

The Social Artist



Spirituality

Farming

Activism

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Editorial

The major issues of welfare reform, poverty, war and ecological degradation all boil down to the single issue of finance – where is the money to come from? The fact that money is a man-made system has been stated time and again in these pages, ever since *The Social Crediter* was first published in the 1930s. The implications of this fact have been considered with a view to bringing the financial system under democratic control. Yet still the workings of the financial system plague our lives, homes and communities with ever-increasing stress and indications of impending social, ecological and financial disaster. A fresh way of looking at things is now called for.

So, could the fact that women give love be as important, perhaps, as the statement that money is, literally, a man-made system? We take it for granted that kings and emperors, army generals, priests, mystics, bankers and world statesmen, even philosophers and economists, appear on the world stage. We can accept that there are women among them, and that those women who do appear are exceptional in their field. Nevertheless,

every single individual – man or woman – who goes down in the annals of history as worthy of note, is born of a woman and is loved for the first crucial seven years of life in a woman-centred household. The very act of gestating and giving birth is an act of love. Yet the modern household in the so-called ‘developed’ world has become little more than a dormitory, where the workers eat, sleep and refresh themselves so that they can go to work to earn the money to shop until they drop. Rearing children is regarded as a spare time activity - like keeping a dog - unless it is done by a paid employee in bureaucratized nursery, in which case it becomes ‘labour’. As far as the man-made system of finance is concerned, the household is an irrelevance. Politically it has no clout whatsoever.

It was not always so, and does not inevitably need to be so. Within rural village communities to the present day the household is the basic unit of production. Based upon the land, the household remains linked to the seasons and the cycles of birth and death, so that such communities retain the enduring

spiritual qualities of what it is to be human. Cities have existed since the beginning of recorded history. But as civilisations came and went, and “the lone and level sands stretch far away”, the land-based rural household, set within the village community, secured the viability of human society.

In her massive two volume account of *“The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time*, the noted sociologist and peace campaigner Elise Boulding describes the hidden world of educated urban women. City women, in ancient and modern times, have always been a crucial influence, both within the household and in the public sphere. Rosalind Miles, in *The Women’s History of the World*, observes:

“Pythagoras, for instance, as every schoolboy knows, was taught by one woman (Aristoclea), and married to another, Theano, a leading mathematician and teacher of philosophy when he met her, and influenced by a third, his daughter Dano, who also concerned herself with the question of women’s education.”

The crucial role of women in developing a love of learning and an awareness of the spiritual life is evident in accounts of the youth of notable characters, but goes unnoticed as we dash about in service to the money system. For example, within St. Anne’s Cathedral in Leeds, stands a statue of St. Anne, the grandmother of Jesus, teaching her daughter to read the Holy Scriptures.

In recent time, the popularity of historical

novels has encouraged authors to research the lives of their characters, giving rise to fascinating glimpses of the childhoods of historical subjects. One of the Sansom novels portrays the Tudor princess Elizabeth receiving the same educational advantages as would a royal boy child. In short, the household in its urban or rural setting has the potential to become far more than the location where women rear and service the waged/salaried slaves demanded by the money system.

Women want something much more than equality with men within an oppressive waged/salaried slavery system. As things stand, women face the triple burden of maintaining the household, caring for the young, the chronically sick and exhausted labourers, whilst ‘breadwinning’ in their own right. Thus men and women in all walks of life have allowed themselves to become slaves of “the money system which is not real in the true sense of the word. It is an artificial thing, man-made, subject to rules so complicated and fraudulent that only an expert in unrealities can understand them.” Since Beatrice Palmer wrote those words in *The Social Crediter* in 1938 (see the reprint in *The Social Artist/Crediter*, Winter 2013) women have continued to want something “*much more than equality*” with men. We are not content to be mere units of labour. As Beatrice Palmer observed decades ago, every woman who uses her common sense knows that food, clothing, leisure and opportunity exist in full measure. There is no real reason why everybody should not have enough of the necessities of life. When enough women, and men, join in the demand, the wishes

of the people must prevail. “So why should we women waste time by working for mere equality, especially when we see the dog’s life most men, even professional men in good positions, have to lead?”

In the present political climate we can wholeheartedly support Beatrice Palmer’s call for a National Dividend. If the present generation of children is not to face social and ecological disaster, it is high time we started to work towards a sane and sustainable future where local, small-scale technologies can be developed. In order

to bring an end to the mass technologies which are producing war and ecological devastation, all that is needed is the political will. Discussion of the pros and cons of a Social Dividend or Universal Basic Income provides a useful starting point for generating that political will. “We want Social Credit, and we want it now!” demanded people in their own local communities across the world in the mid-1930s. The refrain has not lost its relevance with the passage of time.

Meaningful Communication

Pope Francis

Furthermore, when media and the digital world become omnipresent, their influence can stop people from learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously. In this context, the great sages of the past run the risk of going unheard amid the noise and distractions of an information overload. Efforts need to be made to help these media become sources of new cultural progress for humanity and not a threat to our deepest riches. True wisdom, as the fruit of self-examination, dialogue and generous encounter between persons, is not acquired by a mere accumulation of data which eventually leads to overload and confusion, a sort of mental pollution. Real relationships with others, with all the challenges they entail, now tend to be replaced by a type of internet communication which enables us to

choose or eliminate relationships at whim, thus giving rise to a new type of contrived emotion which has more to do with devices and displays than with other people and with nature. Today’s media do enable us to communicate and to share our knowledge and affections. Yet at times they also shield us from direct contact with the pain, the fears and the joys of others and the complexity of their personal experiences. For this reason, we should be concerned that, alongside the exciting possibilities offered by these media, a deep and melancholic dissatisfaction with interpersonal relations, or a harmful sense of isolation, can also arise.

