

The SOCIAL CREDITER

For Economic Democracy

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Editorial

This issue of *TSC* is devoted to finance and farming. However, researching the authenticity of Clifford Hugh Douglas' references (see page 3) to the extermination of millions of Russians as a means to eradicate opposition to collectivisation in 1919, and the mass killing of Russians and other nationalities in 1942, I came across the following quotation. It is from the pocket of the body of Ernie Pyle, a popular American war correspondent killed in 1945, within three years of Douglas writing the extracts quoted on page 3:

"Those who are gone would not wish themselves to be a millstone of gloom around our necks.

"But there are many of the living who have had burned into their brains forever the unnatural sight of cold dead men scattered over the hillsides and in the ditches along the high rows of hedge throughout the world.

"Dead men by mass production - in one country after another - month after month and year after year.

"Dead men in winter and dead men in summer.

"Dead men in such familiar promiscuity that they become monotonous.

"Dead men in such monstrous infinity that you almost come to hate them" (Quoted by Martin Gilbert in *Descent into Barbarism: a history of the twentieth century 1933-1951* HarperCollins 1998 p 667)

Not only men in service, but also civilian men, women and children were slaughtered in their millions in Dresden, the USSR, Hiroshima, Vietnam, Iraq and the constant succession of military dictatorships throughout the 20th century.

Numbers can numb the mind. The personal reaction of surviving witnesses may well be to silence their memories and seek normality. Hence the obligation on the writers and readers of publications like *TSC* to clarify the issues so that the deaths "by mass destruction - in one country after another - month after month and year after year" can be replaced by a saner political economy.

The quotes taken from *TSC* of 1942-3 demonstrate that Douglas forms part of a widely-cavassed alternative to corporate capitalism, being opposed to war, environmental degradation and mass exploitation of the earth and its peoples. Writing 20 years before Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Douglas makes a firm link between the planned destruction of animals and humans and the degradation of the land. Both forms of action lead to an escalation of destruction and violence, as recent years continue to testify, both in the slaughter of people, the BSE crisis and the wholesale destruction of traditional farming across the world. The increase in migrants from new members of the EU is already anticipated, as the drive for 'cheap' cash crops drives traditional farmers from the land and into city slums. These people will swell the numbers of 'illegal immigrants' producing 'cheap' food packages for the supermarket shelves for £1 per day. Today, farming in the UK struggles because it is 'unprofitable'. Meanwhile, rather than feed the poor, we are fed and clothed by the poor (notion used in Fair Trade publicity).

As the extract from *TSC* of sixty years ago shows, social credit is concerned with far more than mere monetary reform. However, as Douglas was at pains to demonstrate, the solution to the major problems of war against the land and its peoples cannot be found without taking the workings of the money system into

account. Hence Wendell Berry's statement that: "Industrialism begins with technological invention. But agrarianism begins with givens: land, plants, animals, weather, hunger, and the birthright knowledge of agriculture" needs to be tempered with the fact that, as we demonstrate in *The Politics of Money*, industrialism, and its associated technologies, begin with the commodification of the land, animals, plants and human labour. By 'commodification, we mean the conversion of natural and human resources into resources labelled with a money value, becoming commodities which can be combined for financially profitable production. The series of articles written in *TSC* was prophetic about the inevitable outcome of continued reliance on planned, large scale production of profitable production of armaments and necessities. The grubbing up of apple orchards (page 8) and the proposed dredging of the Danube continue this process, and can be connected with the ongoing rise of militarism worldwide.

We draw the attention of readers to the new version of our website. Suggestions for additions to the Links page would be most welcome.

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The Agrarian Standard

Wendell Berry

The Unsettling of America was published twenty-five years ago; it is still in print and is still being read. As its author, I am tempted to be glad of this, and yet, if I believe what I said in that book, and I still do, then I should be anything but glad. The book would have had a far happier fate if it could have been disproved or made obsolete years ago.

It remains true because the conditions it describes and opposes, the abuses of farmland and farming people, have persisted and become worse over the last twenty-five years. In 2002 we have less than half the number of farmers in the United States that we had in 1977. Our farm communities are far worse off now than they were then. Our soil erosion rates continue to be unsustainably high. We continue to pollute our soils and streams with agricultural poisons. We continue to lose farmland to urban development of the most wasteful sort. The large agribusiness corporations that were mainly national in 1977 are now global, and are replacing the world's agricultural diversity, which was useful primarily to farmers and local consumers, with bioengineered and patented monocultures that are merely profitable to corporations. The purpose of this now global economy, as Vandana Shiva has rightly said, is to replace "food democracy" with a worldwide "food dictatorship."

To be an agrarian writer in such a time is an odd experience. One keeps writing essays and speeches that one would prefer not to write, that one wishes would prove unnecessary, that one hopes nobody will have any need for in twenty-five years. My life as an agrarian writer has certainly involved me in such confusions, but I have never doubted for a minute the importance of the hope I have tried to serve: the hope that we might become a healthy people in a healthy land.

We agrarians are involved in a hard,

long, momentous contest, in which we are so far, and by a considerable margin, the losers. What we have undertaken to defend is the complex accomplishment of knowledge, cultural memory, skill, self-mastery, good sense, and fundamental decency — the high and indispensable art — for which we probably can find no better name than "good farming." I mean farming as defined by agrarianism as opposed to farming as defined by industrialism: farming as the proper use and care of an immeasurable gift.

I believe that this contest between industrialism and agrarianism now defines the most fundamental human difference, for it divides not just two nearly opposite concepts of agriculture and land use, but also two nearly opposite ways of understanding ourselves, our fellow creatures, and our world.

The way of industrialism is the way of the machine. To the industrial mind, a machine is not merely an instrument for doing work or amusing ourselves or making war; it is an explanation of the world and of life. Because industrialism cannot understand living things except as machines, and can grant them no value that is not utilitarian, it conceives of farming and forestry as forms of mining; it cannot use the land without abusing it.

