

# The SOCIAL CREDITER

For Economic Democracy

Quarterly Volume 82 No. 10 Autumn 2006

## Editorial

In the middle of the second of a series of three articles in New View (Summer 2006) Terry Boardman makes the following statement: *Since the reign of King James I, the colossal consequence of [the] Anglo-American globalising process with its overwhelming concentration on the nature and products of the sense world matrix has been a mighty acceleration in the pace of economic, scientific and technological change to the point where today, the very future of humanity is threatened by nuclear annihilation, ecological disaster, genetic manipulation and the replacement of human beings by robots and cyborgs, all the consequence of a reductionist philosophy of natural science that rigidly restricts its investigations to the world of the five senses and their technological extensions. We are finally beginning to realise, as we never did during the nuclear showdown years of the Cold War, that unless we change our way of life significantly, our so-called post-industrial civilisation may well not see the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; the human race will have committed suicide.*

Obviously, there is no simple solution to a problem on this scale, though there are many who search earnestly for an easy answer, and some who think they have found one. It is not strictly true, however, that the perils of unfettered economic 'progress' are only just now coming to light. In the so-called 'inter-war' years of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century Douglas, O'Duffy and many others knew that the problems of war, poverty-amidst-plenty, environmental degradation and over-production were the direct result of the muddle-headed thinking of the ordinary person-in-the-street who is prepared to go to work or to war if they are paid an income to do so. While people are educated on a pure diet of materialistic philosophy, it is small wonder that to this day Cuanduine's quest to free natural resources (song birds and wildlife) from the grip of corporate ownership would be met by the same blank incomprehension as in Book III, Chapter IV of Asses in Clover:

*[T]he unfortunate people being so muddled in their heads by all they had been taught by their school-teachers, their professors, their novelist-philosophers, their publicists, their economists, their politicians, and their newspapers, that they were quite incapable of thinking to purpose for themselves.*

Stop anybody in the street, academic or activist, nurse, salesman, physicist, parent, teacher or grandparent, ask what they think should be done - and the same refrain will echo back - "I'm too busy to think it through right now". And what are they so busy doing? Earning the money from some kind of employment to pay the rent/ mortgage to keep a roof over the heads of their family so that they can put their children through an educational system designed to turn out adults incapable of thinking why they have no time to stop and think, because they have to go to work to earn the money to pay the rent... . So

long as people are brought up from childhood under the impression that working for tests, exams, certificates and qualifications to improve their career prospects and earning power is the main priority in life, it will be emotionally tricky for them to undertake a fundamental re-think of the social order under which they live, work and have their being. This issue contains an article by Richard House on the crucial question of moving beyond materialistic education, not only in Steiner/Waldorf schools, but in the mainstream educational systems of countries across the world. *It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding* (Upton Sinclair, quoted in the trailer to Al Gore's film *Inconvenient Truth*, about climate change). The truth applies to nuclear (contd on page 123)

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## An Open Letter to Teachers

Taken from *Social Credit*, precursor to *The Social Crediter*, 19 October 1934

Dear Colleagues,

All our educational difficulties centre in Finance. We lack schools, apparatus, playing fields. We want smaller classes, a longer school life, a keener interest on the part of scholars and their parents.

But we have the material to build schools, to supply equipment, to make playing fields. We have thousands of teachers unemployed. The only thing we lack is the money to bring our buildings up-to-date, to employ men to build new ones, and to supply harassed parents, anxiously waiting till Tommy can leave school and earn five bob a week as an errand boy, and Jenny can leave to go into service, with an income which will prevent their dependence upon child labour.

Education is often called the Cinderella of the professions. It is more like the Ugly Sister. Upon it the axe falls first and most heavily to make the educational programme fit the financial slipper. Every citizen of this country, rankling under rates and taxes, sees in education a burden he is forced unwillingly to bear. From his diminished income, he pays to keep going schools and teachers. He hates to do it.

The Post Office appears in the National Accounts as both a liability and an asset, and the asset is greater. But Education appears in the National Budget only as a Liability. The

ordinary citizen sees no assets. Yet they are there. We teachers have the greatest task in the world. We are the coordinators of civilisation. We spin the thread of continuity which binds the past, through the present, to the future. We hand on the culture of the dead ages, and from our training and skill, as educators, the Community is reaping the harvest of a fuller and richer civilisation.

Social Credit would put the finance of Education upon a sane basis. Here we have a world in which our ability to produce goods is unlimited. That ability is our cultural inheritance, due to the efforts of the educationists of all time. The National Dividend issued against this, would suffice to meet the whole of our present educational expenditure, and more, by a creation of credit which would cost the citizen nothing. That part of the National Dividend which went to the consumer would remove the horrible anxiety of working-class parents to see their children earning.

Social Credit would prevent waste of human intelligence and life. In 1930 there were 91,850 children who left school to proceed to places of higher education. But 454,262 children left school, to seek work, at the age of fourteen. Of that number the vast majority could benefit by higher education, but the lack of buildings and the poverty of their parents prevented it. Under Social Credit we could erect the new secondary and technical schools we so urgently

need to give those half million outcasts a chance to develop.

We could find out the capabilities of the child and train him for the work he was fitted to do, instead of pitchforking him into an unsuitable occupation which he hated.

