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Editor: Dr. Frances Hutchinson

Mail and Editorial: The Social Artist
Willow Bank, Riddlesden
Keighley, BD20 5AN

Tel: +44 (0)1535 600356 (editor)
+44 (0)1535 654230 (secretary)

Email editor@douglassocialcredit.com

Website: www.douglassocialcredit.com

Front Cover Photograph: *Menwith Hill US base from Ilkley Moor* by Frances Hutchinson

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Editorial

Once upon a time … all peoples lived in harmony with the flora and fauna of the living world. Tiny bands of human beings learned to make, do and fend for themselves wandering in the forests and hills, wondering at the beauty and challenges presented by natural phenomena. Today, for the vast majority of human beings, the environment into which we are born is entirely man-made. We have moved beyond the Age of Tribalism, through the Age of Empire and into the Age of Individualism, which now threatens the very survival of humanity. The time has come to seek new answers to new questions, in order to usher in the New Age of Earth Community.

In the earliest days of tribalism our human mothers taught us to help one another. Through songs, stories and example they taught that sharing and caring were a fundamental part of what it is to be human. But man and woman could not live innocently in harmony with nature for ever. We were called to a different destiny. Today, the majority of the world's population live in cities or urbanised areas, and the proportion is set to rise to 75% over the next half century. The social and environmental impact of cities like London spreads far beyond their geographical areas, as they draw in essential resources from the lands and labour of distant peoples. Global trade feeds urban centres. The mining of oil and minerals, and the soils themselves in industrial farming methods damage local environments, while pollution from pharmaceutical products affects workers in rural communities. Traded products create pollution of air, land, seas and waterways affecting places thousands of miles from the sites of production, consumption and disposal.

In short, industrialisation and the rapid urbanisation of the twentieth century has left social inequality and ecological degradation on an almost insurmountable scale. Nevertheless, as Bill Hopwood and Mary Mellor argue in their thought-provoking (and highly discussable)

article “Visioning the Sustainable City”, we cannot go back to a rural existence, and few would wish to, even if we could. The words civilisation, civility, citizen (civitas) and politics (polis) are derived from the city. Cities have the capacity to bring together diverse peoples, with their differing outlooks and aspirations, resulting in creative development of culture, arts, science, technology and techniques of organisation. For Hopwood and Mellor “the city ethos has the potential to be the driving force for change” (See full article on Social Art Page of www.douglassocialcredit.com). The danger is mass urbanisation on a world scale without civilisation, that is, without the building of a progressive urban culture.

And it is here that we run into difficulties. What do 'we' mean by a 'progressive urban culture'? To date a very effective “misinformation machine” composed of “think tanks, bloggers and fake citizen's groups” has been created by the tobacco, coal, oil, chemicals and biotech companies in order to portray the interests of billionaires as the interests of the common people. Where did 'we' go wrong? asks George Monbiot.

“As usual, the left and centre (myself included) are beating ourselves up about where we went wrong. There are plenty of answers, but one of them is that we have simply been outspent. Not by a little, but by orders of magnitude. A few billion dollars spent on persuasion buys you all the politics you want. Genuine campaigners, working in their free time, simply cannot match a professional network staffed by thousands of well-paid, unscrupulous people.” (www.monbiot.com).

Now that is one of the most curious paragraphs written in recent times. What does it mean? What exactly can billionaires buy with their billions? And the answer is – us. We sell ourselves into waged and salaried slavery, leaving ourselves only a small amount of “free time” to counter the arguments used by the very masters we are working for. The think tanks and campaigns which are founded and funded by the corporations function through paid scientists, officials and spokespeople, paid to pedal the misinformation. Scientists and technologists are paid to design the products, workers are paid to produce them, others package them, transport them, retail them, and carry out all the accounting and bureaucracy necessary to keep the political economy as a whole on the road. Educationalists are paid to train up a new generation of workers, health workers are paid to keep them in good condition. And, above all, mothers keep producing workers and going to work to earn the money to spend on material consumer items which keep the economy going.

The fundamental question then arises, whose money is it anyway, in the first place? As John Lancaster explains, modern money is deeply weird, just “digital bits moving from screen to screen which combine complete ephemerality with total power over us … and yet they're just ones and zeros”.

“And these ones and zeros are willed into being by governments, which can create more of them just by running a printing press; in fact, thanks to the miracle of quantitative

easing [QE], they don't even need to do that, but can instead just announce that there is now more electronic money. We're inclined to think of money as a physical thing, an object, but that's not really what it is. Modern money is mainly an act of faith; an act of credit, of belief." (John Lancaster, *How to Speak Money*, Faber and Faber, 2014, p39).

So there we have it. The money that keeps us all working to serve the interests of the corporate world, interests that are wrecking the peace, destroying communities and wiping out the natural world – is an entirely man-made act "of faith, of credit, of belief". Why has nobody noticed this before? Well, of course they have. There is a wealth of literature about the work of the Arts and Crafts movement (Morris and Ruskin) the Guild Socialists and the worldwide Social Credit movement available on our website www.douglassocialcredit.com .

A central plank of Social Credit policy in the 1930s was the payment of a 'National' or Citizen's Dividend to all regardless of employment status. Social Crediters argued that, as money is entirely man-made and all wealth is created in common, all should have the right to an income which they could spend on the goods and services which they choose to call onto the market. Although the case was clearly presented in terms easily understood by all, it was fiercely opposed by vested interests who controlled the existing political economy and the media.

