

Social Capitalism – Robert Corfe

THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY IN THE ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL ECONOMIES – NOW BECOMING MORE URGENT BY THE DAY - STEMS FROM THE BREAKDOWN OF THE LEFT/RIGHT DIVIDE AS AN EFFECTIVE MODE IN ADVANCING SOCIO-POLITICAL PROGRESS. ROBERT CORFE'S WIDE-RANGING ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM AND RESULTANT CONCLUSIONS IN A SERIES OF STARTLING BOOKS, CALL FOR OPEN DISCUSSION AMONGST POLITICAL ACADEMICS AND THE WIDER PUBLIC.

THE FOLLOWING 7 PARAGRAPHS present a concise summary of his thinking -

1. That the left/right conflict that has proved so useful as a democratic mechanism in advancing society over the past 200 years is now breaking down in the advanced industrial economies. This is because the emergence of the New Majority, through successful legislation in democratising society, is removing the practical basis for intelligent conflict based on class divisiveness. Consequently, there has emerged a *pretentious* conflict that is compounding rather than resolving underlying socio-economic problems.
2. The new socio-economic problems are predominantly generation-based, and these do not lend themselves to traditional class-based divisions. There is now emerging a new kind of polarisation in society: not a divide between a working class (or proletariat) versus a middle class; but rather a divide between a super-rich elite and the rest of society below such a level.
3. The greatest economic ill of our time is a usurious financial-industrial system that polarises wealth in removing power and ownership from an ever-greater proportion of the population. This has originated from the Rentier Capitalism of the Anglo-American economies, most significantly in the post-war period in confronting the Productive Capitalism of Continental Europe and the Far East Tiger economies.
4. As the rationale of Rentier capitalism is based on maximising the profits of investors; whilst Productive capitalism is based on maximising the market share of products throughout the community, this has created an ideological conflict on the way ahead. Both forms of capitalism emerged through differing historical circumstances: the first through an exploitative trading environment; and the second through the necessary response of state intervention in countering the threatening monopoly of a foreign manufacturing power.
5. Over the past four decades Rentier capitalism has succeeded in absorbing the more socially desirable Productive mode due to the inability in confronting Far East (or Chinese) manufacturing competition. This is driving all sectors of business in the advanced industrial economies to seek profitability from passive assets as land and property rather than from labour generating the productivity of tangibles. The process is self-destructive and will inevitably drive down living standards.

6. The threat can only be countered by the following:- 1. The pursuit of Productive profitability and the demonization of Rentier profitability (or usury defined in the modern sense of excess as contrasted with reasonable levels of interest); 2. The democratisation of society through maximising business as with other modes of ownership throughout the community; 3. The break-up of conglomerates into private ownership units in encouraging greater innovation and competition; 4. The extension of employee ownership to all enterprises beyond a certain size, and the priority of employee investors over the rights of external investors in management decision-making; and, 5. The recognition of every nation state to ensure that financial policy is made democratically accountable, in making international finance responsible to parliamentary control through the abolition of tax-evading offshore havens and other abuses.

7. The above may best be ideologically achieved through the *personalisation of ownership*, which is to be contrasted on the one hand by the deceptively named "privatisation," which in reality means maximising the power of corporations; and on the other hand, by collective or common ownership, both of which deprive the individual of rights and freedom. Democracy in all spheres of domestic, business or public activity is only satisfactorily achieved through *direct* as contrasted with *representative* means in constructively fulfilling majority as well as minority interests.

In view of the above situation, the following is suggested as an immediate response to parliamentary government as we find it today –

1. Maintain a critique of the left/right conflict on the grounds of its self-destructiveness in hindering social progress and the interests of a free society.
2. A constructive dialogue with established party politicians and their supporters is desirable in persuading them towards a more unified purpose in benefiting the good of all sectors of the community.
3. The need to base such arguments on sound socio-economic principles in alignment with objective ethical values founded on psychology and the demands of the environment.

The following is a list of Corfe's current works together with their year of publication -

Death in Riyadh dark secrets in hidden Arabia 2000

My Conflict with A Soviet Spy the story of the Ron Evans spy case 2001

Our Swindling Finance Houses their exploitation of the vulnerable 2002

Freedom from America for safeguarding Democracy & the Economic & Cultural integrity of Peoples 2006

Populism Against Progress and the collapse of aspirational values 2007

Deism and Social Ethics the role of religion in the third millennium 2007

The Girl from East Berlin a romantic docu-drama of the East-West divide 2007
Social Capitalism in Theory and Practice (2008) –Vol. I *Emergence of the New Majority*, Vol. II *The People's Capitalism*, Vol. III *Prosperity in a Stable World*
Egalitarianism of the Free Society and the end of class conflict 2008
The Death of Socialism the irrelevance of the traditional left & the call for a progressive politics of universal humanity 2009
Land of the Olympians papers from the enlightened Far North 2009
This Was My England the story of a childhood 2011
The Future of Politics with the demise of the left/right confrontational system 2013
The Democratic Imperative the reality of power relationships in the nation State 2013
Islam and the New Totalitarianism fundamentalism's threat to World Civilisation 2016
The Crisis of Democracy in the advanced industrial economies 2018

Biography: ROBERT CORFE

Robert Corfe, political scientist, author, freelance journalist, industrial publicist, and founder of the politico-industrial philosophy of Social Capitalism, has been a life-long student of the social sciences, with broad interests in literature and the arts, in addition to addressing questions of economics and industry.

