age, is not forgotten or minimized because attention is here concentrated upon religion's increasingly confident denial of the ultimate necessity and validity of these deadlocks and conflicts, and still more of those aims and values, seeking which man is irresistibly drawn into them.

Extract from Maurice B. Reckitt *Faith and Society: A study of the structure, outlook and opportunity of the Christian Social Movement in Great Britain and the United States of America*, Longmans and Green, 1932.

War, Money and Power

John Papworth

On any realistic historical perspective the most ominous and catastrophic event of the 20th Century was, indubitably, the first world war.

In the midst of a mountainous wave of what appeared to be an exhilarating trend in social and industrial progress, one having no precedent in the annals, a group of leading nations, each with a record of moral and cultural sublimity of the utmost splendour, proceeded to maul one another's vitals with a savagery and wantonness no jungle beast could hope to emulate.

Millions of young men, British, German, French, Italian and Russian, to say nothing of many others, with not the remotest personal grounds for quarrel between any of them, were herded into giant armies and drilled to murder each other with the utmost ferocity by the million.

Few towns and villages across Europe are today without memorials to this witless, barbaric sacrifice of so many young lives and every year services of commemoration are still held in their memory. It was a war which tore to shreds the fabric of civilisation in ways

which are still little understood even as they continue to undermine the vitals of social progress. One of these was by undermining a dawning consciousness that the value of each single human life was itself the necessary basis of any civilised society, and its development, when confronted with such a conflict, could not fail to be sabotaged by the contempt being expressed for its own moral cornerstone.

The disease of contempt proceeded to breed a multitude of subsidiary contagions: if millions could do nothing effective to avert or arrest such horror, what was the point of the developing consciousness of the democratic ethic? If, despite the power of that ethic, men could be bamboozled into adopting behaviour their savage forbears of former ages might have felt shame to contemplate, what was the point of any moral principle?

Another contagion was that of passivity on a mass scale. If men's moral judgement could not prevail against the supreme evil of war and mass slaughter; if moral responsibility could not be exercised to stop it; what was the use of being responsible about anything relating

to the social order?

The question remains, why did that war happen at all? Despite the reams of literature that has poured off the presses in many languages, the question has never seriously been considered, and remains largely unanswered. **The making of modern war is intimately linked to the making of money and if ancient scripture is unambiguous in asserting the love of money is the root of all evil, nobody, not people in high office of state, the bureaucracy, the arts or journalism, and certainly not the Church, saw fit to explore that relationship and its manifest evil effects on human destiny.**

It was an Austrian professor, more than 40 years after its onset, who threw a flood of light on a confused forest of otherwise pointless speculation. The power of money and its market mechanisms was riding roughshod over the entire human adventure: within its maw was the power of the state itself masterminding the crucial fields of education and information, our social structure and services, much of the entire field of artistic endeavour and not least, in what purported to be institutions of moral guidance and leadership, our churches. The state was out of control because money power was out of control, education and information became subordinated to the market values promoted by money, art became the catspaw of the same values, so that architecture, for example, which in the first flight of industrialisation had sought to bow to the splendours of former ages with factories and railway stations which

breathed of the creative possibilities of beauty, seamliness and proportion, degenerated to becoming the handmaiden of money-ordained functionalism, prompting one observer to note it seemed to have taken four thousand years to progress from a pyramid to a box, whilst church teaching scuttled into the heady ramifications of questions of divorce, family breakdown, homosexuality, parental responsibility, single parenting and so on. **The church seemed (as it still does) utterly oblivious to the fact that it was not the divorcees, the single mothers or the gays the founder of the Christian faith threw out of the temple, but the banking fraternity.**

But why has this extraordinarily potent power of money achieved such predominance? Again, it was our Austrian professor who supplied at least one imperative answer. It was out of control, and it was out of control because the institutions deploying it were too big. Just that.

As a result all within its grip would develop the same degrees of excess, would establish the same norms of organisation and their attendant values because they too were out of control, they were too big to be responsive to the moral and cultural promptings of the citizenry, so that despite its ardent desires for peace, social justice and decency, that power would roll on and on regardless until the insatiable imperatives of money-power ruled triumphant.