A short time ago a boy, fourteen and a half years of age, whom I used to teach, was crushed to death under horrible circumstances in the blackness of a coal mine. That boy was a born engineer. He had inventive genius. Under the sympathetic guidance of a colleague he had developed in an astounding way. He made numerous electrical models from pieces of wire and old metal. He gloried in it. He hated pit-work; but in a colliery village he had no chance to develop his genius. Had he lived he would have carried our cultural inheritance a step further. But he is dead, because of an insane monetary system, which denies us the right to give to humanity the gifts with which we are endowed.

As teachers we have a duty to the Community which employs us. It is to help the world to realise its manhood. The financial system, like Peter Pan, refuses to grow up. We teachers must take part in the war to end Poverty in the midst of Plenty.

Social Credit is the way.  
What are you going to do about it?  
Yours faithfully,  
Fred Tait

## Social Credit and Education - State Control or the Freedom of the Teacher

Taken from *Social Credit*, precursor to *The Social Crediter*, 30 November 1934

Many members of the teaching profession will have been grateful to Mr Fred Tait for his "Open Letter to Teachers" in a recent issue of *Social Credit*. He knows so well that sense of frustration felt by all who have to do with the training of children and are not yet quite subdued to the educational machine they are set to

operate. And he showed how a right use of the nation's credit could be made to give us all the material means of rendering education as generous, and schools as attractive, as physical means allow.

One effect of the National Dividend, or of free access to the use of credit,

deserves further emphasis. I mean its effect of bestowing freedom on the teacher himself, to teach as he knows best how, and to organise his school from within, out of his own genius.

*Education for Individual Freedom*  
One of the most profound and far-reaching of (continued on page 122)

## Beyond Materialistic Education: Steiner Waldorf Education for the Evolution of Human Consciousness

Richard House

*It is of great importance to find an answer to the needs of our times through an education which is based on a real understanding of humankind's evolution.*  
Rudolf Steiner

Authoritative commentators the world over are observing that education systems in the Western world's era of 'Late Modernity' are demonstrably in abject crisis, at times teetering on the brink of meltdown – witness, for example, the increasingly frequent media reports of violent attacks by school pupils upon teachers, and recent moves to introduce the random drug-testing of pupils in Britain's schools. In this parlous context, the educational critique and alternative given by Rudolf Steiner at the beginning of the last century offers a profoundly human vision that is even more relevant to our current times than it was a century ago. Whilst there is no space here to give anything approaching an adequate description of the education in its full richness and diversity, there already exists a wealth of literature on Steiner education – including over 20 books on education written by Steiner himself, and a vast secondary literature, just some of which is listed at the end of the article. My aim with this article is to focus on several core themes that Steiner education directly addresses and which are broadly symptomatic of the malaise from which modern schooling systems are characteristically suffering.

### Modernity's Assault on the Very Being of the Child

*If... the teacher continues to overload [the child's] mind, he will induce certain symptoms of anxiety. And if... he still continues to cram the child with knowledge in the usual way, disturbances in the child's growing*

*forces will manifest themselves. For this reason the teacher should have no hard and fast didactic system... Illnesses that appear in later life are often only the result of educational errors made in the very earliest years of childhood. This is why... education... must study the human being as a whole from birth until death.*

*Rudolf Steiner*

According to educationalist Alan Block, in our technocratic age "... the definition of the child is made so precise that the imaginative freedom of the individual child is denied, [and] the child's freedom to play and explore is severely curtailed". The relentless incursion of imposed cognitive-intellectual learning at ever earlier ages is just one example of these pernicious trends – and this in the face of mounting international evidence that the 'too much too soon' educational ideology may be doing untold developmental harm to a generation of children. Such evidence is well set out in the range of books published in the Hawthorn Press *Early Years* series, as well as in an increasing number of non-Waldorf books, like Sue Palmer's recent book *Toxic Childhood* and Steve Biddulph's *Raising Babies*. Moreover, no less an authority than the eminent Oxford University neuroscientist Professor Susan Greenfield has recently come out strongly in favour of a fundamental re-assessment of the impact of modern technologies on the developing brains of children – echoing cautions which authorities within the Steiner Waldorf movement have been urging for many years.

Mainstream education seems to have lost touch with a deep understanding of the developmental needs of children, and is, rather, preoccupied

with foisting an adult-centric agenda on to children which is both developmentally inappropriate and educationally unnecessary. Media reports abound today about how children are becoming bored and disaffected with learning at ages as young as 6 or 7; how the rates of mental ill-health in children are at record levels and relentlessly rising; and how prescriptions of the drug Ritalin [to 'help' children deemed to be suffering from so-called hyperactivity and attention 'disorders']] are also soaring. In the latter case, our society treats as a medical illness what might well be children's understandable response to, and unwitting commentary on, our 'mad' educational and arid technocratic culture. Young boys' learning in particular is suffering dramatically as they are being forced to 'sit still' for long periods in formal settings which are failing quite fundamentally to meet their developmental needs.

The importance of imaginative play in child development has been emphasised by a host of prominent educationalists – Alan Block, Emerson, Froebel, Susan Isaacs, Winnicott, Vygotsky and, of course, Steiner himself. The experience of free, unintruded-upon play is an absolutely essential precondition for the development of both a well-rounded, emotionally mature personality, and for inculcating the qualities of creativity, self-motivation and the lifelong love of learning. Carl Jung wrote that "without playing with fantasy, no creative work has ever come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of the imagination is incalculable". And psychoanalyst John Heaton wrote many years ago about the peculiar nature of play and how it differs radically from our everyday, taken-for-granted adult consciousness: as Heaton so intelligently wrote, "In

play there is a suspension of belief and non-belief... to [the child] there is no conceptual distinction between being and playing... The game absorbs the player into itself and thus takes from him the burden of [self-aware] initiative... Play does not allow the player to behave towards it like an object... Its nature is completely distorted if it is considered psychologically as a known thing about which assertions can be made and which people then set forth to cultivate”.