Extract taken from *Laudato Si’: On Care for our Common Home* (Catholic Truth Society June 2015)
pp 116 £4.95

Small Machines for Small Farmers

L. T. C. Rolt

Not long ago I read in a country magazine a short article on the subject of the Combine Harvester. The writer compared this latest juggernaut of mechanised “scientific” agriculture with ancient methods of harvesting by sickle and flail. He deplored the fact that this labour of garnering “the staff of life” which, in the course of unnumbered centuries, had acquired the dignity of ritual, should now have become “just another job” for mechanics and internal combustion engines. But at the same time he confessed that this regret was mere sentiment because he saw the Combine as the latest link in a logical and inevitable chain of development whose earlier links were the Bamford “Sailer,” the Self-Binder and the threshing drum. He thus revealed very clearly that all too prevalent modern habit of mind which, while it waxes sentimental over the past, regards every scientific development as fore-ordained and inevitable.

Today, the word “science” conjures up a mental picture of complex machines and processes quite incompatible with small-scale production, while the term “small producer” evokes either an arcadian vision of “three acres and a cow” or the anachronistic atmosphere of an “art and craft” shop. In order to reveal the fallacy here and to show that fundamentally there

need be no conflict between science and the small producer, we must separate both from these false associations with which we have surrounded them. To-day, when our lives are conditioned and controlled to an unprecedented extent by the fruits of scientific research and invention, this is by no means easy.

“Science” means the pursuit of knowledge, and it is significant that it was once synonymous with the word “philosophy.” In days when Europe was still called Western Christendom, men held certain definite views upon the nature of the universe, of man, and of the relationship between them. These views were the basis of morality, and though he might seldom or never declare them explicitly, the “philosopher” accepted them tacitly before he set out upon his quest for knowledge. Consequently, this fundamental moral conception not only influenced the direction of his quest and measured its fruits, it also governed their application. Thus the pursuit of knowledge was always made subservient to higher ends. To trace how this attitude changed, to be succeeded by the mentality which regards the pursuit of knowledge as an end in itself and certain good, would be beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice it to say that the inadequacy of this conception is already

becoming painfully apparent.

The modern scientist assumes an attitude of detachment. He claims that his research is completely disinterested, being actuated solely by the pursuit of truth; "truth" by his definition being that which can be proved in the light of his own scientific canons. Consequently, while he may deplore the effects of the impact of his discoveries upon human society, he disclaims all responsibility for them because, like "the man in the street," he regards them as inevitable. This assumption of detachment is illusory. The modern scientific research worker is human like the rest of us, and no man can claim to be completely disinterested when he sets forth in search of knowledge; to do so implies a mental vacuum. In fact, like the "philosopher" of the past, he begins his research with certain preconceived notions which not only affect the direction of his research but the way in which he applies its results. Unlike his predecessor, however, he regards the universe as a vast piece of mechanism to be "conquered" and exploited by man in the pursuit of material wealth.

Thus, to apply this argument to the particular example of applied science already mentioned, the Combine Harvester does not represent the outcome of a process of inevitable development, but rather the fruit of knowledge applied in a manner dictated by certain preconceived ideas. Different ideas would have led to a different course of development. This does not mean that we would never have acquired the knowledge and command of materials

necessary to evolve a Combine Harvester, but that we should have applied that knowledge in a different direction. To become a mechanic is not the inevitable destiny of the husbandman. If we can envisage the promise of a better and fuller life than that forced upon us by our mechanistic civilisation, then we must cease to regard its manifestations as inevitable. For as soon as we adopt this critical habit of mind, technics to different and better ends at once becomes possible.

Why should the present trend of scientific development be hostile to the survival of the small producer, and why should his activities be regarded by the disciple of inevitable progress as an anachronism soon destined to disappear? Both questions can be answered in terms of that attitude of predatory materialism which translates all things into the terms of a mechanism to be exploited. Consequently it defines "progress" as the evolution of increasingly efficient methods of exploitation. Even judged from the purely material point of view, however, this idea of "efficiency" ultimately defeats its own object. It is true that man's material wealth and well-being are dependent upon the use which he makes of natural resources. But these resources do not represent an inexhaustible income. Instead, they consist of capital which can easily be squandered. Man can only be assured of a generous and enduring income from that capital if he applies his unique ability fully to the task, not only of making the most of the earth's bounty, but of conserving the source of that bounty. The full use of human ability involves

a qualitative conception of work, while in this idea of conservation lies the true meaning of the words “husbandry” and “culture.” Present notions of progressive scientific “efficiency” pursue diametrically opposite ends. Their ideal is quantitative and concentrates always upon those resources which can be made to yield the maximum monetary return for the minimum of human effort. Such a policy carried to its logical conclusion leads to the exhaustion of the capital resources of the earth and to the neglect, destruction and loss of the great potential of individual creative ability. It is based, not upon a true “culture” at all, but upon a form of predatory nomadism which eventually creates a new barbarism of unprecedented destructive power.

The struggle between the small producer, the husbandman and the craftsman, and the new technocracy which threatens his livelihood is simply the clash of these opposing conceptions of life and work. It is the fight of humanity, culture and stability against mechanism, barbarism and ultimate chaos. This conflict between individual and machine can be traced in every sphere of life and work, but it is in agriculture that it is most readily apparent because it is in this primary occupation that the effects of the policy of exploitation are most obvious.

