

The Social Artist

A photograph of a snowy winter landscape. The scene is dominated by evergreen trees heavily laden with snow, set against a clear, bright blue sky. The snow is piled up in the foreground, suggesting a recent snowfall. The overall mood is serene and cold.

Income

Household

Mothers

Winter 2016

The SOCIAL ARTIST

(incorporating The SOCIAL CREDITER)

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Editorial

“Who pays for my school?” seven year old Jo asks her grandma. “Well, I suppose we all do,” comes the thoughtful response after a thoughtful pause. “We pay our taxes as citizens. We go to work to earn the money to pay the taxes to run the schools.” The child was content with the answer. But it would have all social creditors spinning in their graves.

The grandma's response follows generation after generation of indoctrination in neoliberal philosophy. According to this way of thinking, people must work-for-money, so that they can buy the things they need and pay the taxes necessary to run the schools, hospitals, shops, transport systems, banks and offices of the bureaucratic state. According to neoliberal theorizing, without work there would be no taxes, and without taxes there would be no civilization. However, neoliberalism is only a belief system, an ideology. It is faith, belief, in the free market, backed by laws relating to rights but without corresponding duties. It is not set in tablets of stone.

As children and young people pass

through the schools and colleges of the world educational system, they prepare themselves to serve the money interests. The power of finance – the 'elephant in the room' – lies in our failure to critique the assumptions of the political economy we inherit from the past. Mothers and fathers set about rearing the next generation of adults with only a hazy idea of what it is all about. Until the twentieth century, for the vast majority of households, total dependence upon a money income was rare, because most families had guaranteed rights of access to land (see review of Vandana Shiva's *Who Really Feeds the World*). Total dependence on money for access to the basic essentials of daily life may spell freedom for a few. But for many it spells waged/salaried slavery, and abject poverty amidst plenty for an ever-growing proportion of humanity.

The Ken Loach film *I, Daniel Blake* calls all of us to wake up, shake up our comfortable illusions and take time out to consider frankly our role in the whole scheme of things. Excellent material is available for embarking on the process of understanding ourselves and the

systems through which we cooperate as responsible adults.

The worldwide Social Credit movement arose when Clifford Hugh Douglas and A.R. Orage, editor of *The New Age*, asked the fundamental question: “Who paid for the War to End All Wars?” Their answers to that question were taken up by farmers, housewives *i.e.*, by mothers who managed the households, by small businessmen, artists, craftsmen and by all who loved the natural world and its living communities. Men and women of the Social Credit movement worked tirelessly to promote theoretical and

practical alternatives to what we now call the neoliberal agenda. Perhaps it may not be too late to pick up the threads where they left off in order to weave a sustainable future for our children. The starting point might be to explore www.dougllassocialcredit.com for suitable texts for study and discussion in local communities.

We were sad to hear of the death of Tony Hodgson. Tony was a long-time ally of Social Credit, always endorsing and supporting our work and linking it to his own work within the Green Christian movement. We shall miss him.

The Elephant in the Room:

What Trump, Clinton, and even Stein Are Missing

David Korten

In this most bizarre of presidential elections, no one is talking about one of the biggest—if not the biggest—issues of our time. Namely, the global power imbalance between corporations and governments.

Not Donald Trump, as he obsesses over the weight of a long-past Miss Universe. Not Hillary Clinton, despite her many substantive proposals that the media largely ignores. Not even Jill Stein, although she offers many proposals for moving power to the people at the national level.

Earth is dying. A few hundred billionaires are consolidating their control of the Earth’s remaining real

wealth. Racism is rampant. And violence devastates millions of lives. These issues do get mention, though less than they deserve. What is not mentioned, the elephant in the room, is that which blocks serious action on these and other critical threats to the human future: the glaring and growing global power imbalance between corporations that represent purely financial interests and the institutions of government we depend on to represent the interests of people and living communities.

The healthy function of society requires that governments be accountable to the electorate and that corporations in turn be accountable to democratic governments. Our ability to deal with every other issue

of our time—from climate disruption to inequality to violence—depends on that accountability.

In a complex modern society, government is the essential and primary institution by which communities set the rules within which they organize. Even markets need rules to function in the community interest, and those rules must be made and enforced by government. Claims that a “free” market—a market free from rules—best serves the common good are an ideological fiction born of the dreams of banksters.

No candidate is addressing the global power imbalance issue—and no corporate media outlet will ever call them on it. The significance of this issue rests on an analysis of the role and power of money in contemporary society.

Not that long ago, most people lived directly from what they harvested from their land—and might barter for other needs. For example, a country doctor might treat a patient in exchange for a chicken. By these and other means, most people minimized their need for money. As society urbanized and industrialized, people were, by choice or exclusion, separated from the lands and community relationships that provided their means of living with little need for money.

We now live in a society in which our access to food, water, shelter, energy, transportation, health care, education, communication, and most all the other basic essentials of daily life depends on our ability to pay. No money, no life.

Each time we monetize a relationship—

for example, replacing a parental caregiver with a paid child care worker or a backyard garden with a trip to the supermarket—we grow GDP and create new opportunities for corporate profits. At the same time, we weaken the loving bond between child and parent and between humans and Earth. And we become more dependent on money. So what does this have to do with power? The more dependent we become on money, the more dependent we become on the money masters—bankers and corporations—that control our access to money through their control of paid employment, loans, and investments. We now live in servitude to money masters, who organize globally beyond the reach of democratic institutions and deny responsibility for or accountability to the people and communities they hold hostage. From their position of separation, power, and privilege, they buy politicians, avoid taxes, and take over the institutions of media, education, health care, agriculture, criminal justice, communications, energy, and more. Though it is a defining issue of our time, politicians who depend on corporate money and media dare not mention the growing power imbalance between corporations and governments and its sweeping implications. They will face it and address it only when forced to do so by “we the people.” Leadership in the cause of democracy and community will come—can only come—from an organized electorate with a power analysis.