The freedom of imagination is a delicate human quality that can all too easily be damaged – sometimes irreparably – by technocratic educational practices. For Alan Block, “to deny imagination is to deny the very creativity that makes self possible... To deny imagination is to instill hatred where should stem love and creativity”. Moreover, modern schooling “establishes a dictatorship over the child in which reality is defined by the other... [T]he imagination... [is] denied for the predetermined outlines of the other. This violence denies the very existence of the individual child and denies that child all opportunity to learn.” And in the face of a system which “banishes children... under a dense cover of rationalistic, abstract discourse about ‘cognition’, ‘development’, ‘achievement’, etc.’, it becomes ‘impossible to hear the child’s own voice’, in the process ‘dismissing the child’s experience and... falsifying the actual lived experience of children.”.

On this view, there is a compelling argument for doing away for ever with fixed, government-imposed curricula, universal normalising standards, and the intensive surveillance through which we discipline our children: Block again: “Until we create an environment in which the child may use the educational establishment to create him or her self, until we serve only as a frame on which the canvas may

appear in paint, we will continue to practice extreme violence upon the child, denying him/her growth, health, and experience”. Those parents fortunate enough to be able to home-educate, or to send their children to a Steiner Waldorf or ‘human-scale’ school run along child-centred rather than politician-centred lines, are far more in a position to nurture their children’s inherent love of learning, not least through the protection of their developing senses and imagination.

### **The State’s Pernicious Involvement in Education**

*An education that has gradually been taken over by the State has deprived man of active striving; it has made him into a devoted member of the State structure. [From school age onwards] the State lays claim to the child and he is trained to fit the patterns of the State; he ceases to be a person and bears the stamp of the state.*

*Rudolf Steiner*

A growing number of mainstream critics is beginning to challenge the central controlling role of the State in children’s education. Last year, not long before his death, Professor Ted Wragg bemoaned the state of education in Britain: “What is the point”, he asked, “of having any kind of structure in education when the whole thing is run by the No. 10 Policy Unit?”. Ted Wragg’s typically piercing comment challenges the mentality that unquestioningly assumes that career politicians should control the education of the nation’s children (see, for example, the excellent and highly sobering essays in Prickett and Erskine-Hill’s edited book *Education! Education! Education!*).

Dr. Martin Stephen, high master of St. Paul’s School, London, wrote last year that education is too important to be left in the hands of politicians: “Education policy takes 10 or 15

years to come to fruition, and governments rarely have more than three years”, he argued. Stephen went on to advocate a Standing Commission upon which would be represented the universities, employers and parents, and which would make policy recommendations to government. Steiner anticipated these difficulties many decades ago, advocating that we “work towards an independent school system, making it free of the state so that the state does not even inspect schools. The activity of self-administered schools should arise purely from cultural needs”.

Children’s intrinsic motivation is severely compromised, if not destroyed, under a pressure to reach and maintain externally defined and imposed ‘standards’. When children are exposed to the pressure of such ‘extrinsic motivation’ and are made to learn, they inevitably lose autonomy and self-regulation. We should hardly be surprised that too many young people are today leaving school without an interest in anything they have been taught.

In an address given on 20th August 1919, in what has turned out to be an extraordinarily prophetic commentary on the relentless incursion of the State’s influence on education, Steiner said the following: “The State will tell us... what results to aim for, and what the State prescribes will be bad. Its targets are the worst ones imaginable, yet it expects to get the best possible results. Today’s politics work in the direction of regimentation, and it will go even further than this in its attempts to make people conform...”. And elsewhere: “the important thing is that we do not rob teachers of their strengths of personality by forcing them to work within the confines of government regulations... In a state school, everything is strictly defined... everything is planned with exactitude. With us, everything depends on the free individuality of each single teacher... Classes are entrusted entirely to the individuality

of the class teacher;... what we seek to achieve must be achieved in the most varied of ways. It is never a question of external regulations”.

A major figure within mainstream education in Britain, the President of the National Union of Teachers Hilary Bills, recently argued that “I don’t believe it is a coincidence that the level of disruption in schools has risen at the same time as the curriculum has been narrowed and testing has increased”. Steiner held a similar view: “It is always a matter of concern when someone has passed examinations; he can still undoubtedly be an extremely clever person, but this must be in spite of having passed examinations”.

### **An Education for the Evolution of Consciousness?**

*The only way out of this social chaos is to bring spirituality into the souls of people through education, so that out of the spirit itself, people may find the way to progress and the further evolution of civilisation.*  
Rudolf Steiner

Over 30 years ago, the French philosopher Louis Althusser coined the useful term the ‘ideological state apparatus’, in showing how an education system will tacitly tend merely to reproduce and reinforce the prevailing values of the society of which it is a part - in other words, a kind of self-perpetuating ‘status-quo theory’ in which the prevailing materialistic Weltanschauung will be relentlessly re-asserted throughout a given culture. Similarly, in his famous 1970 book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn also showed how an existing paradigm will cling on desperately to its hegemonic status, no matter how much disconfirming evidence accumulates that undermines its assumptive base and associated world-view.

