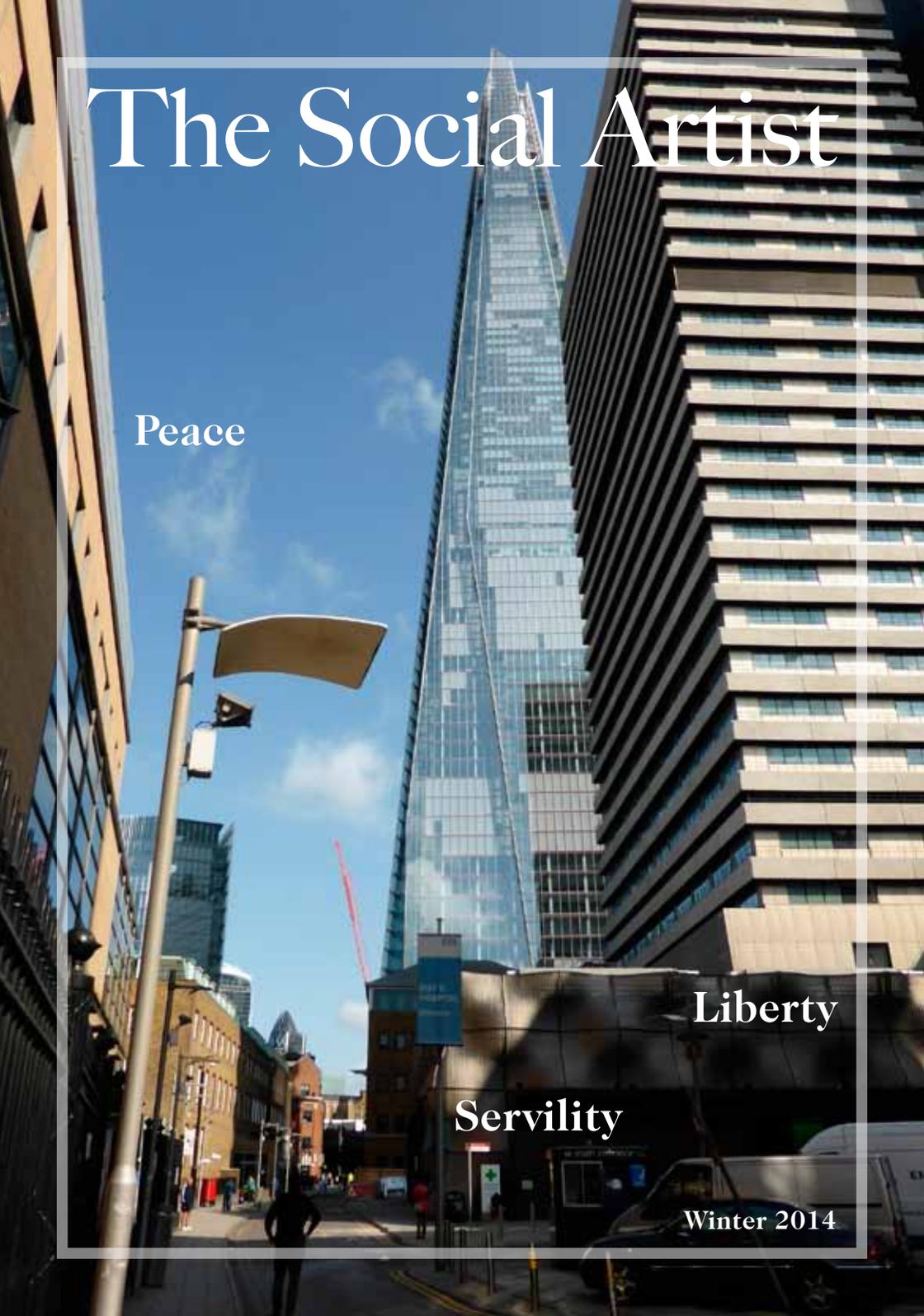


# The Social Artist



Peace

Liberty

Servility

Winter 2014

# The SOCIAL ARTIST

(incorporating The SOCIAL CREDITER)

## THE JOURNAL OF THE SOCIAL CREDIT SECRETARIAT

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# Editorial

*“Only the most ingenuously optimistic, the most wilfully blind to the facts of history and psychology, can believe that paper guarantees of liberty – guarantees wholly unsupported by the realities of political and economic power – will be scrupulously respected by those who have known only the facts of governmental omnipotence on the one hand and, on the other, of mass dependence upon, and consequently subservience to, the state and its representatives.”*

So wrote Aldous Huxley in a neglected but by no means forgotten essay entitled *Science, Liberty and Peace*. Today George Monbiot voices the same concerns – nothing seems to change except the urgency with which those concerns are voiced. In 1947 Huxley spoke of the family as the “basic social unit” of society. Writing in the *Guardian* (14 & 21 October, 2014) Monbiot observes; “The war of every man against every man – competition and individualism in other words – is the religion of our time, justified by a mythology of lone rangers, sole traders, self-starters, self-made men and women, going it alone”. There is now no such thing as society, and no such thing as the family. Our governments are so powerful that they can speak of benefit claimants as living, not in families, but in “benefit units”, defined by the government as “an adult plus their spouse (if applicable) plus any dependent children living in the household.” Those who are employed by the centralised, mass-production system are defined by their usefulness to the system through

terms like ‘human resources’. Nature is ‘natural capital’ and ‘ecosystem services’, and “hills, forests and rivers are described in government reports as green infrastructures” and so on. And those who kill for a living describe their actions as “mowing the lawn” and their victims as ‘bug splats’. In theory, the democratic state guarantees the right of all to ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’. In practice, where the mass of the population is propertyless, rootless and lacking in the most basic practical skills, parents have seemingly no option but to strike a deal by entering into waged or salaried slavery.

Human beings are highly social beings who need love to thrive and prosper. We do well in households rooted in place and community, where our physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual needs can be met comfortably as we emerge to take our place in the public world of the political economy. But the economic system forces us out of the household and into the workforce where we blindly do the bidding of ‘the powers that be’, because we have been educated into the illusion that There Is No Alternative.

