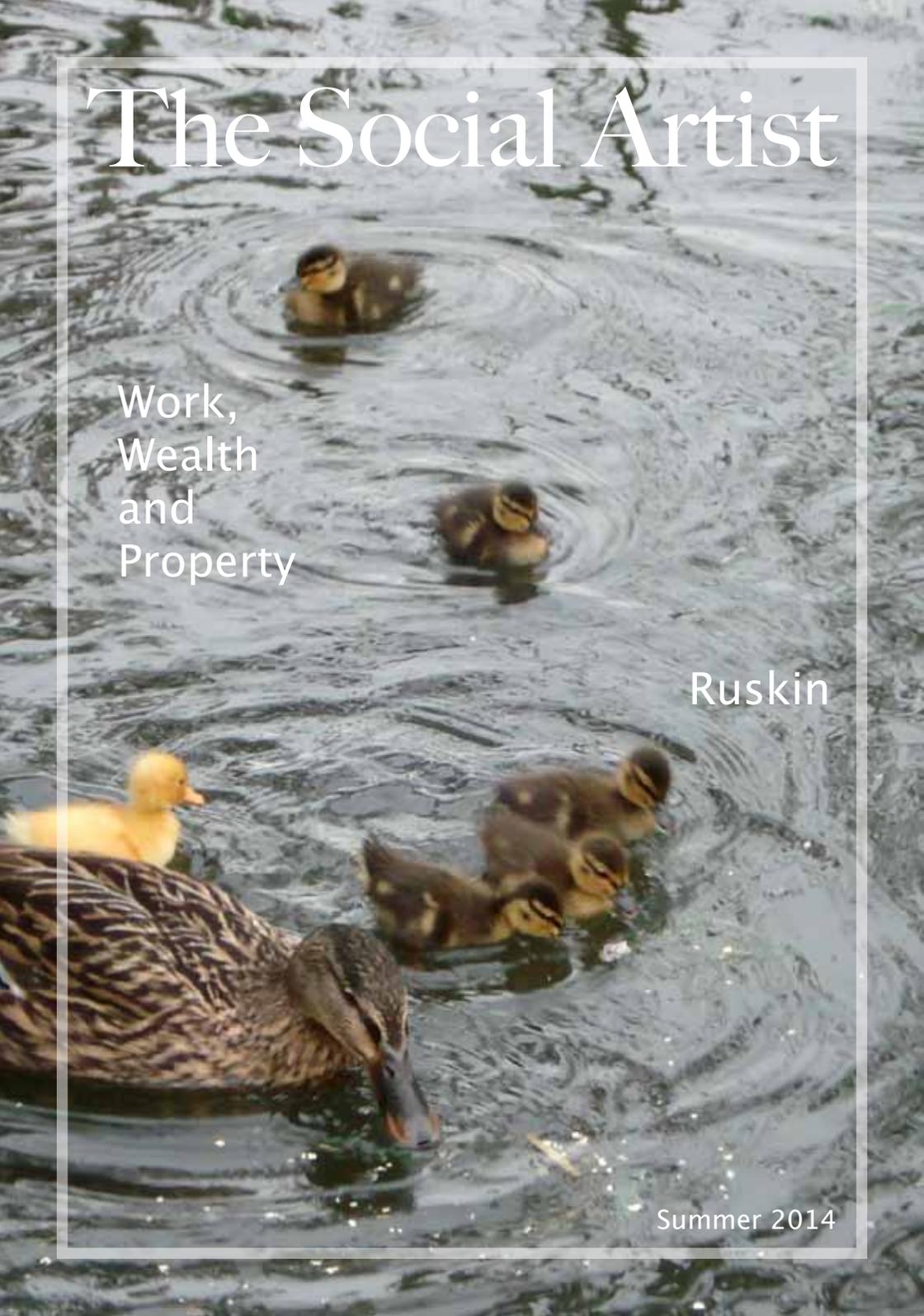


# The Social Artist



Work,  
Wealth  
and  
Property

Ruskin

Summer 2014

# The SOCIAL ARTIST

(incorporating The SOCIAL CREDITER)

## THE JOURNAL OF THE SOCIAL CREDIT SECRETARIAT

Quarterly Review for Economic Democracy

**Spring 2014 Vol.2, No.2**

ISSN: 2053-5236 (online 2053-5244)

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Front Cover Photograph: Frances Hutchinson

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

Back Cover Cartoon: Cartoon taken from the comic book How to be Rich by Hunt Emerson and Kevin Jackson. The book is available from the Brantwood Trust [www.brantwood.org.uk](http://www.brantwood.org.uk)

# Editorial

People everywhere hate change. War, revolution, or the destruction of trees, these are the very last things any sane family wants to see happening on their own doorstep – or anywhere else for that matter. Yet as I write ordinary people across the world continue their work of making the tools and weapons of the ongoing war against man and nature. Why this should be so has challenged the minds of many a thinker and writer of the twentieth century. A host of excellent works provide the would-be reformer with ample illumination and food for thought. Sadly, however, the practice of self-determined study-reading has gone out of fashion. Any time spent in study is directed towards obtaining qualifications for the purpose of securing a money income. In one's 'own time' there is very little chance to read reflectively at leisure. Students of mainstream educational establishments are rarely introduced to the texts of genuinely dissident writers for the very good reason that study of the works of alternative thinkers would encourage bright, talented and thoughtful youngsters *not* to enter into the service of the war machine.

The system guides thoughtful youngsters

into jobs which are seemingly harmless enough, even helpful to the general good. Workers in education, science, medicine and the caring professions are encouraged to see themselves as offering service to human welfare. The reality is, however, that they are necessary to keep the war machine on the road. Central to the process is the command of the corporate system over education. As the young person qualifies to enter the payroll of an educational institution, the blinkers of the mind close. A choice must be made between research, writing and teaching that comes truly from the heart, and the demands of the pre-existing career structure. As a result, mainstream arts, literature and social science offer very little indeed by way of challenge to mass production for the mass markets of emulative consumerism and war.

By its very definition, mass production requires to be conducted on a massive scale. Small scale hand crafting takes time. When anything is expensive in terms of time and money it is classed as 'uneconomic' for the mass market. For this reason, good, healthy food, works of art and crafted items for the household become expensive luxury items for the

not-so-idle rich, *i.e.*, those who are doing very well out of the system. Lacking the spirit, imagination and motivation to press for change, the downtrodden masses buy the shoddy products of the mass production lines. Condemned to long hours of intrinsically unsatisfying work under unpleasant conditions, apathy and despair are commonplace. Mass production produces wealth and luxury for an élite, the illusion of status for its top employees, and degraded lives at work and at leisure for the mass of wage slaves. Furthermore, mass production is also the sole means whereby weapons of mass warfare can be produced and put into operation.