The opposition by the corporate world, and the acquiescence of the common people in their oppression, is beautifully portrayed, with delightful humour, in Eimar O'Duffy's *Asses in Clover* (1933, 2003 reprint available from www.douglassocialcredit.com). Until very recently, our corporate masters have been aided and abetted by all colours of the political spectrum. The reds on the 'left' have opposed payment of an unearned income for all because it would destroy the power base of the trade unions in their quest to get a better deal in terms of the material benefits generated by their capitalist bosses. Greens have meandered between left and right. Meanwhile, the true blues have held to their philosophy of exploiting the community and the earth's resources for the private winners of the game of Monopoly. The time has come for a new politics of consensus to emerge at local levels.

I, Daniel Blake

Just watched "I, Daniel Blake". Been waiting for this for ages. Well worth the wait. Absolutely brilliant depiction of the many barriers people face and the hardship. The ever present lack of kindness and humanity by those who should know better and the glimmers of kindness that are sometimes found in the most surprising places. Powerful, heart breaking, and poignant. Really makes you want to get out there and make a real difference?

Allison Hutchinson, Social Worker
The film is now available as a DVD.

Citizen's Dividend Made Simple

Frances Hutchinson

The myth of full employment has bedevilled the 20th century and continues to bemuse the electorates of the developed world. Politicians across the board proclaim that all will be well when the entire population is engaged as waged or salaried workers within an expanding financial economy. In the event of an individual being unable to work, due to sickness, widowhood or unemployment, welfare benefits can be claimed. But these have to be paid for through income taxes, purchase taxes or company taxes. For many reasons, including the screening of films like *Cathy Come Home* and *I, Daniel Blake*, the urgent need for review of the income distribution system has emerged in the 21st century. There is a strong and growing interest in the potential payment of a basic or citizen's income to each individual, as an inalienable right, regardless of work status.

A silly idea? Not when one considers how ludicrous the present system is. We are spewing out waste and war, destroying the natural resources of our beautiful planet, creating new diseases and increasing poverty at a seemingly unstoppable rate. Mothers struggle in to their paid employment, often spending virtually all their wages for the privilege of leaving their tiny infants all day in the care of strangers, returning at night to sort out the household and drop exhausted into bed. And all for what? For a blind faith in the magic of money, for the belief that generating more economic activity will enable people to earn more

money, whilst in the process solving all the world's problems. Money – finance – seems to be the key which opens all doors. Yet the financial system is entirely man-made. It currently remains beyond democratic control because, as an organisational system, it is beyond our understanding.

So – what do economists have to say on the matter? The following passage, taken from an 'alternative' economics text (photocopied long ago, source lost), offers some insights into the situation:

A SUGGESTION FOR THE RIGHT TO A BASIC CAPITAL

We have always been taught that we must work, work, work to earn a living. It's always jobs, jobs, jobs because for most of us it is the only way to get a living. However, a lot of people cannot work and jobs are not always available and most people in the world only get paid a pittance. But in fact productive capital does most of the work and creates most of the wealth. In large parts of the world, millions of people labour ceaselessly every day and they are, and always will be, in poverty because they own little or no capital.

The phrase: *"We must work, work, work..."* implies that work is something we don't want to do, something that we have got to do for some other reward than the intrinsic satisfaction derived from completing a task and doing it well for one's own sake. When we work under orders from above, we sell ourselves into slavery. The slave undertakes work for the master, under threat. The master controls through physical violence, deprivation of food, or of life itself.

In the first decade of the 20th century the Guild Socialist followers of William Morris, John Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts movement, coined the term "wage slavery", applying it to any waged or salaried worker whose main livelihood depended upon receipt of a money income in return for work undertaken for an employing body.

The Luddites recognised at the outset of the industrial revolution that it was unwise to become slaves of the Machine Age by seeking *"jobs, jobs, jobs"*. They saw that families separated from their ages-old rights to occupy the land were being forced to work in the factory if they were not to starve or go into the workhouse. The Luddites were craftspeople and farmers, combining traditional farming practices with ages-old child-rearing techniques and household management practices. Like many others across the world, they saw factory production as a de-skilling and disempowering process. As they saw it, factory production converted work into something to be done under orders for a financial reward.

In reality, we have a collective wealth [commonwealth] which is much more than any individual wealth we may claim from work or ownership of private capital. It follows that, if we allow private inheritance, we should all have a 'return', **a social dividend on the collective wealth.** The idea, associated with Thomas Paine, GDH Cole and the Guild Socialists and advocated today by Guy Standing and others, is an idea whose time has come.

National Dividend and the common cultural inheritance

Frances Hutchinson

By the 1920s and 1930s, when Douglas was writing, technological developments had reached the point where, in certain industries, machinery could perform most of the mechanical routine tasks previously undertaken by individual workers. The result was a *plentiful* flow of goods into existence, at prices covering their previous costs of production, but an *inadequate* flow of the necessary finance as incomes to consumers, with which the products of industry could be purchased. The option was to jettison the labour-saving technologies and revert to manual labour and handicrafts in order to keep the labourers employed. In 1924, Douglas spelled out the necessity to re-think the relationship between finance and the social order:

"The early Victorian political economists agreed in ascribing all 'values' to three essentials: land, labour, and capital. But it is rapidly receiving recognition that, while there might be a rough truth in this argument during the centuries prior to the industrial revolution consequent upon the inventive period of the Renaissance, and culminating in the steam engine, the spinning-jenny, and so forth; there is now a fourth factor in wealth production, the multiplying power of which far exceeds that of the other three, and which may be expressed in the words of Mr. Thorstein Veblen as the 'progress of the industrial arts'. Quite clearly no one person can be said to have a monopoly share in this; it is a legacy of countless numbers of men and women, many of whose names are forgotten and the majority of whom are dead. And since it is a cultural legacy, it seems difficult to deny that the general community, as a whole, and not by any qualification of land, labour or capital, are the proper legatees. But if the ownership of wealth produced vests in the owners of the factors contributing to its production, and the owners of the legacy of the industrial arts are the general community, it seems equally difficult to deny that the chief owners, and rightful beneficiaries of the modern productive system can be shown to be individuals composing the community, as such".