If size itself was the governing factor the lesson to be derived from the catastrophe of World War One was of an order

which the Victor' nations might have hearkened to by proceeding not to treat the vanquished as peer-units to be 'made to pay' for the war with reparations, (Germany was, in the tabloid language of the time, 'to be squeezed until the pips squeaked'), but by restoring the sovereign powers of the numerous city states of Saxe-Coberg, Hesse, Wartemburg, Bavaria, Hanover, and others, which had been suppressed into Bismark's 'Germany'. In failing to take this crucial step they neglected to question the very existence of a Prussian dominated 'Germany'; instead they inflicted such onerous economic penalties that they formed the basis for the mass discontent which any political adventurer could exploit in the pursuit of power. In short they made bad matters worse and simply created the basis for the rise of Hitler and set the stage for yet another war. And still money-power rolls on, giant, out of control and now threatening us with global warming, industrial excess, deforestation, oceanic plundering, a population-numbers nightmare and social vandalism on a global scale, which can

scarcely fail to wreck any prospect of a civilised social order. ...

Unless ordinary people across the world stop joining and supporting giant political movements they cannot possibly control, and which they can never make responsive to their moral discernments, and start instead to create genuine, decision-making power structures across the entire spectrum of political and economic matters; alternative structures locally based, in local hands and responsive to the moral leadership every small community possesses in abundance when it is enabled to function and to breathe at all.

This article is reprinted from Fourth World Review No.135, (2005)

Behind their beribboned façade, more former US soldiers are killing themselves than are dying on the battlefields. Last year 6,500 veterans took their own lives.

John Pilger, The silent military coup that took over Washington, (September 2013).

Modern society has made the bank account the standard of values.

When this happens, the banker has the power.

When the banker has the power, the technician has to supervise the making of profits.

When the banker has the power, the politician has to assure law and order in the profit-making system.

When the banker has the power, the clergyman is expected to bless the profit-making system or join the unemployed.

When the banker has the power, the Sermon on the Mount is declared impractical.

When the banker has the power, we have an acquisitive, not a functional, society.

Peter Maurin, Easy Essays, published by Francis of Assisi House, Chicago Catholic Worker.

Why War?

B.M. Palmer (1938)

I sometimes wonder whether people who write articles in newspapers about preventing war, know anything about the man in the street. Here is a sentence written by Basil de Selincourt in the *Observer* for 5th June last [1938]:

“Of course, there is an obvious animal combativeness which is the glory of the male.”

This is one of those fine sounding phrases which is almost complete nonsense.

Some pacifists speak as though men were so ready to fight that we can only stop them by a long course of training from childhood, which will gradually overcome this evil instinct.

Why don't they study the facts before them? How have the people conducted themselves this week [*i.e.*, in September 1938]? Have they been marching and singing through the town, flag waving?

No – hour by hour – as it was borne in upon them that the terrible possibility was nearer, the men in the street were subdued and anxious. It was plain that the prospect of war, far from arousing the fighting instinct, has shewn that whatever else they may want, our husbands and fathers do not want to take part in a European conflict.

I have seldom seen Londoners so quiet and depressed. According to the *News Chronicle*, recruiting for Air-Raid Precaution services has slowed down to such an extent that in many parts of the country it has come to a standstill.

Those who remember August 1914, will recall that it was not until “poor little Belgium” was invaded that the fighting spirit became red-hot. To arouse this instinct in modern men we have to persuade them that they are fighting for a righteous cause, or else make their daily lives so intolerable that they welcome war as a relief.¹

Is there a woman among you who can tell me of any man she knows who is longing for war to break out?

No, the English people have not yet been driven into that state of mind. They are longing and praying for peace.

I say here with all the emphasis of which I am capable, that if within the next few days they are driven to it, the responsibility will not rest on them, but upon a few men who know perfectly well what they are doing.

Extract from “The Society of Outsiders”, The Social Creditor September 1938.

¹ See Douglas Reed *Insanity Fair*,

The Control and Distribution of Production

Clifford Hugh Douglas

Editor's Note: The extract below is taken from an address given at Ruskin College, Oxford, 4th June 1920. At that time, Marxism was just starting to emerge as a major influence in the social sciences.

The *primary* object of the whole industrial system should be the delivery to individuals, associated together as the public, or society, of the material goods and services they individually require. This demand of individuals, be it emphasised, is the absolute origin of all activity. Since men co-operate to satisfy this demand, which is complex in its nature, it is necessary to also combine the demand, and this combined demand of society is the policy, so far as it is economic, of society as a whole. The first part of the problem, then, consists in finding a mechanism which will impose this policy on the co-operating producers with the maximum effectiveness, which always means with the minimum of friction.

Now, if I have made my meaning clear,

you will begin to see (willingly or otherwise!) that this has nothing to do with “workshop control by the workers” — in fact is in one sense the antithesis of it. It involves the assumption that the plant of civilisation belongs to the community, not to the operators, and the community can, or should, be able to appoint or dismiss anyone who in its discretion fails to use that plant to the best advantage. So far you might say this is pure State Socialism, but I think you will agree, if I make myself clear, that it is nothing like what is commonly so called.