William Morris (1834-96), like John Ruskin and other nineteenth century thinkers, struggled with the problem of providing good work for all regardless of class or status in a society dominated by money values. The skilled workman requires training, tools, and above all *time*, to perfect his or her craft. But under conditions of late capitalism, success in business depended upon making money from the venture. The so-called “economies of scale” could churn out a mass of identical items, all designed, advertised, packaged, transported, and marketed through massive retail networks, bringing profits to investors in the firm, and blighted lives to the mass of work slaves. Morris brought his privileged upbringing to bear upon the plight of the landless poor. For Morris, the alternative was to set about producing items of beautiful design and workmanship, offering intrinsic satisfaction to artisan and user alike. However, under the mass

market economy the ‘firm’ has to stay solvent financially in order to conduct its business. Labour-time and tools must be paid for so that the artisan can stay alive and the owner of the firm can continue with production. The system is not designed to produce good work and respect for the land and its peoples. On the contrary, it is perfectly suited to creating continuous warfare and environmental degradation. Inevitably, Morris found himself forced to sell to the rich, whilst his political writings, like those of the other guild socialists, have been studiously ignored by mainstream academia.

As I have maintained throughout my writing career, Social Credit and Guild Socialism are inseparable. The one without the other makes no sense whatsoever. Social credit on its own implies continuation of the mass production, mass market – and hence mass warfare – system, on the basis that it will generate sufficient income to pay out a ‘National Dividend’ for all citizens, whether they engage in waged labour or not. A revolution in thinking must pre-date any meaningful reform of the money system. For workable alternatives to emerge it will be essential that ordinary people take time out to study the current financial system, and how their work and spending patterns serve to perpetuate the war economy. The tragedy is that promoters of Social Credit, like their state socialist counterparts, lost touch with their Guild Socialist roots as they sought to engage with mainstream thought on its own terms. It would seem that the time has come to explore these issues afresh.

# Private Property

Alain Pilote

The fault that the [Catholic] Church finds with present capitalism is neither private property nor free enterprise. Far from wishing the disappearance of private property, the Church rather wishes its widespread availability so that all may become real owners of capital and be real “capitalists”:

“The dignity of the human person necessarily requires the right of using external goods in order to live according to the right norm of nature. And to this right corresponds a most serious obligation, which requires that, so far as possible, there be given to all an opportunity of possessing private property... Therefore, it is necessary to modify economic and social life so that the way

is made easier for widespread private possession of such things as durable goods, homes, gardens, tools requisite for artisan enterprises and family-type farms, investments in enterprises of medium or large size.” (Pope John XXIII, encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra*, May 15, 1961, nn. 114-115.)

Social Credit, with its dividend to every individual, would acknowledge every human being as a capitalist, a co-heir of the natural resources and progress, some of which are human inventions and technology.

This extract is taken from the *MICHAEL* journal, January/February 2014

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## Built in Economic Domination

“In the first place, then, it is patent that in our days not alone is wealth accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic domination is concentrated in the hands of a few, and that those few are frequently not the owners, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds, who administer them at their good pleasure.

“This power becomes particularly irresistible when exercised by those who,

because they hold and control money, are also able to govern credit and determine its allotment, for that reason supplying, so to speak, the lifeblood to the entire economic body, and grasping, as it were, in their hands, the very soul of production, so that no one dare breathe against their will.

Pius XI, quoted in *The Social Credit Proposals Explained in 10 Lessons*, prepared by Alain Pilote, page 143. See [www.michaeljournal.org](http://www.michaeljournal.org)

# The Law of Help:

## John Ruskin's Theory of Thistles

### Howard Hull

To quote Mick Jagger:

It's not easy facing up when your whole world is black.

When Ruskin looked at the popular arts of his own time, he noted that virtually all of them were in some way concerned with darkness and decay. He took this as a particular symptom of the sickness of society. In the essay 'Fiction Fair and Foul' he spoke of the public's obsession with detailed accounts of death. In response, Ruskin banished black from his palette, even to the point that when he buried his mother, he buried her in a bright blue coffin.

In the summer of 1968, the Rolling Stones composed the song *Street Fighting Man*. The song laments that London was not caught up in the spirit prevailing in Paris or Chicago:

But what can a poor boy do  
Except to sing for a rock 'n' roll band  
'Cause in sleepy London town  
There's just no place for a street fighting man

When, in 2011, London did finally erupt, the target was the High Street. Rioters were not targeting political structures or ideologies as they had more than forty years earlier, but everyday commercial ones.

It is a measure of how the perceived threats to our individual and social well-being change that not so long ago the power of government was the flint that sparked social protest, whereas now it is the power of commerce on our high street. We are angry with the drug that we know we cannot do without but which is gradually killing us.

It is hardly of much comfort to learn that Ruskin saw this coming more than 150 years ago. In an effort to free people from commercial slavery he published a series of short magazine articles and public lectures in the 1850's and 60's in which he proposed such things as a minimum wage, free libraries, education for women, welfare for the sick and elderly, national insurance, fair trade, planning green belts and careers advice.

So influential were these ideas that they not only made him a celebrity in the second half of his life, they were variously taken up by successive generations of political reformers, and not one of them has failed in some form or another to be adopted. For all that, the deep cancer of *laissez-faire* capitalism remains an ever present threat.

If many of Ruskin's own prescriptions

for social change were pragmatic, the values upon which they drew were deeply evolved and grew on spiritual ground. Ruskin's political economy arises from deep roots in man's relation to the divine, as expressed in his husbandry of nature and the value which he places upon life. I want to draw closer to these roots, so that we can connect with the vital nature of Ruskin's ideas, and allow their influence to speak to our lives today. Again, let us observe that it is values that are being upheld here, and not Ruskin's personal theology, for his belief is that the values he espouses are common to all humanity and its different spiritual faiths.

Last year we had an exhibition at Brantwood of Ruskin's drawings and paintings on the theme of thistles. 'States of Adversity' was the title Ruskin gave to his theory of thistles - a theory begun in his relative youth about architecture and taken up in a wider way in later years in his botanical work, *Proserpina*.