The 'dividends' paid to owners of capital derive from the unearned increment of association and the common cultural heritage. Hence a recipient of a dividend under the present financial system is a pioneer of the future, when all citizens will have the inalienable right to income security through a National Dividend.

A 'dividend' in its accepted sense, is a payment of money, a 'credit' which derives from the community but is paid through the banking system. The institutions which mobilise the issue of 'credit' are the banks and financial institutions. But what is 'credit'?

This extract is taken from *Understanding the Financial System* pp 64-65 (Jon Carpenter 2010), available from: www.douglassocialcredit.com

Extracts from *Social Credit Clearly Explained: 101 Questions Answered*

John Hargrave

Q. 64 What about taxation? (p41-2)
Taxation is the raising of a revenue from members of a community by the imposition of compulsory contributions, usually in the form of money. The term taxation covers every conceivable exaction that a government can make, whether under the name of a tax, or under such names as rates, assessments, duties, imposts, excise, licences, fees, tolls, etc. The purpose of taxation is to raise a revenue with which to pay for government and other public services, because, under the Bankers' Debt-system, the Government has no money—i.e., the community is deemed to have no power to create its own public credit for these purposes, and can only carry on by (a) taxing itself by taking away a proportion of its buying-power which cannot then be spent on consumer goods, or (b) borrowing its own credit-power from the bankers, which again means taxing itself in order to pay interest and/or pay back the sum borrowed.
A Social Credit Government will not need revenue from taxation (i.e., buying-power taken from your pocket), nor will it have to borrow one farthing from the Bankers, because the money needed for all government and other public services will be public (debt-free) credit issued by the National Credit Office for these purposes, based upon the actual productive capacity of the whole community. *Therefore, under Social Credit, all forms of taxation will tend to fall into disuse, and finally there will be no taxation of any kind.*
Under the ramshackle Heath Robinson mechanism of the Bankers' Debt-system, taxation is a method—a very crude method—of regulating the amount of buying-power in the hands of the community. Under Social Credit this will be automatically regulated by the operation of the Scientific Price Adjustment at the retail end.

Q. 70 What will Social Credit do for agriculture? (p46)
Agriculture will be given Number One place in the production-system of Great

Britain. Food—Warmth—Shelter: these are the Three Essentials, and obviously food-growing comes first. Social Credit will remove all financial hazards from the growing of food as a business proposition. It will not only ensure a remunerative market generally, but will bring markets nearer to the grower. The right to draw the National Dividend enjoyed by everyone will reverse the migration from country to town and enable multitudes of people to live where food grows at their doorsteps, and where they can, if they choose, grow their own food, or take part in food-growing. This will mean fresher food and an open-air life, and therefore a vast improvement in the health of the nation.
As for the farmer: every working farmer knows that in peacetime his only real problem is money—i.e., *prices*. Farming is not his problem, but how to make farming "pay." He cannot, under the Bankers' Debt-system, get a market price for his products that will cover his costs and leave him enough to live on. He puts his hand to the plough, but there's always a spectre following. He is dogged by debt.
Under Social Credit the farmer will (a) be able to get new debt-free credits for new production, (b) he will get his National Dividend like everyone else, and (c) always find an effective Home Market—i.e., people will be able to buy his produce at the just or scientific price, and the farmer will receive the full price (as now calculated) from the wholesaler or the retailer.
Therefore, the farmer will flourish. Think it out, and you will soon see why. And don't forget that it was the *farmers* of Alberta—and their wives—who elected a Social Credit Government in that Province in 1935, again in 1940, and again in 1944. They voted for Social Credit because they had been sunk up to their necks in money-debt—i.e., they couldn't get a price for their product (mainly wheat) that would cover their costs.

> *In a Power Age the idea of "full employment" ought to be extinct like the Dodo—and would be, but for muddled thinking encouraged by the Bankers and their political, economic, and industrial stooges.*

Q67: **If everyone gets a national dividend will anyone do any work?** (p44)
If they don't, there won't be any National Dividend. The National Dividend is based upon the production of Real Wealth (goods and services), and will rise and fall with production. *No Production—no Dividend!* That hard fact should be allowed to dawn upon each individual. It is time people became "adult" and faced the hard facts of existence.
No work—no Production. No Production—no National Dividend. Just nothing. No Food, Warmth, Shelter, or so-called Luxuries—but not because of artificial poverty due to lack of money-tickets. Just nothing because no one had done any work. That would teach people the first lesson; either to Work by Hand, or Work the Machines. It is high time they came face to face with realities, instead of financial nonsense. People would then begin to work, simply and solely because they wanted to use the goods and services that human labour plus machine-energy can produce. And that is as it should be in a Sane Economic System.