In the 1930s, when this journal was founded, men and women had a better understanding of the world around them and their role within it as farmers, householders, professional and industrial workers. Throughout the UK and across the world, ordinary people came together

in their local communities seeking change. As a result, the popular, country-wide Social Credit movement became a major force to be reckoned with by key figures in politics and economics. Women and men social crediters asked: "Have you the courage to ACT NOW?"

*"Do you know that the suffering and misery of the peace years, since 1921, have been entirely the result of High Financial Policy. Think! millions of people in this great country suffer scarcity and actual starvation, in a time of super-abundance. Factories stand idle in thousands, thousands of local merchants and shopkeepers are on the verge of ruin because the bankers continue to keep the country's consumers short of purchasing power.*

*"During the Great War, hundreds of thousands of the youth of this country were maimed or killed, and now, thousands of the youth of this generation are wasting away mentally, and physically."* (Keighley Green Shirt Review, September 1933).

In the decades following World War II generation after generation of young people have been taught to believe in the stories circulated by paid, professional economists. As a result, dogmatic faith in economic and technological progress is blinder than any religious belief system of the past.

The magical myth of the Circular Flow holds sway. People leave their Households to work in the Firm to earn the money they need to spend on the goods and services that the Firms produce. In practice, however, people are producing and consuming things which they do not really want, things which are killing and maiming families all over the world,

things which are reducing the natural world to a poisonous dump.

We can look again at the Circular Flow diagram, so often reproduced in these pages, and ask the heretical question – what is it all about? Why do people have to leave their Households in order to spend their days working on terms dictated by an employing Firm? The home is the place where we create our own space, do things our own way, bring up our children and learn to make sense of the natural and social worlds that surround us. Yet children are herded out of their homes and into gated educational establishments where they are taught to enter into the service of the Firm. Scientists and technologists have been paid very well indeed to devise mass production technologies capable of delivering armaments, transport and communications systems, and all manner of ever-changing, packaged, processed and transported consumer goods on a massive scale. Mass production requires technicians, manual workers and bureaucrats to undertake the routine tasks made essential by the very scale of things. Small scale technologies consume less time, less energy and fewer resources. But they do not command fat salaries. So the home, the place where human beings learn to love, becomes a mere display unit for the designer products of the mass market.

Depressing. But always, annoyingly, comes in that persistent sneaky feeling of hope. There are signs, some outlined in these pages, that the Precariat<sup>1</sup> is waking up to the possibility of new ways of living?

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<sup>1</sup> See Guy Standing: The Precariat

# Extracts from Science, Liberty and Peace

Aldous Huxley

So intense is our faith in the dogma of inevitable progress that it has survived two world wars and still remains flourishing in spite of totalitarianism and the revival of slavery, concentration camps and saturation bombing.

Faith in progress has affected contemporary political life by reviving and popularising, in an up-to-date, pseudo-scientific and this-worldly form, the old Jewish and Christian apocalypticism. A glorious destiny awaits mankind, a coming Golden Age, in which more ingenious gadgets, more grandiose plans and more elaborate social institutions will somehow have created a race of better and brighter human beings. Man's Final End is not in the eternal timeless Now, but in a not too distant utopian future. In order to secure the peace and happiness of their great-great-grandchildren, the masses ought to accept, and their leaders need feel no qualms in imposing, any amount of war and slavery, of suffering and moral evil, in the present. It is a highly significant fact that all modern dictators,

whether of the right or of the left, talk incessantly about the golden Future, and justify the most atrocious acts here and now, on the ground that they are means to that glorious end. But the one thing we all know about the future is that we are completely ignorant of what is going to happen, and that what does in fact happen is very often different from what we anticipated. Consequently any faith based upon hypothetical occurrences a long time hence must always, in the very nature of things, be hopelessly unrealistic. In practice, faith in the bigger and better future is one of the most potent enemies to present liberty; for rulers feel themselves justified in imposing the most monstrous tyrannies on their subjects for the sake of the wholly imaginary fruits which these tyrannies are expected (only an implicit faith in progress can say why) to bear some time, let us say, in the twenty-first or twenty-second century. (p26-7)

Area bombing, saturation bombing, rocket bombing, bombing by atomic missiles – the indiscriminateness has

steadily increased throughout the Second World War, until now no nation even makes a pretence of observing the traditional distinction between civilians and combatants, innocent and guilty, but devote themselves methodically and scientifically to general massacre and wholesale destruction. Other practical consequences of our 'nothing-but' [man is 'nothing but' an animal or machine/mechanism, so no standards need apply] philosophies of life are the employment by civilized people, with a high standard of scientific and technological training, of torture, human vivisection and the systematic starvation of entire populations. And finally there is the phenomenon of forced migration – the removal at the point of the bayonet of millions of men, women and children from their homes to other places, where most of them will die of hunger, exposure and disease. (p30)

Unrealistic beliefs tend to result in foolish or morally evil actions; and such wrong beliefs cannot be got rid of, except by teaching right, or at least less erroneous, beliefs. If the ministers of the various sects and religions would abandon sentimentality and superstition, and devote themselves to teaching their flocks that the Final End of man is not the unknowable utopian future, but the timeless eternity of the Inner Light, which every human being is capable, if he so desires, of realizing here and now, then the myth of progress would lose its harmfulness as a justifier of present tyranny and wrongdoing. ...

In the past, despots committed the crimes that despots always do commit – but committed them with a conscience that was sometimes distinctly uneasy. They

had been brought up as Christians, Hindus, as Moslems or Buddhists, and in the depth of their being they knew they were doing wrong, because what they were doing was contrary to the teachings of their religion. Today the political boss has been brought up in our more enlightened and scientific environment. Consequently he is liable to perpetrate his outrages with a perfectly clear conscience, convinced that he is acting for humanity's highest good – for is he not expediting the coming of the glorious future promised by Progress? is he not tidying up a messily individualistic society? is he not doing his utmost to substitute the wisdom of experts for the foolishness of men and women who want to do what they think (how erroneously, since of course they are not experts!) is best for them? And then there are the pastors and the schoolmasters. They have their Ph.D.s and their D.D.s their academic positions and their cure of souls, their habits of authority and their high perches in the pulpit or on the lecture platform. Why should they change their long-established habits and the hallowed traditions of the organisations of which they are the living pillars? The most important lesson of history, it has been said, is that nobody ever learns history's lessons. The enormous catastrophes of recent years have left the survivors thinking very much as they thought before. A horde of Bourbons, we return to what we call peace, having learned nothing and forgotten nothing – forgotten nothing, except, of course, the causes of war, which (whatever our intentions and our well-worded ideals) we do everything in our power to perpetuate. (p30-32)