At the beginning of the 21st Century, the dominant world-view is, of course, overwhelmingly that of materialism, consumerism and corporate managerialism – values which increasingly saturate and define mainstream schooling systems and culture more generally (the books by Henry Giroux and Juliet Schor are excellent exposés of these grim realities). Within education, we are witnessing the uncritical ascendancy of a soulless utilitarianism, in which quantity prevails over quality, academic over artistic and craft-oriented pursuits, ends over means, goals and targets over process – in short: head very much over heart. Under such a system, then, children are being conditioned into the very kind of limited, materialistic consciousness that it is surely humankind’s urgent evolutionary imperative to transcend. A cocktail of one-sided materialism and subservience to soulless technology, allied with an associated chronic loss of meaning, arguably lies at the heart of our emotional and ecological malaise. And an educational approach that merely mimics these same values is bound to reinforce that malaise.

I believe that our education system – in both its overriding philosophy and in its detailed procedures – should be at the forefront of the evolution of human consciousness that a spiritually mature way of living and being entails. Steiner Waldorf education is positioned right at the forefront of this global wave of educational models which is striving to find a better way to educate our children. In Steiner education our vision is lifted above the materialistic, deterministic world-view of ‘modernity’, with a concerted attempt being made to understand materialism in its wider evolutionary and cosmic context.

In the preface to his book *Mystics after Modernism*, Steiner wrote: “Only those who understand spirit in

the sense of true mysticism can fully understand the reality of nature”. For Steiner, “the divine is not something external to be recapitulated as an image in the human spirit. Rather, ... the divine is awakened within the human being” – and for Steiner, such awakening must always be an act of freedom for every individual, free of religious dogma of any kind.

At its best, Steiner education maximises the possibility of such a natural, unforced divine awakening – and of a deep ecological awareness and re-enchantment – through creating a learning environment that continually strives for a balanced engagement of mind, body, soul – and heart. Indeed, Steiner himself passionately emphasised the urgent need to “put the heart back into education”.

In his book *The Child’s Changing Consciousness and Waldorf Education*, Steiner was a trenchant critic of modernity and its accompanying world-view. While always being careful to acknowledge the positive achievements of modern science, he points out just how much its one-sidedness has “alienated the human being from himself”. On materialism, his critique is devastating: “Materialistic minds can grasp only human thinking – and this is their tragedy... Materialism is the one view of the world which has no understanding of what matter is!...”. He emphasises how, in the dominant over-intellectualised climate of modern education, there has been a fundamental misunderstanding of children and child development, for “the child’s soul is so entirely different from that of a thoroughly intellectualised grown-up... A pedagogy which only observes outer phenomena does not penetrate into those regions of the human being that reveal what should be done with regard to practical life”.

Steiner championed a truly living

pedagogy – for “life is full of living movement, of transformation... it has to be comprehended in all its mobility”...; and “partaking in the creativity of the world is the very thing our present culture is waiting for”. As Rudolf Meyer puts it in *The Wisdom of Fairy Tales*, “The whole of nature is permeated with creative intelligence”. It is hardly surprising, then, that for Steiner, “If you [the teacher] come with something dead, you inflict wounds upon what is... alive in the child, you attack its sense of truth and reality” ...

Steiner saw the antidote to these pernicious forces consisting in the qualities of heart and love. Thus he wrote, “In our work we need forces of the heart... that we ourselves have our heart in our pedagogy” – which is just one reason why he was so opposed to the kind of centrally imposed and determined ‘national curriculum’ which has now become the norm in mainstream Western education. He maintained that it is teachers who stand in the forefront of bringing new impulses into our civilisation; “...and an awareness has to emerge of how much needs to be changed... before a truly human form of education becomes established”.

The technocratic mentality of ‘modernity’ and its accompanying myth of materialism – together with their psychological manifestation, self-centred ego-consciousness - are deeply pervasive in modern culture. However, in Steiner education we are quite self-consciously pursuing an education that strives to enable the mature evolution of human consciousness far beyond the one-sided materialism of the prevailing Zeitgeist.

Part of this striving entails grappling with the deepest paradoxes of human existence. The Steiner Kindergarten, for example, is simultaneously a site of both complexity and simplicity: complexity in the sense of engaging with the delicate subtleties of soul

experience and their experiential dynamics (what Professor Max van Manen has called the “tone and tact of teaching”); and simplicity in the sense that we seek to protect the child from sensory and ‘soul’ overload in these years, as her energies are used to develop the physical body and the nascent imagination. We believe that it is the simple virtues and sensibilities that make us most fully human. To create an environment in which young children have a deep experience of such values and ways-of-being is therefore a core aspiration of Steiner Waldorf early education.

Children’s education, then, must surely play a central role in transcending the one-sided world-view of modernity. The environment and the soul-nourishment provided in Steiner education offers one of the greatest hopes for the evolutionary health of humankind, through the expanded consciousness that we cultivate and model in our Kindergarten environment.