This article originally appeared in *Yes!* Magazine, posted 5 Oct 2016

Financial Credit and Real Credit

Ronnie Lessem

In *The Control and Distribution of Production* Douglas (1922) noted that capitalism is based upon a financial accounting system that is only tenuously associated with the real world. Hence the necessity to draw a distinction between real value (or credit) and financial value. *Real credit comprises the potential supply of goods, that is the real wealth of the community. Financial credit is merely the supply of money. There is no necessary correlation between the two.*

Hence services undertaken outside the financial system, for example housework, may add real value, but do not register in financial terms. Natural resources form a vital part of the real wealth of the community, but do not count until and unless brought onto the market.

The person who works for money does not necessarily, then, produce benefit for the community as a whole, although they may bring profit to their employer and the employing firm's financial investors. A person who works in the home or community may well give essential service to the common good. However, in many instances they do not receive a direct financial reward. Hence a person who spends a lifetime giving voluntary care to children, the

chronically sick or homeless is deemed to make no recognized contribution to the community. They therefore fail to qualify for pension rights. Meanwhile, *scientists who design land-mines and military aircraft for profitable export to corrupt regimes receive high salaries during their working lives and can buy the right to handsome pensions.*

For Douglas, incomes should be distributed on the basis of common cultural inheritance, that is the common ownership of the real resources of the community. The natural environment and the skills and knowledge of how to use the resources which flow from that environment rightly belong to every man, woman and child in the community. To regain community control over real resources it is necessary to review the way incomes are distributed. Douglas proposed two mechanisms to regain community control over finance without resorting to violent revolution: the national, or social, dividend, as we have already seen, and, in addition, the "credit scheme".

The National Dividend

That National or Social Dividend firstly, payable to all citizens as we have seen,

was the most well-known and best understood of Douglas' proposals. He argued, as such, that *the common cultural inheritance belonged to all, and should be distributed to all in the form of financial dividend, a basic income by right of citizenship to everyone, regardless of income or employment, past or present.*

The main point of attack by guild socialists, generally, was upon the exploitation of common knowledge, common resources and cooperative work, typically by colonial or indeed post-colonial elites, for the profit of the

few rather than use for the majority. Profiteering would not end until the control of industry was taken from the passive property holder and restored to real producers and consumers – not to nationalized industries – who form the community. Hence industrial democracy is a matter of responsibility by the community as a whole, not merely a question of the rights of the workers within a particular industry.

Extract from Ronnie Lessem, Paul Chidara Muchineripi and Steve Kada, *Integral Community: Political Economy to Social Commons*, Gower (2012) pp 232-3.

The very *being* of the child

Richard House

In his important book *I'm Only Bleeding: Education as the Practice of Social Violence against Children*, educationalist Alan Block argues that in our technocratic age, "the definition of the child is made so precise that the imaginative freedom of the individual child is denied, [and] the child's freedom to play and explore is severely curtailed". The relentless incursion of adult-imposed cognitive-intellectual learning at ever earlier ages is just one example of these pernicious trends – and this in the face of mounting international evidence that the 'too much too soon' educational ideology may be doing untold developmental harm to a generation of children. "Toxic" indeed.

Mainstream education, then – or rather the political class responsible for it, who only seem capable of seeing it in terms of the state – seems to have lost touch with a deep understanding of the developmental needs of children, and is, instead, preoccupied with foisting a developmentally inappropriate adult-centric agenda on to them. We are increasingly reading media reports about how, for example, children are becoming increasingly bored with and disaffected from learning at ages as young as 6 or 7; with reports of violence, sometimes extreme, being perpetrated on teachers by young children; how the rates of mental ill-health in children are at record levels and relentlessly rising; how prescriptions of the drug

Ritalin (used to treat conditions diagnosed as ‘hyperactivity’) are also soaring as our society medicalises and pathologises what might well be children’s understandable response to our repressive educational culture; and how young childrens’ learning, particularly boys’, is suffering dramatically as they are being forced to ‘sit still’ for long periods in formal settings which are failing quite fundamentally to meet their developmental needs.

What we are really talking about here is the freedom of imagination, a delicate human quality that can all too easily be damaged – sometimes irreparably – by technocratic educational practices. For Alan Block, “to deny imagination is to deny the very creativity that makes self possible.... To deny imagination is to instil hatred where should stem love and creativity”. Moreover, modern mainstream schooling establishes a dictatorship over the child in which reality is defined by the other. ... the imagination... [is] denied for the predetermined outlines of the other. This violence denies the very existence of the individual child and denies that child all opportunity to learn.

And in the face of a system which, as Block writes, “banish[es] children... under a dense cover of rationalistic, abstract discourse about ‘cognition’, ‘development’, ‘achievement’, etc.”, it becomes “impossible to hear the child’s own voice”, in the process “dismissing the child’s experience and... falsify[ing] the actual lived experience of children”.

Block advocates doing away, for ever,

with the fixed curricula, universal standards and intensive surveillance through which we discipline our children:

Until we create an environment in which the child may use the educational establishment to create him or her self, until we serve only as a frame on which the canvas may appear in paint, we will continue to practice extreme violence upon the child, denying him/her growth, health, and experience.

Those parents fortunate enough to be able to home-educate, or to send their children to a Steiner (Waldorf) or ‘human-scale’ school run along humanistic lines, will be far more able to nurture their children’s inherent love of learning, not least through protecting their developing senses and imagination from the cold bludgeon of modernity with its anxiety-driven surveillance and ‘audit’ culture. In making such a brave counter-cultural educational decision for our children, we will also be inoculating them from the worst excesses of the toxicities of late-modern childhood, which are the subject of this article.