John Hargrave, London 1945

A Brave New Dystopia

Chris Hedges

Posted on 27 December 2010
The two greatest visions of a future dystopia were George Orwell's *1984* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. The debate, between those who watched our descent towards corporate totalitarianism, was who was right. Would we be, as Orwell wrote, dominated by a repressive surveillance and security state that used crude and violent forms of control? Or would we be, as Huxley envisioned, entranced by entertainment and spectacle, captivated by technology and seduced by profligate consumption to embrace our own oppression? It turns out Orwell and Huxley were both right. Huxley saw the first stage of our enslavement. Orwell saw the second.

We have been gradually disempowered by a corporate state that, as Huxley foresaw, seduced and manipulated us through sensual gratification, cheap mass-produced goods, boundless credit, political theater and amusement. While we were entertained, the regulations that once kept predatory corporate power in check were dismantled, the laws that once protected us were rewritten and we were impoverished. Now that credit is drying up, good jobs for the working class are gone forever and mass-produced goods are unaffordable, we find ourselves transported from *Brave New World* to *1984*. The state, crippled by massive deficits, endless war and corporate malfeasance, is sliding toward bankruptcy. It is time for Big Brother to take over from Huxley's feelies, the orgy-porgy and the centrifugal bumble-puppy. We are moving from a society where we are skillfully manipulated by lies and illusions to one where we are overtly controlled.

Orwell warned of a world where books were banned. Huxley warned of a world where no one wanted to read books. Orwell warned of a state of permanent war and fear. Huxley warned of a culture diverted by mindless pleasure. Orwell warned of a state where every conversation and thought was monitored and dissent was brutally punished. Huxley warned of a state where a population, preoccupied by trivia and gossip, no longer cared about truth or information. Orwell saw us frightened into submission. Huxley saw us seduced into submission. But Huxley, we are

discovering, was merely the prelude to Orwell. Huxley understood the process by which we would be complicit in our own enslavement. Orwell understood the enslavement. Now that the corporate coup is over, we stand naked and defenseless. We are beginning to understand, as Karl Marx knew, that unfettered and unregulated capitalism is a brutal and revolutionary force that exploits human beings and the natural world until exhaustion or collapse.

"The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake," Orwell wrote in *1984*. "We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power. What pure power means you will understand presently. We are different from all the oligarchies of the past, in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just round the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power."

The political philosopher Sheldon Wolin uses the term "inverted totalitarianism" in his book *Democracy Incorporated* to describe our political system. It is a term that would make sense to Huxley. In inverted totalitarianism, the sophisticated technologies of corporate control, intimidation and mass manipulation, which far surpass those employed by previous totalitarian states, are effectively masked by the glitter, noise and abundance of a consumer society. Political participation and civil liberties are gradually surrendered. The corporation state, hiding behind the smokescreen of the public relations industry, the entertainment industry and the tawdry materialism of a consumer society, devours us from the inside out. It owes no allegiance to us or the nation. It feasts upon our carcass.

The corporate state does not find its expression in a demagogue or charismatic leader. It is defined by the anonymity and facelessness of the corporation. Corporations, who hire attractive spokespeople like Barack Obama, control the uses of science, technology, education and mass communication. They control the messages in movies and television. And, as in *Brave New World*, they use these tools of communication to bolster tyranny. Our systems of mass communication, as Wolin writes, "block out, eliminate whatever might introduce qualification, ambiguity, or dialogue, anything that might weaken or complicate the holistic *force* of their creation, to its *total* impression."

The result is a monochromatic system of information. Celebrity courtiers, masquerading as journalists, experts and specialists, identify our problems and patiently explain the parameters. All those who argue outside the imposed parameters are dismissed as irrelevant

cranks, extremists or members of a radical left. Prescient social critics, from Ralph Nader to Noam Chomsky, are banished. Acceptable opinions have a range of A to B. The culture, under the tutelage of these corporate courtiers, becomes, as Huxley noted, a world of cheerful conformity, as well as an endless and finally fatal optimism. We busy ourselves buying products that promise to change our lives, make us more beautiful, confident or successful as we are steadily stripped of rights, money and influence. All messages we receive through these systems of communication, whether on the nightly news or talk shows like "Oprah," promise a brighter, happier tomorrow. And this, as Wolin points out, is "the same ideology that invites corporate executives to exaggerate profits and conceal losses, but always with a sunny face." We have been entranced, as Wolin writes, by "continuous technological advances" that "encourage elaborate fantasies of individual prowess, eternal youthfulness, beauty through surgery, actions measured in nanoseconds: a dream-laden culture of ever-expanding control and possibility, whose denizens are prone to fantasies because the vast majority have imagination but little scientific knowledge."

Our manufacturing base has been dismantled. Speculators and swindlers have looted the U.S. Treasury and stolen billions from small shareholders who had set aside money for retirement or college. Civil liberties, including habeas corpus and protection from warrantless wiretapping, have been taken away. Basic services, including public education and health care, have been handed over to the corporations to exploit for profit. The few who raise voices of dissent, who refuse to engage in the corporate happy talk, are derided by the corporate establishment as freaks.

Attitudes and temperament have been cleverly engineered by the corporate state, as with Huxley's pliant characters in *Brave New World*. The book's protagonist, Bernard Marx, turns in frustration to his girlfriend Lenina:

"Don't you wish you were free, Lenina?" he asks.

"I don't know that you mean. I am free, free to have the most wonderful time. Everybody's happy nowadays."

He laughed, "Yes, 'Everybody's happy nowadays.'

We have been giving the children that at five. But wouldn't you like to be free to be happy in some other way, Lenina? In your own way, for example; not in everybody else's way." "I don't know what you mean," she repeated.

