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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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The Grand Inquisitor

The following passage is taken from *The Brothers Karamazov*, the last of Dostoevsky's novels, which he wrote in 1878 and which is broadly concerned with the effects of an ill-digested 'liberalism' and 'science' on traditional Russian life and culture.

Ivan, the second Karamazov brother, is an 'intellectual,' and he finds it increasingly difficult to reconcile his knowledge of the affairs of men, of philosophy and of science with a belief in God. He is expressing his doubts in a long conversation with his younger brother Alyosha, a youth of unassuming kindness and simplicity. He tells him about a poem he nearly wrote a year ago:

"My story is laid in Spain, in Seville, in the most terrible time of the Inquisition, when fires were lighted every day to the glory of God, and 'in the splendid *auto da fé* the wicked heretics were burnt.' . . . He came once more among men in that human shape in which He walked among men for three years fifteen centuries ago. He came down to the 'hot pavements' of the southern town in which on the day before almost a hundred heretics had, *ad majorem gloriam Dei*, been burnt by the cardinal, the Grand Inquisitor, in a magnificent *auto da fé*, in the presence of the king, the court, the knights, the cardinals, the most charming ladies of the court, and the whole population of Seville.

"He came softly, unobserved, and yet, strange to say, everyone recognised Him. That might be one of the best passages in the poem. I mean, why they recognised Him. The people are irresistibly drawn to Him, they surround Him, they flock about Him, follow Him. He moves silently in their midst with a gentle smile of infinite compassion. . . . 'It is He—it is He!' all repeat. 'It must be He, it can be no one but Him!' He stops at the steps of the Seville cathedral at the moment when the weeping mourners are bringing in a little open white coffin. In it lies a child of seven, the only daughter of a prominent citizen. The dead child lies hidden in flowers. 'He will raise your child,' the crowd shouts to the weeping mother. The priest, coming to meet the coffin, looks perplexed, and frowns, but the mother of the dead child throws herself at His feet with a wail. 'If it is Thou, raise my child!' she cries, holding out her hands to Him. The procession halts, the coffin is laid on the steps at His feet. He looks with compassion, and His lips once more softly pronounce, 'Maiden, arise!' and the maiden arises. The little girl sits up in the coffin and looks round, smiling with wide-open wondering eyes, holding a bunch of white roses they had put in her hand.

"There are cries, sobs, confusion among the people, and at that moment the cardinal himself, the Grand Inquisitor, passes by the cathedral. He is an old man, almost ninety, tall and erect with a withered face and sunken eyes, in which there is still a gleam of light. He is not dressed in his gorgeous cardinal's robes, as he was the day before, when he was burning the enemies of the Roman Church—at this moment he is wearing his coarse, old, monk's cassock.

At a distance behind him come his gloomy assistants and slaves and the 'holy guard.' He stops at the sight of the crowd and watches it from a distance. He sees everything; he sees them set the coffin down at His feet, sees the child rise up, and his face darkens. He knits his thick grey brows and his eyes gleam with a sinister fire. He holds out his finger and bids the guards take Him. . . .

"The day passes and is followed by the dark burning, 'breathless' night of Seville. The air is 'fragrant with laurel and lemon.' In the pitch darkness the iron door of the prison is suddenly opened and the Grand Inquisitor himself comes in with a light in his hand. He is alone; the door is closed at once behind him. He stands in the doorway and for a minute or two gazes into His face. At last he goes up slowly, sets the light on the table and speaks.

"'Is it Thou? Thou?' but receiving no answer, he adds at once, 'Don't answer, be silent. What canst Thou say, indeed? I know too well what Thou wouldst say. And Thou hast no right to add anything to what Thou hadst said of old. Why, then, art Thou come to hinder us? For Thou hast come to hinder us, and Thou knowest that. But dost Thou know what will be tomorrow? I know not who Thou art and care not to know whether it is Thou or only a semblance of Him, but tomorrow I shall condemn Thee and burn Thee at the stake as the worst of heretics. And the very people who have today kissed Thy feet, tomorrow at the faintest sign from me will rush to heap up the embers of Thy fire.' . . .