Conclusion

With enough pressure from the electorate (parent power), there’s no reason why a future government shouldn’t recognise the long-term importance of taking a holistic approach to childhood.

Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood*

The issues raised in this article have been necessarily brief and impressionistic through space constraints, and there are many other themes that I could have developed – for example, technology

and screen culture; the importance of a holistic, balanced approach to learning, including the head/heart/hand approach; and the place of the arts in children's learning. But I hope that, taken as a whole, I have given sufficient of a rationale for the contention that Steiner Waldorf schooling in particular is one of the most effective antidotes to 'toxic childhood' currently available across Western culture. Certainly, those concerned about the phenomenon of toxic childhood today could do no better than send their child(ren) to a Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten and school, for in this way at least you'll know that you'll be minimising, through schooling, many if not most of the worst excesses of the toxicities that stem from technological late-modernity, as outlined in this article.

More generally, if there is to be wider cultural change around this crucial issue, there has to be a fundamental ideological, even spiritual revolution amongst parents, citizens and educationalists

– for politicians myopically wedded to the ideology of neoliberalism and globalisation clearly aren't going to make the necessary changes, certainly under the current political system where the needs of private corporate capital are listened to far more assiduously by the political class than are the developmental needs of children. For the sake of our children's well-being, this partiality for and bias towards 'the needs of the economy' simply has to stop.

And there is surely no more important place for the unfolding of this paradigmatic battleground around 'toxic childhood' than in the nursery and the school.

This extract is taken from an article which appeared in full in the Autumn 2016 issue of *New View*. Richard House, Ph.D, is a chartered psychologist, a retired senior university lecturer in psychotherapy and education and a trained Steiner Waldorf Class and Kindergarten teacher.
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Exploring Ecologically Sensitive Lifestyles

Frances Hutchinson

In separating parents and children from the home during their waking hours, the economic system is creating problems for which it has been able to deny all responsibility. Childhood in the 'developed' West has become confusingly fragmented. Parents work away from their

households, so that from early infancy children are whisked from place to place, adjusting to different environments and different people, with no continuity or predictability. Home and school are in different places, so that the people in them relate to the child incoherently,

The lack of family time to grow fruit and vegetables, erosion of the countryside and the volume of traffic on the roads has led to the confinement of childhood on a scale unprecedented in the past.

We have allowed ourselves to be mesmerised by the notion that production must rise, that more and more things must be made, consumed and discarded. It is time to look again at the phenomenon we call 'economic growth'. The financial system currently governs policy formation throughout the economic, cultural and political spheres of the global corporate economy. Over the course of the twentieth century the essential tasks of tending the land and creating households set in community have been neglected. As a result, we have neither the skills nor the resources to provide adequately for the childhoods of so many future citizens.

Down to earth-centred community

Our scientific understanding of the universe, and the place of the planet Earth within that universe has developed by leaps and bounds during the twentieth century. But our rapport with that natural world has disintegrated to the point of virtual non-existence. Instead of creating mutually enhancing relations between humanity and the other life communities of which we form an inextricable part, we have caused dysfunction throughout the entire planet. Such malaise cannot be cured by sticking-plaster piecemeal solutions grafted on with a view to continuing business-as-usual. It is essential that humanity as a whole, in all its complexity and diversity, sets about acquiring an understanding of the unbreakable continuity of cause and effect

between ourselves, the other species with whom we share our existence on this planet, the planet Earth itself and the entire universe within which we have our life and our very being.

In her impassioned, visionary plea to free children from the enclosed childhoods of the machine age, Jay Griffiths presents the case for the restoration of the spirit of adventure, freedom and closeness to nature that is every child's birthright. Her work has that enduring, poetic quality that defies paraphrasing which demands to be read in the original, and must only warily be quoted out of context.

In *Kith*, Jay Griffiths explores childhood across time and cultures. Isolated from the land and educated under the spell of the formal employment system, children in Britain and the United States are trained to follow orders as employees of a globalised network of institutions which they neither understand nor control. As they progress through that system, emerging adults are not even taught the basics of infant care, so that when they embark on parenthood they enter entirely unfamiliar territory. They find themselves locked into a series of impossible choices. The child is unlike any previous possession. Children require love, i.e., emotional security, combined with the progressive freedom to act autonomously. No matter how wealthy they may be, the birth parents have neither the time nor the skills and material resources to provide for a child's needs. Griffiths explains the old adage: "It takes a village to rear a child". "The most precious gift adults can give children is social space". That is, according to "the great authorities on the culture of childhood", Iona and Peter

Opie: “the necessary space - or privacy – in which to become human beings”. As children endure constant surveillance, at home, in school, and in supervised leisure activities, their spiritual and emotional development is damaged, often beyond repair. The child who never learns to act alone, to determine his own actions and take responsibility for them, does not learn to govern his own will. He learns instead to grow into an adult who is easily led into following orders. Abjectly obedient to their superiors, ruthlessly inhuman to their inferiors, they provide the ideal citizens for the centralised, hierarchical, militaristic state.

As one reviewer of Kith observed: “I didn’t just read this book: I revelled in it.” The text interweaves between instances of the chaotic approach to the needs of the child as pupating adult in the machine age, and glimpses of indigenous patterns of child care more capable of providing both the emotional security and personal independence of judgement necessary for children to become responsible citizens in adult life. In the urban West, argues Griffiths, childhood has become unnatural. Children are “enclosed indoors, caged and shut out of the green and vivid world, in ways unthinkable a generation ago”. Confinement of childhood began with the onset of the enclosure movement, when the commons were fenced off for private profit by landowners claiming by legal rights of possession to exclude children from their natural birthright. Enclosure has deprived children of their ‘kith’, their square mile of unadulterated nature, of woodlands, rivers, animals, unrestricted, unsupervised play, high adventure, carnival, private dens, solitude and time

to daydream. Children need to find beauty and mystery amidst the beauty and mystery of Nature and the wild. Children who are free to play unsupervised, taking responsibility for their own actions in respect of those younger or weaker than themselves, are better prepared for the assumption of responsibility for their own lives in adulthood.