In the matter of social justice, Ruskin had observed that when faced with pain and hurt, all living things - humans included - had a tendency to respond to adversity with a type of defensive elaboration and excess, ultimately to the point of violence. Where one might expect them to withdraw and hide away, injustice brought out the fight in them, but since the fight was more rarely enjoined than not, the fight took the form of a type of bravura, a provocative posturing with an underlying threat of violence. The simple supportive architecture of the leaf in a meadow's grass blade, for instance, was thus, when it found itself the habitué of rocky ground, drawn into an array of spikes: a thistle was

born. A society which lived in a state of adversity within itself or the world around it, would express itself in everything from its architecture to its military with similar excess in order to assert internal repression or external intimidation. Whenever out of balance in themselves or with others, individuals would likewise bristle with a proportionate degree of aggression.

Ruskin's theory is, of course, not botany, but a type of allegorizing of the human condition. To apply it to our current discussion, we have, straight away, to make the link between the disenfranchised and anti-social who are filled with a sense of injustice, and the franchised, who assert their position with an equivalent degree of aggression against the possibility of losing their advantage to others in the social game. The theory of the thistle applies to both because it focuses on an underlying truth that binds us all to each other - namely that good or bad fortune can befall any of us at any time.

Ruskin observes that it is inequality of fortune (we fall ill, our house blows down) that creates the first imperative in so-called economic man. When our misfortune exceeds our ability to absorb it, we must call upon others to help. Within a family or close-knit group, this help is given freely, even to the point that the cost to the whole results in a diminution for everyone individually, that is none the less seen as a gain for the cohesion of the whole. However, a point arises where assistance is required from others that involves an agreement to return the favour in some form or another. An exchange is made. If the exchange can be made immediately a simple trade occurs. But unfortunately

the nature of misfortune is such that the exchange may have to be deferred and so a promissory note – or debt - arises.

We can see that the agency of misfortune introduces an imbalance that ultimately becomes threatening in different ways to both parties. The ground on which both stand is potentially rocky, and we may expect, nature being what it is, for both to grow prickly in such circumstances.

So how can a society avoid being one that turns its people into thistles? A good society is potentially an abstract and impersonal goal. We need to create a society that connects with people in their hearts, and the only way to do that is to achieve one that is built on kindness. ‘Harden not your heart as in the day of provocation’ was a daily invocation from Psalm 95, the *Venite*, in Morning Prayer for more than 350 years.

It matters a great deal whether we consider the foremost attribute of a good society to be a presiding sympathetic sensibility in which each individual’s spirit is to be honoured to the highest of its potential, or the workings of an efficient machine, in which the individual is to contribute as effectively as possible to a collective good.

Our society - by which I mean the global market model - is a type of organism which we attempt to understand and regulate as if it were a machine, but which is designed to get a bridle on and then ride our desire for individual freedom and satisfaction as its motive force. ‘I Can’t Get No Satisfaction’ to quote Mick Jagger again, is exactly what it wants to hear! This is history’s most successful and

audacious social system. The true capital of capitalism, as Ruskin saw, is the human soul. This thirsting, vital, optimistic and infinitely precious resource has been remorselessly mined, melted and beaten into the service of our greed for getting on. The wicked genius of the whole thing is built on an underlying spiritual hunger, corrupted into idealism.

No clearer indication of social character exists than in a nation’s attitude to crime. Ruskin drew a clear line between understanding the roots of crime and dealing with those who commit crimes. The root issue is justice. In the realm of the human spirit, when good behaviour is coerced, rather than freely forthcoming, a type of injustice is generated. If we think we are only training an individual to be obedient to a set of norms, as we might train a horse to accept the saddle, then a degree of coercion or discipline would, at first sight, seem to be acceptable. If, however, we can only train the individual to accept the saddle by destroying their spirit, then we have planted the seeds of injustice.

This means that if we want to have a good society, we have first to understand goodness itself. If we think of being good as a type of behavioural perfection we place it in a dangerous, spirit-denying place, which from the start of people’s lives threatens them with exclusion. You can see how quickly the notion of ‘being good’ becomes tied to academic or athletic performance at school. No matter how illogical it may seem, the sense of injustice that arises in such situations actually stems from the use of force. It doesn’t matter that this is not actual violence, (though

it matters a great deal if it is). Any type of power play where one side has the upper hand will produce it: persuasion through any type of institutionalized threat or intimidation – even peer pressure - our schools are full of it. Any type of force exercised on another in anything other than in defence of life represents a contravention of natural justice deeper and more irresistible than any social argument that may seek to justify it.

Our understanding of this is complicated by the fact that there are two quite distinct notions of justice at work. There is the common legalistic sense of justice, which serves society and is predicated on a set of adopted values translated into laws and promulgated through norms of behaviour. This type of democratic justice is mutable in that it is interpreted according to a perception of the interests of whatever is the ideology of the ruling majority. And then there is universal or natural justice, a type of grace which speaks to our spiritual nature. When we fall from this, humanity is diminished and nature cries out. In our everyday, spirit-denying world, we give little heed to such a force. The trouble is that common justice often involves the denial of natural justice. If we set ourselves up in judgment according to common justice we are following a similar path to that which Ruskin has sketched out in the political economy. At its best in such a system we are asserting goodness and morality as a type of currency (a contract of obligation) which society issues in its own favour and we charge its absence in others as a debt. We speak of prisoners as owing a debt to society. At its worst, in a competitive society like ours, the result is that morality is asserted in a

field of conflict and further corrupted by negotiation in a market of exchange.

The type of justice that Ruskin was concerned with and which most concerns me here is natural justice. Natural justice is a form of grace which serves to balance humanity within creation. It is a gift, inalienable and universal, which must be seen first and foremost as a spiritual quality that inheres in the fabric of our relationship to life. Justice like this cannot be defined or possessed as a solely human ideal. When it is conceived in purely ideal terms and applied through judgment in an impersonal system it loses its capacity to relate to the individual, and, again, injustice is the result. We can call the alternative expediency, we can call it necessity, but we cannot call it justice. The seeds of the alienation we feel when we experience confrontation with this social dictatorship are in us all, they co-exist with goodness, often they are instrumental in corrupting goodness; they germinate in frustration, dispossession, and rejection. We know this. We feel this poignantly in our youth. We find it again in later years. Quiet and reasonable citizens, we join a peaceful gathering to express our feelings about something quite positive like education, and we find ourselves confronted by the armed and organized force of the police, treated as enemies of the State. We see the thorns of the thistle grow sharp, even as the ground around us becomes barren.

So within the political economy, we observe that we have first to value the soul, not to exploit it. If we are to rely on it as capital, then we have also to replenish it, not exhaust it. Whatever virtues the

systematization of the economy brings its deficits will be higher if we do not understand and apply this principle in the very foundations of all that we do.