Industrialism prescribes an economy that is placeless and displacing. It does not distinguish one place from another. It applies its methods and technologies indiscriminately in the American East and the American West, in the United States and in India. It thus continues the economy of colonialism. The shift of colonial power from European monarchy to global corporation is perhaps the dominant theme of modern history. All along, it has been the same story

of the gathering of an exploitive economic power into the hands of a few people who are alien to the places and the people they exploit. Such an economy is bound to destroy locally adapted agrarian economies everywhere it goes, simply because it is too ignorant not to do so. And it has succeeded precisely to the extent that it has been able to inculcate the same ignorance in workers and consumers.

To the corporate and political and academic servants of global industrialism, the small family farm and the small farming community are not known, not imaginable, and therefore unthinkable, except as damaging stereotypes. The people of "the cutting edge" in science, business, education, and politics have no patience with the local love, local loyalty, and local knowledge that make people truly native to their places and therefore good caretakers of their places. This is why one of the primary principles in industrialism has always been to get the worker away from home. From the beginning it has been destructive of home employment and home economies. The economic function of the household has been increasingly the consumption of purchased goods. Under industrialism, the farm too has become increasingly consumptive, and farms fail as the costs of consumption overpower the income from production.

The industrial contempt for anything small, rural, or natural translates into contempt for uncentralized economic systems, any sort of local self-sufficiency in food or other necessities. The industrial "solution" for such systems is to increase the scale of work and trade. It brings Big Ideas, Big Money, and Big Technology into small rural communities, economies, and ecosystems—the brought-in industry and the experts (*contd on page 4*)

C H Douglas on Finance and Farming

The following extracts were first published in *The Social Crediter* in 1942/43)

Saturday 5 December 1942 (pp97/8)

One of the first considerations of the old system was to maintain, in the real, not the financial sense, the capital value of the land, and to do this required extraordinarily detailed knowledge of local conditions and custom. The desperate condition of much English arable, which has been "farmed-out" by tenant farmers not properly supervised, and having little anxiety as to their ability to get another of the hundreds of farms on offer, is the direct result of the sabotage of this administrative system.

Now, we are hypnotised by the propaganda of the international chemical combines into the belief that soil analysis, chemical fertilisers, and oil-driven farm machinery are far superior, and more "scientific" than the intimate farming of the older order. Not only is there not a particle of genuine evidence for this, but there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Never has there been so much "professorial" farming; and never have agricultural products been so unsatisfactory in quality. Bread which has to be reinforced with drugs; fruit which looks attractive and is both tasteless and lacking in all its old essential virtues (the Phoebe strawberry, the staple export of the Hampshire strawberry beds, looks large and delicious, and tastes like wet cotton wool); fabrics which are showy but neither warm nor durable; chemical beer; wine doctored and prohibitive in price. Progress!

But it is easy, more particularly in war-time, to look upon "the land" as though it were almost entirely an agricultural and production problem, which is the usual mis-direction of emphasis fostered by international finance. It is primarily, but not principally, an agricultural problem. It is, I think, a problem which can be

easily misapprehended, unless it is considered in intimate relation with the character of the population, as well as its numerical magnitude. For instance, the last pursuit in which the land agitator wishes to engage, is farming, nor do farmers do much agitating.

There are very many curious circumstances surrounding the question of population statistics, and population habits, in Great Britain. William Cobbett was aware of them. They have become still more curious in the last hundred years, as anyone who will take the trouble to consider the figures available in Whitaker's Almanac can see for himself.

Saturday 13 February 1943 (p173)

A few weeks ago, one of the most famous herds of Pedigree Shorthorn cattle in the world, domiciled in the South of Scotland, developed some cases of Foot-and-Mouth disease. Money values really mean very little in connection with unique specimens, but the herd was conservatively valued at about £20,000.

It has been formed by an owner who was an acknowledged authority. His whole life's work and interest was in his cattle.

Every possible argument was brought to bear upon the Board of Agriculture, without effect. Every animal, sick or well, was slaughtered. The owner died of a broken heart a few days later.

Although comment was stifled, it was not wholly prevented, and several disinterested persons with cognate experience obtained publicity for the expression of grave doubts as to the justification for this rigid policy. One lady, a member of a family with a long hereditary experience of cattle breeding, but with no interest to serve

but that of farmers, claimed, not only to have a cure, but to have demonstrated it beyond any possibility of refutation. The Ministry of Agriculture was not even interested, and refused reasonable facilities for a re-demonstration. It will be remembered that the Duke of Westminster expressed disbelief in the official policy some time ago, and as a large landowner in probably the most famous dairy county, Cheshire, he was doubtless drawing on first class information.

There is in this policy evidence of that soulless crudity which many people have come to recognise in Marxian ideology. If it were justified by results, it would still be suspect as containing the seed of further trouble. But it is grossly ineffective. Information as to the number of head of cattle in the United Kingdom in 1942 is not available to me. It seems highly probable that it is far less than at the beginning of the war. But the outbreaks of foot-and-mouth were 99 in 1939; 160 in 1940; 265 in 1941; and 670, or nearly seven times as many, in 1942. The number of cattle slaughtered under the Order was 12,029 in 1939; 19,058 in 1940; 27,128 in 1941; and 56,515 in 1942. Comment would appear to be superfluous.

Many persons who have taken up this matter do not hesitate to give their opinion on it. They say that there is some vested interest involved. In the sense in which this is usually meant, I can offer no special view, since I am not closely in touch with the problem. But I should, a priori, be much more inclined to regard it as the policy of a philosophy. Israel Zangwill, the Zionist leader, was profoundly right, and was no doubt speaking from inner information, when he said at the "Hands off Russia" Meeting at the Albert Hall on February 8, 1919: - "The British Government is only

Bolshevism in embryo, and Bolshevism is only Socialism in a hurry." It does not require much imagination to see that the type of mind which regards mass slaughter of cattle as the least troublesome way in which to deal with a curable disease is the same type of mind which regards the mass liquidation of millions of Russian farmers as the easiest way to stamp out opposition to collective farming. I hope no reader of these lines will miss the implication of them.