One can only imagine what the effect might be within just one generation, if all young children were to receive a consistent Steiner Waldorf experience in early childhood. Not least, the profound concerns of OFSTED, – the British Schools Inspectorate – about the mounting malaise of early childhood would begin to be seriously and effectively addressed. Britain’s Chief Inspector of Schools, David Bell, recently claimed that many young children are providing an “almost intractable” challenge to schools and teachers, with many youngsters “appearing less prepared for school than they have ever been before”, and with “children never having sat at a table because their parents let them eat sitting on the floor in front of the television”. In Steiner Waldorf terms, it is the over-intellectualised culture of modernity which is perhaps chiefly

responsible for these maladies – as Rudolf Meyer puts it: “mankind’s powers of reason [will] not alone be able to find contact again with the creative spirit. What [is] needed is child-like qualities to rejuvenate and permeate our whole being”. (It is noteworthy that the last century’s greatest scientist, Albert Einstein, did not learn to read and write until into his early teens, and spent much of his early childhood in the kind of unawakened, unintruded-upon ‘dream-consciousness’ which we actively cultivate in the Steiner Kindergarten.)

In sum, then, in Steiner education we find a fully articulated approach to re-balancing the potentially catastrophic one-sidedness of modern materialistic culture.

### **In Conclusion...**

*If in education we coerce the impulses of human nature, if we do not know how to leave this nature free, but wish to interfere on our own part, then we injure the organism of the child for the whole of its earthly life.*

*Rudolf Steiner*

A certain corollary to this can be found in the writings of Robert Sardello: “Education... can now move from competition-driven modes of operation to conducting daily affairs as if every other person truly mattered. Children can now be instilled with delight in life, not just the conquest of winning”.

Recent research findings in a wide diversity of fields are amply confirming the educational approach devised by Steiner almost a century ago. Schools and teachers across the globe will testify to the fact that the multi-faceted genius that was Rudolf Steiner has bequeathed what is quite probably the most comprehensive holistic framework for education that has ever been articulated. As modern

mainstream education systems lurch from inevitable crisis to crisis, the education world could do no better than to pay close attention to, and learn from, the Steiner pedagogical approach to child development and learning, which is successfully facilitating the development of many thousands of responsible, creative, well-rounded and emotionally intelligent young people the world over.

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This article is an edited and updated version of a chapter from *Reinventing Education*, edited by Vincent Nolan and Gerard Darby, Synectics Education Initiative, Stoke Mandeville, 2005, pp. 123-34. (250pp, ISBN 0-9538534-1-1). The book can be bought at a special price to *New View* readers of £15 + £2 p&p from: Synectics Education Initiative, 13 Marsh Lane, Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5UZ, UK; tel. 01296 613949.

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## WORKSHOP ON STEINER EDUCATION 19TH NOVEMBER, LONDON

with Richard House & Sylvie Héту  
With his partner, the international lecturer on infant massage and Steiner education, Sylvie Héту, Richard is co-facilitating a workshop at Rudolf Steiner House, London on Sunday 19th November, on the theme 'The Future of Childhood: Journeying towards Steiner Education'. For further details, please contact Richard at richardahouse@hotmail.com or ring Steiner House on 020 7723 4400.

## Asses in Clover

Book 3 Chapter 4

How Cuanduine broke the second of his geasa

Another of Cuanduine's difficulties was this, that the world showed itself completely indifferent to the birds which he had been at such pains to deliver. One after another the Governments replied to his message that this was no time to bother about a lot of song-birds: that what the world really needed was the restoration of normal trading conditions; and in this attitude they were supported by the people, among whom the general opinion began to spread that though Cuanduine might be a good man at handling a fighting-plane, he was in other respects a bit of a crank and unfitted to manage practical affairs. 'A demi-god' said the popular press 'is no doubt valuable in stimulating the natural idealism of mankind, and idealism is an excellent thing in its proper place. The problem before the world, however, is essentially a practical one, and can only be solved by sane hard-headed men with practical experience.'

The Socialist press said more concisely: 'We have had enough of this demi-god with his bourgeois dilettantism and his callous disregard of the real needs of the workers. What the workers want is not birds, but work.'

The comic press said cleverly: 'Cuanduine offers us birds. We give him the bird.'

At this hostility Cuanduine was very much astonished. Addressing the people through a microphone, he said: 'My friends, whether you mean anything in particular by normal trading conditions I cannot tell. I can only tell you that at all times the conditions under which you have traded have made your world a laughing stock in hell and a heartsore in heaven. Whether practical business men will get you out of your present mess is likewise problematic: seeing

that it was they that got you into it. As to why you should be so voracious for work puzzles me entirely when so many good things can be produced with so little work. Do you think that man has no other purpose in life than to labour eternally at material production?'

At this, Mr Slawmy Cander, who had been awaiting his opportunity, sprang to his microphone, and cried out for all the world to hear him: 'Why, what other purpose can he have?'

'He might listen to the birds' said Cuanduine; and thereby he broke the second of his geasa, namely, not to answer the questions of White upon the lips of Black: for wisdom appears as folly to darkened understandings.

At his words the whole world burst into a roar of laughter, and the sound of it was as the laughter of damned souls. Mr Cander, pushing his advantage, spoke again.

'I do not profess to understand these metaphysical subtleties' said he. 'Will you give me a plain answer to a plain question? Have you or have you not any scheme to propose which will provide work for our starving millions.'

'Truly I have a score' replied Cuanduine. 'First you might build a tower to reach heaven; but as that kingdom is somewhat remote, and I perceive that none of you wants this world to be dumped with the goods they produce there, you should stop a little short of the gates thereof and put up a strong customs barrier. In the lower storeys you could set parties of unemployed to fish for clouds and to catch whales. Secondly, you could dig several passageways through the earth from various points on the surface to their antipodes, being careful to use no

machinery in the process, nor even steel tools, but only mattocks of pine or other soft wood, that your toil may be as prolonged and as onerous as possible. Afterwards you should fill the passages up again, lest they should be of any use and thus add to your abundance of riches which has proved your undoing. Thirdly, you could melt the polar ice-caps with matches or candles; but on no account with electric heat or the oxyhydrogen flame. Fourthly, you could distil the seas to obtain drinking water, and use no salt but what you abstract from the rivers. These tasks will suffice to begin with. I can set you more later on if you are in need of them.'