The façade is crumbling. And as more and more people realize that they have been used and robbed, we will move swiftly from Huxley's *Brave New World* to Orwell's *1984*. The public, at some point, will have to face some very unpleasant truths. The good-paying jobs are not coming back. The largest deficits in human history mean that we are trapped in a debt peonage system that will be used by the corporate state to eradicate the last vestiges of social protection for citizens, including Social Security. The state has devolved from a capitalist democracy to neo-feudalism.

And when these truths become apparent, anger will replace the corporate-imposed cheerful conformity. The bleakness of our post-industrial pockets, where some 40 million Americans live in a state of poverty and tens of millions in a category called "near poverty," coupled with the lack of credit to save families from foreclosures, bank repossessions and bankruptcy from medical bills, means that inverted totalitarianism will no longer work.

We increasingly live in Orwell's Oceania, not Huxley's The World State. Osama bin Laden plays the role assumed by Emmanuel Goldstein in *1984*. Goldstein, in the novel, is the public face of terror. His evil machinations and clandestine acts of violence dominate the nightly news. Goldstein's image appears each day on Oceania's television screens as part of the nation's "Two Minutes of Hate" daily ritual. And without the intervention of the state, Goldstein, like bin Laden, will kill you. All excesses are justified in the titanic fight against evil personified.

The psychological torture of Pvt. Bradley Manning—who has now been imprisoned for seven months without being convicted of any crime—mirrors the breaking of the dissident Winston Smith at the end of *1984*. Manning is being held as a "maximum custody detainee" in the brig at Marine Corps Base Quantico, in Virginia. He spends 23 of every 24 hours alone. He is denied exercise. He cannot have a pillow or sheets for his bed. Army doctors have been plying him with antidepressants. The cruder forms of torture of the Gestapo have been replaced with refined Orwellian techniques, largely developed by government psychologists, to turn dissidents like Manning into vegetables. We break souls as well as bodies. It is more effective. Now we can all be taken to Orwell's dreaded Room 101 to become compliant and harmless. These "special administrative measures" are regularly imposed on our dissidents, including Syed Fahad Hashmi, who was imprisoned under similar conditions for three years before going to trial. The techniques have psychologically maimed thousands of detainees in our black sites around the globe. They are the staple form of control in our maximum security prisons where the corporate state makes war on our most politically astute underclass—African-Americans. It all presages the shift from Huxley to Orwell.

"Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling," Winston Smith's torturer tells him in *1984*. "Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty and then we shall fill you with ourselves."

The noose is tightening. The era of amusement is being replaced by the era of repression. Tens of millions of citizens have had their e-mails and phone records turned over to the government. We are the most monitored and spied-on citizenry in human history. Many of us have our daily routine caught on dozens of security cameras. Our proclivities and habits are recorded on the Internet. Our profiles are electronically generated. Our bodies are patted down at airports and filmed by scanners. And public service announcements, car inspection

stickers, and public transportation posters constantly urge us to report suspicious activity. The enemy is everywhere.

Those who do not comply with the dictates of the war on terror, a war which, as Orwell noted, is endless, are brutally silenced. The draconian security measures used to cripple protests at the G-20 gatherings in Pittsburgh and Toronto were wildly disproportionate for the level of street activity. But they sent a clear message—DO NOT TRY THIS. The FBI's targeting of antiwar and Palestinian activists, which in late September saw agents raid homes in Minneapolis and Chicago, is a harbinger of what is to come for all who dare defy the state's official Newspeak. The agents—our Thought Police—seized phones, computers, documents and other personal belongings. Subpoenas to appear before a grand jury have since been served on 26 people. The subpoenas cite federal law prohibiting "providing material support or resources to designated foreign terrorist organizations." Terror, even for those who have nothing to do with terror, becomes the blunt instrument used by Big Brother to protect us from ourselves.

"Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world we are creating?" Orwell wrote. "It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less but more merciless as it refines itself."

Chris Hedges is a senior fellow at The Nation Institute. His newest book is "Death of the Liberal Class." http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/2011_a_brave_new_dystopia_20101227/

Albert Einstein

– from a letter to his daughter.

After the failure of humanity in the use and control of the other forces of the universe that have turned against us, it is urgent that we nourish ourselves with another kind of energy. If we want our species to survive, if we are to find meaning in life, if we want to save the world and every sentient being that inhabits it, love is the one and only answer. Perhaps we are not yet ready to make a bomb of love, a device powerful enough to entirely destroy the hate, selfishness and greed that devastate the planet.
However, each individual carries within them a small but powerful generator of love whose energy is waiting to be released. When we learn to give and receive this universal energy, dear Lieserl, we will have affirmed that love conquers all, is able to transcend everything and anything, because love is the quintessence of life.

In The Midst Of Madness

Michael Leunig

On street corners, people talk of the growing madness. They speak in a dialect that survives in the instincts of young and old, rich and poor, males and females … "The world has gone mad", they say. In tones of dismay, resignation and humour they confirm their suspicions to each other. It's as if this is a new kind of greeting or farewell.

Yet it is also their small way of grieving together about the tragic state of their world; about the destruction of meaning or the rise of hostility, ugliness and stupidity in an angry, exhausted culture. And as they lament, they also yearn. Sanity may not prevail but it lives on as a vision of love somewhere in the minds of ordinary people.