Griffiths shows how child-rearing practices affect our ability to cope with circumstances in which we find ourselves. According to a Report for the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, in 1977 six boys from the Friendly Islands shipwrecked on an uninhabited island survived for fifteen months through devising means to maintain mutual support. According to the report, the boys “owed their survival to a shared faith; to the fact that none had any reason to exploit the other; and, especially, perhaps, to a culture which gave more weight to cooperation than to competition. Modern education,” continues the report, “has gone to such lengths to subvert this principle that, faced with a similar situation, the urban youngsters of today would be unlikely to react with the same unselfishness and self-reliance.”

Children looked after only by adults “learn a dependence on the top-down protection of a parent, the vertical politics of hierarchy”. It follows, argues Griffiths with perfect reasoning, that if children experience care as something which only comes from adults, they are unlikely to develop a sense of responsibility for each other. They will not be able to practice the “horizontal politics of equality, the skills of cooperation and mutuality which recognise the common good”. Unable

to initiate ways of working together on a voluntary basis, they inevitably end up in such a world as that depicted by Golding in *The Lord of the Flies*. That story, Griffiths observes, presents a true portrait of the likely actions “of children indoctrinated by hierarchy, authority and racism.” However, Griffiths takes issue with the conclusions drawn from the

story, namely that without adult influence children become vicious little monsters. Deprived of closeness of love in infancy, dependent on powerful adults throughout childhood, young people have little chance to consider the common good when given unexpected freedom.

Extract from *The Economics of Love*
(forthcoming)

Corbyn is an atheist – but his ideas are true to the Bible

Giles Fraser

Readings in the Church of England and the Roman Catholic church are set in advance on a three-year cycle. That’s partly to stop priests from constantly picking their favourite bits and partly to make sure all parts of the Bible are covered, even the tricky passages. Which means that, last Sunday, up and down the country, the same readings were read out to congregations. First we heard a stinging condemnation of wealth from the book of Amos: “Alas for those who lie on beds of Ivory, and lounge on their couches.” Then a psalm about God sustaining the widow and the orphan. Then a long passage about money – “Those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction” – from Paul’s first letter to Timothy. Then, to top it all off, the story from Luke of a rich man (“who was dressed in fine linen and feasted sumptuously every day”) burning in hell and a poor man, who lived

homeless at his gate, being carried off to heaven by the angels.

Absolutely nothing that has been said by Jeremy Corbyn over the past few months is anything like as hostile to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few as the Bible. Indeed, compared to the book of Amos and the gospel of Luke, the campaign group Momentum are a bunch of bland soft-peddalling apologists for the status quo. So how, then, can middle England sit through these readings without storming out, but apparently find Corbyn unelectable? Have they not been listening?

It’s five years next month since the Occupy protest arrived at St Paul’s cathedral. Though originally aimed at the London stock exchange, its impact on the cathedral and the wider church was, if anything, much greater. For what the protest dramatised was the deaf ear that the church and its members often turn

when it comes to any reference to their wallets.

This week saw the 90th anniversary of the BBC broadcasting choral evensong. During every one of these the choir will have been encouraging revolution – bringing down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly, again from Luke’s gospel. On Thursday, they were singing this from Westminster Abbey, the heart of the establishment. Seditious hiding in plain view. And no one batted an eyelid. Which I suspect is evidence that people were listening to the wonderful music and ignoring what they were singing about.

But despite all the aesthetic chaff that the church throws out to misdirect the ear, it remains gobsmacking that, of all people, it’s the Tories that are still most likely to profess their commitment to the church. For heaven’s sake, Theresa May is a vicar’s daughter. There is the brilliant little bit in *Godfather part III* when Cardinal Lamberto is talking to Michael Corleone by a fountain in a cloister of the Vatican. “Look at this stone. It has been lying in the water for a very long time but the water has not penetrated,” the cardinal explains,

“The same thing has happened to men in Europe. For centuries they have been surrounded by Christianity, but Christ has not penetrated.”

Even so, can it really be so inconceivable that Jeremy Corbyn’s political philosophy is inimical to the British people when he – atheism notwithstanding – is the only one who even approximates to Christian teaching about wealth. After all, Christianity is, like it or not, still the official religion of this country. And the Queen is its head. So you’d think that the Queen would be cheering on Corbyn, encouraging his bold redistributive instincts, and dismissing the Blairites for their fondness for Mammon. For, unlike Peter Mandelson, the Bible is not intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich.

And if the Bible is to be taken literally, Donald Trump is headed for the fiery furnace. He shouldn’t boast how rich he is. He should be ashamed about it. After all, Trump says it’s his favourite book. Funny, isn’t it? When the Bible speaks about something like homosexuality, it has to be taken literally. When it speaks about money, it’s all a metaphor.

The Guardian 30 September 2016

Reviews

Film Review

I, Daniel Blake

Mark Kermode

Ken Loach’s latest Palme d’Or winner, his second after 2006’s *The Wind that*

Shakes the Barley, packs a hefty punch, both personal and political. On one level, it is a polemical indictment of a faceless benefits bureaucracy that strips claimants of their humanity by reducing them to mere numbers – neoliberal 1984 meets

uncaring, capitalist Catch-22. On another, it is a celebration of the decency and kinship of (extra)ordinary people who look out for each other when the state abandons its duty of care.