We have, secondly, to learn that non-violence, that wonderful creed preached by Gandhi (who, incidentally, was profoundly influenced by his reading of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*), is not simply about not physically attacking each other, but is about avoiding all acts of coercion and pursuing instead a path of encouragement and generosity: fashioning a creative and co-operative environment where neither justice nor its subjects find themselves 'enthistled'.

We have, thirdly, to spread more widely in our schools a greater understanding of the natural basis of economic life, and to correct the misunderstandings we foster by being lazy and dishonest about the nature of equality.

Economic and social systems which apply rules based on treating individuals as measurable units swap individual character for socio-economic categories in order to maintain a type of mechanical inequality that allows the machine to function in an optimum way. These systems need measured, controllable inequality. Capitalism doesn't believe in equality, instead it believes in a market value for everything. This presents an illusion of equality: what is often referred to as equality of opportunity.

Whilst equality of opportunity exists, like any market offer it is only available in limited supply and is conditioned by what else is on offer. It is the promise of

this opportunity, a sort of ever receding mirage, which acts as the true opium of the people. Its daily marketing in the form of celebrity life styles, the cityscape parade of corporate power, the endless reinforcement of competition through sport: all encourage the popular fantasy which is the gambler's faith that participation in the game already partakes imaginatively in the victory. Wherever there are such dreams there are also waking realities, the bitterness that accompanies the death of any illusion. This is a breeding ground that makes for a profound sense of injustice. The real inequality of which capitalism stands accused is not the jealousy of the poor for the goods of the rich; it is an anger born of lost spiritual worth. It is not the issue of the have or have-nots of material wealth that is at the heart of disaffection with capitalism.

It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine, [said Ruskin] which, more than any other evil of our times, is leading the mass of nations everywhere into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves. ... It is not that men are ill fed, but that they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread, and therefore look to wealth as the only means of pleasure.<sup>1</sup>

Ruskin also observes the effects of Darwinism on *laissez-faire* capitalism. Ruskin did not deny the basic tenets of evolutionary theory, but he was deeply alarmed that the unfeeling logic which accounted for the process of natural selection was coming to be seen as an irresistible and fateful force in human relations. At the heart of the political economist's concept of 'survival of the

fittest' is the belief that competition and the fight for survival is the sole engine of positive progress that has delivered mankind to the top of the evolutionary tree, and that its continued application in social affairs is the brutal but ultimately only effective way of ensuring continued development for mankind.

What does this tell us, Ruskin asks, that we didn't already know about the natural world and the propensity of human beings to grow thorns? How does this help us to move beyond the inexorable cycles of suffering and disappointment and the ultimate personal futility that relentless competition can impose upon us all? Like this, enslaved by its own logic, mankind's cultural and intellectual barrenness exercises a type of spirit-denying autocracy that makes our souls prickly. If we accept to see life only in this way, then we have tipped the scales of natural justice away from the qualities that lead us to the transcendent and divine and condemned ourselves to 'painting it black'. Corrupted by the marriage of scientific idealism with a competitive financial system, we can only expect division, disillusion and death to be the outcomes.

A pure or holy state of anything, [wrote Ruskin] ... is that in which all its parts are helpful or consistent. They may or may not be homogeneous. ... The highest and first law of the universe – and the other name of life is, therefore, "help." The other name of death is "separation." Government and co-operation are in all things and eternally the laws of life. Anarchy and competition, eternally, and in all

things, the laws of death.<sup>2</sup>

When Ruskin came to sum up his writings on social justice and the political economy, he uttered those famous words

### THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE<sup>3</sup>

A good society is a constant labour, not as I said at the outset, a result. It involves faith in and love for humanity, and is part of the great entail of our husbandry of the earth and all its living things: a husbandry that brings forth fruits not thistles. In educating our young and employing our adults, we need to nurture the whole person. Somehow we have convinced ourselves that we cannot alter the essential shape of society, so we equip people only to fit its shape. We have to stop thinking of ourselves as victims of a big machine. Ruskin had the insight to recognize that values give shape, not shapes value.

All human creatures, in all ages and places of the world, who have had warm affections, common sense and self-command, have been, and are, Naturally Moral. Human nature in its fullness is necessarily Moral—without Love, it is inhuman—without sense, inhuman—without discipline, inhuman. In the exact proportion in which men are bred capable of these things, and are educated to love, to think, and to endure, they become noble—live happily, die calmly; are remembered with perpetual honour by their race, and for the perpetual good of it. All wise men know and have known these things, since the form of man was separated from the dust.<sup>4</sup>

Howard Hull, Director of the Brantwood Trust

<sup>1</sup> Works X.194

<sup>2</sup> Works VII.207

<sup>3</sup> Works XVII.105

<sup>4</sup> Works XXXIII.173

# Planning the Earth

Geoffrey Dobbs (1944, reprinted 1950)

It might be supposed that in the face of the War danger, no other emergency could be of comparative gravity. But for all the death, misery and destruction which they bring in their train, the great wars do not, as advertised in advance, destroy the human race, or even the material basis of our livelihood, which, so far as technical resources go, is usually on balance greatly increased by wars. They seem to be carefully controlled emergencies, the chief function of which is to enforce the surrender of rights and liberties by the use of fear on a large scale.

The world-wide emergency brought about by the impoverishment and destruction of the soil is of a different nature, and menaces the very means of our subsistence on this planet. At the very least we are threatened with a return to that state of scarcity which the economists, who have a vested interest in it, were forced grudgingly to admit we had escaped from in the Poverty-in-Plenty days of the 1930s. As usual we are being told that the surrender of further freedom of action to centralised control is the only cure, and the situation is so grave that the correct measures must be taken, whatever the cost, even if it should include a return to serfdom - a probability clearly envisaged, at least for the African native, by Jacks

and Whyte in their book *The Rape of the Earth*.

The affair is being represented as another War Crisis: Mankind is waging and losing a desperate battle against Nature, and is in dire need of an efficient General Staff if disaster is to be avoided. This picture is, of course, entirely false, except in so far as we have been forced into the position of waging war on Nature, and particularly on the soil, by the operations of this same would-be General Staff. We are faced with poverty and starvation only to the extent that we persist in this course.

The destruction of the soil has not been brought about by the innate errors of free individuals, who naturally tend to cooperate with their environment, but by bad farming enforced by the dictates of the remote holders of agricultural debt, and more recently, by Government Departments. The worst effects have been caused by extensive farming with low yields, *e.g.*, yields of the order of 12 bushels of wheat to the acre have destroyed the prairies of North America, whereas 32 bushels is a fair average for this country, and is quite compatible with the maintenance of a high degree of fertility. It is worth noting in passing that "the average terms of farm tenancy in the

United States is under two years.” (Jacks and Whyte: *The Rape of the Earth*, p.232).