Perhaps at this point I may be permitted to emphasise once again the evident collapse of the episodic view of events [aka the 'cock-up theory of history']. Our sense of reality has become so perverted that we only see with difficulty the connection between the murder of millions of Russians in 1919, and the mass killing of unknown millions of Russians, as well as other nationalities in 1942. The pseudo-scientists of dialectical materialism appear to be determined to distract attention from the first Law of genuine science: -Action and reaction are equal, and opposite. Still less, therefore, do we see that, in allowing these mass, collective, 'remedies' to become familiarised, we are preparing a psychology which can only have appalling results.

To anyone who is not wilfully blind, it must be obvious that man's interference with nature, if it is not to be catastrophic, must be inspired by something very different from the rigid formalism of a Government Department. The modern Government Department has its roots in the departmentalised pseudo-science of the Encyclopaedist fore-runners of the French Revolution and its lineal descendant, Russian Bolshevism. The curious, shallow and largely bogus generalisations of Russian intellectuals (e.g. that all human behaviour is derived from four "conditional Reflexes") have the

same unhealthy phosphorescence. No sane individual would contend, I should suppose, that either genuine scientific research or its application within the sphere in which it can be controlled - inorganic - is in itself undesirable. Only megalomaniacs could claim that we have accumulated sufficient knowledge in about one hundred years to warrant us in undertaking the modest task of rectifying on a grand scale the errors of a Life Process which has evolved in untold millenia. Nor does the initial results of our activities appear to justify the mass application of our theories. We have begun to Plan the animals

Saturday 16 January 1943 (p141)

At bottom there is little doubt that there are two irreconcilable ideas in conflict.

The first of these is that the world in which we live is an organism and that men and animals have intricate relationships with the earth - not amorphous but specific and infinitely varied, which can only be disregarded at the peril both of man and the earth they live on. I do not mean in the least by this that a universal back to the land movement is either necessary or even desirable, but I do think that the idea that the earth is merely something to be exploited and "lived on" is quite fatal.

The second and antithetic idea, is that the world is merely the raw material for a factory, that the nearer agriculture approximates to Mr. Ford's conveyor-belt principles, and towns emulate Stalingrad, the better we shall be. I do not think I am unduly squeamish, but I have to plead guilty to a wave of real nausea at the description, as progress, of egg factories in which hundreds or thousands of hens are kept under electric light from birth to death, confined in little boxes, never

allowed out, laying eggs. I don't want to eat those eggs, and I have a strong conviction that they are not good to eat, whatever their superficial taste may be. The idea - the Encyclopaedist idea - that everything can be put into a nice watertight compartment, and card indexed, is the philosophy of a frozen Hell.

Clifford Hugh Douglas 1943

Or, one might add to the end of the last sentence, a 'Silent Spring'. We plan to make the whole series of articles, as published in TSC in the winter of 1942-3, available in electronic form and in the form of a pamphlet. Together, they provide material for discussion about the care of the land and its peoples, as relevant today as when first published in 1942/3.

Wendell Berry (*contd from page 2*)

being invariably alien to and contemptuous of the places to which they are brought in. There is never any question of propriety, of adapting the thought or the purpose or the technology to the place.

The result is that problems correctable on a small scale are replaced by large-scale problems for which there are no large-scale corrections. Meanwhile, the large-scale enterprise has reduced or destroyed the possibility of small-scale corrections. This exactly describes our present agriculture. Forcing all agricultural localities to conform to economic conditions imposed from afar by a few large corporations has caused problems of the largest possible scale, such as soil loss, genetic impoverishment, and groundwater pollution, which are correctable only by an agriculture of locally adapted, solar-powered, diversified small farms—a correction that, after a half century of industrial agriculture, will be difficult to achieve.

The industrial economy thus is inherently violent. It impoverishes

one place in order to be extravagant in another, true to its colonialist ambition. A part of the “externalized” cost of this is war after war. Industrialists are always ready to ignore, sell, or destroy the past in order to gain the wealth, comfort, and happiness supposedly to be found in the future.

Industrilism begins with technological invention. But agrarianism begins with givens: land, plants, animals, weather, hunger, and the birthright knowledge of agriculture. Industrialists are always ready to ignore, sell, or destroy the past in order to gain the entirely unprecedented wealth, comfort, and happiness supposedly to be found in the future. Agrarian farmers know that their very identity depends on their willingness to receive gratefully, use responsibly, and hand down intact an inheritance, both natural and cultural, from the past.

I said a while ago that to agrarianism farming is the proper use and care of an immeasurable gift. The shortest way to understand this, I suppose, is the religious way. Among the commonplaces of the Bible, for example, are the admonitions that the world was made and approved by God, that it belongs to Him, and that its good things come to us from Him as gifts. Beyond those ideas is the idea that the whole Creation exists only by participating in the life of God, sharing in His being, breathing His breath. “The world,” Gerard Manley Hopkins said, “is charged with the grandeur of God.” Some such thoughts would have been familiar to most people during most of human history. They seem strange to us, and what has estranged us from them is our economy. The industrial economy could not have been derived from such thoughts any more than it could have been derived from the golden rule.

If we believed that the existence of the world is rooted in mystery and in

sanctity, then we would have a different economy. It would still be an economy of use, necessarily, but it would be an economy also of return. The economy would have to accommodate the need to be worthy of the gifts we receive and use, and this would involve a return of propitiation, praise, gratitude, responsibility, good use, good care, and a proper regard for the unborn. What is most conspicuously absent from the industrial economy and industrial culture is this idea of return. Industrial humans relate themselves to the world and its creatures by fairly direct acts of violence. Mostly we take without asking, use without respect or gratitude, and give nothing in return.

To perceive the world and our life in it as gifts originating in sanctity is to see our human economy as a continuing moral crisis. Our life of need and work forces us inescapably to use in time things belonging to eternity, and to assign finite values to things already recognized as infinitely valuable. This is a fearful predicament. It calls for prudence, humility, good work, propriety of scale. It calls for the complex responsibilities of caretaking and giving-back that we mean by “stewardship.” To all of this the idea of the immeasurable value of the resource is central.