For all its raw anger at the impersonal mistreatment of a single mother and an ailing widower in depressed but resilient Newcastle, Paul Laverty's brilliantly insightful script finds much that is moving (and often surprisingly funny) in the unbreakable social bonds of so-called "broken Britain". Blessed with exceptional lead performances from Dave Johns and Hayley Squires, Loach crafts a gut-wrenching tragicomic drama (about "a monumental farce") that blends the timeless humanity of the Dardenne brothers' finest works with the contemporary urgency of Loach's own 1966 masterpiece *Cathy Come Home*.

We open with the sound of 59-year-old Geordie joiner Daniel Blake (standup comic Johns) answering automaton-like questions from a "healthcare professional". Having suffered a heart attack at work, Daniel has been instructed by doctors to rest. Yet since he is able to walk 50 metres and "raise either arm as if to put something in your top pocket", he is deemed ineligible for employment and support allowance, scoring a meaningless 12 points rather than the requisite 15. Instead, he must apply for jobseeker's allowance and perform the Sisyphean tasks of attending CV workshops and pounding the pavements in search of nonexistent jobs that he can't take anyway.

Meanwhile, Squires's mother-of-two Katie is similarly being given the

runaround, rehoused hundreds of miles from her friends and family in London after spending two years in a hostel. "I'll make this a home if it's the last thing I do," she tells Daniel, who takes her under his wing, fixing up her flat and impressed by her resolve to go "back to the books" with the Open University. Both are doing all they can to make the best of a bleak situation, retaining their hope and dignity in the face of insurmountable odds. Yet both are falling through the cracks of a cruel system that pushes those caught up in its cogs to breaking point.

"We're digital by default" is the mantra of this impersonal new world, to which carpenter Daniel pointedly replies, "Yeah? Well I'm pencil by default." Scenes of Blake struggling with a computer cursor ("fucking apt name for it!") raise a wry chuckle, but there's real outrage at the way this obligatory online form-filling has effectively written people like him out of existence. Yet still Daniel supports – and is supported by – those around him; from Kema Sikazwe's street-smart China, a neighbour who is forging entrepreneurial links online (the internet may alienate Daniel, but it also unites young workers of the world), to Katie's kids, Daisy and Dylan – the latter coaxed from habitual isolation ("no one listens to him so why should he listen to them?") by the hands-on magic of woodwork. Having lost a wife who loved hearing *Sailing By*, the theme for Radio 4's *Shipping Forecast*, and whose mind was "like the ocean", Daniel carves beautiful fish mobiles that turn the kids' rooms into an aquatic playground. Meanwhile, their mother is gradually going under.

"A scene in a food bank in which the

starving Katie, on the verge of collapse, finds herself grasping a meagre tin of beans is one of the most profoundly moving film sequences I have ever seen. Shot at a respectful distance by cinematographer Robbie Ryan, the scene displays both an exquisite empathy for Katie's trembling plight and a pure rage that anyone should be reduced to such humiliation. Having seen *I, Daniel Blake* twice, I have both times been left a shivering wreck by this sequence, awash with tears, aghast with anger, overwhelmed by the sheer force of its all-but-silent scream."

"They'll fuck you around," China tells Daniel, "make it as miserable as possible – that's the plan." For Loach and Laverty, this is the dark heart of their drama, the

use of what Loach calls the "intentional inefficiency of bureaucracy as a political weapon", a way of intimidating people in a manner that is anything but accidental. "When you lose your self-respect you're done for," says Daniel, whose act of graffitied defiance becomes an "I'm Spartacus!" battle cry that resonates far beyond the confines of the movie theatre. Expect to see it spray-painted on the walls of a jobcentre near you soon.
Mark Kermode

Clips from the film and interviews with the film-making team can be seen on:
<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/oct/23/i-daniel-blake-ken-loach-review-mark-kermode>

This review was published in *The Observer*, Sunday 23rd October 2016

Cash not Care: the planned demolition of the UK welfare state

Mo Stewart

New Generation Publishing (Sept. 2016)

222pp £15.99

ISBN: 978-1785077838

This new book reveals how disastrous welfare policies were developed. How did Britain reach the point where thousands of seriously ill people died shortly after being declared 'fit for work'?

How did we get to the point where a diabetic man, repeatedly sanctioned and thus unable to eat properly or to manage his condition, had to have his leg amputated? How could MPs seriously believe that slashing the already meagre incomes of people whom the government itself finds unfit to work, will 'incentivise' them into getting a job?

How could all this happen in the name of reform? A book published this month explains in great detail the highly dubious 'evidence', the bogus assumptions, and especially the shadowy corporate influences which have helped to produce what has been described as a social policy disaster.

Cash not Care: the planned demolition of the UK welfare state, forensically tracks the development of UK social security policy in relation to sick and disabled people over several decades, under both Labour and Conservative governments. It reveals a common thread which runs throughout the years - the highly influential role of the private insurance industry, with calamitous results for disabled people.

The book, written by disabled researcher Mo Stewart, has already received ringing endorsements from a host of academics,

disabled people's organisations, and professionals in the area of social policy. Sir Bert Massie, Chair of the Disability Rights Commission from 2000 – 2007 says, "Stewart names names. She shows where and how the policies originated. She destroys all claims that they were based on solid research... To understand what is happening and why, this is the book to read and I thank Mo Stewart for writing it."

Independent researcher Catherine Hale says, "When the history of the persecution of disabled people in the name of welfare reform in Britain finally gets written for mainstream audiences, Mo Stewart's evidence will form the starting point. Read it here first."

Dr Simon Duffy, of the Centre for Welfare Reform, says, "I thoroughly recommend this book to anyone who wants to look beyond Government

rhetoric and understand what's really going on."