One of the most promising fields of scientific research at the present time is that which is being carried out in the realm of ecology, in the study, that is, of that subtle and marvellous pattern which, by innumerable links of mutual interdependence, unites the animal, vegetable and mineral worlds in one

harmonious whole. Those engaged in this study are finding out the nature of the disasters which occur when these links are broken and the harmony of the whole is disrupted. Nature’s inexorable laws compel all forms of life to conform to this pattern with one exception—man. He, too, in the last analysis, must stand or fall by his recognition or ignorance of these laws, but he alone is given a measure of freedom actively to contribute to the creative pattern of the whole. But this gift is double-edged, for the power to create carries with it the power to destroy.

Man the husbandman, as typified by the peasant or small farmer tilling his own acres, properly fulfils this creative function because his way of life and the end to which his labour is directed do not conflict with natural laws. He may possess no accurate knowledge of their working, though he may become intuitively aware of their existence and observe some part of their operation. His goal is not the maximum profit which he can wring from his land in the shortest time and with the least expenditure of labour, but with the real wealth which his acres will yield, not only to-day but to-morrow. As one writer has summarised it, his maxim is “output per acre per century.” The fertility of his land is his capital; the more he can increase that capital, the higher will be the income which he and his successors will derive from it, and the more men and beasts the earth will support. In this way he makes the only positive contribution to the real wealth of the community. He is, in fact, the one and only foundation of a true culture.

The aim of “output per acre per century” makes observance of natural laws obligatory, and this, translated into practice, means intensive mixed farming. Man, even if we accept for the moment the materialist’s view and consider him solely as a piece of mechanism, is admirably fitted to carry out the diverse activities which such mixed farming involves. His body is the most complex but at the same time the most versatile and adaptable machine in the world.

The machines of modern “scientific” agriculture have now become so highly specialised in their function that they compel the farmer to become a specialist in order to survive. The small producer with a mixed holding cannot hope, with any one crop, to compete with the mechanised farmer practising extensive monoculture. He must either go under or become a specialist himself. Without the encouragement of a subsidy, for example, he could not grow a small acreage of wheat because the price set by the multi-furrow plough, combine drill and combine harvester would not recompense him for the labour involved. On the other hand, if he acquired this formidable array of mechanism, he would then cease to be a mixed farmer. One machine demands another. He could not invest £3000 in a Combine Harvester, a pick-up baler and a grain dryer simply for use, during one week of the year, in harvesting perhaps a single field. Thus these ingenious machines lead inevitably to larger farms staffed with mechanics and practising extensive monoculture. Such farms can produce astonishing figures of “output per man” and also, for a time, high yields. But for a time

only. For such monoculture inevitably upsets the natural ecological balance of any region in which it is practised. The ultimate result of thus flouting natural laws are crop disease, the exhaustion of soil fertility leading to erosion by flood and drought, and the decline of first the quality and ultimately the quantity of the crop. Furthermore, it depopulates the land, making the erstwhile husbandman a homeless nomad trekking from farm to farm in search of casual labour at peak seasons. For whereas mixed farming spreads the work of the year fairly evenly over the seasons, monoculture can be carried on with a very small labour force for most of the year, calling for additional labour only at the short peak season of harvest. There is no need to dwell further upon these effects of monoculture. They have been fully dealt with in such books as *The Rape of the Earth*, or *Ill Fares the Land*—a damning and fully documented account of the social consequences of monoculture in the U.S.A.

We should follow a very different course. The great knowledge and command of natural processes which we have acquired in the last century must be applied to a different and better purpose. It should be harnessed to the work of creating a civilisation based upon a healthy and fertile soil husbanded by a healthy and populous rural community. The unit of such a community can only be the family farm engaged in intensive mixed farming.

Because we reject the costly and cumbrous machines of modern mechanised agriculture as incompatible with natural laws and with the needs of a society based on the small mixed farm,

this does not mean a return to the sickle and the flail as the epitome of progress in this direction. But we must summon the resolution and humility to acknowledge the possibility of error and, by studying the way of life which these ancient tools symbolise, endeavour to apply our new scientific knowledge in such a way that it will fertilise its renewed growth. Such pioneer work is beset with difficulties, but, once given the driving force of firm purpose, the possibilities for good are immense.

If life in a region were to be devoted to the task of utilising all natural resources for the benefit of the regional community in accordance with ecological laws, then not only would both land and people prosper, but the vexed question of the control of the machine would cease to exist. For by recognising and observing natural laws man becomes the master instead of the slave of his tools. Furthermore, by being diverted into channels moulded by an overriding pattern and purpose, our technical knowledge would be manifested in new forms. Our machines, for instance, instead of being large, complex and of highly specialised function, would have to be small, simple and versatile.

Such a scheme of land settlement and development would call for great schemes of drainage, irrigation and re-forestation. It means minute study of the conditions of ecological balance in every region, and the evolution of breeds of plants and animals best suited to local conditions of soil and climate which influence that ecology. Scientists and engineers who to-day each pursue their

own highly specialised and frequently conflicting lines of research could cooperate and pool their knowledge in the great common task of regenerating a raped earth, and a distraught humanity.

To consider the particular application of every branch of technics to this work of regeneration would obviously be beyond the scope of this chapter. Examples only must suffice, and if in these I emphasise mechanical engineering it is because that happens to be the particular department of technics with which I am most familiar.

Small-scale intensive production, in both agriculture and industry, involves a revolution in the application of mechanical methods. "Look after the quality and the quantity will look after itself" might well be the motto of the small producer. Consequently his acceptance or rejection of machines and scientific processes should not be determined by such questions as "How much labour will it save?" or "Will it do a cheaper job?" but by the craftsman's arbiter which no expediency can divert: "Will it do a better job?" In the particular case of the husbandman, a better job means one that will leave the land in as good, or preferably better, heart than it was before.