What is needed is a restatement of the

Emersonian doctrine of self-reliance – a restatement not abstract and general, but fully documented with an account of all the presently available techniques for achieving independence within a localized, co-operative community. These techniques are of many kinds – agricultural techniques designed to supply *the basic social unit, the family*, with its food supply; mechanical techniques for the production of many consumer goods for a local market; financial techniques such as those of the credit union, by means of which individuals can borrow without increasing the power of the state or of the commercial banks; legal techniques through which the community can protect itself against the profiteer who speculates in land values which he has done nothing whatever to increase. At present [1947] this documented and practical restatement of an old doctrine is being made by such men as Wilfred Wellock in England and Ralph Borsodi in the United States. In the enormous bellowing chorus of advertisers singing the praises of centralized, mass-producing and mass-distributing industry, and of left-wing propagandists singing the praises of the omnipotent state, these few isolated voices have some difficulty in making themselves heard. If it were not for the fact that, in the past, apparently negligible movements originating amongst individuals without any political power, have yet exercised a prodigious influence over mankind, there would be reason for discouragement. But fortunately it is not impossible that the presently tiny piece of decentralist leaven may end by leavening the whole huge lump of contemporary society.

It is not impossible, I repeat; but it must

be added that, so long as the nations stick to their ancient habit of war-making, it is highly improbable. For the nature of modern war is such that it cannot be successfully waged by any nation which does not possess a highly developed, not to say hypertrophied, capital-goods industry supplemented by a mass-producing consumer-goods industry capable of rapid expansion and conversion for wartime needs. Furthermore it cannot be waged successfully, except by nations that can mobilize their entire man-power and woman-power in universal military or industrial conscription. But universal conscription is most easily imposed where large numbers of the population are rootless, propertyless and entirely dependent for their livelihood upon the state or upon large-scale private employers. Such persons constitute that dream of every military dictator – a ‘fluid work-force,’ which can be shifted at will from one place or one unskilled job to another place or job. Again, big centralized corporations and their wage-earning employees can be taxed much more easily and profitably than small-scale farmers working primarily for subsistence and only secondarily for cash, or than independent or co-operative producers of commodities for a localized market. For this reason anything like a popular movement in the direction of decentralization could hardly be tolerated by any government desirous of becoming or remaining a ‘great power.’ It may be argued that the bomber and the rocket may force all nations to undertake a geographical dispersion of industries; but such dispersion can take place without any real increase of individual independence from government or capitalist control,

or any expansion of the present area of voluntary co-operation, self-government and de-institutionalized activity. (p44)

Now it seems pretty obvious that man's psychological, to say nothing of his spiritual, needs cannot be fulfilled unless, first, he has a fair measure of personal independence and personal responsibility within and toward a self-governing group, unless, secondly, his work possesses a certain aesthetic value and human significance, and unless, in the third place, he is related to his natural environment in some organic, rooted and symbiotic way. But in modern industrial societies vast numbers of man and women pass their whole lives in cities, are wholly dependent for their livelihood upon a capitalistic or governmental boss, have to perform manual or clerical work that is repetitive,

mechanical and intrinsically meaningless, are rootless, propertyless and entirely divorced from the world of nature, to which, as animals, they still belong and in which, as human beings, they might (if they were sufficiently humble and docile) discover the spiritual Reality in which the whole world, animate and inanimate, has its being. The reason for this dismal state of things is the progressive application of the results of pure science for the benefit of mass-producing and mass-distributing industry, and with the unconscious or conscious purpose of furthering centralization of power in finance, manufacture and government. (p22-3)

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Science, Liberty and Peace*, from which these extracts were taken, was published in 1947 by Chatto and Windus.

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# Property and the Servile State

## Hilaire Belloc

I had, indeed, thought it advisable at one moment to add some words on the term "property" in order to point out that a wide distribution of property in *insignificant amounts* was no weakening but rather a bolstering up of Capitalism. All own something. Even a tramp owns, I suppose, his broken boots. The essential of Capitalism is a refusal to the many of Property in *significant amounts* and the decline of small estates. I had, I say, thought at one moment of making this clearer by a few pages of expanded statement. But I decided, after some

hesitation, to leave the argument as it was. For I considered that those to whom the argument for existing small property appeals – those whom our Capitalist press bemuses with mere numbers of holders in Railway stock or the National Debt – were hardly of the kind who would follow a serious economic discussion. (Emphasis original)

HILAIRE BELLOC, January 1st, 1927. Extract from 1927 Preface to new edition of *The Servile State*, originally published in 1913.

# Higher Education and Home Defence

Wendell Berry

Everywhere, every day, local life is being discomfited, disrupted, endangered, or destroyed by powerful people who live, or who are privileged to think they live, beyond the bad effects of their work.

A powerful class of itinerant professional vandals is now pillaging the country and laying it waste. Their vandalism is not called that by name because of its enormous profitability (to some) and the grandeur of its scale. If one wrecks a private home, that is vandalism, but if, to build a nuclear power plant, one destroys good farm land, disrupts a local community, and jeopardizes lives, homes and properties within an area of several thousand square miles, *that* is industrial progress.

The members of this prestigious class of rampaging professionals must meet two requirements. The first is that they must be the purest form of careerists – “upwardly mobile” transients who will permit no stay or place to interrupt their personal advance. They must have no local allegiances; they must not have a local point of view. In order to be able

to desecrate, endanger, or destroy a *place*, after all, one must be able to leave it and forget it. One must never think of any place as one’s home; one must never think of any place as anyone else’s home. One must believe that no place is as valuable as what it might be changed into or as what might be taken out of it. Unlike a life at home, which makes ever more particular and precious the places and creatures of this world, the careerist’s life generalizes the world, reducing its abundant and comely diversity to “raw material.”