In this connection the following paragraph from *The Threefold State*, by Dr Rudolf Steiner, a book which is attracting attention on the Continent, may be of interest: —

“Modern socialism is absolutely justified in demanding that the present-day methods, under which production is carried on for individual profit, should be replaced by others, under which

production will be carried on for the sake of the common consumption. But it is just the person who most thoroughly recognises the justice of this demand who will find himself unable to concur in the conclusion which modern socialism deduces: that, therefore, the means of production must be transferred from private to communal ownership. Rather he will be forced to a conclusion that is quite different, namely: that whatever is privately produced by means of individual energies and talents must find its way to the community through the right channels.”

The radical difference—and I would commend it to your most serious consideration— is that State Socialism is based on the premise that, firstly, the control of policy is resident in

administration, and, secondly, that it is possible to “socially” control administration, and, thirdly, that the State should be able to supply economic pressure to the individual; whereas I suggest to you that the control of policy is resident in credit (fundamentally, in the belief in the beneficial outcome of any line or action) and its financial derivations, of which money is one, while administration is a technical and expert matter not susceptible of being socialised, and, lastly, that the only possible method by which the highest civilisation can be reached is to make it impossible for either the State or any other body to apply economic pressure to any individual.

Extract from: Clifford Hugh Douglas, *The Control and Distribution of Production*, Cecil Palmer 1922 (first edition).

To Despair...

To despair because one cannot think that enough people will be found, even in the turmoil of today, capable of receiving such ideas, provided only sufficient energy be supplied to spreading them, this would be to believe human nature hopelessly insensible to healthy and reasonable influences.

Is it hopeless? This is not a question that ought to be asked at all. One should only ask what we ought to do, in order to make the exposition of these ideas as forcible as possible, so that they may awake confidence.

Rudolf Steiner

Technological Civilization

Philip Mairet

The age of machine-power is conceived, not without some reason, to have modified the status of Man in Nature. We find this notion expressed often and in various ways, from the eloquent essay of an aesthete like Oscar Wilde in the 1890's (*The Soul of Man under Socialism*), to the recent writings of an engineer-economist, Major Douglas, who has calculated that the amount of power generated in the power plants of the United Kingdom is equivalent to the provision of forty mechanical slaves to every household. In this view it would appear that we are in sight of a civilization in which no man's status is less than that of a master of many slaves—inanimate slaves who can be driven without humanitarian scruples. The expectation that all should accordingly be raised to the level of a leisured class is frequently expressed; and at the least there is a very strong feeling that the meaning of work has been radically changed.

The demands that social reformers continue to frame—legitimately enough—for embellishing the lives of the masses with more of the amenities of a modern economy, have always presupposed as a matter of course that the powers of the new class of 'mechanical slaves'—if one may put it so—ought to be thus devoted to enriching the largest possible number of the people. The question whether this was the right use

for the powers in question was never asked until this answer had been already assumed. But is it the whole truth? If we desire the enrichment of the human race in general, as a thing good in itself, we must consider what goods are comprised in the conception of riches. The wealth and well-being of Man consists not only in the quantity of goods, but in the balance and proportion between the different kinds of goods at his disposal. We have to inquire whether the employment of automata has the effect of increasing available goods and services equally or in harmonious proportion.

The answer is in the negative. Given right conceptions of wealth, and a benevolent but firm management of society, we should presumably employ indefinitely great quantities of power to social advantage. Those thinkers who have given most study to plans for distributing the wealth of the power-age to the people have usually found the most need to postulate a centralized and unified control of production, because they have seen that power of itself stimulates production very unequally and tends towards unbalanced results. Under the competitive and individualist system of capitalist production this has been clearly demonstrated; there has been a hypertrophy [enlargement] of those economic functions of which power-machinery could most increase the output

and efficiency, whilst other functions, no less valuable or necessary to life but less patient of stimulation by mechanical power, have suffered proportionately. **This applies especially, though not exclusively, to the basic function of agriculture, in which a world-wide process of deterioration has been causing so much alarm. Agriculture would have to be specially protected in a civilization of technics, because technics benefit it relatively little: the biological processes that agriculture cherishes for use are of a different order from those which technology can control.** Even where agriculture has availed itself most successfully of the work of the scientists and engineers, the rate of increase in its yields bears no comparison with the ever-multiplying production of factories producing such things as motors or electric bulbs. This discrepancy in the acceleration of output, when power is applied to techno-facture and agriculture respectively, tends to dis-balance society altogether, for a disproportionate amount of human energy and ambition flows into the occupations which technics make more profitable, and others tend actually to regress, indispensable though they are.