We can get to the same idea by a way a little more economic and practical, and this is by following through our literature the ancient theme of the small farmer or husbandman who leads an abundant life on a scrap of land often described as cast-off or poor. This figure makes his first literary appearance, so far as I know, in Virgil’s Fourth Georgic:

*I saw a man,
An old Cilician, who occupied
An acre or two of land that no one
wanted,
A patch not worth the ploughing,
unrewarding
For flocks, unfit for vineyards; he*

*however
By planting here and there among
the scrub
Cabbages or white lilies and
verbena
And flimsy poppies, fancied himself
a king
In wealth, and coming home late in
the evening
Loaded his board with unbought
delicacies.*

Virgil’s old squatter, I am sure, is a literary outcropping of an agrarian theme that has been carried from earliest times until now mostly in family or folk tradition, not in writing, though other such people can be found in books. Wherever found, they don’t vary by much from Virgil’s prototype. They don’t have or require a lot of land, and the land they have is often marginal. They practice subsistence agriculture, which has been much derided by agricultural economists and other learned people of the industrial age, and they always associate frugality with abundance.

In my various travels, I have seen a number of small homesteads like that of Virgil’s old farmer, situated on “land that no one wanted” and yet abundantly productive of food, pleasure, and other goods. And especially in my younger days, I was used to hearing farmers of a certain kind say “They may run me out, but they won’t starve me out” or “I may get shot, but I’m not going to starve.” Even now, if they cared, I think agricultural economists could find small farmers who have prospered, not by “getting big,” but by practicing the ancient rules of thrift and subsistence, by accepting the limits of their small farms, and by knowing well the value of having a little land.

How do we come at the value of a little land? We do so, following this strand of agrarian thought, by reference to the value of no land. Agrarians value land because

somewhere back in the history of their consciousness is the memory of being landless. This memory is implicit, in Virgil's poem, in the old farmer's happy acceptance of "an acre or two of land that no one wanted." If you have no land you have nothing: no food, no shelter, no warmth, no freedom, no life. If we remember this, we know that all economies begin to lie as soon as they assign a fixed value to land. People who have been landless know that the land is invaluable; it is worth everything. Pre-agricultural humans, of course, knew this too. And so, evidently, do the animals. It is a fearful thing to be without a "territory." Whatever the market may say, the worth of the land is what it always was: It is worth what food, clothing, shelter, and freedom are worth; it is worth what life is worth. This perception moved the settlers from the Old World into the New. Most of our American ancestors came here because they knew what it was to be landless; to be landless was to be threatened by want and also by enslavement. Coming here, they bore the ancestral memory of serfdom. Under feudalism, the few who owned the land owned also, by an inescapable political logic, the people who worked the land.

Thomas Jefferson, who knew all these things, obviously was thinking of them when he wrote in 1785 that "it is not too soon to provide by every possible means that as few as possible shall be without a little portion of land. The small landholders are the most precious part of a state. . ." He was saying, two years before the adoption of our constitution, that a democratic state and democratic liberties depend upon democratic ownership of the land. He was already anticipating and fearing the division of our people into settlers, the people who wanted "a little portion of land" as a home, and, virtually opposite to those, the consolidators and exploiters of the land and the land's wealth, who would not be restrained by what Jefferson called "the natural affection of the human mind." He wrote as he did in

1785 because he feared exactly the political theory that we now have: the idea that government exists to guarantee the right of the most wealthy to own or control the land without limit.

In any consideration of agrarianism, this issue of limitation is critical. Agrarian farmers see, accept, and live within their limits. They understand and agree to the proposition that there is "this much and no more." Everything that happens on an agrarian farm is determined or conditioned by the understanding that there is only so much land, so much water in the cistern, so much hay in the barn, so much corn in the crib, so much firewood in the shed, so much food in the cellar or freezer, so much strength in the back and arms — and no more. This is the understanding that induces thrift, family coherence, neighborliness, local economies. Within accepted limits, these become necessities. The agrarian sense of abundance comes from the experienced possibility of frugality and renewal within limits.

This is exactly opposite to the industrial idea that abundance comes from the violation of limits by personal mobility, extractive machinery, long-distance transport, and scientific or technological breakthroughs. If we use up the good possibilities in this place, we will import goods from some other place, or we will go to some other place. If nature releases her wealth too slowly, we will take it by force. If we make the world too toxic for honeybees, some compound brain, Monsanto perhaps, will invent tiny robots that will fly about pollinating flowers and making honey.

To be landless in an industrial society obviously is not at all times to be jobless and homeless. But the ability of the industrial economy to provide jobs and homes depends on prosperity, and on a very shaky kind

of prosperity too. It depends on "growth" of the wrong things — on what Edward Abbey called "the ideology of the cancer cell" — and on greed with purchasing power. In the absence of growth, greed, and affluence, the dependents of an industrial economy too easily suffer the consequences of having no land: joblessness, homelessness, and want. This is not a theory. We have seen it happen.

I don't think that being landed necessarily means owning land. It does mean being connected to a home landscape from which one may live by the interactions of a local economy and without the routine intervention of governments, corporations, or charities.

In our time it is useless and probably wrong to suppose that a great many urban people ought to go out into the countryside and become homesteaders or farmers. But it is not useless or wrong to suppose that urban people have agricultural responsibilities that they should try to meet. And in fact this is happening. The agrarian population among us is growing, and by no means is it made up merely of some farmers and some country people. It includes urban gardeners, urban consumers who are buying food from local farmers, consumers who have grown doubtful of the healthfulness, the trustworthiness, and the dependability of the corporate food system — people, in other words, who understand what it means to be landless.

Wendell Berry is a former professor of English at the University of Kentucky and the author of thirty-two books of essays, poetry and novels. He has worked a farm in Henry County, Kentucky since 1965. He has been a fellow of both the Guggenheim Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. He has received numerous awards for his work, including an award from the National Institute and Academy of Arts and Letters in 1971, and most recently, the T.S. Eliot Award.

