

ECONOMICS OF SOCIALISM

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BY

H. D. DICKINSON

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PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to investigate in the light of modern economic science the fundamental problems involved in the organization of human productive activity for the satisfaction of human needs in a society based upon the twin postulates of economic freedom (both for the worker and for the consumer) and economic equality. During the investigation, fundamental issues regarding the price system are raised. The significance of the pricing process for a socialist community is dealt with, and the interrelations of pricing and planning are discussed. The author believes both in the significance for a socialist community of the indications of the pricing process based upon free individual choice of occupation and consumption, and in the practicability of its adoption by such a community. Thus, while developing his own theme, he joins issue with three different schools of thought. First, with the scientific or technocratic exponents of an 'Age of Plenty', according to whom the problem of scarcity, and hence of pricing, will not exist in a rationally planned society. Second, with those socialists who deny, wholly or in part, the relevance of the categories of rent and interest in a socialist community. Third, with those economists who assert that socialism is an impossible ideal because under socialism all rational economic calculation would be impossible.

While the author's original purpose in this book was to make a contribution to pure economic theory, he found himself, in developing this theme, more and more obliged to take into account the purposes of economic activity and to consider the significance of such institutional devices as planning and the market in the light of these purposes. Hence he was led to keep constantly in mind the

interrelations of economic factors with wider social (sometimes called political) factors: thus such fundamental concepts as welfare, freedom, and equality are here discussed, not only in their economic aspects but in their more general social aspects. It is inevitable that the author should have proceeded upon certain assumptions regarding social ends. It may therefore be made explicit at the outset that the present work is based upon the liberal and democratic assumption that the ultimate purpose of social and collective action is the enlargement of opportunity for the development of individual personality as far as this is compatible with the equal opportunity of all other individuals.

This book, like all products of human labour, whether material or intellectual, is the result of a social and not an individual process. Thus its author is deeply indebted for encouragement and inspiration to a great multitude of conscious and unconscious collaborators. Those who have helped him by their writings are mentioned in the bibliography. Those who have helped him by talk and discussion are so numerous that he cannot mention them all by name. He would like, however, to acknowledge the contributions of members of the Grangetown Advanced Tutorial Class (W.E.A.) in Economics of 1935-6. A special word of gratitude is due to J. D. Bernal and Lancelot Hogben for their endeavours to widen the author's intellectual horizon beyond the narrow perspectives of academic economics.

H. D. D.

25 August, 1939.

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Abbreviations

<i>A.E.R.</i>	<i>American Economic Review</i>	<i>M.S.</i>	<i>Manchester School</i>
		<i>P.Q.</i>	<i>Political Quarterly</i>
<i>Arch. d. Soz.</i>	<i>Archiv der Sozialwissenschaft</i>	<i>Q.J.E.</i>	<i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i>
<i>Eca.</i>	<i>Economica</i>	<i>R.E.S.</i>	<i>Review of Economic Studies</i>
<i>E.J.</i>	<i>Economic Journal</i>	<i>Schm.J.</i>	<i>Schmollers Jahrbuch</i>

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