"'Hast Thou the right to reveal to us one of the mysteries of that world from which Thou hast come?' my old man asks Him, and answers the question for him. 'No, Thou hast not; that Thou mayest not add to what has been said of old, and mayest not take from men the freedom which Thou didst exalt when Thou wast on earth. Whatsoever Thou revealest anew will encroach on men's freedom of their faith; for it will be manifest as a miracle, and the freedom of their faith was dearer to Thee than anything in those days fifteen hundred years ago. Didst Thou not often say then, "I will make you free"? But now Thou hast seen these "free" men, the old man adds suddenly, with a pensive smile. ' . . . For fifteen centuries we have been

(Continued on page 3.)

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Social Credit

Our Editorial of ten years ago is well worth re-publishing, especially for new readers:

We say, with adequate foundation, that Social Credit is applied Christianity, and it is therefore especially necessary to be able to give an intelligent answer to an enquiry for a definition of Christianity in everyday life. It must be remembered that while it is so no longer, England was once a Christian country, and during that period there was evolved

a system of Law, known as Common or Natural Law, which was definitely Christian in intention, and surprisingly so in achievement. It was wholly distinct from Roman Law and entirely opposed to the Legislation by Departments which is struggling to kill it.

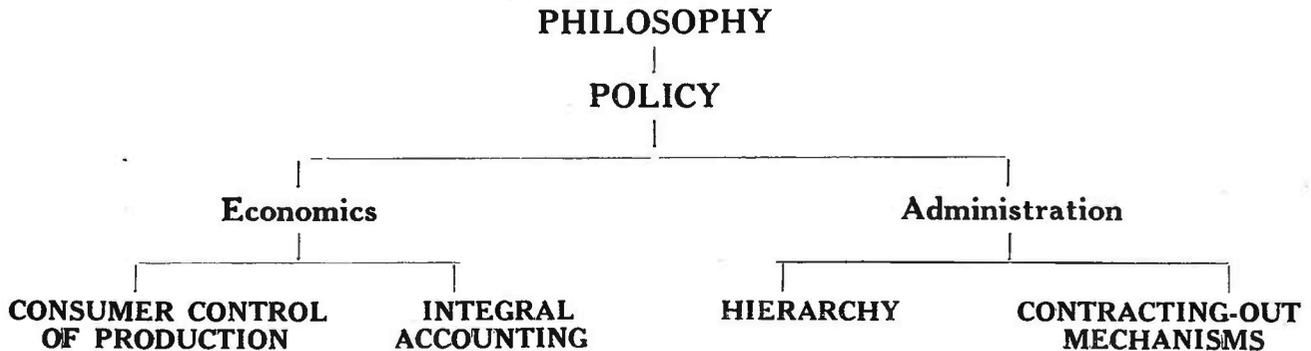
It is in this body of Law that the most tangible structure to which Social Crediters can refer is enshrined, and it is important that Social Credit technicians should have a clear understanding, not of the details, but of the principles which are involved—principles which underlie the whole theory of private property and its corollary—the corporate nature of the family from generation to generation, which have been filched by their simulacra, the limited company and State Capitalism.

Socialism, Communism, and Atheism are all of a piece, as are Christianity, private, decentralised property, and respect for family tradition as part of respect for the individual. There is no compromise possible—either there is no Christ, or Socialism and Communism are of the Devil. The essence of them, without exception, is that the group giveth, and the group taketh away; blessed be the name of the group. Anyone with experience of life knows that the group giveth; yes, in exchange for the soul.*

**Editorial note:* The author of this brief article was Major Douglas.

WHAT IS SOCIAL CREDIT?

Social Credit assumes that Society is primarily metaphysical, and must have regard to the organic relationships of its prototype.



OBJECTIVE: Social Stability by the integration of means and ends.

INCOMPATIBLES: Collectivism, Dialectic Materialism, Totalitarianism, Judæo-Masonic Philosophy and Policy.

Ballot-box democracy embodies all of these.

C.S. Douglas

February, 1951.

THE GRAND INQUISITOR—(continued from page 1.)

wrestling with Thy freedom, but now it is ended and over for good. Dost Thou not believe that it's over for good? Thou lookest meekly at me and deignest not even to be wroth with me. But let me tell Thee that now, to-day, people are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom, yet they have brought their freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet. But that has been our doing. Was this what Thou didst? Was this Thy freedom?"