This last consideration enforces a strong argument in favour of the continued use of the horse for draught purposes on the small farm as opposed to the machine which tends to pack the soil and which drops no dung. But, provided the health of the land is never forgotten, the engineer can assist and supplement hand

and horsepower in innumerable ways. Skilled handwork, however arduous it may be, not only brings the reward of a sense of pride in the article produced; there is a satisfaction derived from the work itself which no figures can assess. But not all handwork calls for skill; some involves drudgery as soul-less as machine-minding. To live by the work of hands unaided by tools and without applying the principle of division of labour would involve unremitting toil for very limited results. Civilisation is built upon the use of tools and division of labour, but the craftsman's qualitative standard is the only certain safeguard against the misuse of both. His tools do not rob him of his skill and the control which he exercises over the article he produces; they enable him to enhance his mastery over his craft. For him, division of labour does not mean division of responsibility; it gives him the freedom necessary to perfect his craft.

In the Vale of Evesham, for instance, local agriculture is carried out to a great extent by small producers. Consequently it is one of the most thickly populated rural areas in England. Yet at the same time it has been estimated that the Vale is one of the most highly mechanised farming districts, a fact which refutes the popular belief that the application of technics to agriculture necessarily means larger farms and rural depopulation.

The Evesham smallholder calls for a machine that is light, robust, simple and versatile, and the answer has been the small row-crop tractor, or the two-wheeled "walking tractor" with their attachments. Yet he knows the limitations

of these machines, and therefore he remains their master. They, and not the mechanical monsters of the ranch-farm, are the successors of the implements which his forebears used in their open fields. When particular conditions are unsuitable for their use, he readily reverts to skilled hand labour.

The modern walking tractor is certainly a versatile tool. While it is dangerous to generalise, a good machine may plough two acres in a working day for a fuel consumption of little more than two gallons. Ridging ploughs and rolls can also be attached, or harrows, cultivators, drills and hoes of different types fitted to a common tool bar. By means of a power-driven cutter-bar the tractor will also cut hay or corn, a recent innovation which partially solves the small producer's harvesting problem. Finally, by means of a pulley power take-off, the engine can drive a small saw-bench, chaff-cutter, mill or milking machine. There is, in fact, much room for further developments in the range of small machines which the tractor could drive. A miniature threshing drum, for instance, used in conjunction with the small corn mill which is already on the market, would readily enable the small producer to convert his own wheat crop into flour for his own use.

In its present stage of development these small tractors are admirably fitted to serve the needs of a small producer engaged in intensive mixed farming on orthodox lines.

Published in *The Small Farmer*, edited by H J Massingham (Collins 1947)

Food and Farming

Michael Rowbotham

Agriculture and the food industry offer a perfect case study of the effects of debt financing. All the factors and trends discussed in previous chapters are exemplified—heavy debt; bias in favour of large businesses; science and technology gone mad; mix of poor quality and good quality produce, but with a heavy market bias in favour of cheaper food; consumer preference blatantly overridden; excessive transport; overcentralisation; powerlessness of the industry concerned to act counter to the dictates of a price-cutting market; government subsidies; spare capacity, and a practicable alternative simply begging to be applied.

The powerless consumer

Perhaps the best measure of the consumer's total subservience to the economic trends created by debt finance is to be found in food. What the consumer wants should be a priority in any commercial venture, but especially so in the essentials of life. Food one would expect to be paramount; the one aspect of the economy under true consumer

control. In fact all the evidence is that the consumer has no control over the food industry which has been developing for decades away from supplying what people really want.

The food industry is where mass production, bulk transport, automation and centralisation have had some of their worst effects and been taken to the most unwarranted lengths. In recent years, people have been horrified to learn the details of what they are eating. In order to mass produce and supply food at the lowest cost possible, the natural ingredients and nutritional value have been increasingly destroyed with aggressive treatments; dried at high temperatures, grown and then processed with chemical supplements, and doctored with preservatives and colourants. Animals have been kept under ever more appalling conditions, fed hormones and antibiotics as growth stimulants, whilst many meat products have been degraded by the addition of ground up carcasses and offal.

There is growing concern over the safety as well as the nutritional value of food, expressed not just by consumers, but food scientists. Many products are grown or processed using chemicals whose individual and synergistic effects are poorly understood. These are present at levels which are not measurably toxic but the assumption that they are therefore safe is quite false. The precautionary principle—that many chemicals which are toxins at high levels should also be regarded as toxins at low levels—is noticeably absent in the food industry. Consumers are reassured by politicians and scientists with a clear vested interest in the industry, and concerned scientists are forever being asked to ‘produce the evidence’ against the increasing use of chemicals in growing and processing food when, in the nature of the case, evidence of contributory and progressive build-up of toxic effects only emerges when it is too late. In addition, there is abundant evidence that crops and meat products produced under high yield, chemical input methods lack many vital nutritional ingredients.

Some consumers have tried to go organic, both for safety and nutritional value, but the cost is prohibitive for most people. In addition, the retail networks, and in particular the food processing industry, are founded on the bulk supply of cheap food. Finding food that strikes a sensible balance between price, health and convenience is becoming ever more difficult. Supermarkets advertise their ‘healthy options’ but these are generally expensive or select a single nutritional factor—such as low fat content—and disguise the fact that the remainder of the

product is no different from the standard range. But at the very same time as there is widespread consumer disquiet about the current structure of our food industry, technology is being vigorously applied to pursue the same policy even further. The next range of foodstuffs ‘demanded by the consumer’ are set to be cereals, vegetables and animals genetically engineered for yet greater productivity, and the resultant food products irradiated for as long a shelf life as possible. These goods, produced in huge quantities in one region and bulk transported around the globe, are already starting to appear in supermarkets, being favoured as cheap ingredients by processing companies, and making an increasing impact throughout the food market. Not only is this trend in clear defiance of consumer demand, but vast sums of money are being spent, in an attempt to win over public opinion, by the multinational corporations driving these changes through.