Debt, insecurity of tenure, extensive farming, low yields, and the destruction of soil capital all go together, bringing in their train the reduction of the land worker to the status of a serf. ... The destruction of English agriculture by the debt system during the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century is indeed amply portrayed by William Cobbett, who, despite his astonishing foresight, can scarcely have foreseen the lengths to which the process would be carried in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, not only in England but throughout the world, reaching its culmination in the dust bowls of North America and the giant tractor farms of the U.S.S.R.

Much as our land has suffered, and is suffering under the attacks of city creditors, monopolies and Government Departments, we are not so far down the slope of infertility as these countries [U.S. and U.S.S.R.]. The ‘future,’ so widely advertised as being the exclusive property of the ‘new’ countries whose seething populations are rapidly transforming them into deserts, actually lies with those people who have learnt, and retained, the arts of intensive, and conservative, agriculture, and have succeeded in incorporating in them, without damage to their primary purpose of maintaining soil fertility, those modern discoveries in engineering and biology which have been found to be useful.

Great Britain compares favourably with other countries in the retention of a

fair proportion of her pristine strength in the soil. In the whole world there is not another piece of land to compare in climate, soil and intrinsic fertility with North Western Europe, the cradle, and the home of modern rotational agriculture. In the huge but semi-arid ‘new’ countries, especially in the U.S.S.R., large reserves of soil fertility remain to be tapped; but after that nothing but the thriftiest conservation agriculture can keep back the desert.

In addition, it would seem that both these vast countries are ripe for an imperialistic phase, and the clash between them which is confidently expected by our socialists as well as by Wall Street, is not only likely to weaken them further, but will prevent the adoption of the small scale, intensive, individual farming methods which alone can build up the land. Only the individual who is secure in his tenure of the land can find the interest and the will and the energy to care for the soil and build up its fertility. You cannot *enforce* good farming by laws, restrictions and penalties. Such an idea can only arise from a childish misconception of the complexity of the links between men, animals, plants, micro-organisms, and the soil. It is idiotic to suppose that you can bring about balanced biological relationships by law; yet it is this idiotic idea which is being ‘put over’ by our planners and scientists.

Our soil, in the British Isles, is now in very great danger. Its fertility, maintained, and even built up over the centuries, and buffered in recent years to some extent by the large imports of food from abroad, must by now have suffered serious inroads. Several

decades of ‘manuring’ with industrial products have now manifestly begun to produce their effects upon the health and quality of crops and stock. Agricultural scientists, however, seem to have become peculiarly sensitive, if not irritable, at any suggestion that this is true. Particularly in front of witnesses [job’s worth factor], their usual reaction is a nervous titter and a resort to standard witticisms about the ‘muck-and-magic,’ school, the ‘compostolic creed,’ witch doctors and so on, not entirely relevant to the subject under discussion. The astounding assumption they appear to make is that these things can be done on a vast scale, with *no effect* other than the immediate results desired. The law of action and reaction, it seems, has been disproved, so far as agriculture is concerned, by the Rothamsted experiments. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture has, during (and since) the War, forced the application of heavy dressings of chemical fertilizers throughout the country.

At the same time, though it is still not considered ‘respectable’ for a scientist or agricultural specialist to criticise chemical farming, and any who venture to do so immediately ‘lose caste’ as cranks, there are signs that the Planners – as evidenced, for instance, by the space devoted to the subject in the *New Statesman* – have their eye on the possibility that the criticisms may be true after all. When the disastrous effects of the present policy become too blatant to be denied any longer, it will be quite according to plan for them to raise a loud shout for even greater centralised control to save the soil. It is also not

surprising that when so many people have been influenced by H.G. Wells, Wellsian fantasies have a way of coming true, and the chance of restricting ‘Grade A’ (properly grown) food to selected classes, leaving the usual denatured rubbish to the rest of us, is surely too good to be missed. It is said to have been noticed already in some places as the chief clamourers for compulsory pasturisation of milk are also the first to get on the special list for natural milk.

If we allow our soil to be destroyed we shall, with our dense population, inevitably become a vassal nation; but on the other hand, if there is any hope anywhere, for the soil, and for the people who live on it, it is North Western Europe, the cradle of good farming, and of that development towards democracy which may some day reach its goal. In these Islands we have recently suffered some heavy defeats in the long-term war for freedom and security of the individual. We have had our Dunkirk; the assault on the central bastion, the land itself, the real Battle of Britain, has now begun.

Extract from *On Planning the Earth*, KRP Publications (1950). Originally published in *The Social Crediter*, 23 September 1944, p5. Geoffrey and Elizabeth Dobbs were leading associates of Clifford Hugh Douglas who kept the flame alive in the UK until well into the 1990s. Geoffrey was Professor of Biology at Bangor University (and hence a scientist), and it was through him that Michael Rowbotham studied Social Credit preparatory to the writing of *The Grip of Death*.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir W.G. Ogg, the Director of Rothamsted, is so hyper-sensitive that he does not like ammonium sulphate and superphosphate to be called ‘chemicals,’ or sprays, capable of killing men as well as pests if used carelessly, to be called ‘poison sprays’ (see Presidential Address to Section M, British Association, at Dundee, 1947). He says there is no controversy; but indeed there is, though it goes deeper than organic versus chemical manuring; it concerns the nature of a valid Science, and the existence of a Natural Order.

# Joseph Beuys on Art as the Sole Revolutionary Force

David Adams

**New Idea of Art.** When Joseph Beuys spoke of art as “the sole revolutionary force capable of transforming the earth, humanity, the social order, etc.,”<sup>1</sup> he did not have in mind the modernist idea of visual art as the production of refined, precious objects to be viewed in protected, white-walled spaces isolated from everyday life. Nor did he mean art as a prestige commodity or investment tool. He spoke of “another level of art, which is related to everybody’s needs and the problems existing in society. . . . it has to start from the molding power of thought as a sculptural means. If this sculptural agent is not active in the beginning, . . . the physical form will only be pollution for the world . . .”<sup>2</sup> Only in self-conscious thinking, he argued, do we really act out of freedom.

**Endless Growth.** Today the capitalist or so-called “free market” system that is expanding ever more aggressively across the globe is based on a retrograde, materialistic idea of capital as financial value. This system, and the goals of the international corporations and financiers who drive it, is based on continual expansion of the activity of transforming natural resources into profitable products and the continual expansion of markets to purchase such products. This gesture of endlessly expansive growth within the

body social is the same gesture as that of cancer within the organic body and represents a morbid disease within human civilization that is now the greatest threat to the continued health of both the natural ecology of the earth and human society.