I do not mean to say that people with local allegiances and local points of view can have no legitimate interest in energy. I do mean to say that their interest is different, in both quality and kind from the present *professional* interest. Local people would not willingly use energy that destroyed its natural or human source or that endangered the user or the place of use. They would not believe that they could improve their neighbourhoods by making them unhealthy or dangerous. They would not believe that it could be necessary to destroy their community in

order to save it.

The second requirement for entrance into the class of professional vandals is “higher education.” One’s eligibility must be certified by a college, for, whatever the real condition or quality of the minds in it, this class is both intellectual and elitist. It proposes to do its vandalism by thinking; in so far as its purposes will require dirty hands, *other* hands will be employed [i.e., landless labour].

Many of these professionals have been educated, at considerable public expense, in colleges or universities that had originally a clear mandate to serve localities or regions – to receive the daughters and sons of their regions, educate them, and send them home again to serve and strengthen their communities. The outcome shows, I think, that they have generally betrayed this mandate, having worked instead to uproot the best brains and talents, to direct them away from home into exploitative careers in one or other of the professions, and so to make them predators of communities and homelands, their own as well as other people’s.

Education in the true sense, of course, is an enablement to serve – both the living human community in its natural household or neighbourhood and the precious cultural possessions that the living community inherits or should inherit. To educate is, literally, “to bring up,” to bring young people to a responsible maturity, to help them to be good caretakers of what they have been given, to help them to be charitable towards fellow creatures. Such

an education is obvious pleasant and useful to have; that a sizeable number of humans should have it is also probably one of the necessities of human life in this world. And if this education is to be used well, it is obvious that it must be used *somewhere*; it must be used where one lives, where one intends to continue to live; it must be brought home.

When educational institutions educate people to *leave* home, then they have refined education as “career preparation.” In doing so they have made it a commodity – something to be *bought* in order to make money. The great wrong in this is that it obscures the fact that education – real education – is free. I am necessarily aware that schools and books have a cost that must be paid, but I am sure nevertheless that what is taught and learned is free. None of us would be so foolish as to suppose that the worth of a good book was the same as the money value of its paper and ink or that the worth of good teaching could be computed in salaries. What is taught and learned is free – priceless, but free. To make a commodity of it is to work its ruin, for, when we put a price on it, we both reduce its value and blind the recipient to the obligations that always accompany good gifts: namely to use them well and hand them on unimpaired. To make a commodity of education, then, is inevitably to make a kind of weapon of it because, when it is dissociated from the sense of obligation, it can be put directly at the service of greed.

Extract from Wendell Berry, *Home Economics*, North point Press, San Francisco (1987) pp50-52.

# Working for Moloch

(after reading Adrienne Rich)

*Note: Moloch was a deity worshipped by the people of Jordan in Old Testament times (see Leviticus 20: 2-5). The chief feature of such worship was the sacrifice of children to secure power and riches. Alistair McIntosh read the poem during his Liverpool Schumacher lecture in March 1999. He also referred to the trilogy by Walter Wink, "Naming the Powers", Fortress Press, Minneapolis.*

The cleaners are scrubbing the Institute  
lavatories  
because women are supposed to do that

the girls are typing in the Institute offices  
because women are dedicated and careful

the women are assembling printed  
circuits  
because women are good at delicate work  
and women's eyes are expendable

the young men are doing their PhD's  
because young men are obedient and  
ambitious  
and someone wants warheads  
laser rangefinders  
hunt and destroy capabilities  
multichannel night seeking radar  
and science is neutral

back home the wives of the PhD students  
are having babies  
because women are maternal and loving  
and who else can have children but  
women?

at the top of the tower the old men and  
the middle aged men  
and sometimes one woman professor  
meet to form plans, cadge funds and run

the place  
because obedient young men turn into  
obedient old men  
and it's all for the good of the country  
and defence funds are good for science  
and science is neutral  
and no one notices Moloch

the women bring them  
clean toilets  
cups of coffee  
typescripts  
micro circuits oh so neatly assembled  
and children

and it's hard to see Moloch because he is  
both far away  
and everywhere  
and no one asks to whom they are all  
obedient

and they say, "Who's Moloch? Never  
heard of him"  
as out in the dark Moloch belches  
and grows redder and redder  
and fatter and fatter  
as he eats the children

by Mary McCann, published in  
"Pomegranate", Women's Writing Group,  
Scotland, 1992, pp. 64-65.

# What is Social Credit? Part II

Frances Hutchinson

Social Credit is an analysis of the financial system which arose out of Guild Socialist thought. What, then, is Guild Socialism?

Guild Socialism is a body of studies of work and lifestyles that articulated criticism of capitalist exploitation of humanity and the countryside in the name of financial profitability. It arose out of the Arts and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth century in England, with its quest to revive standards in decorative arts and to restore the dignity of craftsmen in reaction to the debased quality of mass produced goods. Cooperative workshops were founded to produce furniture, textiles, pottery and wallpaper. Most readily associated with the works of John Ruskin and William Morris, Guild Socialism was widely criticised for its appeal to rich patrons who had done well out of the capitalist system.

The need to address the power of the money system to corrupt even good work itself was recognised by a number of leading Guild Socialists, including A.R. Orage, editor of the Guild Socialist weekly *The New Age*. In 1917, and before Clifford Hugh Douglas put pen to paper, Orage published *An Alphabet of Economics* in which he used the terms ‘wage slavery’, finance ‘credit’, and ‘real’ and ‘financial’ capital. The issues raised in the pages of *The New Age* under the editorship of Orage resonate with present day concerns, offering hope and inspiration.

Contributors to *The New Age* included key thinkers whose works have circulated widely throughout the twentieth century. Many are considered as relevant today as when first published, and are still available in print. In addition to works by and about Ruskin and Morris, the names Arthur Penty, C.E. Bechhofer, Maurice

Reckitt, Rowland Kenny (Editor of the *Daily Herald*), Philip Mairet, G.D.H. Cole, Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton are associated with a substantial body of literature which can help to consolidate thinking on the pressing global issues of today.

In his book *Means and Ends*, published during the economic catastrophe of the Great Depression, Arthur Penty made the following observation:

“Modern society is to be regarded as abnormal. It is abnormal because material activities are overdeveloped, whilst spiritual ones carry on a precarious existence, because there is a lack of balance between the industrial and agricultural sides of society, because in a hundred directions personal and human ties are being dissolved and replaced by competition or the impersonal activities of the states.”