It is when one begins to look at the components of the price of food the debt under which farming operates, the competitive inefficiency of the distribution network and the huge hidden cost of transport, that the persistent decline in food quality begins to find an explanation. The first aspect that needs to be explored is farming debt. If there is one sector of the community that has suffered more than the consumer from modern agricultural trends, it has been the farmer.

Extract taken from *The Grip of Death* (Jon Carpenter Publishing 1998) £18 ISBN: 978-1-897766-40-8. Available via the Publications page of our website: www.douglassoccredit.com

Blessing the Hands that Feed Us: Lessons from a 10-mile diet

Vicki Robin

Thriving Together

Local eating could seem like a personal choice that only hippies or Yuppies might make, but it is actually a collective project for a shared future. How to do that is the question. How do we have our (local) cake and eat it too (not sacrifice the benefits of anywhere food)? This is the challenge. By what agreements, compromises, laws, customs, rituals, or celebrations will we bring forth on this earth a future of common resilience, flourishing together?

In the seventies when we were waking up to spirituality, we'd say "the longest journey is the twelve inches between head and heart." Now the necessary journey is "from me to we," from self-interest to common interest, from YOYO (you're on your own) to WAITT (slow down, we're all in this together). The task now is to gather up our hard-earned freedoms and apply them to shaping a future that works for all. As it says in the Bible in Matthew 5:45, "He makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Same with the earth's living systems—what affects them affects us all. The sun and rain of climate change fall on everyone. No-one has the option of cutting loose from the collective, presuming she can make it on her own or

survive at the expense of others.

We need to find a way to be free—and cooperate. To be creative and work for the common good. In short, to be part of a community and to be fully ourselves. What I call relational eating—being in relationship with the food, farms, farmers, forests, waters, soils, air, and other critters in a local living food system—is such a path.....

Natural Hope

Hope is like fertility in the sense Chris Korrow, my biodynamic farmer, explained to me. It's not something we put into life; it comes out of life naturally, like warmth or a sweet smell. Our task is not to forcibly change bad situations but rather to notice the seeds of hope we might cultivate. We don't make hope. We cooperate with it.

This kind of hope isn't made by the will nor does it descend like grace from Heaven. It isn't invented or imagined. It doesn't require proof or respond to moods. It's there all the time. It simply requires watering.

Nothing lives without hope, because hope is actually what every living thing expresses by getting up in the morning. Life hopes! Every second we're alive, hope is there in our steadily beating

hearts and our breathing. Hope is as much a fact of life as babies—which are themselves evidence of life’s hopeful tendencies.

I spent a few months volunteering at a hospice facility to prepare myself as best I could for the imminent death of my partner Joe Dominguez. I’d been shielded as most of us have, from seeing people sicken and die, and I needed to participate in that process somehow. There at that hospice wing of a hospital I saw how the heart keeps hanging on to life even when the mind has surrendered or given up. I’ve seen people ready to die, wishing to die, who live on because life wants to take the next breath. Life goes on naturally.

“Life goes on” is not a weary statement of monotony, like Macbeth’s “Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day.”

“Life goes on” has the exuberant, inevitable power of a great waterfall.

Once I discovered this natural hope, it was easy to embrace it not as an antidote to the data but as a deeper truth in which the data is generated. The data doesn’t contradict hope. Hope itself generates the data; why would researchers generate the data if not hoping to contribute to maintaining or improving life? If the data is disturbing, that’s life at work, providing us with the kick in the pants we need to change. It worked with the ozone hole. Data showed up and we acted and the hole diminished. The weight of data is now pushing against policy makers, moving them (some would say glacially) toward climate remediation.

But honestly, there wasn’t much reason for hope in the human world. Forests may regenerate, life may go on, but many think it has a better shot without our human presence.....

My breakthrough came when I realized I actually don’t know what’s going to happen a week from now, so how can I be sure that my predictions for a decade from now will be true. It’s like seeing a car going south at sixty miles per hour on 525, Whidbey Island’s backbone highway, and saying, as it passes you standing in Bayview, “That fella will drive right into Puget Sound in ten minutes.” We might predict that, except we don’t know if he’ll slow down, turn onto a side road, get a flat tire, remember he left his wallet on the dresser and turn around, or get a speeding ticket. And we are certainly discounting that he’ll probably drive onto a ferry and not simply sail off the pier.

The present suggests but doesn’t predict because we can’t see all the factors in play. A lot can change between a measurement and an outcome.

Saying you don’t know how things will turn out doesn’t deny the data, but it does allow you to release your convictions, widen your frame, see more options, head in a better direction, or slow down. As you do this, you might just find more hope-filled possibilities and turn your attention there.

I’d based my life for several decades on this overshoot data. I don’t have to stop believing in it, ignoring everything

the climate and resource scientists have said and the world's best minds have confirmed. I simply need to allow for some mystery and humility between today and fifty years from now.

As I was writing these words, news came that a mentor and friend for nearly thirty years passed away: Ernest "Chick" Callenbach, author of *Ecotopia* and wise elder of sane living. He composed a final essay as cancer was doing its dirty work, and tucked it into his hard drive to be opened after he was gone. Among the many wise ideas was this section on hope:

Hope. Children exude hope, even under the most terrible conditions, and that must inspire us as our conditions get worse. Hopeful patients recover better. Hopeful test candidates score better. Hopeful builders construct better buildings. Hopeful parents produce secure and resilient children. In groups, an atmosphere of hope is essential to shared successful effort: "Yes, we can!" is not an empty slogan, but a mantra for people who intend to do something together—whether it is rescuing victims of hurricanes, rebuilding flood-damaged buildings on higher ground, helping wounded people through first aid, or inventing new social structures (perhaps one in which only people are "persons," not corporations). We cannot know what threats we will face. But ingenuity against adversity is one of our species' built-in resources. We cope, and faith in our coping capacity is perhaps our biggest resource of all.