Of course, this windswept conversation on street corners is ancient. With a twinkling smile my grandmother used to offer me the old refrain: "The whole world is mad except for you and me – and even you're a little strange". And there was WB Yeats with his poem The Second Coming: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world…"

Yet, though the conversation be old, there is a new dimension to it. There have never been so many people on the planet to lose their marbles and there have never before been such powerful and precocious devices, machines and weapons to express and give form to insanity. Their looming presence has given rise to an unprecedented critical mass of fear and anger on the planet – enough to drive humanity into panic and over the edge.

In the British parliament last week, the new Prime Minister, Theresa May, was asked if she was prepared to launch a nuclear strike that would kill 100,000 civilians. Without hesitation, the self-confessed "goody-goody" said quite stridently and without hesitation that, "Yes, she would do it".

We could think of this as domestic violence on a massive scale. The mind should boggle but it does not because we know that the world has gone batty; so unhinged in fact that it cannot discuss its growing lunacy and the misery that comes with it. Madness is normal so why not join in?

The release of the Chilcot report into the atrocity that was the Iraq war, and the recent commemorations of mass carnage in World War I, remind us of the persistent psychotic savagery that is officially ours.

Strangely, this madness, as popular, crucial and interesting as the topic is, seems too complex and vast to be openly discussed in parliament or on the television talk shows. It is probably regarded as too negative and cannot

be packaged into neat bundles of information and debate. Anybody who raises the subject is under suspicion of being an amateur or even a bit hysterical. The theme is too hard to deal with and there is no Minister for Mental Health to take the initiative. After all, isn't madness so common that it has become banal? This was pointed out recently by a bright young woman who served me in a pharmacy. Madness is not the elephant in the lounge room, it is actually the lounge room. This is the normal lounge room where citizens may sit and digest the stupefying corrosive lunacy of television. We may well expect madness, just as we expect that most of our political leaders will be more or less crazy. We know well that the emperor does not have new clothes and into the bargain, will have no new ideas or insights. We shrug.

Yet the loss of sanity in an individual is an immensely sad tragedy to be looked upon with compassion, and the loss of cultural sanity is an utter disaster we can witness with despair.

The problem is not the divine madness or eccentricity that was the prerogative of inspired individuals such as Zorba, who told us that "a man needs a little madness or else he dares not cut the rope and be free".

No, it is the surge of a compulsive new bitterness and hostility, an antisocial infection that is cause for grief; the bad mood of modern times which is far from being free because it is so painfully constricted and constricting. It is the driver behind you, angrily blasting their horn because your acceleration at the green light is not fast enough. It is the righteous ugly clash of a televised political debate, the spiteful intensity and punishing fury of a gender equality discussion, the absurdly hostile tirades surrounding a football commentator controversy – all sorts of people are rushing to lose their marbles and imitate their heartless digital devices. And it is all assisted by the sheer maddening velocity of life. Nothing can be loved at speed.

There is something bipolar happening – not the bipolarity of depression and mania, but the split in people's minds between "them and us", good guys and bad guys, men and women, left wing and right wing, etcetera; the whole divided, tribalistic world of the mind which gives energy and purpose to modern nations and their economies, gives momentum to every war, to all hateful fear or anger and to each psychotic act – the compulsive idea that we are right and they are wrong, that we are victims and they are to blame, that we are worthy and they are not. Herein lie the origins of derangement and imbalance. In every football match and school examination lie the seeds of war. Sanity must not be defined too strictly, but its maintenance lies in the integration of opposites, the capacity to open and broaden consciousness – enough to gracefully hold two seemingly opposite things together and reflect rather than react. To be enlivened by paradox. This is a lifetime's work. This is sanity.

Mental health is precious and vulnerable. It is a fragile ecosystem; a garden that needs constant nourishment, love and attention. We would do well to value it and be careful about what we allow into our minds. Sanity needs what is real and thrives on what is beautiful and true. Sometimes it falls apart and is gone quite suddenly.

First published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* July 2016.

We are most grateful to Gregory Bartley, one of our subscribers in Australia, for bringing this article to our attention.

Rebuild Community

George Monbiot

This is how to stop demagogues and extremists:

Without community, politics is dead. But communities have been scattered like dust in the wind. At work, at home, both practically and imaginatively, we are atomised.

Politics, as a result, is experienced by many people as an external force, dull and irrelevant at best, oppressive and frightening at worst. It is handed down from above rather than developed from below. There are exceptions – the Sanders and Corbyn campaigns for example – but even they seemed shallowly rooted by comparison to the deep foundations of solidarity that movements grew from in the past, and may disperse as quickly as they gather.

It is in the powder of shattered communities that anti-politics swirls, raising towering dust devils of demagoguery and extremism. These tornadoes threaten to tear down whatever social structures still stand.

When people are atomised and afraid, they feel driven to defend their own interests against other people's. In other words, they are pushed away from intrinsic values such as empathy, connectedness and kindness, and towards extrinsic values such as power, fame and status. The problem created by the politics of extreme individualism is self-perpetuating.

Conversely, a political model based only on state provision can leave people dependent, isolated and highly vulnerable to cuts. The welfare state remains essential: it has relieved levels of want and squalor that many people now find hard to imagine. But it can also, inadvertently, erode community, sorting people into silos to deliver isolated services, weakening their ties to society.

This is the third in my occasional series on possible solutions to the many crises we face. It explores the ways in which we could restore political life by restoring community life. This doesn't mean ditching state provision, but complementing it with something that belongs neither to government nor to the market, but exists in a different sphere, a sphere we have neglected.