Excerpt from
Call for a Revolution in Agriculture

Wes Jackson

First Annual E. F. Schumacher Lectures, October 1981

Homo sapiens is now a species out of context, and the most out-of-context activity, it seems to me, is the very production of food. . . .

In my view agriculture will remain a tragedy so long as it is kept separate from the problem of the human condition. And the human condition will remain a tragic problem as long as it is kept separate from the problem of agriculture. . . .

To get at both what the human is and what agriculture is, I think we must study and understand what Wendell Berry calls the 'natural integrities' that preceded agriculture. For my part of the country that would be the abundant prairies, which had supported the Indians and greeted the settlers. Here in the east it would be the deciduous forests. . . .

Toward the end of *Nature's Economy*, a fine paperback on the roots of ecology, the author, Donald Worster, builds a strong case for mistrusting ecology as an operating paradigm for future human action. He takes pains to show that the science of ecology has been studied and understood in the language of economics and industry by people who, whether they know it or not, not only betray their belief in the economic system in which we now operate but also betray their belief in the industrial society. As early as 1910 one of the pioneers of modern ecology said: *Bio-economically speaking, it is the duty of the plant world to manufacture the food-stuffs for its complement, the animal world Every day, from sunrise until sunset, myriads of [plant] laboratories, factories, workshops and industries all the world over, on land and in the sea, in the earth and on the surface soils are incessantly occupied, adding each its little contribution to the general fund*

of organic wealth. We may think, Well, that was a long time ago when such language was used in describing nature, but less than fifteen years ago a noted ecologist at the University of California, Berkeley, said, *Like any factory the river's productivity is limited by its supply of raw materials and its efficiency in converting these materials into finished products.* The metaphors used in understanding ecology, Worster says, are more than casual or incidental, for they express the dominant tendency in the scientific ecology of our time. Nature has been transformed into a reflection of the modern corporate industrial system. Unfortunately, ecology has had little or no influence on economics; rather, economics has tainted ecology. It's been a one-way street.

The problem is, where do we begin? What do we build on? I think that a long time ago, nature gave us two important ecological concepts that became religious philosophy and which both will need emphasis in a new ecology. Both are central to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, though in recent times they have been understood in rather shallow ways. These concepts center around the idea of redemption and the idea of transcendence. Regarding the first, nature has shown us that we can damage an area, yet it will redeem itself and to some degree. This idea of redemption is a source of hope: abuse a hillside and the sins of the father will visit the sons even unto the third and fourth generations but not necessarily forever, for redemption of the wasted hillside is possible if loving care is given it.

The idea of transcendence is one that even the most ardent zealot of reductionist science can't ignore. For example, there is nothing about the

properties of hydrogen and oxygen that gives a clue about the properties of water. The properties of both are completely transcended by what water can do and how it figures in our lives. We can move up the hierarchy of the sciences and see that at every step of the way more is different. As we approach the cultural level, more specifically the agricultural level, we have a clear example of the power of transcendence in the Amish as compared to the conventional farmer of today. The Amish farmer probably never had a single vocational agriculture course in high school. The Amish simply believe that the highest calling ordained by God is to be stewards of the land, and this duty is tightly tied to an aesthetic ideal. Because economics is not foremost in their thinking, they are able to make sound economic decisions. By being obedient to a higher calling, 'All these other things are added unto them.' This is a practical kind of transcendence that all can experience. It requires no guru or priest or minister. That the consistently sound economic decisions are made by people who do not make economics primary should be no more surprising than the fact that water is more than the combined properties of hydrogen and oxygen. The idea of transcendence cuts through all and is essential to an ecological agriculture. It can go a long way toward helping us temper the unfortunate language we are saddled with, the reductionist language of economics and industry, which has been applied to ecology. It should help us soften the utilitarian point of view.

If we do one thing that is ecologically right, we have reason to expect more than a multiplicative effect, indeed a transcending effect, just as when we do something that is

ecologically wrong, it works in the other direction. If what we are talking about is not real, as the rigorous reductionists insist, then neither is water.

The implications of an ecological agriculture in which some of nature's information is allowed to operate are unforeseeable at the moment, but it is nevertheless something we can trust. This approach to agriculture is clearly in the spirit and teachings of our brother *E F Schumacher*, who really was talking about transcendence in his descriptions of meta-economics. It is both interesting and important that Schumacher, economist that he was, was very much interested in ecology. He was president of the Soil Society of England. He was a strong advocate of planting and caring for trees, which he saw as more than bearers of fruit, for he thought of them as symbols of what he called 'permanence,' which he used as a synonym for sustainability. He was a man who grew a garden, which by definition consists of patches. A man whose primary message was transcendence of the economic world saw the perennial trees as redeemers of the landscape.

Wes Jackson, a farmer, world-renowned plant geneticist, author and teacher, lives and works at *The Land Institute*, Salina, Kansas, USA. The full text of the lecture featured here is obtainable in pamphlet form from: The E F Schumacher Society, 140 Jug End Rd, Great Barrington, MA 01230 (USA)

I know it is said that a man must find it monotonous to do the twenty things that are done on a farm, whereas he always finds it uproariously funny and festive to do one thing hour after hour and day after day in a factory. I know that the same people also make exactly the contrary comment; and say it is selfish and avaricious for the peasant to be so intensely interested in his own farm, instead of showing, like the proletarians of modern industrialism, a selfish and romantic loyalty to somebody else's factory, and an ascetic self-sacrifice in making profits for somebody else.
(G.K. Chesterton)

The Torching of the Orchards

Cider makers and apple growers predict that the skies over the West Country will blacken next autumn, as tens of thousands of apple trees go up in smoke: the reason is yet another anomaly in the way that Margaret Beckett and her officials at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs have chosen to apply the new "single farm payment" scheme.

Under a change to the EU's farm subsidy system, farmers will be paid not for what they produce but according to their acreage. Uniquely, in the EU, Britain has chosen to exclude the growers of apples, pears, plums and cherries from payment. Growers of hops, soft fruit, asparagus, and willows used for fuel will, like other farmers, receive £230 a hectare per year. Orchard owners will get nothing – unless by January 1 they have uprooted all their trees, in which case they will receive the full £230, even if the ground is left unused.