"I don't understand again." Alyosha broke in. "Is he ironical, is he jesting?"

"Not a bit of it! He claims it as a merit for himself and his Church that at last they have vanquished freedom and have done so to make men happy. 'For now' (he is speaking of the Inquisition, of course) 'for the first time it has become possible to think of the happiness of men. Man was created a rebel; and how can rebels be happy? . . .'

"Judge Thyself who was right—Thou or he who questioned Thee then [in the wilderness]. Remember the first question; its meaning, in other words, was this: "Thou wouldst go into the world, and art going with empty hands, with some promise of freedom which men in their simplicity and their natural unruliness cannot even understand, which they fear and dread—for nothing has ever been more insupportable for a man and a human society than freedom. But seest Thou these stones in this parched and barren wilderness? Turn them into bread, and mankind will run after Thee like a flock of sheep, grateful and obedient, though for ever trembling, lest Thou withdraw Thy hand and deny them Thy 'bread.' But Thou wouldst not deprive man of freedom and didst reject the offer, thinking, what is that freedom worth, if obedience is bought with bread? Thou didst reply that man lives not by bread alone. But dost Thou know that for the sake of that earthly bread the spirit of the earth will rise up against Thee, and all will follow him crying, 'Who can compare with this beast? He has given us fire from heaven!' Dost Thou know that the ages will pass, and humanity will proclaim by the lips of their sages that there is no crime, and therefore no sin; there is only hunger? 'Feed men, and then ask of them virtue!' that's what they'll write on the banner, which they will raise against Thee, and with which they will destroy Thy Temple. . . ." They will seek us again, hidden underground in the catacombs, for we shall be again persecuted and tortured. They will find us and cry to us, "Feed us, for those who have promised us fire from heaven haven't given it!" . . . and we alone shall feed them in Thy name, declaring falsely that it is in Thy name. Oh, never, never can they feed themselves without us! No science will give them bread so long as they remain free. In the end they will lay their freedom at our feet, and say to us "Make us your slaves, but feed us." They will understand themselves, at last, that freedom and bread enough for all are inconceivable together, for never, never will they be able to share between them! They will be convinced, too, that they can never be free, for they are weak, vicious, worthless and rebellious. . . . They will marvel at us and look on us as gods, because we are ready to endure the freedom which they have found so dreadful and to rule over them—so awful it will seem to them to be free. But we shall tell them that we are Thy servants and rule them in Thy name. We shall deceive them again,

for we will not let Thee come to us again. That deception will be our suffering, for we shall be forced to lie.

" . . . in this question lies hid the great secret of this world. Choosing "bread," Thou wouldst have satisfied the universal and everlasting craving of humanity—to find someone to worship. So long as man remains free he strives for nothing so incessantly and so painfully as to find someone to worship. But man seeks to worship what is established beyond dispute, so that all men would agree at once to worship it. For these pitiful creatures are concerned not only to find what one or the other can worship but to find something that all would believe in and worship; what is essential is that all may be *together* in it. This craving for *community* of worship is the chief misery of every man individually and of all humanity from the beginning of time. . . . Thou didst know, Thou couldst not but have known, this fundamental secret of human nature, but Thou didst reject the one infallible banner which was offered Thee to make all men bow down to Thee alone—the banner of earthly bread. . . . I tell Thee that man is tormented by no greater anxiety than to find someone quickly to whom he can hand over that gift of freedom with which the ill-fated creature is born. But only one who can appease their conscience can take over their freedom. In bread there was offered Thee an invincible banner; give bread, and man will worship Thee, for nothing is more certain than bread. But if someone else gains possession of his conscience—oh! then he will cast away Thy bread and follow after him who has ensnared his conscience. In that Thou wast right. For the secret of man's being is not only to live but to have something to live for. Without a stable conception of the object of life man would not consent to go on living and would rather destroy himself than remain on earth, though he had bread in abundance. That is true. But what happened? Instead of taking man's freedom from them, Thou didst make it greater than ever! Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil? . . . In place of the rigid ancient law, man must hereafter with free heart decide for himself what is good and what is evil, having only Thy image before him as his guide. . . . And is it for me to conceal from Thee our mystery? Perhaps it is Thy will to hear it from my lips. Listen, then. We are not working with Thee, but with *him*—that is our mystery. It's long—eight centuries—since we have been on *his* side and not on *Thine*. Just eight centuries ago, we took from him what Thou didst reject with scorn, that last gift he offered Thee, showing Thee all the kingdoms of the earth. We took from him Rome and the sword of Caesar, and proclaimed ourselves sole rulers of the earth, though hitherto we have not been able to complete our work. But whose fault is that? Oh, the work is only beginning, but it has begun. It has long to await completion and the earth has yet to suffer, but we shall triumph and shall be Caesars, and then we shall plan the universal happiness of man. But Thou mightest have taken even then the sword of Caesar. Why didst Thou reject that last gift? Hadst Thou accepted that last counsel of the mighty spirit, Thou wouldst have accomplished all that man seeks on earth—that is, someone to worship, someone to keep his conscience, and some means of uniting all in one unanimous and harmonious ant-heap, for the craving for universal unity is the third and