* * * *

In the beginning (as this essay has tried to show) the ends in view were more right than they afterwards became. Some of the discoverers who initiated an epoch of invention worked consciously for the glory of God which is the true end of Man. And later, when technical progress was allied to humanitarian purpose, the spirit in which both were pursued was still dignified by some Christian values. It

is only in this century that we have come to believe—or at least to profess as the only supposed ground of agreement—that the remarkable faculties we have acquired ought to be consecrated wholly and solely to our own mutual benefit as human beings.

This is quite a new idea. It may prove to be a delusive one, for we do not know whether a human culture with such a limited *raison d'être* is feasible. The witness of history is against it. Whenever Man has achieved a high state of culture he has devoted the finest flower of whatever faculties he had to God, or to gods—in any case to beings conceived as higher than Man. Whether we think of ancient Egypt, Greece, or medieval Europe; whether we think of an almost contemporary culture of which much still survives, like the Japanese, or one like that of Central America of which only obscure vestiges remain, we are thinking of a society whose technicians expected that the very best works of the faculties they represented would be devoted to the temple, or to some activity of the life of worship. The best in stone-work, woodwork, metal-work, or weaving was not devoted to Man, but offered to Beings he venerated. These cultures have been various in human achievement and longevity, but the point is that no historian or sociologist can prove that an enduring or worthwhile culture is possible upon any other terms.

Extract from “A Civilization of Technics” by Philip Mairet, published in Maurice B. Reckitt (ed) *Prospect for Christendom: Essays in Catholic Social Reconstruction*, Faber and Faber, 1945/6.

Joseph Beuys on Money and Social Art

Frances Hutchinson

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.

The title of the book published by Clairview Press derives from the remarkable 1984 discussion in Ulm, Germany, between the distinguished artist Joseph Beuys on the one hand, and two professors (of financial sciences

and political economy) and a banker on the other. Translated into English and published in 2010, the transcript of the debate makes very interesting reading¹. Since, furthermore, it resonates with my own research and publications on Guild Socialism (in the sense of local Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, including farms) and Social Credit over the same period, I take this opportunity to introduce the substance of the 1984 German event.

Rainer Willert, who organised and chaired the public debate, explained the background in a letter to the original German publishers in 1991:

“I studied economics and had thus become a ‘money man’ before I really started trying to see what money is. Although this question is intrinsic to the profession, no really satisfactory answer was forthcoming ... As Erlicher rightly said during the debate,

economists have solved the problem by offering functional definitions. Accordingly, money is everything that fulfils three functions: a means of payment, a means of storing value, and a unit of calculation. In the history of economics this was not always so. In recent centuries people reflected comprehensively on the nature of money, but have not done so any more for well over a hundred years.

“After finishing my studies I kept pondering this question – the nature of money, not just how to lay one’s hands on it². And at the same time, since the narrower discipline of economics no longer engaged with this in a broader sense, I looked around to see what the view of other disciplines might be.” [p6-7]

In due course he came across the work of Joseph Beuys at the ‘Quartetto’ exhibition in Venice in 1984:

“The exhibition included blackboards with texts describing economic and monetary circulation streams. To an economist’s eye, there was something very familiar here and yet, it seemed, more than was fully explained or easily explicable.” [p7]

As he explored further, it became apparent that, as artists and economists inhabited very different world views, Beuys was exploring matters of crucial relevance to the world economy of the late twentieth century. He therefore invited Beuys to participate in a public debate. Willert explains further:

“For the discussion at Ulm I decided not to have anyone from the art and culture world alongside Beuys. Instead I would have people who knew something about economics, solid professionals who would also be unabashed about contradicting the ‘guru’. [p10]

The discussion merits reading and re-reading by everybody in all walks of life. Money today is a commodity in itself. As capital it exerts power over the lives of individuals, degrading work into a mere commodity, tradable labour. It is essential to find new ways of understanding how money works within society, so that its destructive effects upon people, society and the planet can be understood.

The quotation at the head of this document presupposes that the reader recognises the destructive power of money in the modern world economy. Within the recorded discussion the banker, Johann Phillip von Bethmann observed:

“Many years ago, when I was still a banker but had already started to think about these things – bankers also reflect, you know ... I reflected on money because I felt that we didn’t know enough about it. It seemed to me that money is one of the products of human civilization which has escaped from human grasp and which we no longer understand, like the magic broom in Goethe’s ‘Sorcerer’s Apprentice’.” [p18]

Bethmann goes on to reflect “it is absolutely terrifying if even the specialists and those who are responsible for money don’t know, don’t *really* know what money is.” [p19, emphasis original]

The debate introduces the possibility of finding answers to a lot of questions about the role of money in a world dominated by the power of finance. There are no easy answers offered. Rather, the transcript opens up the distinction between the manipulative social science methodologies and the creative potential

of the ‘social artist’ of the future.