**New Idea of Capital.** Joseph Beuys, following the Threefold Social Organism ideas of Rudolf Steiner and his interpreter Wilhelm Schmundt, presents us with a radically alternative conception of capital, which is at the same time a radically alternative conception of art: “Art = Capital” or, perhaps more accurately stated, “Creativity = Capital.” As Beuys puts it, “this means that every person is an artist or must be considered as such since the human being’s creativity is the real capital of a society. . . . humanity’s real capital consists of human capacity.”<sup>3</sup> Or: “capital is the human ability for creativity, freedom and self-determination in all their working places.”<sup>4</sup> ([http://wn.rsarchive.org/SocialIssues/CapCrd\\_index.html](http://wn.rsarchive.org/SocialIssues/CapCrd_index.html); <http://cfae.biz/index.php?id=7index.html>)

**Everyone an Artist.** If “capital” is basic human creativity (in whatever field) and if this is also what we mean by “art,” then every person is in reality an artist. This “anthropological” understanding of art, or “social sculpture,” which ultimately is the artistic resculpting of society itself, is not

something for specialists or professionals, but for everyone. “Everyone is an artist.” To produce the kind of human society that would lead to an ecologically sustainable future, art must be freed from the prison-walls of galleries and museums. New ways must be found to integrate artistic processes and capacities into everyday life, into, as Beuys would have said, the three spheres of culture, economy, and democratic rights. Beuys: “The human being is only truly alive when he realizes he is a creative, artistic being. I demand an artistic involvement in all realms of life.”<sup>5</sup>

**Art as Social Service.** In fact, art is most properly an activity of social service (as it always was in ages before, say, the 17<sup>th</sup> century), not of personal self-expression or income-generating careerism. The kinds of formative, imaginative, qualitative thinking, perceiving, and feeling that the arts develop represent the very faculties needed by humanity today in

order to move beyond a morbidly greedy industrial, modernist version of capitalism that threatens its very survival. Art also builds human abilities for holistic thinking and feeling, for perceiving underlying meaning behind outer appearance, for broadening and refining the range of human-feeling life, and for moving from analytic to synthetic thinking to imagination and beyond. Beuys’s actions and artworks were all aimed at helping awaken people to these conditions and many specific possibilities for moving human evolution forward to a new stage. Instead of the gesture of endless growth, Beuys’s artworks tried to present a gesture of balance between extremes, as indicated in his “Theory of Sculpture” – a pattern we also observe in the mutually balancing ecological processes of nature. “Art is . . . a genuinely human medium for revolutionary change in the sense of completing the transformation from a sick world to a healthy one.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1982, public dialogue in Bonn, in Karin Kuoni, comp., *Energy Plan for the Western Man: Joseph Beuys in America* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1990), p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> 1980, interview with Kate Horsefield, in *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> 1982, public dialogue in Bonn, in *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

<sup>4</sup> 1982, interview with Richard Demarco, in *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> 1969, interview with Willoughby Sharp, in *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>6</sup> 1982, public dialogue in Bonn, in *Ibid.*, p. 99.

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## Tackling Structural Sin

The richest 85 people in the world – who could squeeze into one double-decker bus – are as wealthy as the poorest half of the world’s population. This shocking Statistic was presented by Oxfam ahead of last January’s World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland. Those classed as super-rich have a combined worth of £1 trillion, the same amount owned by the poorest 3.5 billion. And the growing inequality has been driven by a “power grab” by wealthy elites around the world. . . . This is what structural sin is all about: identifying social inequalities and injustices as sinful and then tackling them. Economic injustice and the grab not only for power, but for natural resources, must be challenged by people of faith who look more to the common good. This will mean working for justice and peace, and reflecting on our own lifestyles.

Vocation for Justice, quoted in May/June 2014 edition of *Far East*, the magazine of the Columban Missionaries.

# Book Reviews

## **The Economics of Killing**

by *Vijay Mehta*

Pluto Press,  
pp. 237 £13

In the summer of 1915, the feisty 86-year-old Charles Brooke, penultimate White Rajah of Sarawak, rose to his feet to address the assembled Ibans, Dyaks and Malays of his fairytale kingdom's Council Negri. Anticipating rueful references to the tribal warfare ravaging distant Europe, the natives were startled to receive a warning lecture on their own prospects. "Has it ever occurred to you," Brooke asked of the upturned brown and yellow faces," that after my time out here, others may appear with soft and smiling countenances to deprive you of what is solemnly your right, and that is the very land on which you live, the source of your income, the food even of your mouths?" These intruders, Brooke continued, would "carry the value of their products out of the country to enrich their shareholders," leaving the descendants of the Council Negri's members to become "nothing but coolies and outcasts of the island."

*The Economics of Killing* does not record Rajah Brooke's homily, which is odd, as it is a rare example of a bona fide (if benevolent) imperialist spilling the beans. The core theme of Vijay Mehta's book is the fatal attraction that raw resources have for ambitious, chiefly Western, nations. In crude terms, a local strongman is bribed, one way or another, to buy the expensive military hardware required to a) keep the

strongman's resentful people in check and b) allow the arms-supplying nation to fund the purchase of hydro-carbons, or minerals, or plantation-products that its economic base demands.

All this is bad news, Mehta explains, for much of the planet's population. If they are not blitzed by the high-tech ironmongery of an acquisitive neighbour-state, they are condemned to existences untroubled by the sewers, bridges, power-lines, schools and hospitals that could have been built with the money funnelled into the coffers of BAE and Lockheed Martin. In 2012 the United Nations calculated that re-deploying one-third of the global arms budget of \$900b could lift all the earth's inhabitants above the extreme poverty line of \$1 a day. The money that Delhi was recently offering for jets to match Pakistan's F-16s (the French ultimately won the deal) could, Mehta calculates, have stuffed \$22 into the pockets of each of the 450m Indians officially classified as poverty-stricken. Despite vast oil and gas reserves, Sarawak remains the second poorest of Malaysia's 13 states.