Penty’s words hold as true in the Age of the Precariat as they did all those decades ago. However, progressive routes out of the quagmire are more obscure than ever. Over the intervening decades, both followers and detractors of Clifford Hugh Douglas’ Social Credit thought have persistently mistaken suggestions for blueprints. The two are very different. Monetary reform solutions such as national dividends, just prices and the like cannot be super-imposed upon pre-existing industrial, agricultural and political systems. Informed debate on the complex subject of finance must come before the demand for change. As every farmer and homemaker knows, essential work has to be done, pay or no pay. If that work is not done, society and sustainable agriculture become unviable, catastrophe is as inevitable as night following day.

See, for example, George Marshall’s *Don’t Even Think About It: Why our brains are wired to ignore climate change*, published recently by Bloomsbury. Douglas’ critique of finance capitalism resonated with the thinking of farmers, homemakers, small family businesses and the unemployed and low paid industrial workers. It did not appeal to the leading industrialists of the corporate world, nor could it inform aspiring politicians or academics who sought careers in service to the corporate world of finance capitalism.

So the question now arises – what is finance capitalism? Economic growth is the driving force behind socially unsustainable development and the wholesale destruction of the earth’s life support systems. The only way to make an economy grow is to invest more money – finance capital – in firms, factories and industries that ‘make’ money. That is what career economists are paid to say. So, what forms of production are financially profitable? It is not socially useful, ecologically sound products that promote health, welfare and spiritual growth. Those things can be provided – so the argument goes – *provided there is money to pay for them*. And where does money come from? It comes from profitable production which pays good wages and salaries so that money can be taxed or gifted to pay for worthwhile causes that cannot pay their way.

First and foremost amongst profitable forms of production are armaments for export. Consumer durables, including computers in their various forms, are also highly profitable, and for much the same reasons – obsolescence is built into the

design from the outset of the production process. Other profitable lines include pharmaceutical products of all kinds, and food which is processed, preserved, packaged and transported over vast distances, creating a massive ‘carbon footprint’. Add to those the fashion items designed to adorn house and body, all designed to be replaced with increasing rapidity, and it is time to ask – who really wants to live like that? This is the question that Douglas and the Guild Socialists were asking during the war-to-end-all-wars which raged a hundred years ago. In 1918 Douglas came up with a further

question – how was the war financed? Where did the finance capital come from to fund the industries and pay the wages necessary to run the war effort? In explaining the origins of finance capital in clear and concise detail (See Hutchinson and Burkitt, *The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism*, p55-6), Douglas founded a school of economic thought that can only be challenged by being mis-represented. The fact that so many distinguished figures in politics and academia took a great deal of time out to challenge Douglas would suggest that his teachings carried the ring of truth.

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# Ruskin and the Artists of Today

## Howard Hull

John Ruskin, who lived from 1819 – 1900 and thus spanned the entirety of the Victorian era, was one of the most influential art critics and social theorists of his time, but it may be argued that his influence since has been even greater. For all that he wrote about art in his famous five volume study, *Modern Painters*, it was his subsequent much smaller publication on the political economy, *Unto This Last*, that had the most enduring effect. Lauded (and translated) by Gandhi and a bible to the architects of the Welfare States, this little volume has never gone out of print<sup>1</sup>. So how do the thoughts of Britain’s greatest art critic connect with those of one of its most prescient thinkers on the political economy?

In *Modern Painters* Ruskin argues that we get the art we deserve. In other words, that the state of our social and moral values is reflected in what we surround ourselves with and this is as true of art as it is of social justice. If artists want society to change – as many do – then art alone cannot do the job; the artist must also become a type of social activist and art become his tool. In Ruskin’s time his words found favour with the Pre-Raphaelites, a young generation of artists and designers, most notably William Morris and Edward Burne Jones. At the end of his life Morris recalled the impact of reading Ruskin “To some of us, when we first read (him), now many years ago, (he) seemed to point out a new road on

which the world should travel.” Morris and Ashbee in particular became political activists, inspiring the formation of the Arts and Crafts Movement and influencing the emergence of Guild Socialism. For a brief period prior to the destruction of World War I, it seemed as if a new social model might be possible in which the destructive power of *laissez-faire* capitalism could be overcome.

Filled with disillusion and anger in the aftermath of the Great War, artists were understandably eager to eradicate their links to the past and broadly demonised the nineteenth century as a whole. On the surface at least, Ruskin fared no better than any of his contemporaries. However, time has been on Ruskin’s side and today he stands accused less of being a dinosaur in such an evolution than a rogue gene. It is precisely because Ruskin got under the skin of his own era so incisively that he liberated many of the conceptual and philosophical forces which drove radical change when it surfaced in the post-war period.

Consider what some of the following Ruskinian thoughts *actually* imply: greatness in art stands in direct proportion to the number of ideas that an artist communicates; nothing but art is moral; art without industry is sin; industry without art is brutality. Even Ruskin’s comments on individual artists remain deeply challenging – for instance, his argument that Turner failed to produce work as truly great as he might have because the world failed him; and Ruskin’s famous rejection of Whistler: so often represented as Ruskin being too old-fashioned to appreciate the modern, when

in reality his anger was that a talented young artist would be content with showmanship when he was capable of greater morality and depth. To push any of these thoughts to their logical conclusions is to see how profoundly radical they are and how little sympathy they extend to the indulgences of the market in any era.

Ruskin’s call to society to nurture its artists; his observation that a society gets the art it deserves; his constant association of moral value and creative power: – all of these are social messages which place the artist at the heart, not the periphery, of civil society. They place upon that society a responsibility to value, challenge and defend the imagination and vision of its most creative people, and to cherish in all people the innate creativity that can accompany their work and social relations. Typically, he puts upon the shoulders of those who practice such creativity the heaviest burden of all: truth to such a trust, wherever it may lead.

It is against the background of such observations as these that we can assess Ruskin’s appeal to artists today. And the first thing we can observe is that both the climate in which art is made and received, and the commitment of many who practice it, are split along some deep fracture lines.