last anguish of man. Mankind as a whole had always striven to organise a universal state. There have been many great nations with great histories, but the more highly they were developed the more unhappy they were, for they felt more acutely than other people the craving for world-wide union. The great conquerors, Timours and Ghenghis-Khans, whirled like hurricanes over the face of the earth striving to subdue its people, and they too were but the unconscious expression of the same craving for universal unity. Hadst Thou taken the world and Caesar's purple, Thou wouldst have founded the universal state and have given universal peace. For who can rule men if not he who holds their conscience and their bread in his hands? We have taken the sword of Caesar, and in taking it, of course, have rejected Thee and followed *him*."

(To be continued.)

Albert Schweitzer

"We have to wrestle with conditions [an abstraction] so as to secure that men who are imprisoned in work and are being worn out by it may nevertheless preserve the possibility of a spiritual existence." (Albert Schweitzer, 1928.)

Schweitzer, a Doctor of Theology, Medicine and Philosophy of Strasbourg University, and an Honorary Doctor of Music, Divinity, Laws and Law of various British Universities, is, we hear, considered overrated by the daily newspaper in this country which has the largest circulation but figured on *The Sunday Times's* front page on October 23 in a large drawing by Mr. Augustus John above a eulogy borrowed from the recommendation of him for a Cambridge degree the day before. A wrangle about his title to distinction, conducted from the visible extremes of public agitation, will tend if not to increase, to magnify it; and we do not suppose this is entirely unpremeditated. Realism, not by any means cynicism, which we disown, suggests to our mind the consideration that most public agitations on behalf of individuals are, in fact, expressions of the eternal preference of Demos for Barabbas. "We have to . . ." is not an outstandingly New Testament concept: there the simple future takes precedence over imperatives as a rule. If anyone shares our sense of mystery investing Dr. Schweitzer, we suggest that it may be directed if not dissipated by a close study of the following passage from Schweitzer's book on J. S. Bach (page 48, vol. 1):—"The more we try to see into the development of things, in any field whatever, the more we become conscious that to each epoch there are set certain limits of knowledge, before which it has to come to a halt, and always at the very moment when it was apparently bound to advance to a higher and definitive knowledge that seemed just within its grasp. The real history of progress in physics, philosophy, and religion, and more especially in psychology, is the history of incomprehensible cessations, of conceptions that were unattainable by a given epoch, in spite of all that happened to lead it up to them,—of the thoughts it did not think, not because it could not, but because there was some mysterious command upon it not to." In itself, minutiae of expression apart, that seems to us to contain a profound observation. Notice, however, that the direction is

to 'look back.' Schweitzer does not say, nor does he mean, "The more we try to *advance* the development of things. . ." Bach had done the advancing two centuries before Schweitzer wrote.

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Realistic Constitutionalism

by

C. H. DOUGLAS

Notes for an Address by Major C. H. Douglas to the Constitutional Research Association at Brown's Hotel, Mayfair, May 8, 1947.

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