Historically, humanity has moved away from the domestic economy of the traditional village society, where farming and production of artefacts were home based³. In the world economy of the twenty-first century, the institutional framework of society has become disjointed. Where money dominates social action, the different aspects of the life of an individual can no longer form a coherent whole. The legal rights of large companies and organisations, organised on the basis of the division of labour and the so-called economies of scale, stand opposed to the rights of the individual householder/consumer with only its labour to sell for a money wage or salary.

The twenty-first century adult has inherited a series of interlocking institutions all of which are permeated by money. Money activates, motivates and justifies action in all three spheres of the world economy. Money is often thought of as solely concerned with economics, with the production and consumption of material goods. The humanities, arts, education, cultural, scientific, healing and spiritual activities appear to fall outside the realm of finance. Equally, political matters, the law, human rights would seem to be rightly independent of financial considerations. And yet action in each of the three spheres of the social framework – the *economic life*, the *cultural/spiritual life* and the *rights life* – is currently dependent upon financial validation.

The terminology used by Beuys to categorise the three social spheres is

based upon the work of Rudolf Steiner. Beuys argues that money has the potential to become a useful social tool, if it can be fully transformed into a ‘rights document’. To clarify:

“Both sectors, production as well as consumption, must be regulated by democracy which itself has to relate to money. If democracy is not related to money, all the people’s democratic effort will be destroyed by the power money can assume. So unless money has become a full rights document in which the production sector and the consumption sector are embedded in our society, it will continue to ensure the decline of human creativity, of the human soul, of the power of human creation, and the life of nature!” [p32]

This is tricky material to grasp, coming from cold. However, the message is exactly the same as that articulated in the first Guild Socialist/Social Credit text *Economic Democracy*, authored by Clifford Hugh Douglas in the pages of *The New Age* (1919/20) .

Speaking thirty years after the death of Douglas, and over sixty years after the publication of *Economic Democracy*, Beuys articulates his perception of the two world economic systems, communism and capitalism. The centralized economy of the Soviet Union “totally eliminates freedom”. But, whilst the capitalist economy of Germany “professes to be a democracy” it is in fact not realized:

“ ... because every time a democratic process touches the true nerve of the transformation of society, power struggles underpinning money and the state spoil every attempt at authentic democracy. In other words, we are

dealing with two economic systems which are no longer adequate for people, and even less so for nature. ... The power of money which prevents people from unfolding their capacities and realizing their aims has to end.” [p27]

This does not mean that money could be abolished. What needs to end, says Beuys, is the use of money as a *tradable commodity*. “You can use money to speculate, to buy political parties – you can do everything with it.” [p28] Implied in ‘democracy’ is a well informed clued up electorate of the common people, of inspired social artists who cannot be swayed by every passing demagogue in the pay of rich and powerful interests.

The debate, WHAT IS MONEY?, started by Joseph Beuys in 1984, has yet to give rise to an informed public debate. Across the social, political, economic and environmental spectrum, no topic has more relevance than the key question, ‘What is Money, and how do we bring its power under the control of the common people?’ The pages of *The Social Artist*, (incorporating *The Social Creditor*) are devoted to the task of generating informed discussion of the role of money in society into the everyday language of the ordinary person.

- ¹ *What is Money? A Discussion*, Joseph Beuys with Johann Philipp von Bethmann, Hans Binswanger, Werner Ehrlicher and Rainer Willert, Clairview Press, 2010. This book was reviewed in *The Social Creditor*,
- ² This was the theme of the two books which arose directly from the first Bromsgrove Gathering, my *What Everybody REALLY Wants to Know About Money*, and Michael Rowbotham’s *The Grip of Death*.
- ³ See *Down to Earth: A Guide to Home Economics* for review of the historical process.
- ⁴ See Note 2 above, plus my books *The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism*, coauthored with Brian Burkitt, (Routledge 1997, 2005 edition), *Environmental Business Management: Sustainable Development in the New Millennium*, with Andrew Hutchinson (McGraw-Hill 1997), *Social Credit: Some Questions Answered, Understanding the Financial System, Social Credit Rediscovered*, (Jon Carpenter 2010), and *Down to Earth: A Guide to Home Economics* (KRP 2013). Available from www.douglasocialcredit.com.

Preliminary invitations were sent out for the planned “Finance, Faith and Society” weekend of 25-27th October 2013, at Barnes Close, near Bromsgrove.