I like heading into the unknown with a powerful question so I asked, Can local really scale up to feed the people?

At first blush, scaling up local sounds ridiculous. You can't have large-scale

small scale. Local by its very nature is diverse, entrepreneurial, adaptive to microclimates, individualistic unto quirky. Local is relational.....

.....Maybe local can't feed the world the way the global industrial system does, but "locals feeding locals" can multiply sideways, linking arms. In fact this is already happening. The strength of local is the very everywhere-ness of it, the guerrilla-ness of it.

Now we are on new ground with a new question. How can local scale sideways—and feed the world? I like that question. In it I see the hope I've been seeking, a place to stand, actions to take, and a humble attitude. No longer fixated on fixing or stopping things, I can participate in restoring, regenerating and relocalizing life. You could call it "relational hope." In fact, I think I will.

It takes a System to Feed a Village

If vertical integration is the key strategy of local brands, then horizontal distribution with webs of relationships is the strategy of scaling local sideways. we need to repair our food web. We need a system to support all the people and institutions that bring local food to our table: the growers, distributors, butchers, packagers, processors, marketers, retail outlets, chefs, lenders, advocates, educators, and artists. It takes a system to feed a village, to paraphrase the old African proverb.

Blessing the Hands that Feed Us is published by Penguin Books (New York 2014) ISBN: 978-0-14-312614-0

The Flight From Conversation

Lauren Cassani Davis

The psychologist Sherry Turkle argues that replacing face-to-face communication with smartphones is diminishing people's capacity for empathy.

Many of my daily conversations don't involve eye contact. My roommate texts me from a neighboring bedroom. My boss sends me an instant message from a few feet away. Sometimes, the substitution of face-to-face talk for words on a screen makes me uneasy. Yet other days, it slips past unnoticed, and I too reach for a keyboard instead of finding someone's gaze. Sherry Turkle, a clinical psychologist and sociologist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has spent the past 30 years observing how people react and adapt to new technologies that change the way we communicate. In her latest book, *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*, Turkle argues that texts, tweets, Facebook posts, emails, instant messages, and snapchats—simultaneous, rapid-fire “sips” of online communication—have replaced face-to-face conversation, and that people are noticing the consequences. Over-reliance on devices, she argues, is harming our ability to have valuable face-to-face conversations, “the most human thing we do,” by splitting our attention and diminishing our capacity for empathy. The book combines Turkle's research

from the past five years—interviews and anecdotes from children, teenagers, college students, parents, educators and managers—with her own insights from her background in psychology. Together, the stories she presents offer a snapshot of people grappling with the social consequences of changing communication technology.

Saving the Lost Art of Conversation

In her previous book, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other*, Turkle documented the wholehearted embrace of smartphones and other new technologies. Now, she writes about growing discontent: children begging their parents to put down their phones at dinner, people feeling neglected as their friends put conversations “on pause” to disappear into their smartphones. Turkle's central diagnosis: “We turn to our phones instead of each other,” in friendships, in families, in romantic relationships, and at work. Turkle's prescriptions: Carve out “sacred spaces” for conversation in day-to-day life—no devices at the dinner table, study and lounge spaces that are wi-fi free. Abandon the myth of multitasking for good—it is neither efficient nor conducive to empathy, she says—and instead embrace “unitasking,” one thing at a time. Resist the urge to see the smartphone as the universal tool that should replace everything.

While Turkle paints a bleak portrait of what devices may be doing to the social and emotional development of digital natives, she writes that ultimately, she is encouraged by “young people’s discontent.” I can’t help but agree, as a member of the generation somewhere between digital natives and web-

neophytes—I got my first iPhone at 16, and it marked a profound inflection point in my life. But Turkle is also an outsider to the younger generation. It remains to be seen whether, and how, my peers and those younger than us will “reclaim conversation” for themselves.

The Politics of Mothering

Vanessa Olorenshaw

.....If a mother were to leave a child at home, alone, for significant periods of time every day, she would be prosecuted for child abandonment or child neglect. The State imposes a duty of care onto the parent. Yet, despite these criminal and civil duties on parents, there is no accompanying responsibility of the State to a mother, no recognition of a mother’s work and performance of her duty, no reward for the work she does, and no respect for work or status of mother.
think about what that means: It means that the State recognises that a child *must* be cared for

Libraries are closing.....
Playgroups can be few and far between - often relying on volunteers.... For a Government to cut funding to services, groups and activities to support parents in raising their children at home only for policymakers and commentators then to say to parents.: ‘you are failing your children by not providing access to enrichment’ is cruel and rich indeed. The answer is not increased investment

in institutionalised childcare and more hostile attempts to force mothers into workforce participation. Rather, it is proper consideration of the needs of a society which actually values young children and their parents.

In removing the universality of Child Benefit, George Osborne was able to take a first step in annihilating mothers’ rights, unnoticed. He did not stand up in Parliament and say ‘We are going to remove the only payment in a mother’s own right’ or ‘We are going to render a mother at home with the children at the mercy of the charity of her partner’. Had he done so, I would imagine at least one or two ears would have pricked up, smarting at the blatantly sexist and discriminatory nature of the announcement.

The result: in the 21st Century, there are, yet again, women who have ‘not a penny coming into her home in her name’ as a safety net. Her crime: her decision to raise her children and support her family

at home. Her punishment: being rendered dependent and invisible.....