In the public sphere I believe art reflects remarkably well upon the core principles that Ruskin espoused. Ironically, the medium and form of such art is often ‘difficult’. It is exploratory, allusive, and ephemeral. It loves installation, documentation, film, performance and social action. Amazingly, public patronage has exerted a light touch when it comes

to shaping the work of artists working in this arena. It has wanted both to hear what they have to say and to help that voice reach as widely as possible. It has been progressive, encouraging artists to work in whatever way most effectively communicates their ideas. The ideas have been the thing. In England this has largely been at the behest of the Arts Council, and English culture has been the richer for it, even though the patronage of the public purse is not an ideological prerequisite of socially relevant art. Through the relentless energies of museums and galleries, the public have come to engage with artists working in this way.

There is a flip side. The global scale of the commercial art market today beggars belief. Artists who become darlings of the market, the ‘culture casino’ of endless art fairs and pop-up galleries, learn to varnish their work with an altogether different gloss. Here the object is the thing – something that can be traded. And as in any market, getting noticed is paramount. Virtuosity, vanity, even violence – anything that calls attention to itself. As the number of the super-rich and their aspirants multiplies around the world, art has become a colourful currency, taking its place alongside Bitcoins and Brands.

The prestigious public museums and galleries in the Nineteenth Century were initially treasuries, designed to declare national or regional holdings of wealth. Even now they are being built in every industrial city of the new economic giants from China to India, Brazil to Indonesia. These museums, are nonetheless interesting. They have evolved in a profound sense from their

forbears. The difference is not in the grandiose architecture on the face of institutions but of the attitude inside them. Taking their curatorial cues from leading western galleries, they are more interested in ideas and intangibles, upon process and perspective, above all upon social relations. It is all surprisingly Ruskinian.

The extent to which Ruskin’s ideas became associated with the most progressive and avant-garde of writers, artists and architects in the twentieth century is astonishing and reveals something very important about his way of thinking: its fugitive nature. Listen to the German artist Joseph Beuys in the 1970’s:

‘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’<sup>2</sup>.

The concept of the social artist seems to me to be profoundly Ruskinian. Under the outer showmanship of the ‘Art World’ the social agenda is a powerful moving force. Witness this year’s Turner Prize winner, Laure Prouvost. Her associated installation, *Wantee*, which has just finished a period of exhibition in Derry and Coniston, features Ruskin and Brantwood, his former home, directly<sup>3</sup>. Behind this work is the presence of Grizedale Arts, Arts Council funded and working a distinctly social agenda in the village of Coniston, bringing artists and artist-curators into direct relation with the challenges of the small rural community where Ruskin made his home. The complex interplay of creative factors that

they are working with is further stretched by their international projects, such as the installation of a 'Mechanics Institute' at the Sao Paolo Biennale, or their work with a hill-farming community in Japan.

Grizedale is part of a wider movement of the artist-curator, one of the contemporary terms for the social artist that has included Ruskin in its sweep. Liam Gillick and Jeremy Deller (another Turner Prize winner) are examples. Within this sphere conceptual artists, social theorists, architects and designers cross-over. Close readers of Ruskin in the architecture category are the New York-based Spanish artist/architect Jorge Otero-Pailos (his installation at the Doge's Palace in a recent Venice Biennale was a remarkable examination of our ideas on time and memory reflected against Ruskin's thinking) and radical Dutch architect Lars Spuybroek, author of *The Sympathy of Things: Ruskin and the Ecology of Design*.

What of artists whose work is altogether more craft-driven and personal, for whom the creative instinct of the individual is paramount? What of the philosophy of heart, hand and eye that Ruskin espoused? If anything, Ruskin's influence is even stronger. Some of today's artists who are most tactile in paint, delicate of eye and most personal in revelation are keenly energised by the power of Ruskin's words and the inspiration afforded by his own painting. In Edinburgh this year the summer exhibition at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery was 'John Ruskin: Artist and Observer'. This display gathered together from all over the world more than 150 of Ruskin's own paintings. What the show revealed was the instrumentality of

Ruskin's own art, the way he used it to shape and influence thought.

Brantwood has been privileged to encounter and show many such contemporary artists working in the same tradition. With an average of eight exhibitions a year, it has worked with more than 120 living artists in the last ten years, in many cases with periods of residency. Some of these artists have read Ruskin and take the opportunity to exhibit at Brantwood to make work with very direct connections. Others may be said to wear their Ruskin lightly, but nonetheless proudly. I am mindful of Derek Hyatt. Derek has found inspiration in Ruskin almost all of his working life. Then there is George Rowlett, another artist who, like Derek, is represented by the Michael Richardson Gallery, London with whom we have collaborated on numerous occasions. George's journey through the Alps and then Coniston in the footsteps of Ruskin released an extraordinary volley of work which is among his very best. In the long tradition of painting and drawing Ruskin very much remains a force to be reckoned with. In particular, through the *Campaign for Drawing*, which was established by the Guild of St George (itself established by Ruskin) the notion that everyone is an artist has been championed to tens of thousands with no aspirations to professionalism, let alone greatness, who pick up a pencil or brush and begin a journey of discovery and self-expression that hugely enriches their lives.

Whether you respond more warmly to conceptual, abstract or representational art is ultimately insignificant. What all the artists I have mentioned have in common

is an understanding that art is not isolated, it forms part of a larger social commitment. For too long we have considered Ruskin's works in a series of silos, particularly intent on keeping art criticism and the political economy apart. Ruskin worked hard to bring them together. It seems that artists today

have a shrewd instinct for their connection. Let's applaud that.

Howard Hull is director of Brantwood

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<sup>1</sup> Including the comic book version *'How To Be Rich'* published by the Ruskin Foundation

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Beuys *What is Money?* Clairview Press, 2010

<sup>3</sup> Brantwood, John Ruskin's former home in the Lake District is open to the public throughout the year. [www.brantwood.org.uk](http://www.brantwood.org.uk)

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# Another 2014 Battlefield

## Michael Luxford

In a few years' time, when looking back to 2014, the Gaza, Ukraine and Islamic State crises and the Ebola epidemic will stand out as major 'events'. Seemingly less critical events will also stand out at personal and organisational levels, and one of these, relevant to this publication and its purpose, is what has been taking place recently in the Camphill Movement in England, and has come to a head this year.

In 1939 a group of mainly Austrian Jewish refugees, led by a Dr Karl König, arrived on the shores of Britain, having escaped the Nazi arrival in Vienna.