There are hundreds of colourful examples of how this might begin, such as community shops, development trusts, food assemblies, community choirs, free universities, time banking, Transition Towns, potluck lunch clubs, local currencies, men's sheds (in which older men swap skills and make new friends), turning streets into temporary playgrounds (like the Playing Out project), secular services (such as Sunday Assembly), lantern festivals, fun palaces and technology hubs.

Turning such initiatives into a wider social revival means creating what practitioners call "thick networks":

projects that proliferate, spawning further ventures and ideas that weren't envisaged when they started. They then begin to develop a dense participatory culture that becomes attractive and relevant to everyone, rather than mostly to socially active people with time on their hands.
A study commissioned by the London borough of Lambeth sought to identify how these thick networks are most likely to develop. The process typically begins with projects that are "lean and live": they start with very little money, and evolve rapidly through trial and error. They are developed not by community heroes working alone, but by collaborations between local people. These projects create opportunities for "micro-participation": people can dip in and out of them without much commitment.
When enough of such projects have been launched, they catalyse a deeper involvement, generating community businesses, co-operatives and hybrid ventures, which start employing people and generating income. A tipping point is reached when 10 to 15% of local residents are engaging regularly. Community then begins to gel, triggering an explosion of social enterprise and new activities, that starts to draw in the rest of the population. The mutual aid these communities develop functions as a second social safety net.
The process, the study reckons, takes about three years. The result is communities that are vibrant and attractive to live in, that generate employment, that are environmentally sustainable and socially cohesive, in which large numbers of people are involved in decision-making. Which sounds to me like where we need to be.
The exemplary case is Rotterdam, where, in response to the closure of local libraries, in 2011 a group of residents created a reading room out of an old Turkish bathhouse. The project began with a festival of plays, films and discussions, then became permanently embedded. It became a meeting place where people could talk, read and learn new skills, and soon began, with some help from the council, to spawn restaurants, workshops, care cooperatives, green projects, cultural hubs and craft collectives.
These projects inspired other people to start their own. One estimate suggests that there are now 1300 civic projects in the city. Deep cooperation and community building now feels entirely normal there. Both citizens and local government appear to have been transformed.
There are plenty of other schemes with this potential. Walthamstow, in east London, could be on the cusp of a similar transformation, as community cafes, cooking projects, workshops and traffic calming schemes begin to proliferate into a new civic commons. *Incredible Edible*, that began as a guerilla planting scheme in Todmorden, in West Yorkshire, growing fruit and vegetables in public spaces and unused corners, has branched into so many projects that it is widely credited with turning the fortunes of the town around, generating start-ups, jobs and training programmes. A scheme to clean up vacant lots in the Spanish city of Zaragoza soon began creating parks, playgrounds, bowling greens, basketball courts and allotments, generating 110 jobs in 13 months.
The revitalisation of community is not a substitute for the state, but it does reduce its costs. The Lambeth study estimates that supporting a thick participatory culture costs around £400,000 for 50,000 residents: roughly 0.1% of local public spending. It is likely to pay for itself many times over, by reducing the

need for mental health provision and social care and suppressing crime rates, recidivism, alcohol and drug dependency. Participatory culture stimulates participatory politics. In fact, it is participatory politics. It creates social solidarity while proposing and implementing a vision of a better world. It generates hope where hope seemed absent. It allows people to take back control.
Most importantly, it can appeal to anyone, whatever their prior affiliations might be. It begins to generate a kinder public life, built on intrinsic values. By rebuilding society from the bottom up, it will eventually force parties and governments to fall into line with what people want. We can do this. And we don't need anyone's permission to begin.

See www.monbiot.com for electronic version which includes links/information sources.
Published in *The Guardian* 8th February 2017

Reviews

The Shepherd's Life: A Tale of the Lake District
James Rebanks
Penguin March 2016
pb 320pp £9.99
ISBN: 978 0141979366

Some people's lives are entirely their own creations. James Rebanks' isn't. The first son of a shepherd, who was the first son of a shepherd himself, he and his family have lived and worked in and around the Lake District for generations. Their way of life is ordered by the seasons and the work they demand, and has been for hundreds of years. A Viking would understand the work they do: sending the sheep to the fells in the summer and making the hay; the autumn fairs where the flocks are replenished; the gruelling toil of winter when the sheep must be kept alive, and the light-headedness that comes with spring, as the lambs are born and the sheep get ready to return to the fells. ….

… Rebanks generalises about blood in our lives – the necessity of it, the reality of it – and he can do this because he has shown us exactly what it takes to look after animals, to feed, shear, medicate and slaughter them. Or have them slaughtered: a graphic section describes a visit to the knacker's yard, which was deep in piles of bloated cows and sheep, "puddles of drying blood and bile, pools of piss … like some vast panorama of animal death by Damien Hirst".

A surprising strand in the book – surprising if you're inclined to stereotype "working men" or "sheep farmers" – emerges when the writer goes to study at Oxford. When he was younger, he

excelled in pub quizzes and had become a book-lover after chancing on WH Hudson's A Shepherd's Life. He wrote a history essay for his elder sister, typing with one finger on a word processor – and it was highly praised by her teacher. Aged 21, he enrolled at the nearest adult learning centre, with no GCSEs, and found study so easy that a tutor advised him to go to university. First he had to teach himself cursive writing from children's manuals.