Take a mother who sacrifices an income to care for her young family.....she performs a quite amazing feat of sustaining life inside her body. She births her baby. She nurtures her baby. She may or may not breastfeed her baby and continue to do so in responsive maternal care. She is caring and loving. She is instilling values. She is teaching life skills. She is teaching her child how to speak, how to recognise numbers, shapes, colours, car makes and models in the street, to name a few. She provides nutritious meals, three times a day. She dresses her children. She does the school run. She does voluntary work supporting new mums to breastfeed. She changes nappies. She wipes bottoms and noses. She attends to her children's needs. She kisses and cuddles her children. She teaches manners. She takes her children to all manner of playgroups, parks and activities. She resolves conflict. Performs simple first aid where necessary - let's kiss that better. She takes them with her while she does necessary tasks for the running of the house and home - shopping, bank, post office. She teaches a child how to interact in the world. She reads to her children. She provides loving guidance. She sees to their emotional needs. She bathes her children. She puts her children to bed. And is woken numerous times a night. Did I say she loves her children? And that's just one day. And that is not the end of it. And that's just babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers. I could go on, to discuss the needs of older children - emotional security, guidance, help with learning. In short, everything that matters. The work this mother (and, I will spell out again that a primary caregiver might well

be a father, but come on, I am primarily talking about mothers' desire, taboo, to mother their children) is valuable and rewarding, and continues to be throughout her children's lives. We are wilfully ignoring the stories and pride of mothers who chose a path of family life. If we dismiss the accounts of women who are living their lives, quietly but nevertheless happily, and continue only to heed those women who are already on a platform to speak, and who have got there by explicitly and necessarily choosing not to raise their children at home, we distort the picture and fail millions of mothers.

The combination of compelled work outside the home and care of a mother's children by strangers in the numbers we see today is a new thing. Many mothers feel justifiably unhappy leaving their children in the care of others and experience real pain in separation from the children (a sentiment echoed often by the children). The work we do at home in caring for young children and older children in the school holidays, in the community and in voluntary organisations, is utterly disregarded.

Extract taken from *The Politics of Mothering*, currently available as an e-booklet on [www.facebook.com/Politics of Mothering](http://www.facebook.com/PoliticsofMothering).

The American theologian Walter Wink writes of 'The Myth of Redemptive Violence' which has condemned mankind to repeat the same mistakes over and over again. One domination system replaces another...By meeting violence with violence, we are always in danger of becoming what we most oppose and deplore.

Book Reviews

Spiritual Activism : Leadership as Service

by *Alastair McIntosh* and *Matt Carmichael*

Green Books (2016) hb £19.99 pp 224
ISBN: 978-0857843005

This book is the product of a long and fruitful co-operation between two seasoned activists from different generations. Alastair McIntosh has been described as one of the world's leading environmental campaigners. A Scot who lives in the Govan area of Glasgow, he has taught spiritual activism around the world. Co-author Matt Carmichael is a secondary school teacher who has been campaigning on global justice issues since the 1990s, and is a founding member of Schumacher North.

The book draws on a very broad range of different areas of knowledge and schools of thought, different cultures and periods of history. From Freud and Jung to Pussy Riot and liberation theology, from Gerard Winstanley's Diggers to Pashtun resistance to the British Raj, it integrates psychology, philosophy and theology with the desire to bring about positive change, both in the world and within ourselves. Yet its broad intellectual sweep remains accessible to the general reader, because it is conveyed in clear, readable prose, and very little prior knowledge is assumed. At the back of the book there is a very useful glossary which explains some of the more

specialised terms used, although the book is reassuringly free of jargon.

The book will serve as both a guide and an inspiration for people who are involved in all forms of non-violent activism. The authors offer advice and guidance in a way that is humble, self-deprecating and never patronising. Their considerable combined experience gives their counsel authenticity, and they even agonise over the use of the word leader or leadership, stressing that a good 'leader' should always be happy to do the most mundane tasks or take a back seat when appropriate.

The path which the authors wish to guide us down is not an easy path, demanding humility and an honesty with ourselves which can be very challenging. We don't just need to know what we are doing and why, but why we are doing it. 'We must wrestle constantly with the psychological honesty of purifying our motive.' But activism rooted in and nourished by such truth and self-knowledge can be truly transformative, and avoid the many traps which are only too easy to fall into.

I found one of the most enjoyable features of the book to be the Case Studies found at the end of each chapter. These briefly tell the story of a particular person or persons, the movement with which they are associated, and how they illustrate the points that have been made in the chapter. Throughout there are inspiring and very encouraging examples

of non-violent activism which do not get the coverage they should in the mainstream media.

The book was written in the aftermath of the Islamist terror attack on the office of the French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo. Reading it in the aftermath of the November 2015 Paris attacks gave it extra resonance, and brought a sad urgency to its message of non-violence. As the authors acknowledge, 'This is, indeed, a terrible time to be advocating "spiritual" activism. That's why the time is right.'

Religions may have been hijacked to fuel tragic conflicts around the world, but this does not mean that activists should, or can, dispense with the spiritual dimension, which the authors believe is inherent to being human. Instead of the dogmas which people are prepared to die for, we need a spirituality which people want to live for, and which enriches the struggle for a better world. In this brand of activism, say the authors, 'We are on a journey that reconnects to the life force.'

The book makes a very persuasive argument for non-violence, which at the current time should be particularly valued. The authors cite what American theologian Walter Wink calls 'the myth

of Redemptive Violence' which has condemned mankind to repeat the same mistakes over and over again. 'One domination system replaces another, just as George Orwell's pigs morph into humans at the end of Animal Farm.' By meeting violence with violence, we are always in danger of becoming what we most oppose and deplore.