When Cuanduine had finished speaking, a vasty silence fell upon the world, the unfortunate people being so muddled in their heads by all they had been taught by their school teachers, their professors, their novelist-philosophers, their publicists, their economists, their politicians, and their newspapers, that they were quite incapable of thinking to purpose for themselves. Presently Cuanduine, seeing them thus driven to a nonplus, and pitying them, said: 'Well, then, since these works seem too much for you, let us return to our birds, which you can have without any work at all. And hark ye, my friends, if you cannot agree among yourselves in this matter, I myself will solve the difficulty in the way of Alexander with the Gordian knot, even with the sword. For I swear by the gods my people swear by, that not for your sakes only did I come to liberate the birds, but for theirs; and the work of the Gods must be done whether your worships like it or not.'

Copies of Asses in Clover can be obtained from the Social Credit Secretariat at the very special price of £5.00 (incl p&p) (RRP: £11)

## Commentary on Asses in Clover

Book III Chapter IV

How Cuanduine broke the second of his geasa\*

The quest imposed upon the hero, the demi-god Cuanduine, to free the song birds and wild flowers from the grip of corporate ownership can be viewed on one level as a mission to bring social justice and ecological sustainability into the world. The people, however, remain convinced that the insane economic system into which they have been born and educated, is non-negotiable. Here Slawmy Cander speaks not only for bankers but also for leading intellectuals in all walks of life. Their reasoning goes something like this:

“In theory and idealistically the birds should be freed. We are well aware that the very future of humanity is threatened by ecological disaster and the consequences of introducing unsustainable technologies based upon greed, not need. It would be very nice if we could reduce our ecological footprint on the planet, check global warming and create a healthy environment for our children to live in. It might give us more time to appreciate the finer things in life – art, beauty, music, nature, life itself. But we have got to be practical. In real life we have to meet our economic obligations. There are debts, mortgages and bills to pay, and there’s nothing we can do about that except follow a career and make our way up

the ladder of success. In any case, I like my work. It is what I want to do. I’m a top professional in my field. Many are not as fortunate as I am. They have to work hard at a tedious job for a pittance. But what you’ve got to realise is that they have a right to that pittance if they have worked for it. No matter what the true value of, or necessity for, that work, society has a duty to provide them with – work. What’s more, with the housing market as it is, we must make sure that our children can command good earning power. In due course we may be able to consider freeing the birds (ecological sustainability) but not right now. I have my life to get on with, thank you very much. And anyway, some of us need to be rich so that we can give to the poor. That’s far more important than asking esoteric questions about the causes of poverty, meaning of life and all that rubbish.”

The second *\*geis*, plural *geasa* (meaning something between a tabu – not to be done for fear of disastrous consequences -, and a pledge or obligation laid on by another), is “not to answer the questions of White upon the lips of Black”, i.e., to be aware that seemingly sensible questions can be

deliberately presented in such a way as to trap the unwary hero. The intention in asking such a question is to cash in on the general ignorance which results from failure to think things through to logical/coherent conclusions. The motives for asking such questions are generally defensive – what you are saying challenges my world view, and is dangerous to my position of prestige or power. Corporate business-as-usual depends upon the populace remaining in a steady state of inertia founded on ignorance. Hence, this section of the book highlights the necessity to focus upon the educational system which is currently denying children and young people their basic human right not to become wage (or salary) slaves in a rapidly disintegrating social order. If this task was seriously embarked upon it would work wonders for the present generation of workers, who would find themselves examining their accepted values and mind-sets about their lifestyles.

Editor’s note: This is an extract from the Commentary on *Asses in Clover*, which is still in preparation. The theme of viable alternatives is pursued elsewhere in the Commentary. In the last edition of TSC we included an extract from Chapter 1.

### Quest

Long before the present generation of workers went through their education in schools and universities, the following paragraph appeared in an article by W.L. Bardsley in *Social Credit* (a forerunner of *The Social Crediter*). The year was 1937. Rearmament for war, following the horrors of World War I, was being justified by fanning the flames of hatred against the German people, who were suffering under the oppression of the Nazis. Bardsley’s article contrasts reality with the economic theory that capital goods can only be produced by sacrificing current consumption.

*So far from rearmament being a burden on*

*this and future generations, it is the very activity which has released purchasing power where it is needed – in the pockets of the people. It is a silly, unnecessary way of releasing purchasing power, but that is what rearmament has done. The employees of the booming armaments industry are enabled to call upon the vast resources of modern production for their requirements of food, warmth and shelter, aye, and amusements, and beer and cigarettes – on one condition. That condition is that they work at making guns, battleships, bombing planes and poison gas. A National Dividend would enable them and others to call upon the same vast resources for all they need*

*without having to make guns first. But if we need armaments it is clear that we can make them and enjoy a higher standard of living, not a lower one. There is plenty for all, and time and resources to make armaments into the bargain if need be. (Social Credit, February 5, 1937)*

The final sentences were necessary because anti-war sentiments could not be expressed in the social climate of the times. When will they ever learn?