This decision is particularly absurd in view of all the efforts in recent years to revive England's apple orchards, after years of decline when British fruit growers found it hard to compete with EU-subsidised continental competitors. According to the European Commission, three-quarters of the apples grown in France were destroyed once hefty subsidies had been claimed.

.....next autumn the West Country will see "the biggest bonfires since foot and mouth, only they will smell better".

The choice that Mrs Beckett presents to orchard owners is stark: destroy your trees by the end of the year, or you will never again be able to claim payments on the land – while you compete with foreign growers who are heavily subsidised. According to Julian Temperley of the Somerset

Cider Brandy Company, "half the traditional orchards in my part of Somerset will go". John Thatcher who runs Britain's largest farmhouse cider business, predicts that next autumn the West Country will see "the biggest bonfires since foot and mouth, only they will smell better".

This report first appeared in *The Sunday Telegraph* of 21 March 2004 and is reproduced here with kind permission

The Inclosure problem

Private property rights now exist on almost all land in England and Wales. The earth under our feet once considered a divine gift to all mankind, has been measured, partitioned off with fences, and privatised.

The Normans' Domesday book set the stage for inclosure. Compiled in 1086, it was an inventory of all land-based resources in the country so they could be effectively taxed. There were at least some local riots when the King's commissioners demanded what was considered private information. It was nicknamed Domesday because the people compared it to the day of judgement. Once a taxable resource was in the book no appeal was allowed. Inclosure (enclosure seems to have been the advocates' spelling) was the transfer of God-given land into the ownership of arrogant men. Such land took on the legal status of private property such as something crafted by one's hands or something bought or exchanged. The controversial Statute of Merton, a scheme of Henry VIII's, was one of the first inclosures in Britain.

Inclosure took place piecemeal across the country over many hundreds of years and the fragmented peasants' side to the story has been largely untold. The rural poor could rarely read or write, neither did they have more than a handful of sympathisers amongst the classes that could. The perpetrators didn't want sordid details of evictions recorded. In many cases the only hint of struggle over land are entries for soldiers' payment in the inclosure commissioners' accounts.

The only king to make a serious attempt to put a stop to and even reverse

inclosure, Charles I, was beheaded. The English Civil War, which culminated in the death of Charles, was driven by the same classes who were finding inclosure so lucrative.

England became the world's first nation controlled by the merchant or capitalist class. It was the first country to see mass rural evictions and urbanisation and as a result was fertile ground for the industrial revolution.

The present and virtually universal 'private ownership' model has left us with no easily identifiable way of legally containing or 'owning' land which doesn't lead to financially better off individuals having greater power in deciding how it is used. It is also difficult to see how a group can be prevented from going into debt that would leave land open to takeover by moneyed interests from outside.

The inclosure model has been used to undermine natural human rights in other areas of nearest blood-relative took possession. As the head of the household wished it could pass to anyone in his or her immediate family. Crucially, the copyhold meant family land could not be bought and sold on the open market, nor used as security against a bank loan. This made it virtually impossible for the family to be turned out of their home.....

We are most grateful to Barbara Panvel for sending us this piece.

archy does his part **Faber 1936**

what the ants are saying

dear boss i was talking with an ant
the other day
and he handed me a lot of
gossip which ants the world around
are chewing over among themselves

i pass it on to you
in the hope that you may relay it to
other
human beings and hurt their feelings
with it
no insect likes human beings
and if you think you can see why
the only reason I tolerate you is
because

you seem less human to me than
most of them
here is what the ants are saying

it wont be long now it wont be long
man is making deserts of the earth
it wont be long now
before man will have used it up
so that nothing but ants
and centipedes and scorpions
can find a living on it
man has oppressed us for a million
years
but he goes on steadily
cutting the ground from under
his own feet making deserts deserts
deserts

we ants remember
and have it all recorded
in our tribal lore
when gobi was a paradise
swarming with men and rich
in human prosperity
it is a desert now and the home
of scorpions ants and centipedes

what man calls civilization
always results in deserts
man is never on the square
he uses up the fat and greenery of
the earth
each generation wastes a little more
of the future with greed and lust for
riches
north africa was once a garden spot
and then came carthage and rome
and despoiled the storehouse
and now you have sahara
sahara ants and centipedes

toltecs and aztecs had a mighty
civilization on this continent
but they robbed the soil and wasted
nature
and now you have deserts scorpions
ants and centipedes
and the deserts of the near east
followed egypt and babylon and
assyria
and persia and rome and the turk
the ant is the inheritor of tamerlane
and the scorpion succeeds the
caesars
america was once a paradise

of timberland and stream
but it is dying because of the greed
and money lust of a thousand little
kings
who slashed the timber all to hell
and would not be controlled
and changed the climate
and stole the rainfall from posterity
and it wont be long now
it wont be long
till everything is desert
from the alleghenies to the rockies
the deserts are coming
the deserts are spreading
the springs and streams are drying
up
one day the mississippi itself
will be a bed of sand
ants and scorpions and centipedes
shall inherit the earth

men talk of money and industry
of hard times and recoveries
of finance and economics
but the ants wait and the scorpions
wait
for while men talk they are making
deserts all the time
getting the world ready for the
conquering ant
drought and erosion and desert
because men cannot learn

rainfall passing off in flood and
fresnet
and carrying good soil with it
because there are no longer forests
to withhold the water in the
billion metculations of the roots

it wont be long now it wont be long
till earth is barren as the moon
and sapless as a mumbled bone

dear boss i relay this information
without any fear that humanity
will take warning and reform

archy

Don Marquis
1878 – 1937
American poet and columnist
We are most grateful to Jack Hornsby for
bringing this poem to our attention

The Revolution Starts Here

Amid the doom and gloom, encouraging signs of spring are emerging. The fastest growing category of allotment holders in the UK are young parents determined to provide their children with fresh, wholesome food which has not been contaminated by poisons and GM.

