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"SOCIAL CREDIT PRINCIPLES" Swanwick Address, 1924

By Major C. H. DOUGLAS

The financial system, in its control over production, stands to the works or factory system of the world, considered as an economic unit, in the same relation as the planning department of a modern factory does to that factory.

The distribution side of the financial system exercises a function not dissimilar to that of the progress department of a factory.

No discussion of the financial system can serve any useful purpose which does not recognise:

(a) *That a works system must have a definite objective.*

(b) *That when that objective has been decided upon it is a technical matter to fit methods of human psychology and physical facts, so that that objective will be most easily obtained.*

In regard to (a) the policy of the world economic system amounts to a philosophy of life. There are really only three alternative policies in respect to a world economic organisation:

The first is that it is the end in itself for which man exists.

The second is that while not an end in itself, it is the most powerful means of constraining the individual to do things he does not want to do; e.g., it is a system of Government. This implies a fixed ideal of what the world ought to be.

And the third is that the economic activity is simply a functional activity of men and women in the world; *that the end of man, while unknown, is something towards which most rapid progress is made by the free expansion of individuality, and that, therefore, economic organisation is most efficient when it most easily and rapidly supplies economic wants without encroaching on other functional activities.*

In regard to (b) certain factors require to be taken into consideration.

(1) That money has no reality in itself. That in itself it is either gold, silver, copper, paper, cowrie shells, or broken tea cups. The thing which makes it money, no matter of what it is made, is purely psychological, and consequently there is no limit to the amount of money except a psychological limit.

(2) That economic production is simply a conversion of one thing into another, and is primarily a matter of energy. It seems highly probable that both energy and production are only limited by our knowledge of how to apply them.

(3) That in the present world unrest two entirely separate factors are confused. The cry for the democratisation of industry obtains at least 90 per cent of its force from the desire for the democratisation of the *proceeds* of industry, which, is, of course, a totally different thing. This confusion is assisted by the objective fact that the chief controllers of industry get rich out of their control.

The present world financial system is a Government based on the theory that men should be made to work, and this theory is considerably intermixed with the even stronger contention that

the end of man is work. . . . This is a statement of fact, not a theory. More than 95 per cent of the purchasing-power actually expended in consumption is wages and salaries.

It will therefore be seen that there are two standpoints from which to examine its mechanism. The first considered as a method of achieving its political end of universal work, and the second as a means of achieving some other political end - for instance, the third alternative already mentioned.

Considered as a means of making people work (an aim which is common both to the Capitalist and Socialist Party Politics) the existing financial system, as a system, is probably nearly perfect.

Considered as a mechanism for distributing goods, however, the existing financial system is radically defective. In the first place, it does not provide enough purchasingpower to buy the goods which are produced. . . . The fact that that is so is the central fact of the existing economic system, and unless it is dealt with, no other reforms are of any use whatever.

And the second feature of equal importance is that considerably less than the available number of individuals, working with modern tools and processes, can produce everything that the total population of the world, as individuals, can use and consume, and that this situation is progressive, that is to say, that year by year a smaller number of individuals can usefully be employed in economic production.

To summarise the matter, the principles which must govern any reform of the financial system, which will at one and the same time avoid catastrophe, and re-orientate world economic policy along the lines of the third alternative, are three in number:

1. *That the cash credits of the population of any country shall at any moment be collectively equal to the collective cash prices for consumable goods for sale in that country, and such cash credits shall be cancelled on the purchase of goods for consumption.*

2. *That the credits required to finance production shall be supplied, not from savings, but be new credits relating to new production.*

3. *That the distribution of cash credits to individuals shall be progressively less dependent upon employment. That is to say, that the dividend shall progressively displace the wage and salary - (Swanwick, 1924).*