If we are to learn from the past, we need to study the paragraph from Bardsley’s article, and do a little research. **Can anyone find an economist capable of refuting Bardsley’s argument?**

(continued from page 114) Major Douglas' utterances runs as follows (I quote from memory), "That the end of man, though unknown, is such that progress towards it is best furthered through the greatest freedom of the individual." And one of the most useful questions his followers can put to opponents is: "Do you do your best work when acting on your own inspiration, or when carrying out other people's directions?"

"Education is an affair of the Spirit," parrot our politicians with one breath, while with the next they call it a "System," one which needs revising certainly, but one which is capable of being framed, ordered and administered by them, from above. "The Educational Systems of the world are cracking like the streets of Messina during the earthquake," says Sir Michael Sadler, and adds, with apparent approval, "Hitler is trying a very interesting experiment in national education." *The Daily Telegraph* leader, next day, hastens to draw conclusions, "If so, it is high time the progressive educationalists should agree on the educational system best fitted for our changed English life," and proceeds to scold its political opponents for "rarely sparing a word on what that Education itself should be."

Even if such decisions were within the competence of any political party, or of any administrative body within the political systems, the truth would be the exact opposite of what *The Daily Telegraph* assumes. The systems are cracking because they are imposed systems, not vitally functioning organisms quickened from within.

### *Teachers and the State*

Major Douglas, before the Macmillan Committee, quoted from the economic views of Rudolf Steiner as expressed in his *Threefold Commonwealth*. Let me quote from the educational views of the same writer, taken from a preface to the

same book:—"Human life in these latter times has entered upon a phase where all social institutions continually give rise to what is anti-social, and this anti-social element has constantly to be overcome afresh."

"Those who hold socialistic views can conceive of no other arrangement than that the Community should educate the individual to its own service, after its own standards. People are very unwilling to come to what is an absolutely necessary recognition for our own day, namely a recognition of the fact that, in the course of history, a thing may come to be a mistake for a later age which at an earlier stage of evolution is right. In order that new conditions might be prepared suitable for modern times, it became necessary that the control of education should be taken from those in whom it was vested during the Middle Ages, and should be made over to the State; but to continue to maintain this arrangement now is a very serious social mistake.

"The educational system—which after all forms the ground from which the spiritual life grows—must be placed under the administration of those who do the educating. Every teacher must spend only so much time on actual teaching as will allow of his being administrator in his own province....Nobody will prescribe instructions who is not himself at the same time hiringly engaged in the actual work of teaching. No parliament—and no individual who himself once taught, perhaps, and does so no longer—will have any choice in the matter....from a free spiritual community of this kind both the State-life and the life of Economics will receive those forces which they are not able to give, when they aspire to shape the spiritual life from their own aspects."

No one who looks with imagination into the future can fail to see that in the Social Credit State education will become a free, self-appointed task as far as teachers are concerned. With a

grant from the national credit supply, men and women who feel they know the needs of the young, will be able to associate themselves together in groups, drawn to one another by natural affinity, and will select or attract pupils by the same hiring process. Only so can education ever be a truly an affair of the spirit, only in such free communion can the gifts of the children find their true development.

Mr Tait, as a historian, will recognise that these antisocial conclusions to socially necessary beginnings (mentioned in the above quotation) are discoverable in all human institutions (not excluding the institution of Banking), and if anyone should need further persuasion of the Death of Abstractionism coming to us from central educational administration, complicated by power lusts of the politicians, levelling jealousies of the mediocre, and vanity complexes of official advisors, he cannot do better than read the front page of *The Times Educational Supplement* of October 27<sup>th</sup> (1934).

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F Bunce

### **Can Schools be Replaced?**

"Young children ask fundamental questions about God, the nature of the Universe and about society. Some cynics suggest that since these are such difficult questions to answer we send them to school where they are taught not to question at all.....children love to learn but they resent being taught."

Cedric Cullingford, in Vincent Nolan and Gerard Darby (eds.) *Reinventing Education: A 'Thought Experiment* by 21 authors, Synectics Education Initiative, 2005.

*Within education, we are witnessing the uncritical ascendancy of a soulless utilitarianism, in which quantity prevails over quality, academic over artistic and craft-oriented pursuits, ends over means, goals and targets over process – in short: head very much over heart.*

(contd from page 113) physicists, scientists in pharmaceutical companies (see Le Carré's *The Constant Gardener*), and academia as a whole. In these circumstances the call for a National Dividend for all, independent from earnings, becomes an urgent priority.

Barry Sheerman, chairman of the Commons education committee said (on 2 August) that children should not start school until the age of seven, thus giving them time to learn and develop away from the pressure of tests and formal lessons.

Mr Sheerman revealed that his committee would be launching an inquiry into testing in the autumn.

He said he had visited New Zealand recently where educationalists told him: "We don't want your system of testing at 7, 11, 14, 16, 17 and 18 because everybody knows your people are teaching to the test and they're not doing that in a way that's best for the development of the children."

## Obituary

### Eric Dudley Butler, 1916 -2006

Eric was born in Victoria, Australia. His antecedents were Welsh and Irish, and from an early age he loved history, especially that of the English-speaking peoples. At the height of the Great Depression, in 1935, he read C H Douglas' *Economic Democracy* in one afternoon, and thus was introduced to social credit ideas. The following day he left his farm on foot to go to the small city office of a social credit group headed by the writer and editor T J Moore, and said, "I am reporting for duty and prepared to give the rest of my life."