However, take up of places was such that we have regrettably decided to cancel it for this year.

Unless we do change our whole way of thought about work, I do not think we shall ever escape from the squirrel-cage of economic confusion in which we have been madly turning for the last three centuries or so, the cage in which we land ourselves by acquiescing in a social system based upon Envy and Avarice. A society in which consumption has to be artificially stimulated in order to keep production going is a society founded on trash and waste, and such a house is built upon sand.”

Dorothy L Sayers *Creed or Chaos?* (1954 edition) p47.

Health and Work

Wendell Berry

The modern urban-industrial society is based on a series of radical disconnections between body and soul, husband and wife, marriage and community, community and the earth. At each of these points of disconnection the collaboration of corporation, government, and expert sets up a profit-making enterprise that results in the further dismemberment and impoverishment of the Creation.

Together, these disconnections add up to a condition of critical ill health, which we suffer in common—not just with each other, but with all other creatures. Our economy is based upon this disease. Its aim is to separate us as far as possible from the sources of life (material, social, and spiritual), to put these sources under the control of corporations and specialized professionals, and to sell them to us at the highest profit. It fragments the Creation and sets the fragments into conflict with one another. For the relief of the suffering that comes of this fragmentation and conflict, our economy proposes, not health, but vast

‘cures’ that further centralize power and increase profits: wars, wars on crime, wars on poverty, national schemes of medical aid, insurance, immunization, further industrial and economic ‘growth’, etc; and these, of course, are followed by more regulatory laws and agencies to see that our health is protected, our freedom preserved, and our money well spent. Although there may be some ‘good intention’ in this, there is little honesty and no hope.

Only by restoring the broken connections can we be healed. Connection is health. And what our society does its best to disguise from us is how ordinary, how commonly attainable, health is. We lose our health—and create profitable diseases and dependences—by failing to see the direct connections between living and eating, eating and working, working and loving. In gardening, for instance, one works with the body to feed the body. The work, if it is knowledgeable, makes for excellent food. And it makes one hungry. The work thus makes eating both nourishing and joyful, not consumptive,

and keeps the eater from getting fat and weak.

This is health, wholeness, a source of delight. And such a solution, unlike the typical industrial solution, does not cause new problems.

The ‘drudgery’ of growing one’s own food, then, is not drudgery at all. (If we make the growing of food a drudgery, which is what ‘agribusiness’ does make of it, then we also make a drudgery of eating and of living.) It is—in addition to being the appropriate fulfilment of a practical need—a sacrament, as eating is also, by which we enact and understand our oneness with the Creation, the conviviality of one body with all bodies. This is what we learn from the hunting and farming rituals of tribal cultures.

As the connections have been broken by the fragmentation and isolation of work, they can be restored by restoring the wholeness of work. There is work that is isolating, harsh, destructive, specialized or trivialized into meaninglessness. And there is work that is restorative, convivial, dignified and dignifying, and pleasing. Good work is not just the maintenance of connections—as one is now said to work ‘for a living’ or ‘to support a family’—but the enactment of connections. It is living, and a way of living; it is not support for a family in the sense of an exterior brace or prop, but is one of the forms and acts of love.

To boast that now ‘95 percent of the people can be freed from the drudgery of preparing their own food’ is possible only to one who cannot distinguish between

these kinds of work. The former deputy assistant secretary cannot see work as a vital connection; he can see it only as a trade of time for money, and so of course he believes in doing as little of it as possible, especially if it involves the use of the body. His ideal is apparently the same as that of a real-estate agency which promotes a rural subdivision by advertising ‘A homelife of endless vacation’. But the society that is so glad to be free of the drudgery of growing and preparing food also boasts a thriving medical industry to which it is paying \$500 per person per year. And that is only the down payment.

We embrace this curious freedom and pay its exorbitant cost because of our hatred of bodily labor. We do not want to work ‘like a dog’ or ‘like an ox’ or ‘like a horse’—that is, we do not want to use ourselves as beasts. This as much as anything is the cause of our disrespect for farming and our abandonment of it to businessmen and experts. We remember, as we should, that there have been agricultural economies that used people as beasts. But that cannot be remedied, as we have attempted to do, by using people as machines, or by not using them at all.

Perhaps the trouble began when we started using animals disrespectfully: as ‘beasts’—that is, as if they had no more feeling than a machine. Perhaps the destructiveness of our use of machines was prepared in our willingness to abuse animals. That it was never necessary to abuse animals in order to use them is suggested by a passage in *The Horse in the Furrow*, by George Ewart Evans. He is speaking of how the medieval ox

teams were worked at the plow: ‘... the ploughman at the handles, the team of oxen—yoked in pairs or four abreast—and the driver who walked alongside with his goad.’ And then he says: ‘It is also worth noting that in the Welsh organization . . . the counterpart of the driver was termed *y geilwad* or the *caller*. He walked backwards in front of the oxen singing to them as they worked. Songs were specially composed to suit the rhythm of the oxen’s work ...’