Allotments go back a long way (see website 'Allotment and Kitchen Gardens: History Page'), and can be found in most localities. Today, advice on obtaining garden space and maintaining a garden is easily obtained through the internet and also through local libraries. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (England and Wales), for example, has existed since 1901. Its Objectives are: "To help all to enjoy the recreation of gardening and so promote their health, education and community fellowship. ... The Society aims to ensure that facilities are made available to all who desire to follow the recreation of gardening and endeavours to instil a better understanding of the fact that gardening is a recreation for the mind and body as well as a source of economic wealth both to the individual and to the nation." (www.nsalg.demon.co.uk).

According to the BBC web page on Gardening, 'Allotments are now a world away from the flat cap and whippet image they have suffered from in the past. Renting one is not only an inexpensive way of getting your hands on valuable gardening space but it's also a great opportunity to meet fellow gardeners and a relaxing, sociable way to garden ... Allotments cost anything from £6 to £50 per year for a plot of 9m by 6m (30ft by 20ft). Most have concessionary rates for older or disadvantaged people. Many also have rates for the unemployed.'

An excellent way to foster understanding of soils, seasons and locality, good value for money, excellent value for time spent, but above all a route out of wage slavery and the money-dominated consumerist lifestyle. Local, practical, self-motivating, liberating; gardening is truly revolutionary.

Growth Fetish

Clive Hamilton

Pluto Press, 2004, pp262, £12.99
ISBN 1-7453-2250-6

The book is a delight to read. Gently, but with a firm clarity, the author presents a comprehensive global review of the political economy of the early 21st century. Without beating about the bush, Hamilton offers the individual reader a comprehensible choice. Anyone can continue to go along with the 'growth fetish', destroying society, the environment and individual happiness in the process. Or anyone can select the obvious, accessible and realistic

alternative for themselves. How? By robbing the market of its most powerful weapon: "people's willingness to transform themselves into consumers."

The book is entirely in line with Douglas' work. There is no need to take to the barricades, chant slogans or put ourselves on the breadline. Modern technology capable of producing more than enough for everybody, is currently making the vast majority of people in the 'developed' world progressively more miserable. Hamilton spells out the corruption, alienation and degradation of society and environment across the world that Douglas predicted would follow from the continued subservience to the money-market economy and its untrammelled appeal to naked self-interest. However, without the historical dimension, the book falls short of clarifying the rise of consumerism following the wholesale worldwide enclosure of the land and its people into the money economy. For this dimension, the reader needs to turn elsewhere, perhaps to *The Politics of Money*.

Growth Fetish has been attacked as "silly dangerous, left-wing crap", a surprising accusation since Hamilton has little time for a backward-looking and opportunist Left which "revels in a sort of collective Schadenfreude". Furthermore, as the author indicates, adherence to the divisive class war model draws the Left straight into collusion with the self-centred individualist philosophy of the market economy as they fight for a better share of the proceeds. Neo-liberalism and the Third Way are similarly analysed and found wanting.

This crafted book is well-referenced, demonstrating the considerable scholarship of "Australia's most amazing economist. A book to be read by all who seriously question the contemporary "growth fetish" of modern times with a view to finding constructive alternatives."

Frances Hutchinson

The Origins of the Organic

Movement

Philip Conford

Floris Books, 2001, pp287, £14.99
ISBN 0-86315-336-4

Philip Conford is to be congratulated on the thoroughness of his research into the

origins of the 20th century organic movement. The mine of information on the powerful web of conceptual links between leading thinkers concerned with the issues of food, farming, society, politics, economics, culture, religion, arts and the spiritual dimension could provide a potent antidote to the myriad, unfocused single-issue propagandist campaigning of today. In the first half of the 20th century, the rise of agribusiness farming was challenged by writers, intellectuals and poets through a web of debate and discussion in the public arena. AE, Lady Eve Balfour, Hilaire Belloc, C.H. Douglas, G.K. Chesterton, T.S. Eliot, Lawrence D.Hills, Philip Mairet, H.J. Massingham, Lewis Mumford, Lord Northbourne, A.R. Orage, Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, Maurice B Reckitt, Reginald George Stapledon, Rudolph Steiner, Friend Sykes, R.H. Tawney, P.L. Travers and Henry Williamson are among the writers who grouped together to establish a coherent cultural and intellectual framework of alternatives to the juggernaut of 'progress'. (Many of these writers appear in my publications).

Sadly, however, the sparkling inspiration of the writers and their works is dimmed by Conford's adherence to a spurious political correctness. Since the interwar years about which Conford writes, 'progress' has brought Hiroshima, the Berlin Wall and its aftermath, Vietnam, Iraq, East Timor (and countless other shames), deforestation, desertification, GM, global warming and the most ignorant generation of people ever born (able to recognise brand names and logos, but ignorant of local plants and their uses for food or medicine). To obscure the issues by implying that care for the land can lead to nationalism, fascism and opposition to all forms of change (as do both the author and the writer of the Foreword) is to stand logic firmly on its head.

The great value of this book is the introduction it provides to a multitude of texts, many of which are still available, by great authors whose works have been shoved aside by the juggernaut of unstoppable, meaningless, progress. For the casual reader, the vast majority of names may well be unfamiliar. Hence the two appendices provide useful potted biographies of the leading figures, and of the groups, institutions and journals

through which they interacted. Throughout this comprehensive reference work social credit and the Christian connection occur as common strands. However, the only way to understand the origins of the organic movement is to read the original works of the leading thinkers who thundered against the spiritual death of materialism's demolition of the natural support systems and its denial of access to the countryside as a place to live and work. In this respect, Conford's book is an excellent resource.

Frances Hutchinson.