He has been continuously active in political life, in association with parliamentary groups for more than a quarter of a century, both nationally and locally, and only finally repudiated affiliation with party politics in June 2008, in the need of maintaining neutrality at the time of deciding to found and organise the Social Capitalist Network.

After a long career in senior management in manufacturing industry, in international marketing and export sales both in this country and abroad, he then became a management consultant advising SMEs (small and medium sized firms), usually in the engineering sector, as a trouble-shooter. Appalled by the collapse of British manufacturing, failing management, indifferent training, and poor industrial relations, he established the Campaign for Industry (CFI) in 1987 in an attempt to reverse decline. The founding meeting was hosted in the City offices of Unity Trust (bankers to the trades unions) by T.B. Thomas, later Chairman of the Co-operative Bank, and whilst Robert Corfe was elected to Chair of the new association, Lord Gregson of Stockport was elected its first President.

In the years that followed, Corfe wrote many pamphlets, published by the CFI, highlighting the diverse problems adversely affecting British industry, researching and making comparisons with more efficient and socially equitable economies in Continental Europe and the Far East. In 1980 he became a Founder Member of the SDP, and during the following years he was elected on three occasions to the Council for Social Democracy. Whilst a party member he became active in the Tawney Society; the Industrial Reform Group, led by the eminent industrialist,

George Goyder, who for many years fought to change company law in extending ownership and managerial rights to ordinary workers; and was pleased to accept David Sainsbury's invitation to join the Industrial Policy Association in 1984. During his time with these bodies, he got to know and became friendly with many leading industrialists – several of whom are household names.

In September 1988, he became a lapsed member following the split between the SDP and the Liberal Democrats which occurred during the Conference held in Sheffield. It was then decided that the CFI should abstain from involvement with party politics, and for several years Corfe remained free of party affiliation. With the difficulties encountered in building up the Campaign for Industry's membership, he again had a change of mind. It was thought that the association should draw on the interests of the trades unions, but it was only with Tony Blair's election to the Labour party leadership in 1994, and only with his assurance that the party was repudiating the divisiveness of class interests that Robert Corfe felt he could join the movement without compromising his own principles, or risking the neutrality of the CFI.

For the following 14 years, he was a committed activist: on the national level, he contributed papers to the Labour Finance & Industry Group (which advises the front bench) and on one occasion, on request, agreed to stand for election as Chairman of that association. He also served on the Committee of the Full Employment Forum, led by Roger Berry MP under the Presidency of John Edmonds General Secretary of the GMB; and later he served on the Steering Committee of Labour Reform, and subsequently was active in Save The Labour Party and other similar associations.

During these 14 years, he accepted speaking engagements to Labour party branches, in addition to other associations, throughout the country. During this period he was also involved in public life as a Councillor, an LEA Upper School's Governor, and as a member of Exclusion Appeals panels.

Realising the imminent failure of the Labour Party and left wing politics worldwide as a benign force for the future of both democracy and home-based industry, in 1998 he set about writing the first of his books on New Socialism in an attempt to challenge the threat of Neo-liberalism and a world which was becoming increasingly inequitable and socially unjust. The first of these was, *Reinventing Democratic Socialism for People Prosperity*, published in 2000; followed by, *Foundations of New Socialism a vision for the third millennium*, in 2001; *New Socialist Business Values for industrial resurgence*, in 2002, and to complete the tetralogy, *The Spirit of New Socialism and the end of class-based politics*, which appeared in 2005.

Other important books he wrote during this period were, *Freedom from America for safeguarding Democracy & the Economic & Cultural Integrity of Peoples* (2006); *Populism Against Progress and the collapse of aspirational values* (2007); and, *Deism and Social Ethics the role of religion in the third millennium* (2007), which has sold particularly well in America.

By 2006 he realised that the New Socialist project was doomed to eventual failure for a variety of reasons, most concerned with the psychological mindset of those on the left and the priority covertly given to class struggle in preference to addressing substantive issues affecting real people. The story of this disillusion with Labour and the left is described in his book, ***The Death of Socialism the irrelevance of the traditional left & the call for a progressive politics of universal humanity***, which appeared in January 2009.