And so he did. He travelled on foot or by bicycle throughout Victoria, speaking soap-box style with a cap for donations. He and his friend and supporter Norm Rolls who travelled ahead and heralded his arrival by putting up signs, depended for food on the donations received. During this period he also wrote for *The New Times*, then edited by the aforementioned T J Moore.

By 1939, the social credit movement had grown tremendously, especially

in Victoria and part of New South Wales. At one time there were 200 weekly social credit study groups in Sydney. Many of their 'teachers' were inexperienced and mistakes were made, especially the most glaring one of starting a social credit political party, despite the warnings of C H Douglas who had visited Australia in 1934. Eric Butler corresponded with Douglas and avoided the party political approach.

Nonetheless, by the time of the outbreak of WW11, Social Credit had seriously alarmed some politicians, one of whom tried to destroy Eric Butler and his associates by forcing an enquiry into their so-called 'anti-war activities.' While on active service during the war, Eric continued to write for *The New Times*.

In 1946 he founded the 'League of Rights' to defend constitutional limits to government and preserve individual rights. In 1962 he embarked on a packed tour of Britain, voicing his opposition to Britain's entry into the European Common Market.

Though he made mistakes, notably his much-publicised intervention in the Rhodesia affair, presenting a tankerful of petrol to the beleaguered Smith government, he understood social credit theory extremely well and promoted it vigorously throughout his long life.

We offer our sincere sympathy to his family and friends.

## Book review

### What is a University?

*Peter Milward* Professor Emeritus of English Literature and Western Culture at Sophia University in Tokyo Director of the Renaissance Institute in Tokyo, member of the Jesuit Order. Shephard-Walwyn 2006 £13.95 pb 130pp ISBN: 0 85683 233 2

This book is in two parts, the first

looking at the origins of the academic disciplines and the second part looking at the fundamentals of philosophy from a Christian viewpoint. The text is full of rich and warming quotes from Aristotle, Milton, Shakespeare (especially King Lear), and the Victorians, John Henry Newman and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

This book will appeal to readers with a traditional Christian background. It has a delightful, charming, innocent style very easy to read. It is almost as though the cultural richness of the Renaissance period spills over into the values expressed, such as in his chapter on 'What is a woman?' Readers who espouse traditional family values will have no trouble with this chapter. There is a strong spirituality which, in a simple way, describes some of the deeper mysteries of life such as the spiritual evolutionary principle from plant to animal. There is a hidden depth to this book; behind it stands the wisdom of the Jesuit Order.

Readers who have turned away from the traditional Christian models will have no time for this book. It will seem to them to be full of out-moded stereo-types. The description of the role of women will be particularly unacceptable, particularly his polarising and justifying of traditional male qualities for men and female qualities for women.

Towards the end of the book there is a classic exposition on reason and faith. Thinking cannot investigate the world of Spirit; this he claims is only accessible to us through faith. The author would lull us into the warm and comforting images of Renaissance Christianity. Maybe, in this age of increasing individual consciousness, quite independent of gender, we need to waken up and find new ways of looking at the world around us.

*Adrian Lamont* is a retired teacher and student of Rudolf Steiner.

## Young People and Organic Farming

Organic farming is creating more jobs, revitalising rural economies and encouraging younger people into agriculture. Results from a comprehensive survey comparing employment on organic farms to that on non-organic farms shows that organic farming is delivering 32% more jobs per farm on average across the UK.

If organic farming, currently practised on 4% of UK farmland, was adopted by all UK farmers, it would produce an additional 93,000 on-farm jobs - 16 times more people than were employed by the Rover car company when it closed in April 2005.

The survey results were launched on 15 May in conjunction with the *Transport & General Workers Union* at the Transport and General Workers Union HQ, London.

The independent research also reveals that organic farmers are:

- younger -the average age of organic farmers surveyed was 49, seven years younger than their non-organic counterparts, who average 56 years old.

- more optimistic about the future of farming - 64% expect their family to take on the farm compared to 51 % for non-organic farming.

- more entrepreneurial - 3 times as many organic farms are involved in direct or local marketing schemes than non-organic farmers.

Peter Melchett, *Soil Association* Policy Director said: 'The implications of this research are not limited to the UK. In the developing world, some 2.5 billion people are still dependent for their livelihoods on agriculture. If they adopt the model of industrial farming, as has been the trend in the developed world, millions will be forced off the land. In contrast, organic farming offers a truly sustainable development path'.

This extract is taken from *Land Heritage Newsletter* Spring 2006. We are very grateful to Barbara Panvel for bringing it to our attention.

### Books by C H Douglas ( in SC Library)

*Economic Democracy*

*Social Credit*

*The Monopoly of Credit*

*Warning Democracy*

*Credit Power and Democracy*

*The Control and Distribution of Production*

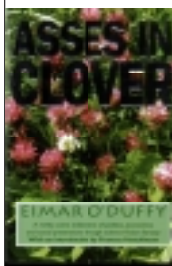
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# Recommended Reading



**Eimar O'Duffy**  
*Asses in Clover*  
(Jon Carpenter £11.00)



**H J Massingham**  
*The Tree of Life*  
(Jon Carpenter £13.99)

**Frances Hutchinson & Brian Burkitt**  
*The Political Economy of Social Credit And Guild Socialism*  
(Jon Carpenter £12.99)

**Frances Hutchinson**  
*Social Credit? Some Questions Answered*  
(KRP £5.00)

**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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(It would be very helpful if material were submitted either by e-mail or on disk if at all possible).

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