This group ended up in Aberdeen and started a community which set out to live with and help children and young people with what we now term 'learning disabilities' or 'additional learning needs'. This was their work since this was König's medical speciality.

In the course of time this endeavour expanded, and over a hundred

communities have been established in over twenty countries supporting people of all ages and with a variety of needs, including people with mental health issues. This work is embraced by what came to be known as the Camphill Movement.

What is relevant to these pages is that these communities, in the UK and Ireland and the USA in particular, have operated since that time on a non-salaried basis. Initially, and because it was wartime, there was little money and the needs of the co-workers could only be met from a common fund. Salaries were out of the question.

However, for pragmatic reasons and based on the background König and the other founder members had in anthroposophy and the work of Rudolf Steiner, these people decided that they would not go the way of salaries and would instead create a system whereby personal expenses would be met on a needs basis with reference

to available funds and discussion with colleagues.

Thereby, through not taking out of the income of the community financial resources which would be required to support individual and family security in housing, insurance, pension etc. terms, non-ownership of property and shared use of infrastructure and the provision of sustenance freed up resources to build communities. The cultural commitment of individuals to the community was to be the source of security and purpose for everyone. To achieve this was not a matter only of idealism and developed financial acumen, but of the social relationships which needed to be built between those who shared this intention.

Now, in 2014, a battle is under way in one of the Camphill charitable trusts and particularly in one of its ‘flagship’ communities, Botton Village in North Yorkshire, a battle being fought about whether or not this way of living and working, which has an over seventy year history in Britain, can survive in the face of mounting criticism over its validity.

“Change is inevitable” can easily be said, but just because something has existed for a long period it does not mean it loses validity. It might be that it is just a beginning of a new way which had first to be pioneered, as otherwise change would never be researched and practised.

It is small battlefield, but is taking place in the context of a serious practical endeavour which has existed in Britain for this length of time and has addressed in practice the five areas of Ownership, Work and Needs, Money, Capital and Associative Working, and has, like Social Credit, the potential to be a *third way*, and in the case of the Camphill Movement, did become a working example, which is now under threat.

Michael Luxford, Camphill Co-worker, researcher for *Directions for Change Social Research* and board member of the *International Communal Studies Association* (ICSA).

Further insight into this ‘battle’ will be shared in this publication.

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## Book Reviews

### **Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi**

by *Richard Rohr*

Hodder & Stoughton (August 2014)

ISBN: 978-1473604018

320pp £14.99

This is not a biography of Saint Francis. As the author points out, there are many such books available, and lots of people

think they have a rudimentary knowledge of the facts of his life. This little book is an exposition, in very clear, readable prose, of what Saint Francis means, his spiritual legacy and the Franciscan way.

The spirituality expressed in the book is so accessible, so generous and inclusive, that it is equally relevant to Christians of all denominations, people of other faiths,

and even people of no faith at all. It is, when all is said and done, about a love that extends to all Creation, in which nobody is excluded, nobody is alien, nobody is unworthy.

The book is also timely, because the way of Saint Francis is highly relevant to some of the biggest crises facing the world today. The seemingly never-ending 'war on terror' has been a disaster, with British and US forces currently bombing Iraq yet again.

In the mediaeval period, the Christian world was caught up in anti-Islamist fervour, with Popes promising eternal life to Christians who engaged in the 'holy war' against the Muslims. Francis took an extraordinarily brave and revolutionary step. He took Christ's instruction to love our enemies literally. He travelled to the Holy Land and urged Christian troops to stop fighting, saying that the war was 'against the will of the Lord'. He then travelled to the Muslim camp and spent weeks talking to the Sultan, with whom he seems to have built a relationship of trust and respect. Imagine if our current world leaders actually believed we should love our enemies, and do good to those that hate us?

We also recently learned that since 1970 humanity has managed to wipe out half the world's wildlife population. Whilst the author states that he wants to get beyond the 'bath image' of Saint Francis, which portrays him as something of a cute animal lover, he stresses that a deep respect for all living things is an essential part of the true Franciscan way. 'Creation itself - not ritual or spaces constructed by human hands - was Francis's primary cathedral, which then drove him back

into the needs of the city...' A heart inspired by Saint Francis would be broken by the destruction we have wrought on the natural world, and would be deeply committed to saving the planet. Indeed there is a Saint Francis Pledge to commit to care for Creation and the poor, available at <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/the-st-francis-pledge/>

The author, himself a Franciscan friar, also acknowledges the great importance of Francis's female companion Clare. In a chapter on her legacy, he admits, 'We male Franciscans often became complex 'human doings' instead of *simple human beings*,' Clare and her Poor Clare sisters, with their simpler way of life, have kept their male counterparts grounded in 'authentic interiority and intimacy with God.'

The author is refreshingly honest about the way the Church, and his own order, can stray from the simplicity of the Gospel, and how some Church teachings are actually more about cultural norms than Christ's teachings. There is a complete absence of the defensiveness that sometimes is associated with religious institutions and those who live within them. The author embodies a constant striving to get back to the authentic, humble, and revolutionary ways of Saint Francis.

When we look at all the problems facing the world today, from greed and environmental degradation, to conflict, exploitation and injustice, Saint Francis seems to present a way to live which would overcome these problems. It is a way that is far from easy, but is beautifully simple. In his humility, poverty, patience and compassion he can

show us an alternative way of living which springs directly from the Gospels, and is revolutionary in actually taking Christ literally.

Personally, I always feel that when you read a book and start thinking of all the people you know who would enjoy it, who would find it both inspiring and consoling,

### **Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Happier Life**

by Arianna Huffington

W.H.Allen 342pp

£16.99

ISBN: 978-0753555408

Is there a nicer publication to work for than *The Huffington Post*? For people who don't know, the *HuffPost*, as it is colloquially termed, is an on-line news website launched in 2005 by Arianna Huffington who remains editor-in-chief despite the *HuffPost* being bought by AOL in 2011 for \$315m. It has editions in six languages, including Japanese, with an Arabic version on the way. It attracts one million comments every month and won a Pulitzer prize two years ago for a series on the plight of traumatically-wounded soldiers. Almost as remarkable, this success has blossomed from an environment the polar opposite of conventional news rooms. *HuffPost* staff are provided with yoga, breathing and meditation classes. There is a *HuffPost* nap room. *Huffpost* fridges are stocked with health foods. Employees keen to help the less fortunate - perhaps labourers at this magazine? - are given three paid days-off for volunteering activity. Charities the *HuffPost* has endorsed have raised \$6m. Journalists fearing a higher-than-average pulse rate can activate a free smartphone app called GPS for the Soul. This will

to whom you would like to pass it on, as I did with this book: that is the sign of a truly successful and valuable book.