So not only does this book offer some very thoughtful advice on how to do effective activism, it will also help people who want to be an effective, healthy and balanced activist. It blends the political with the personal, the internal with the external, the material with the spiritual in a very holistic way. Readers who do not see themselves getting involved in non-violent activism will still be able to take a great deal from the book, in an enrichment and expansion of how they view the world, and how they see themselves in relation to it.

For believers in non-violence, these are challenging days. But as the authors say, 'Time is precious. Let us embark.'

Bernadette Meaden writes on political and social issues, and currently blogs for Ekklesia, the beliefs and values think tank. <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/blog/1251>

Dementia: Anthroposophical Perspectives

by *Judith von Halle*

Temple Lodge Publishing (April 2015)

pb 84 pp £10.55

ISBN: 978-1906999742

In the first chapter of this book Judith von Halle gives an extremely

clear and concise introduction to the anthroposophical view of the reality of the human being, taking into consideration the physical, etheric, astral and the I. What these components of the human being are, and how they fit together, is described with absolute clarity, allowing the reader to fully comprehend the rest of the book.

This book on dementia from an anthroposophical, *i.e.*, from a spiritual scientist, perspective, will be of great interest to anyone who has a relationship with the, as yet, (especially in mainstream medicine) unquantifiable illness. Speaking, as someone who has direct, close personal experience with dementia, this book gives invaluable insights into this phenomenon. It answers many questions which have yet to be addressed by mainstream practitioners. Certainly the ones with whom I have come into contact have not even touched on the subject. These matters have, however, been close to my heart for some time.

In this increasingly frenetic world, where growing old is mostly seen as something to be avoided at all costs, this book is a gift which will help to regain some of the lost wisdom of this age. The journey through the book provides many insights to stimulate ways of thinking about our own life and its processes that can assist us towards living a more balanced life. We are offered the option to become conscious of what we are approaching, as we age. In Chapter 5 a very important aspect of the book comes to life. This is the fact that Western and European medicine is sadly lacking in its approach to a whole realm of reality, that of the spiritual. As Judith succinctly says,

“An entire culture would have to develop the will to educate itself in this respect.”

This is one area where discussion and communication need to be opened up in the mainstream arena. Again this opinion is born out in my direct experiences with medical practitioners who have no concrete insight into this illness and

treat it as a mystery rather than giving any practical strategies for coping with it. And that is what is sorely needed. In the last chapter of the book Judith does just this and gives some very sound advice based on her understanding of this epidemic. And these are all things that can be implemented in varying degrees depending on one's own circumstances. This is a wonderfully uplifting book. It constantly offers food for thought, whilst indicating opportunities for readers to get to grips with their own experiences of dementia. When I have read other literature on the subject I have been left with a desolate feeling of hopelessness because there is never any satisfactory explanations given for what is a truly painful and debilitating condition for all concerned. But here we are gifted such a deep and thorough explanation that it stimulates just the type of living imaginations Judith talks of in the latter part of the book.

Some parts of the early discussion around the ‘being’ of the human (physical, etheric, astral and I) may need a couple of readings to get the concept embedded if you are unfamiliar with the basic principles of anthroposophy, but I urge you, most strongly, to persevere, for the insights that arise at the end of the book are quite inspirational.

Julia O’Keeffe is an actress and director and founder member of PaperZoo Theatre Company. She also works for the Alhambra Theatre, Bradford as Co-ordinator with the Royal Shakespeare Company’s Learning and Performance Network that uses Active Techniques with Teachers and pupils to engage them in Shakespeare. julia@paperzootheatrecompany.co.uk

Social Credit literature currently available in print or online.

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

The Political Economy of Social Credit and Guild Socialism

Frances Hutchinson and Brian Burkitt, (2005)
£12.99

Down to Earth:

A Guide to Home Economics

Frances Hutchinson (2013) £5

The Grip of Death:

A study of modern money, debt slavery and destructive economics

Michael Rowbotham £18

Understanding the Financial System: Social Credit Rediscovered

Frances Hutchinson (2010) £15

What Everybody REALLY Wants to Know About Money

Frances Hutchinson £12

Asses in Clover (Fictional dystopia)

Eimar O'Duffy (2003) £11

This Age of Plenty

A new conception of economics: Social Credit

Louis Even (Pilgrims of Saint Michael)

The Social Artist

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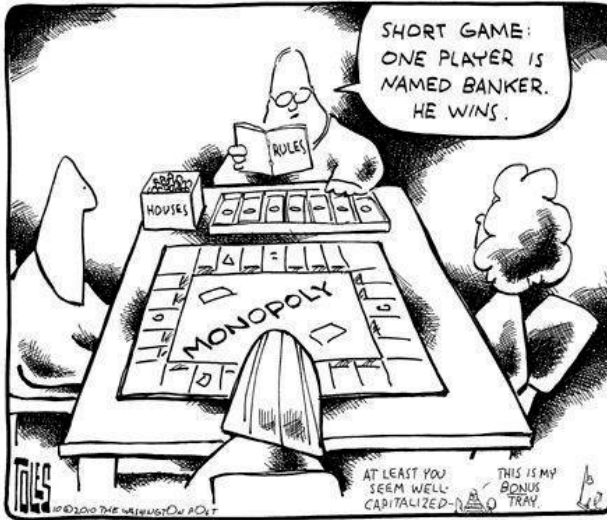
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Cartoon sourced from: Public Banking Institute

**If we want to achieve a different society
where the principle of money operates equitably,
if we want to abolish the power money has over people historically,
and position money in relationship to freedom, equality, fraternity ...
then we must elaborate a concept of culture
and a concept of art
where every person must be an artist ...**

Joseph Beuys *What is Money? A Discussion*, Clairview Press, 2010.

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