There may be many people who have supported welfare reforms affecting disabled people in good faith, for various reasons. I would challenge any of them to read this book, learn the facts, and maintain that support

Cash Not Care: the planned demolition of the UK welfare state, will be available from Amazon as a hardback, a paperback, and an e-book. It should also be available from Waterstone's and other good book shops.

Bernadette Meaden has written about political, religious and social issues for some years, and is strongly influenced by Christian Socialism, liberation theology and the Catholic Worker movement. She is an Ekklesia associate and regular contributor. You can follow her on Twitter: @BernaMeaden

Who Really Feeds the World?

Vandana Shiva

Zed Books, 2015

ISBN: 9 781783608225

PB. £12.16

Every day of the week, year in, year out, in their households across the world, women prepare food for their families. All food comes from the soil – eating is an agricultural act. How the soil is treated, and what happens to the food once it leaves the soil affects the life of the planet and the bodies of our children in ways that can no longer be considered irrelevancies. Vandana Shiva's latest book provides a neat, concise and factually accurate account of the world's food production as she raises – and answers – the most fundamental

economic questions of our times. The author dispels fictions and provides hard facts to guide our future policy decisions.

Shiva explodes the myth that industrial, agribusiness mass production, "the violent knowledge paradigm", feeds the world. It does nothing of the sort. Using knowledge and techniques handed down from generation to generation over thousands of years, small-scale farmers continue to produce 70% of the world's food. Proponents of industrial farming claim that mass production is designed to feed the world. But as it displaces traditional farmers from the land, mass production poisons the soils. As food is produced with chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and genetically modified seeds, the knowledge and

the seeds of traditional farmers are appropriated. Such food literally costs the earth in terms of energy consumption, resource depletion, pollution, waste and health problems. And all to supply only 30% of the world's food. "Corporations do not grow food; they grow profits." To that end they weave a tangled web of lies, deceit and propaganda to back their right to 'free' trade and profitability.

In the chapters of this book, the received fictions about corporate food production and distribution are shown to be factually false. As they claim legal status as persons, corporations determine the rules of production and trade so that they can exploit humanity and the planet in the name of profitability, whilst in practice they create pollution, famine and disease. Finance capital is assumed to create food more efficiently than real capital, the ecological processes of nature combined with the knowledge and labour of farmers. Meanwhile, real costs in terms of energy depletion, fossil fuel consumption, the costs of health and environmental damage to people and planet are left unaccounted. As the profits of corporations grow, small farmers are driven into debt and forced off their lands, to starve or become landless labour employed to service the corporations. As food becomes a commodity, the land is taken from the people. The result is poverty, hunger, and diseases of the soils, the planet and of human beings.

"The future of food depends on remembering that the web of life is a food web. This book is dedicated to this remembering, because forgetting the ecology of food is a recipe for famine and

extinction."

The facts are presented in methodical detail. Here, as in her other works, Shiva calls upon women to take concerted action. Small scale farming has always been undertaken mainly by women acting in partnership with biodiversity. It is there that the potential for achieving food security lies, not only in the Global South where Shiva's practical experience has been sited over past decades. It is becoming increasingly apparent to women in the Global North that dependence upon food which has been mass produced, poisoned, preserved, processed, packaged and transported over vast distances for profitable sale by corporations is harmful to the health of their families. Furthermore, lifestyles that exclude children from all contact with nature and cultivation inevitably result in physical and psychological ill health.

In this most valuable document, which is thankfully well indexed, we are presented with an array of details about women's contribution to food, farming and society across the continents of the world, of facts which have hitherto been left unrecorded. The patriarchal economic system, based purely on monetary values, has left women's contribution to farming, and women's work in general, completely out of account. Women, and small-scale farmers do not have 'jobs', which are accounted and paid for in money wages. They have livelihoods which are essential to sustain the natural and social fabrics upon which all human life depends. Where did economic theory go wrong? Shiva quotes two African economists, Ronnie Lessem and Alexander Schieffer,

who observe that if the fathers of capitalist theory had chosen “a mother rather than a single bourgeois male as the smallest economic unit for their theoretical constructions, they would not have been able to formulate the axiom of

the selfish nature of human beings in the way they did.” I can heartily recommend this timely book to all who eat food.

Frances Hutchinson

The Corruption of Capitalism

Guy Standing

Biteback Publishing;

pp 352, £17.99

ISBN: 9781785900440

What will 2017 bring? In the wake of November 8, we suspect civil disorder, melting ice-caps, many public readings of W.B. Yeats’ apocalyptic poem ‘The Second Coming’ (“And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?”), the related stoning of left-wing agitators, and a fashion for unruly blond male wigs. But do not despair. 2017 will also bring us the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest. The Charter, a rare illustration of benign thought by the aristocratic elite, confirmed various rights for 13th century Englishmen - and Englishwomen. These included the right to roam, the right to object to the private damming of waterways, and widows’ right to scavenge for nourishment in a non-privatised countryside. Guy Standing, a research professor at the University of London’s School of Oriental and African studies, has written a chilling and persuasive account of the world’s economic woes. It will give you sleepless nights, I assure you, and not just because of a ‘film noir’ cover which shows a naked man gingerly ascending the blade of a razor. Did you know that there are 30,000 lobbyists in Brussels, influencing (allegedly) three-quarters of

EU legislation, or that the annual income of Carlos Slim, Mexico’s answer to Sir Philip Green, could employ 440,000 of his fellow-nationals? Just about the only encouragement he offers his transfixed reader is the possibility that those 800th birthday celebrations might kick-start some sort of fightback against the economic paradigm that has riven societies across the globe.