That seems to me to differ radically from our customary use of any living thing. The oxen were not used as beasts or machines, but as fellow creatures. It may be presumed that this work used people the same way. It is possible, then, to believe that there is a kind of work that does not require abuse or misuse, that does not use anything as a substitute for

anything else. We are working well when we use ourselves as the fellow creatures of the plants, animals, materials, and other people we are working with. Such work is unifying, healing. It brings us home from pride and from despair, and places us responsibly within the human estate. It defines us as we are: not too good to work with our bodies, but too good to work poorly or joylessly or selfishly or alone.

Wendell Berry (born 1934) is an American novelist, poet, public intellectual, environmental activist, cultural critic, and farmer. A prolific author, he has written dozens of novels, short stories, poems, and essays. (Wikipedia August 2013)

This article first appeared in *Fourth World Review*, Nos. 46/7, (1991)

Book Reviews

Decoding Mammon: Money as a Dangerous and Subversive Instrument

by *Peter Dominy*

Wipf and Stock, 2012

ISBN: 978-1-606085-35-6

Pb.135pp. £12

On hearing people say ‘money is the root of all evil’ I have in the past been guilty of mentally correcting them, thinking ‘*the love of money* is the root of all evil’. Having read Peter Dominy’s thesis however, I have been forced to reconsider.

Christian theology has traditionally regarded money as something that is intrinsically neutral, that can be used for good or ill: it’s what we do with it that matters. But Peter Dominy, a Canon in the Church of England, persuasively argues here that money in itself is a malign power, inevitably corrupting and distorting human relationships, and the way we relate to the rest of Creation.

Showing great depth of scholarship, the author begins by giving a detailed history

of money, and how our economic systems evolved, paying particular attention to the issues of debt and interest. He then explains how Christianity's attitude to money developed in parallel.

Jesus, the author maintains, had a deep suspicion of money. 'In general terms, it can be said that the whole New Testament affirms the core statement of Jesus that you cannot serve both God and money.' Jesus certainly had a great deal to say on economic injustice and very little to say on sexuality, though the Church often seems to have become obsessed with the latter and very much neglected the former.

Whilst the early Church shared Jesus' suspicion of money, the author believes that since the Enlightenment, when money came to be viewed as a neutral commodity, the Church has not had a satisfactory way of engaging with it. Whilst the Church has condemned poverty and injustice, and worked hard to alleviate the human suffering this causes, it has not addressed the root cause of these problems, money itself.

Many non-religious readers will no doubt have a problem with the Biblical and supernatural aspects of Canon Dominy's thinking. His conclusion that money, 'should ultimately be recognized as a cosmic power which works against the good purposes of God and the well-being of society', that in fact money/Mammon is *the* great power opposing God, will not resonate with them. I believe very few, however, will disagree with his analysis of the malign influence money increasingly exercises in the world, or

of the urgent need to somehow rein it in. Given our recent history, when exotic financial instruments meant that money finally lost all connection with anything real or concrete, but was still able to wreak havoc in the lives of millions, nobody can doubt that this is a power that needs to be controlled.

If we agree that money itself is the problem, what then is the solution? The author accepts that we cannot put the genie back in the bottle, we cannot uninvent money. But he asserts that there is an urgent need for us to 'turn away from the doctrine of free markets which has ruled for too long, and to accept the necessity of much stronger and more extensive regulation of money in all aspects of the economy.'

I believe the author has performed an immensely valuable service to his fellow Christians, by providing them with the tools to engage with and challenge the all-pervasive power of money in our society. Christians should be warned however: if they read this thesis and are persuaded by its arguments, their comfortable seat on the economic fence will be lost for ever.

Canon Dominy may not have intended to do so, but he seems to me to have thrown down a large and undeniable gauntlet to the Churches. If they accept the author's arguments, they will inevitably find themselves in staunch opposition to the most powerful institutions in our society. Instead of shying away from economic debate for fear of being seen as inappropriately political, they will be obliged, and one hopes eager, to

challenge the power of money, and reject the prevailing economic orthodoxy. They will, in fact, become more like Jesus.

Bernadette Meaden,

EDITOR'S NOTE: A thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology, was submitted to the University of Exeter by Canon Peter Dominy in November 2010. *De-coding Mammon: Money in Need of Redemption*. has now been published under the above title. As the book is a condensed version of the thesis, we reprint Bernadette Meaden's review of the thesis, which we published in the Summer 2011 edition of *The Social Creditor*.