Also remarkable is that he has a second job advising the Unesco World Centre in Paris on how to help communities to benefit from tourism. Such work is a necessity for Rebanks because hill farming no longer pays him enough to live on. No doubt, with his intelligence and capacity for hard work, he gives the secondary job his all. What is striking is that it makes so little showing in the book – presumably, in part, because farming is much easier to describe than studying. He does say that once he had become a student, people "wanted to talk about current affairs when I met them on the lane".

After detailing his jobs – laying hedges, hanging gates, bathing sheeps' feet and trimming muck from their tails, cleaning roof gutters, and so on – he concludes: "Landscapes like ours are the sum total and culmination of a million little unseen jobs." Among the survival characteristics that an inspector of Herdwick tups (rams) looks for when he drives from farm to farm around the Lake District are alertness, mobility and strong legs. To these he adds style and character "because sheep are cultural objects, almost like art". Again and again, without losing his focus, Rebanks reveals the wider context. He shows wit, likening the shearing of ewes' tails so that rams can mount them more easily to "removing woolly knickers". He also has a succinct imaginative touch, calling the rougher face of a willing stone "plain and unloved". Sometimes his broad perspective gives rise to a well-grounded assertion of value, such as when he remarks that his father's "encyclopaedic knowledge of landscape" makes nonsense of conventional ideas of intelligence.

Extract from *Guardian Review* by David Craig, 4 April 2015

Debt or Democracy: Public Money for Sustainability and Social Justice
Mary Mellor
Pluto, 2015
ISBN: 978-0-7453-3554-4

"For a little while Pooh and *The Floating Bear* were uncertain as to which one of them was meant to be on the top, but after trying one or two different positions, they settled down with *The Floating Bear* underneath and Pooh triumphantly astride it, paddling vigorously with his feet."

A.A. Milne's charming sketches illustrate metaphorically what happens when the tool seeks to become master. In similar vein, as Mary Mellor skilfully demonstrates, the money system is

currently dictating the rules to humanity. Why can public money be made available for banks, she asks, when there is none for the people? Her latest book, *Debt or Democracy* is an explanation of the nature of money in the 21st century. She explores the way in which governments create new money ('public money') arguing that, since money is a public and a social tool, its creation should therefore be democratically accountable. Hence public services could be funded by public money. Given the political will, central banks could reclaim money creation for the people rather than acting as banker to banks. The book is a competent, comprehensible and readable analysis of local, national and international banking, whilst introducing the ways in which such a democratising of money could give birth to an entirely new post capitalist economy.

The private, commercial banking system that currently dominates the economy, does not, and cannot stand alone. The banking system of the global market rests entirely upon public trust and public authority. It is necessarily backed by the public capacity to create public currency free of debt. The fact raises the fundamental question of the political will. Why do citizens and taxpayers allow the private finance system to control the public sector? As taxpayer bailouts and subsidies to private banks indicate, the logical progression is to bring money creation under democratic control so that it can be used to serve public purposes. This conclusion flows from the fact that, as Mellor concisely explains, money creation originally lay in the hands of the sovereign rulers of city or nation states. It has shifted from the ruling classes to the commercial sector, but remains necessarily a public resource. The central bank must now return the sovereign right of money creation, free of debt, to the democratic control of the people.

In casting a searchlight on the choice between debt or democracy, Mellor quietly raises questions which go well beyond the scope of this fascinating book. What could be done if the money system was under democratic control? What socially just and ecologically sustainable policies might cease to be blighted by the myth of market freedom backed by the heavy hand of austerity? The answers are all there, sparkling inside the unappetising cover. All you have to do is open it.

Frances Hutchinson

All the Goods of this world are finite and limited and radically incapable of satisfying the desire that perpetually burns within us for an infinite and perfect good.

Simone Weil

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

The quarterly journal is freely available electronically. For both print out and read only versions see www.douglassocialcredit.com.

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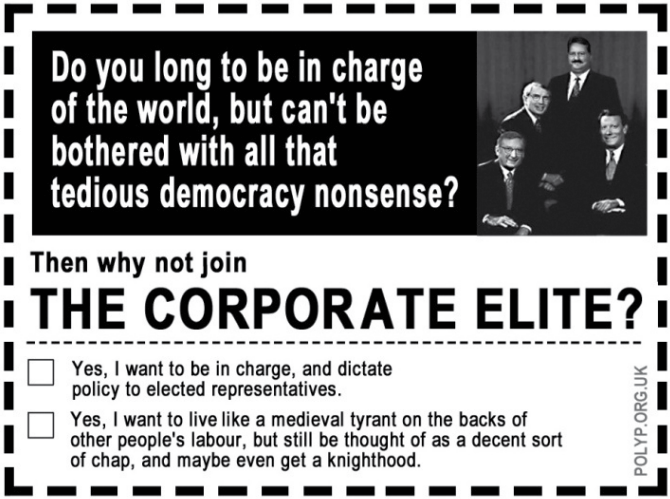
Subscribers are requested to note that the address for all business related to KRP Limited and The Social Credit Secretariat is: PO Box 322, Silsden, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 0YE (UK)

Telephone: 01535 654230/600356
www.douglassocialcredit.com
secretary@socialcredit.co.uk



'ROOM AT THE TOP'

Cartoon from Public Banking Institute

The body of economic theory known as 'social credit' was studied across the world in the inter-war years of the 1920s and 1930s, as ordinary men and women struggled to understand how it was that the world could afford the waste and horror of war. The Social Credit movement was supported by leading figures in the arts, sciences, the church, politics and social activism, all of whom presented the case for peace based upon social justice and environmental sustainability.

What is physically possible
and socially desirable
must be financially possible

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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.

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