Over a 3-year period he worked intensively on producing the tetralogy of what was to become the source material for the Social Capitalist Network, viz., the 3-volume work, ***Social Capitalism in Theory & Practice***, and its accompanying volume, ***Egalitarianism of the Free Society and the end of class conflict***. These four books were to appear early in 2008.

In March 2009 appeared, ***Land of The Olympians papers from the enlightened Far North***, being a selection of his leading articles published in the Finnish press during the 1960s. These were put into a contemporary context through a long introductory chapter entitled, ***Seeing the Future through the Past***, for many of the articles compare the socio-political forwardness of Scandinavia compared with the relative backwardness of Britain at the time. The book is also interesting in tracing the genesis of the author's political ideas. In 2010 appeared ***The Future of Politics with the demise of the left/right confrontational system***. ***The Democratic Imperative the reality of power relationships in the nation state*** was published in 2013; ***Islam & The New Totalitarianism fundamentalism's threat to world civilisation*** appeared in 2016; and his latest publication, ***The Crisis of Democracy in the advanced industrial economies*** appeared in 2018. He has also contributed articles to the **New Statesman** magazine.

He is also author of the following four autobiographical books, originally published under the pseudonyms in brackets: ***My Conflict With A Soviet Spy the story of the Ron Evans spy case*** (Eddie Miller) describing his adventures in Scandinavia in the 60s, the 2nd edition published in 2017 under his own name with a revised Foreword; ***Death In Riyadh dark secrets in hidden Arabia*** (Geoff Carter) based on his experiences as a businessman in the 80s, the 2nd edition published in 2017 under his own name with an introduction updating the significance of the book to the present time; ***The Girl From East Berlin a romantic docu-drama of the East-West divide*** (James Furner), describing a love affair which began at the close of the 50s; and, ***Our Swindling Finance Houses their exploitation of the vulnerable*** (Guy Tallice), vividly describing the scams of Allied Dunbar, published in book format in 2002.

It was only through unemployment during the late Thatcherite era, and because of the humiliation and shame at having become inveigled into the financial services industry – the guile and iniquity of which he was only to learn in retrospect – that he chose to use a pseudonym in writing this book. In 2011 under his own name, an autobiography covering the first 18 years of his life was published under the title, ***This Was My England the story of a Childhood***.

His ten-year residency in Scandinavia, during which he embarked on a successful journalistic career, in addition to a business career in Germany, has given him a particularly valuable perspective of the endemic socio-political problems in Britain and elsewhere, that is denied those who have not enjoyed employment and residence abroad. It has also afforded him a special appreciation of the success of social democratic societies which are renowned for their freedom, egalitarianism, and prosperity, and the richness of this experience is amply reflected in his socio-economic and political writing. All his books are now available on Kindle or Kobo in addition to the printed editions.

In summary, Corfe's socio-economic philosophy may be defined as under:- whilst he rejects the socialist approach which he argues was discredited following the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, he also repudiates the neo-liberal or Rentier capitalism which he argues lost its credibility as a practical system following the banking debt crisis in 2008. Corfe's argument entails the promotion of the "personalisation of ownership" for both a dynamic business culture and a fair society. His empirical approach is based on the transformation of society and the world of work over the past 60 years, and he does point out that the personalisation of ownership through co-determination and differing systems of employee share-ownership is only practical after society has evolved sufficiently in the advanced industrial economies.

Hence, desirable industrial funding is mainly based on deficit financing through industrial investment by credit banks at low rates of interest over long periods, as successfully achieved in the post-war period in northern Continental Europe and amongst the Far East Tiger economies. There is hence a severe criticism of usury (or the charging of excessive interest) as this leads eventually to the diminution of the production of tangibles as financial resources are moved into the passive assets of land and property with their increasing money-profits and the consequent polarisation of wealth in society. Corfe argues that countries dependent too heavily (or totally) on imports for essential tangibles condemn themselves eventually to insolvency through the burden of import costs and the accumulation of wealth into ever fewer hands.

Those interested in promoting the above ideas or proposals, from either a theoretical or practical perspective, in either Britain or other advanced industrial economy, are cordially invited to approach the following - James Farrell, Secretary SCN:- social.capitalism@tiscali.co.uk or Robert Corfe:- robertcorfe.bse@gmail.com

The above came from James Farrell, as above on 10/2/2020, cc lynjohn35@hotmail.com.

*An earlier posting also from James Farrel, on 27/10/2016, asked the following question: **Is Social Capitalism the answer to countering the polarisation of wealth and the threat of unemployment?** The most penetrating socio-economic analysis of humanity's condition today presents a fresh approach that cuts through the discredited ideological baggage of the past. Access the website, and see the leading constructively political tracts of our time for an enlightened future!:* www.socialcapitalistnetwork.org