Mr Mehta's narrative spins along crisply and even-handedly, outlining the mini-armageddons visited on humanity by the military-industrial complexes of the West and, more recently, China (do you remember its invasions of India, and Vietnam?). He enjoys the irony that the US defence industry, with its vast subsidies and tax-breaks, is a splendid example of the Leninist command-

economy orthodoxy the US nominally opposes. A deeper irony, for all camps, is that the bullion splashed on lethal technology is frequently counter-productive, fomenting expensive and disruptive discontent in the client states, and terrorism at home by despairing minorities (Boston and London bombings, Highur knife-attacks in China). It seems likely the car-bombs that daily disfigure Kabul and Baghdad were wired by fingers schooled in 'unconventional warfare' at Fort Bragg, California; graduates include Manuel Noriega, one-time dictator of Panama, and the mysterious 'Col. Imam' who helped set up the Taliban and, some time later, was duly executed by the same organisation.

How much better for everyone, Mehta argues, if all this brain-power and investment could be applied to energy research and pollution control: prosperity is not a zero-sum game, he insists. Britain did not become poor when India learned how to fashion cotton into clothing. In the meantime, funding the deadweight of their military-industrial behemoths costs each US tax-payer \$7,000. Readers tempted to lift their eyes heaven-wards at the foolishness of it all are informed that USAF is already developing a

nimble, satellite-destroying space-fighter, the X37B - also capable, according to Wikipedia, of flinging tungsten projectiles earthwards at 36,000 feet per second.

Inevitably some of the arguments of a book published in 2012 have been overtaken by events. There is no index entry for 'Crimea'. The "reform-minded Islamist...Erdogan", in the wake of corruption and Twitter scandals in Turkey, now seems a less appealing leader of a possible hard-bargaining, pan-Islamic union. The US has drastically reduced its defence budget from \$700b to less than \$500b, and has signed a UN arms trade treaty (opposed by the NRA), designed to keep weapons out of the hands human-rights abusers. And Rolls Royce, alleged frequent employers of Middle Eastern bagmen, have installed a 24-hour whistle-blowers' hot-line.

Mr Mehta pins his hopes on citizen journalists, regional blocs (but no NATO) and a reformed UN. Perhaps a remorseful tide is running his way: his list of 96 UK-based peace organisations includes the Worldwide Consultative Association of Retired Generals and Admirals.

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

### **If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities**

by *Benjamin R. Barber*

Yale University Press 2013

256pp £20.00

A succinct summary of Barber's thought-provoking argument can be found in the final paragraph:

"As nations grow more dysfunctional,

cities *are* rising. When it comes to democracy, they command the majority. Rooted in ancient history, they still lean to the future. As we reach the limits of independence and private markets, they define interdependence and public culture. On a pluralistic planet of difference, they embrace multiculturalism. And as our times plead for innovation, they exude creativity. Reasons enough – good reasons

– why mayors and their fellow citizens can and should rule the world.”

Barber’s central question is where lies the best hope for global democratic governance capable of addressing problems that seriously threaten humankind and the planet such as climate change, energy, food and water availability, migration, economic stability and inequality.

Barber perceives the nation-state as having been effective in securing liberty and independence of autonomous peoples but as failing to resolve current global problems. Nation-states are dysfunctional precisely because their strengths concern independence and sovereignty and are unsuited to matters requiring interdependence and cross-border collaboration. He cites as example the United States’ refusal to sign or ratify a host of international accords embraced by most other states (p.147).

Because of this impasse, Barber argues that the city has come full circle in its epic history: from creating democracy in local habitats to being the best hope for democratic global governance, preventing major upheavals and providing sustainability for peoples and planet in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

He defines the city as an aggregation of features: dense population, relational networks, public spaces, voluntary identity, secularity, cosmopolitan, mobility, multicultural, trade, arts – overall providing the creative, pragmatic, non-ideological and open networking that democratic global governance requires.

Urban living is rapidly increasing, encapsulating more than half the planet’s 7 billion population and estimated to reach 70% by 2030. City populations range from 50,000 to 20 million upwards.

The character of cities supports pragmatic mayors, such as the eleven he profiles, in looking elsewhere for innovative ideas and solutions for their city’s pressing needs such as slums, inequality and transport. A growing variety of international city alliances exist which help mayors solve local problems but also provide global pools of learning exchange and influence change elsewhere– cities are rising.

Against this backdrop, Barber proposes that city mayors collaborate in governing the world for the planetary public good. A relatively small percentage of mayors, 300 rotating members, would be mandated to meet thrice yearly. Proportional allocation of seats would ensure balanced representation of cities by population size. He suggests, rather cursorily, the notion of city-region as a partial response to the criticism that non-urban populations, over 3 billion, would have no representation.

Arguably the most interesting aspect of this proposal are the principles underpinning governance: “a parliament of mayors as a kind of ‘Audiament’ – a chamber of listeners, where to hear is more important than to speak and where, in the absence of command, persuasion reigns; where participating cities and the people they represent act by opting into policies they agree with rather than being subject to mandates on high” (p341). In this way, cities can rescue democracy from sovereignty and help us govern our

world democratically and bottom-up and pragmatically rather than ideologically (p23).

A key question for readers will be if Barber's argument resonates for the cities and countries where they live. For me it certainly does at time when my own city, Glasgow, is about to host the Commonwealth Games in world class sports facilities whilst also aspiring to become a global city leader in harnessing renewable energy. And this in Scotland, where a referendum on becoming an independent nation-state is fast approaching and the intricacies of countries working innovatively and collaboratively across borders are being broached by both sides of the debate. Meanwhile, concerned citizens and civic networks are coming together with ideas and actions to nurture a culture of participatory democracy to fill a stultifying democratic deficit. These include working with the Scottish Government to establish and sustain a Rural Parliament.

Accepting as he does that nation-states will remain part of the picture, Barber's

proposed 'Audiament' is most usefully viewed as a scenario, provoking thought about the complicated dynamics to be balanced for sustainable and effective democratic world governance. He might have given more analysis of the grim consequences of nation-states not working interdependently, more thought about similarities of the city-state of Singapore with the way small countries might act interdependently, and specific consideration of how non-urban democratic processes such as rural parliaments might sit alongside cities rather than be attached to their coat-tails. But there is much in Barber's argument seriously to question nation-states' capacities to assure the planetary public good and he provides strong justification for mayors, actively mandated by their citizens, to help hold nations to account and grow a powerful contribution by cities to global governance.

Mike McCarron has been a public sector employee, contributor to national drugs policy development, local government councillor and is currently Board member of The Centre for Human Ecology and The GalGael Trust.

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### **The Promise**

by *Nicola Davies and Laura Carlin*

Walker

2013 £12.99

ISBN 9781406337280

Apparently a children's picture book, *The Promise* would be enough to encourage anyone of any age to plant something. The story is reminiscent of *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Jean Giono (fictional but believed to be true at the time of

publishing 30 years ago, and which highlighted the importance of forests and woodlands ).