Media Control

Noam Chomsky

Seven Stories Press \$8.95

The Free Press

Hilaire Belloc

IHS Press \$8.95

Ah, women! Maybe Hilaire Belloc was right, after all. Almost a century before reserve brigadier general Janis Karpinski was not keeping a sharp eye on what private Lynndie England was up to in Abu Ghraib prison, the Catholic polemicist was harrumphing into his rosary at the idea of feminine independence: women's suffrage is "an absurdity", he storms in *The Free Press*, an otherwise prescient analysis of the looming horrors (in 1917) of press oligarchs. The scourge of sleazy politicians and "guttersnipe" businessmen could not understand why the skirted trouble-makers "blindly hated the Christian institution of the Family." No doubt US Army recruiting staff are also profoundly sorry that Karpinski and England swapped their aprons for fatigues.

Ticklish as re-publication makes Belloc's views on gender politics, it is nothing to the smallish bomb that Janis and Lynndie indirectly put under the doomsday scenario spelled out by Noam Chomsky, Belloc's successor in the bash-the-media-conglomerate business. In *Media Control*, a 1991 booklet updated to take account of the events surrounding September 11, 2001, Chomsky offers a mournful account of the way American runs itself and the world. It is mournful because, to be fair, Chomsky has much to be mournful about. Unlike Belloc, whose sparky vituperation was aimed only at an embryonic evil,

Chomsky writes with the full heart-sinking knowledge of the manipulative monster it grew up to become.

Have you heard of the Creel Commission? I thought not. This was an agency charged by President Woodrow Wilson with the job of converting placid Americans into fire-eating Hun-haters. Relying heavily on dud facts fed it by British Intelligence (for example, those fake medals allegedly struck by the Kaiser's men to celebrate the sinking of the 'Lusitania'), it did the job in six months, allowing Wilson to despatch his Mid-west farm boys to Flanders. As newspapers, radio and television snaked across the continent, it became apparent that products and ideologies could be promoted just as persuasively. Striking steelmen in 1937 Pennsylvania were non-plussed to encounter, not baton-wielding company heavies, but a smooth PR campaign which presented their action as an insult to national harmony: collapse of strike. This so-called Mohawk Valley Formula has been regularly used, Chomsky tells us, to keep American workers in their place.

The underhand control of the "bewildered herd" is central to Chomsky's gloomy view of American society. Overlooking the possibility that many people might be quite happy to let other people make tricky decisions for them, he sketches a picture of a "specialised class" indoctrinated by the business community to run the country on their behalf. Meanwhile, everyone else watches 'Friends' or the Superbowl. The concentration of the media into fewer and fewer Government-friendly hands means that the public can be skilfully confused about the correctness of Government policy. Semantics and pliant anchor-men trail a smokescreen across the hypocrisy of the War on Terror: terrorism is what its enemies do to America, Chomsky points out; what America did in the first place (mercenary mayhem in Central America and Afghanistan) is the more noble-sounding counter-insurgency.

Obviously there is a lot of truth in this. News organisations are now embedded in corporations which instinctively prefer a Republican philosophy; no doubt this helped the administration's policy-makers link the destruction of the World Trade Centre with the overthrow of Saddam

Hussein (America's erstwhile ally v. Iran) in the public's mind. Disney's recent decision not to allow its subsidiary, Miramax, to distribute Michael Moore's documentary about September 11 is part of the same tawdry waltz. Chomsky sees little hope even among America's liberal intellectuals, claiming that they are equally dedicated to manufacturing the bewildered herd's consent to any tricks the specialised class get up to.

This is where Janis and Lynndie and the rest come in. If there really is a media conspiracy to conceal its administration's actions from the American public, the photographs would not have appeared, as they did., in every major American newspaper. The scandalous images were first shovelled into American sitting-rooms by CBS, a subsidiary of the gigantic Viacom Corporation. On this side of the Atlantic the moguls behind the Daily Mirror also demonstrated remarkable indifference to Tony Blair's wishes. Maybe they were slow news days. Maybe there was a crude economic motive just to boost audience share. Either way, it did happen, which ought to cheer Noam up.

Alternately, he could read Hilaire Belloc. His 86 pages crackle with splendid indignation as he laments the way in which "professional politicians" are, at the start of the 20th century, becoming the stooges of newspaper proprietors - often of "repulsive" origins. "Is not everything which the regime desires to be suppressed, suppressed?" he fumes. "Is not everything which it desires suggested, suggested?" In a line that seems to have passed Lord Hutton by, he insists that "salaried public servants should be perpetually watched with suspicion and sharply kept in control."

The one odd thing about this wonderful tract is that it has been republished by a left-wing Catholic organisation whose otherwise sensible preface encourages journalists to reach the Truth by "Reason and Revelation." Or, as Pope Leo XIII put it in 1890, media outlets "must be subjected to the sweet yoke of the law of Christ. " On balance, I prefer the Republican party to the Inquisition.

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

Obituary

We were sad to hear of the recent death of John Hughes.

John Hughes was an observer of social credit, sympathetic to its ideas, but not personally involved. Towards the end of his life, however, he wrote **Major Douglas: The Policy of a Philosophy** (reviewed in the Autumn 2003 issue of *TSC*). He was already suffering from cancer as he completed the book which he hoped would stand as his epitaph.

I am only one, but I am one.
I cannot do everything, but I can do something.
And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.
What I can do, I should do. And what I should do, by the grace of God, I will do.

—Edward Everett Hale

Books by C H Douglas

(available in the Social Credit Library)

Economic Democracy

Social Credit

The Monopoly of Credit

Warning Democracy

Credit Power and Democracy

The Control and Distribution of Production

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And finally, thank you.....

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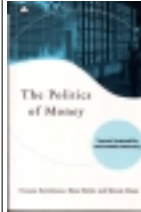
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Recommended Reading

Frances Hutchinson, Mary Mellor & Wendy Olsen

The Politics of Money: Towards Sustainability & Economic Democracy
(Pluto £16.99)



Frances Hutchinson

What Everybody really wants to know about Money
(Jon Carpenter £12.00)



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(KRP £5.00)

Frances Hutchinson & Brian Burkitt

The Political Economy of Social Credit And Guild Socialism
(Routledge £25.00)



Alan D Armstrong

To Restrain the Red Horse
(Towerhouse £7.00)

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