The finger of blame points quiveringly at Mont Pelerin, a Swiss resort where in 1947 a conclave of economists, philosophers and historians resolved to press the case *for* free markets and *against* state intervention. Neo-liberalism, as it has come to be termed, may have seemed like a bright idea at the time. Now, Prof Standing and others insist, it is an out-of-control economic behemoth whipped on by a scourge of self-interested corporate lawyers, politicians, industrialists, media barons and bagmen, which continues to render millions of lives fraught, bitter and often meaningless. Hillary Clinton is probably its most high-profile victim, but she has been hoist by her own petard. The \$600,000 she was paid by Goldman Sachs to talk to their top people will have confirmed to many American voters her presence in the sinister, and tiny, plutocracy which, as Prof Standing tells it, has ruthlessly shaped the world to its own advantage.

The charges are selfishness, compounded by hypocrisy. Let's start with the second. To claim that free trade is free is like claiming that Santa Claus is real: "Up to a point, Lord Copper." That alleged freedom is circumscribed directly and indirectly. The rentiers - individuals and corporations who pocket income from ownership of assets rather than honest labour - make damned sure that those assets are delivered across borders armour-plated with patent, copyright, trademark and design protection. They are aided in this by compliant politicians who are rewarded for framing the appropriate legislation. Prof. Standing scatters figures like marbles on a dance-floor: global patents are worth \$15 trillion, nearly 20 per cent of world GDP; the value of the top global (trademark-protected) brands was £3.3 trillion in 2015; the USA earned \$129b in intellectual property rights in 2013. Patent rights last for 20 years, copyright between 50 and 70; trademarks are renewable indefinitely every ten years. Start-ups in Mombasa and Yerevan find it increasingly hard to develop any quasi-sophisticated product without running foul of the self-proclaimed owners of an idea that may have spilled out of a test-tube in the laboratory of a publicly-funded Western university.

And it is not just the Americans. In 2011 China's patent office received nearly a million applications, more than the US and Japan combined. Thomas Jefferson called all this a tax on knowledge, but it hasn't stopped Martin Luther King's estate selling the rights to his 'I have a dream' speech to Steven Spielberg, Apple claiming a monopoly on round-

cornered 'tablets', or the pharmaceutical firm Gilead charging the US taxpayer \$84,000 for a Hepatitis C drug it costs less than \$140 to produce. So much for the competitiveness supposedly at the heart of market economics. Patents rights are chiefly used like landmines, to frighten off intruders. A Carnegie Institute survey shows that only 10 per cent have real value. The other 90 per cent are filed, not to protect innovation, but to deter potential rivals

Meanwhile, on the other side of the planet's chain-link fence, the social contract withers: unions are emasculated, public services withdrawn, benefits cut, elections increasingly derided. The plutocrats and the "salaried", with their in-house perks (paid holidays, medical cover, subsidised transport, etc) are shielded from the "medieval quackery", as Prof. Standing terms it, of austerity. The richest fifth pay 35 per cent of income in indirect and direct taxes, the poorest fifth 38 per cent. In the UK, USA, Spain and Portugal the majority of those officially in poverty live in households where at least one person has a job. Beyond them, Prof. Standing identifies the emergence of the "precarious", an expanding mass of over-qualified and under-protected "click-workers", dependent on labour brokers like Uber and TaskRabbit for demeaning, hand-to-mouth, last-minute existences. There are already 700,000 of these in Germany, 420,000 in Japan, God knows how many in the UK. Something called the Great Gatsby Curve decrees that inequality in one generation cripples social mobility in the next.

How can this change? With familiar political parties largely declined into “rent-seeking entities” - the Panama Papers showed 72 former or present heads of state and government entwined with tax havens - Prof. Standing hopes for the emergence of new, precariat-rich, movements sharing a contempt for neo-liberal philosophy. Forerunners of this, he believes, are the Scottish National Party, which has injected “vibrancy” into regional political discourse, Bernie Sanders’ candidature in the US election, various European protest bodies, and the Occupy insurgents on either side of the Atlantic.

In the short term, taking their cue from the Charter of the Forest, they should combat the loss of “commons” like wildlife, libraries, the night-time sky and public parks. In the long term he recommends, not the classic “control of the means of production”, but an equitable re-allocating of national resources to equip citizens with decent

levels of income, security, quality space and financial capital. Two components of this would be a democratic sovereign wealth fund, funded by levies on the profits of intellectual property holders and fossil fuel extractors, and a social dividend system that guarantees “a modest monthly sum” to all.

To neo-liberal elites, scowling on their Davos balconies, this may represent something-for-nothingdom. But what, after all, is inherited wealth, accelerating asset values, and government subsidy? Ultimately, our old friend self-interest may come into play. Experiments with social dividends in California, India, Germany, have shown that a ‘citizen’s wage’ makes recipients more co-operative, altruistic and tolerant. All the less likely, then, to reach for their pitchforks.

Erlend Clouston is a freelance journalist who worked for the Guardian newspaper from 1979 to 1997

Liberating Motherhood. Birthing the Purple Stockings Movement

Vanessa Olorenshaw

Womancraft Publishing

Pp 335 £14.99

ISBN: 978-1-910559-19-2

This unconventional book is a major contribution to the area of Motherhood and Parenting, which could have huge positive implications for future children, families and societies. It is Vanessa Olorenshaw’s first major publication, idiosyncratic in its mode of delivery and polemical voice.

Olorenshaw puts the experience of

mothering and motherhood at the forefront of her own brand of Feminism. And, in so doing, she is not afraid to denounce dominant and pervasive ideologies such as Neoliberalism, Capitalism, Patriarchy, Misogyny and Sexism and to critically assess particular strands within Feminism. Mix in some women-centred values with sardonic wit and humour and we are dished up some necessary truths that may be less appetising for many conventional nuclear families in Western middle-class society. Yet, and most importantly, those same truths may be digestible and satisfying to young women and mothers of today. Why? Because they represent and

celebrate important values at the roots of human existence, which are embodied in the roles of motherhood and mothering; Values such as caring, nurturing, playing, listening, communicating, relating and loving.