It reminds us once again of the beauty and necessity of trees. There are so many developments today which threaten our relationship with nature, and this story faces up to them - beginning in darkness and showing all the depressing side of overindustrialised city life, where ordinary human happiness seems to have vanished. The heroine of the tale is a

street child and a thief, but she has to make a promise to the old lady whose bag she steals. She keeps her promise; from such an unlikely start the pages become filled with colour and hope. The beautiful words and pictures of this very unusual book lead to a marvellous conclusion.

Reading this book with a child would be a joy. Each picture seems simple at first, but the words are thoughtful and poignant.

There is certainly a message, but this is not a tract. It is rather a poetic reminder of our place in the natural world.

*Cathy Martins*, specialist in English literature

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune  
- without the words -  
And never stops at all.

Emily Dickinson

### Obituary: John Walton Hornsby

We were sad to hear that Jack died on 8<sup>th</sup> April. He worked tirelessly for the Social Credit movement for most of his adult life.

Before he was called up for military service in 1942, “despite a deficient education” he had joined the Economic Reform Club and Institute incorporating The Rural Reconstruction Association. On being demobbed in 1947 he immediately rejoined this Club and in 1948 their journal carried an enthusiastic review of *Human Ecology – The Science of Social Adjustment* by Thomas Robertson. Jack then sought to extend his research into finance, economics and politics, and testified:

*About 1925 I came across the writings of C H Douglas, and later of Kitson, Soddy, Jeffrey Mark and many others. To Major Douglas my debt is boundless, for it was he who enabled me to grasp reality in both politics and finance, and it was to the writings of Jeffrey*

*Mark that I first owed an understanding of orthodox finance.*

Jack takes up the story: “War-time austerity continued well into the post-war period, so although profoundly influenced by Thomas Robertson’s findings, it took me seven years before renouncing clerical pursuits on Tyneside to undertake – in the face of parental opposition – a prolonged walking/cycling tour of organic farms and gardens in England and Wales, recommended by Lady Eve Balfour of the Soil Association. I also contacted remnants of the Social Credit Movement in and around London”.

There he helped with a Social Credit journal edited by Eric de Maré, and later became secretary of the *Full Cry* production committee. That journal was edited by John Hargrave.

Jack wrote countless, incisive letters to newspapers, bankers and politicians,

promoting Social Credit ideas. In a letter to Ann Widdecombe M.P., he included the following:

*You vote when you go to the poll  
And think you have final control  
But really you dance  
To the tune of Finance  
You've pawned yourself body and soul.*

We are often asked to distinguish between socialism and Social Credit. Jack's answer came in two statements:

1. Socialism states that the socio-economic conflict is Capital vs Labour
2. Social Credit states that the socio-economic conflict is Finance vs The Community

The structural opposition to the popular Social Credit was a matter of concern amongst those seeking to engage in public debate. Jack noted that in his autobiography, *The Years of Transition* (1949), the Duke of Bedford, a committed Social Crediter, stated: "Many years ago, a man who had been connected with the Press told me that, at one time, The Press Association received orders not even to mention Major Douglas's name".

In a letter to us in 2001, he stated: "At the local level I try to use parochial issues as a means of promoting social credit concepts". He was an indefatigable contributor to the letter pages of *The Berwick Advertiser*. His writing style was combative, incisive and incredibly detailed and precise. May he rest in peace.

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## The Common Good and Peace in Society

220. People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens, not as a mob swayed by the powers that be. Let us not forget that "responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in public life is a moral obligation"<sup>1</sup>. Yet becoming a people demands something more. It is an ongoing process in which every new

generation must take part: a slow and arduous effort calling for a desire for integration and a willingness to achieve this through the growth of a peaceful and multifaceted culture of encounter.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Changing Economic Structures.

<sup>1</sup> UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, Pastoral Letter, Forming Conscience for Faithful Citizenship, (November 2007), 13.

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*The Social Artist* is available on [www.doulassocialcredit.com](http://www.doulassocialcredit.com) where it can be read online. Back issues of *The Social Artist* and *The Social Crediter* are also available there.

Contact us (see facing page) if you would like further hard copies of the journal or electronic versions of individual articles in Word format.

# 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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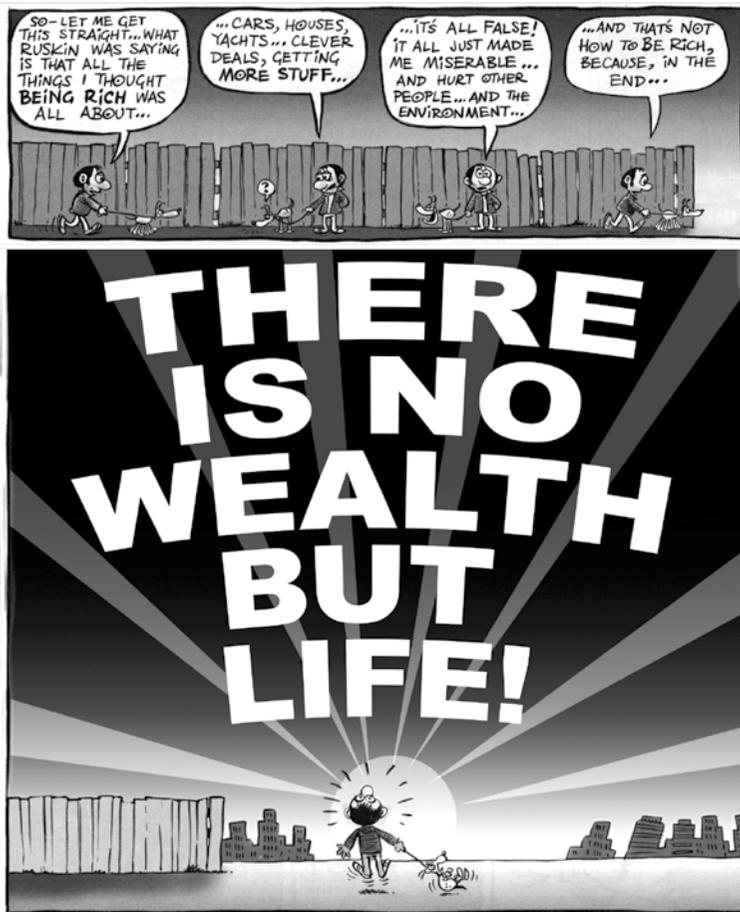
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Cartoon taken from the comic book *How to be Rich* by Hunt Emerson and Kevin Jackson. The book is available from the Brantwood Trust [www.brantwood.org.uk](http://www.brantwood.org.uk).

**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.