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>

help them, their editor-in-chief declares in *Thrive* "return to a state of calm and balance."

There is a juicy irony here. The recurring theme of *Thrive* is the treachery of digital technology. Welcomed as a friend, it has turned into the sort of demonic guest who ends up taking over the household, like a character in a Russian play. Did you know that the average smartphone user checks his device 150 times a day, or that the average 'knowledge economy' employee spends 28 per cent of her time dealing with email? Hold your breath when reading on-screen greetings from relatives or Amazon? Oh yes you do; like millions of others you suffer from 'email apnea', as identified by researcher Linda Stone at Microsoft. According to a company called SaneBox, it takes us 67 seconds to recover from each email we receive, though as SaneBox manufactures email filtering software, you might consider them part pris.

Ms Huffington, the author of biographies of Maria Callas and Pablo Picasso and the ex-wife of a confessedly bisexual Congressman, is as much a victim as the rest of us. She collapsed from exhaustion in 2007. As somebody who had first prayed to the Virgin Mary at the age of three and who took up meditation ten years later, she was ruefully aware she had allowed her spiritual side to be shrivelled

by the pell-mell nature of modern life. Most of us faced by the same predicament would take our pensions and run. Ms Huffington, instead, has bravely opted to offer the world advice. And despite instinctive reluctance to take lectures in moderation from a media mogul - the 52nd most powerful woman in the world, according to Forbes magazine - she proves an entertaining guru.

Her focus is the Third Metric. This is not a new mobile network, but the term invented by Ms Huffington for the congenial qualities - wisdom, wonder, giving - that prop up Metrics One and Two: money and success. Without the Third Metric, our lives will be disagreeable, unrewarding and, worse still, short. People have been saying things like this for ages, and Ms Huffington is not ashamed to quote them. Her witnesses include Socrates, Marcus Aurelius and the Prophet Muhammad as well as Rupert Murdoch, Lou Reed, and her Greek mother, an engaging sort given to standing on her head, defying Nazis and feeding seagulls.

What makes Ms Huffington's admonitions compulsive is the science trotted out to back them. Acts of kindness apparently generate 'oxytocin', the love hormone; fed into a skinflint's nostrils it can persuade him or her to give more to beggars. A Harvard Business School study invites us to believe that donating to charity is the psychological equivalent of a doubling of household income. Conversely, self-centred pleasure leads to diabetes and cancer. There is a sense of a wheel turning full circle here. The author does not mention him, but evil Dr Psycho's quack machismo was a constant threat to the ambitions of the proto-feminist Wonderwoman. Ms Huffington was once an anti-feminist, but her plea for more restful lifestyles is an oblique criticism of

the male way of doing things: the current, destructive, system she notes, was "put in place by men in a workplace culture dominated by men." Women, she predicts, will lead the way to a saner office. If Marcus Aurelius doesn't persuade them, medical statistics will: stressed-out women who have heart attacks are almost twice as likely as male equivalents to die within a year.

What can we do? Sleep more, concentrate on the rising and falling of our breath, enjoy coincidences, meditate while drinking coffee, say hello to your office cleaner. Take hikes, when, who knows you might run into an expedition of *HuffPost* hacks taking Diogenes' advice: "Solvitur ambulando - it is solved by walking." Above all, turn off digital devices at night, which will help you re-connect with creativity and intuition. Ms Huffington's ex-husband insists on no digital devices when they holiday together. If things still go wrong, as in a high-profile divorce, remember that "every misfortune is a teacher, and life a giant classroom." Ms Huffington's role model is the gazelle which moves from alarm to equanimity with uncanny ease.

There are individuals for whom Metrics One (power) and Two (money) remain elusive. Ms Huffington acknowledges this. Her own mother, the seagull-feeder, left no will or prized possessions. Seekers after Metric Three are encouraged, with evident sincerity, to extend a helping hand. Sceptics swithering between spreadsheets and the soup kitchen should know that a Stanford University study has found that those who volunteer live for longer than those who don't.

*Erlend Clouston* is a freelance journalist who worked for *The Guardian* from 1979 to 1997

## 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

***Down to Earth:***

***A Guide to Home Economics***

Frances Hutchinson (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

***This Age of Plenty***

***A new conception of economics: Social Credit***

Louis Even (Pilgrims of Saint Michael)

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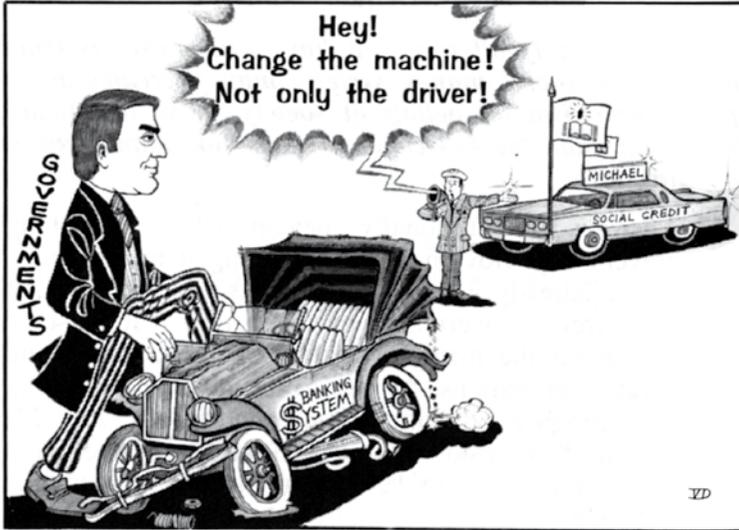
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then we must elaborate a concept of culture  
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Joseph Beuys *What is Money? A Discussion*, Clairview Press, 2010.

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