Bernadette Meaden observes that, knowingly or otherwise, the author presents the Churches

with a formidable challenge. As things stand, no other man-made institutions could possibly have any justifiable reasons for bringing about a radical change in the relationship between humanity and the financial institutions which currently dictate policy throughout the whole of society. The Universal Christian Church today is the only worldly organisation capable of offering reasons or a methodology for the redemption of money. Dominy predicts the "poverty and death of millions" if money values continue to reign supreme. This key work on the Christian challenge to the worldly power of Mammon comes as a timely reminder of the need for fundamental change in the materialistic philosophies currently underpinning the social framework of the world economy. It is a must for every library in the land.

Beauty in the Word: Rethinking the Foundations of Education.

Stratford Caldecott

Angelico Press £9.95

ISBN 978-1-62138-004-7

This book is aimed primarily at those involved in education, and particularly Catholic education, but will be a stimulating read for all with an interest in the subject. The author's familiarity with the significant Home School movement in the United States, and a very wide range of educational theories, gives him an interesting perspective from which to view more conventional systems.

The aim of the book is laudable, to seek to establish a form of education 'that would enable a child to progress in the rational understanding of the world without losing his poetic and artistic appreciation of it'. It is a quest to restore the balance between two philosophies of

education; the 'romantic' model which is almost completely child-centred, and always in danger of losing the requisite rigour, and the classical model, which is teacher-centred and at its extremes produces a 'Mr Gradgrind' approach.

At the outset the author expresses a political sympathy with the Free School movement. It is understandable that a man with such a strong educational vision would welcome this perceived opportunity to 'take back control of schools and schooling'. But currently the main effect of the proliferation of Free Schools seems to have been an increasingly unequal and unfair distribution of the available scarce resources. This seems at odds with Christianity and indeed, Catholic Social Teaching.

The author sets forth his own deeply held beliefs about what an education is

for, and how it should be approached. Every word of the book is imbued with his own very deep faith, and his deep personal sense of mission is pervasive. To call his approach holistic would be an understatement, as he believes teachers must nurture not just the mind but the soul and the heart. The education of the heart, he explains, 'represents not merely a training of the emotions, but an integration of feelings and thoughts into a higher unity: that of the conscience or intellect that is our point of contact with God in the deepest recesses of our soul.'

In addition to his faith the author has a deep love of Classical literature, and fears that modern life may increasingly make these building blocks of our culture inaccessible to today's children. They require a sensory familiarity with the natural world which is rare amongst today's city-dwellers. There could have been a danger that this book became a lament for what we have lost and a pessimistic view of the modern world, but what saves it from such a fate is the author's transcendent faith, often beautifully, poetically expressed.

For those without a Classical education the focus on Grammar, Dialectic and Rhetoric is translated simply as 'Be, Think, Act', and these three aspects are related to a Trinitarian theology. But it is stressed that the book, and the educational approach it advocates, is not meant to exclude unbelievers. 'The theology helps us understand our humanity, including our needs and desires; the purpose of education is to enable that humanity to grow and flourish.

The book explores a very wide range of educational theories and theorists, including many lesser known ones, like Charlotte Mason, who inspired the Parents' Educational Union, and John Holt, 'who regarded the 'school' – a place purpose built to separate learning from everyday life- as a pernicious invention, the foundation of the modern 'slave state'.

The book is packed with wide-ranging references, from Rousseau to Ratzinger, from Chesterton to Chomsky, and the author's great scholarship is apparent throughout, but his ability to write clear and very readable prose means that the ideas he presents remain accessible.

An educationalist reading this book could perhaps be inspired and daunted in equal measure. It is clear that, for the author, teaching is nothing less than a sacred task, a vocation perhaps as profound as priesthood, with a potential to transform people and thereby society

This book may not be aimed at a mass readership, but for those to whom it is relevant, it could have a great impact. Certainly anyone involved in Catholic education, or any manner of education, could not read this book without being fully convinced of the immense significance and almost cosmic potential of their daily task.

Bernadette Meaden has written about religious, political and social issues for some years, and is strongly influenced by Christian Socialism, liberation theology and the Catholic Worker movement. She is a regular contributor to Ekklesia.

BOOKS IN PRINT

The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism
Frances Hutchinson and Brian Burkitt, (2005) £12.99

Down to Earth: A Guide to Home Economics (2013) £5

*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

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Woodcut by Fritz Eichenberg
Catholic Radicalism Peter Maurin

**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.

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.