The book is well-researched, choc-a-bloc with references to classic scholars of feminist theory, sociology, philosophy, psychotherapy, economics and politics, as well as featuring more recent lesser-known theorists. The selection below provides a taste of topics to whet your appetite and encourage you to read the book.

Olorenshaw begins by discussing pertinent feminist issues, and suggests that notions of equity, fairness and justice are preferred to 'equality' and that in a sexist society the 'Recognition and appropriate accommodation of difference is forbidden'. Instead, we should be recognizing and acknowledging 'difference':

...the different points in a woman's life when she faces potentially significant transformative or at least deeply emotional experiences directly connected to her sex are invisible or downplayed, not least by women themselves, to our detriment (49).

Olorenshaw is influenced by theorists such as Sheila Kitzinger, and the pioneer of the birthing pool, Michael Odent, who see human birth concerned with 'what is going on in our minds ... There are increasing movements to raise the issue of how the mind and body work together in birth'. She cites Odent who believes that: *A birthing woman needs to feel unobserved and safe (62-66)*

She is also keen to acknowledge and celebrate the personal and cultural significance of the birth process: *...the work of pregnancy, birth and motherhood are overlooked in our culture (by many feminists and patriarchs alike) but so too are the joy ... the growing of a person in the body of a woman and the birthing of a baby in an empowered mother-respected environment ... It really can be one of the most powerful experiences in a woman's life (63).*

On economic and political matters, we learn about how changes in social policy have affected the financial experience of mothers who choose to stay at home and care for their children. For example, Family Allowance payments (renamed as 'Child Benefit' in the 1970's) were paid directly to the mother and gave mothers an income. It was subsequently dissociated from its original feminist justification, and removed after 2011 from families where one member was a 'higher rate taxpayer' – even in families where the mother was a 'non-earner' (215-6).

Mothers are thus rendered entirely dependent on a partner or husband and rendered invisible, and lots more questions are then raised regarding the sacrifices made by women who choose to love and care for children at home: *Is this unpaid work valued by society? Is a mother working at home entirely at the mercy and goodwill of her husband or partner, as he may – or may not – choose to give her an income? And lone parents – what about them?*

Olorenshaw provides some answers to these questions later on in the book

where the notion of a Basic Income is explored (218-224). She advocates an unconditional Basic Income paid to each individual at a level 'high enough to live on'. This is seen as a *timely antidote to psychopathic liberal capitalism*, and an intrinsically feminist measure that is much more in tune with Olorenshaw's viewpoint than a market-shadowing measure such as Wages for Housework. In her view, Basic Income:

...fundamentally addresses the problem of what to do about the provision of care; the feminization of poverty; recognizes unpaid work, including the education of our children if we choose to provide it ourselves; the gendered nature of care; the vulnerabilities of unwaged workers; and the inequalities within households. Most importantly, it starts to address the unfairness of society continuing to freeload on the labour of millions of women (220).

In short: *Within the leveler of basic income is inbuilt the valuing of unwaged work and care; and the valuing of human wellbeing. (222)*

Motherhood has been put firmly on the Feminist agenda, thanks to Olorenshaw, who is critical of the tendency among many feminists to emphasize *labour-force participation, wages and opportunities in the workplace* (219) to the detriment of the woman-centred experiences of childbirth and motherhood:

It is this need, for a maternal standpoint, in feminism, economics and politics, which lies at the heart of the Purplestockings Movement (44).

Olorenshaw is to be heartily congratulated for opening debate on a

long-neglected topic of major importance to the future of civilization. Since powerful feelings of guilt and resentment frequently surround the whole process of the giving and receiving of maternal care in infancy and early childhood, exploration of the respective roles of mothers and fathers, man and woman as citizens of, and workers within, the human community is long overdue. The way we care for our mothers and carers is the crucial issue of our times. Vanessa has placed the ball firmly in our court. It is up to us, the readers, to decide where we go from here.

Her book project is an ambitious undertaking. But, has it paid off? Will it reach the audience for which it was intended? Can this compendium of interdisciplinary theory, quotes and references become a companion-guide for women, especially expectant mothers, who want to know more about how society works? Does it introduce important and controversial concepts and issues regarding Motherhood and its reconceptualization? The answer to all these questions has to be 'Yes'

Some readers may feel it is in need of serious editing, but that would have concealed benefits gained from hearing Olorenshaw's authentic voice, experiencing her tremendous enthusiasm and witnessing devout passion for her Cause: to launch the Purple Stockings Movement and Liberate Motherhood.

Beryl Spink: Mother; College lecturer in Sociology and Psychology; Parenting Coordinator for Family Service Units.

Social Credit literature currently available in print or online.

Over the century (virtually) since Clifford Hugh Douglas first put pen to paper, a vast literature on the subject of Social Credit has appeared in print. Douglas' own works were translated into many languages, and most of his books can still be bought over the internet.

The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism

Frances Hutchinson and Brian Burkitt, (2005)
£12.99

Social Credit: Some Questions Answered

Frances Hutchinson £3

The Grip of Death:

A study of modern money, debt slavery and destructive economics

Michael Rowbotham £18

Understanding the Financial System: Social Credit Rediscovered

Frances Hutchinson (2010) £15

What Everybody REALLY Wants to Know About Money

Frances Hutchinson £12

Asses in Clover (Fictional dystopia)

Eimar O'Duffy (2003) £11

This Age of Plenty

A new conception of economics: Social Credit

Louis Even (Pilgrims of Saint Michael)

The Social Artist

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