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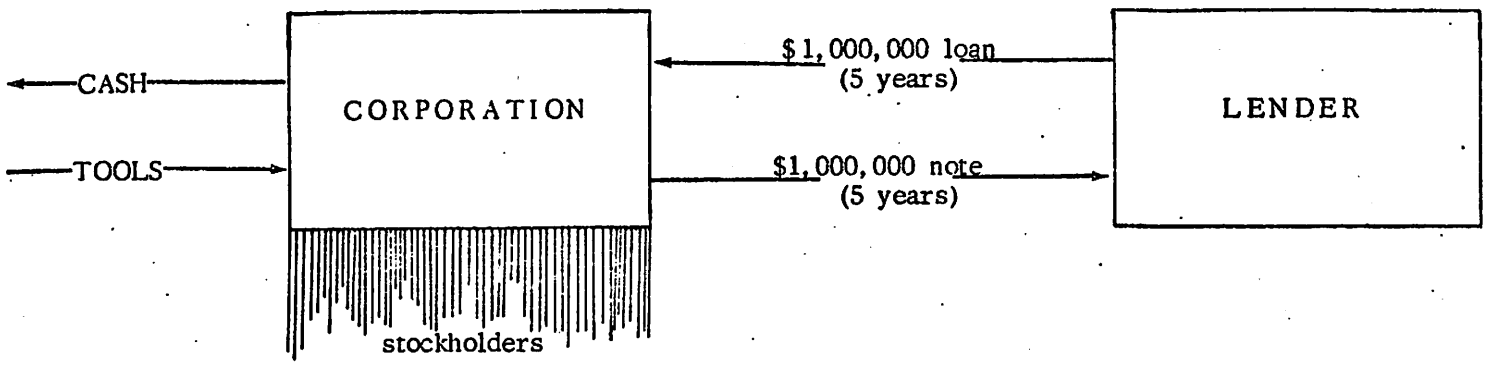
COMPARISON OF CONVENTIONAL DEBT FINANCING WITH EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP FINANCING*

The process by which newly formed capital (improved land, new structures, and new tools) is brought into existence under conventional financing techniques can be functionally analyzed from the following example. Suppose a corporation has done its feasibility study for a contemplated expansion (self-liquidation within a reasonable period of years is the essential logic of business investment) and concludes it should spend One Million Dollars for new tools in order to increase output of goods and services for which it foresees a profitable market. The corporation goes to its bank or other lender, convinces the lender of this "feasibility," and borrows the necessary funds--let's say repayable in installments over five years. The picture looks something like this:

MODEL I
CONVENTIONAL CORPORATE FINANCE



The important aspects of this technique of finance are:

--When the loan is paid off incremental productive power equivalent to One Million Dollars of tools has been built into a stationary stockholder base. An individual may sell stock which he owns in the corporation, and another individual with capital may buy the stock, but no net new capital owners are created in the process.

--Since, as a matter of fact, virtually the entire personal ownership of productive capital in the U.S. economy lies in the top 5% of wealthholders*, it is clear that a principal contributor to this concentration of ownership of productive power (productive input being the business basis for personal outtake or income) under the double-entry bookkeeping logic of a market economy lies in a technique of finance that builds all incremental productive power into a tiny stock ownership base that already owns functionally excessive productive power, having in mind that the ultimate economic purpose of production is consumption. Those who must constitute the great majority of ultimate customers for business--the people with present and potential unsatisfied consumer needs and wants--do not acquire incremental productive power through this process. Those who are in fact already excessively productive (in relation to their present or potential consumer needs or wants) acquire all incremental productive power.

--The other principal methods of financing new capital formation, those using internal cash flow such as retained earnings, investment credits, depletion, accelerated depreciation, etc., all have precisely the same concentrating effect. In the aggregate, all of the conventional techniques of finance above mentioned accounted for nearly 98% of new capital formation during the past decade.

--The sole remaining financing method, the sale of new equities for cash, has the same concentrating effect: the new stock is sold to people with capital who can pay cash for it.

In short, the logic used by business in making investment--the logic of investing in things that will pay for themselves--is not available to the 95% of Americans born without family capital ownership. As the non-human factor increases in quantity and in relative productive power, its ownership remains concentrated in a stationary fraction of the population. With rare exceptions, employees, including executive employees, do not own functionally significant amounts of productive capital.

Business finance, because of our incomplete national economic policy (a failure to interpret the Employment Act of 1946 as requiring a broadening of the ownership of capital in order to achieve "maximum purchasing power" in the hands of those who need it) and our attempt to solve the income-distribution problem entirely through employment, has failed to recognize the importance of creating new owners of capital without diminishing the take-home pay of labor. Business operates in such a way as to deprive even the employees, both sub-managerial and managerial, of the great corporations (1,000 of which produce nearly 80% of the goods and services of the private sector) of effective means of legitimately acquiring the ownership of viable holdings of capital.

The end result, to which businessmen naturally object, is that it falls to Government to close the purchasing power gap which occurs when 5% of families (who own all the capital) acquire ownership of all incremental per capita productive power, and the majority, with most of the unsatisfied product needs and wants and rising expectations stimulated by all the modern techniques, acquire ownership of none of the incremental productive power. The techniques government must use to close the purchasing power gap, and the effects of its actions, are too well known to dwell on here:

--Welfare redistribution of every imaginable kind.

--Redistributive taxation of every conceivable kind.

--Subsidization of employment, both within and outside government, of millions of people who would not be employed except for the subsidies, the cost of which subsidies are a social burden upon the present and future of the economy directly affecting the quality of the life of the people, although the conventional wisdom overlooks them in evaluating the performance of the economy.

--The adoption of myriads of pieces of legislation encouraging employees to demand and receive more pay for less work, even to the point of demanding increasing pay for no work input whatsoever. All such costs go into the prices of products, thus creating inflation, artificial scarcities and a decline in the economic quality of life, where plentitude and growth in the affluent quality of life should prevail because it is consistent both with the objectives of business, with its technical capabilities and with the desires of the people.

--A rising sense of strife between management and labor, and between the rich and the poor--a natural result of governmental redistribution.

--A growing sense of economic alienation and helplessness, the natural result of not owning capital in a world where most of the wealth is produced by capital.

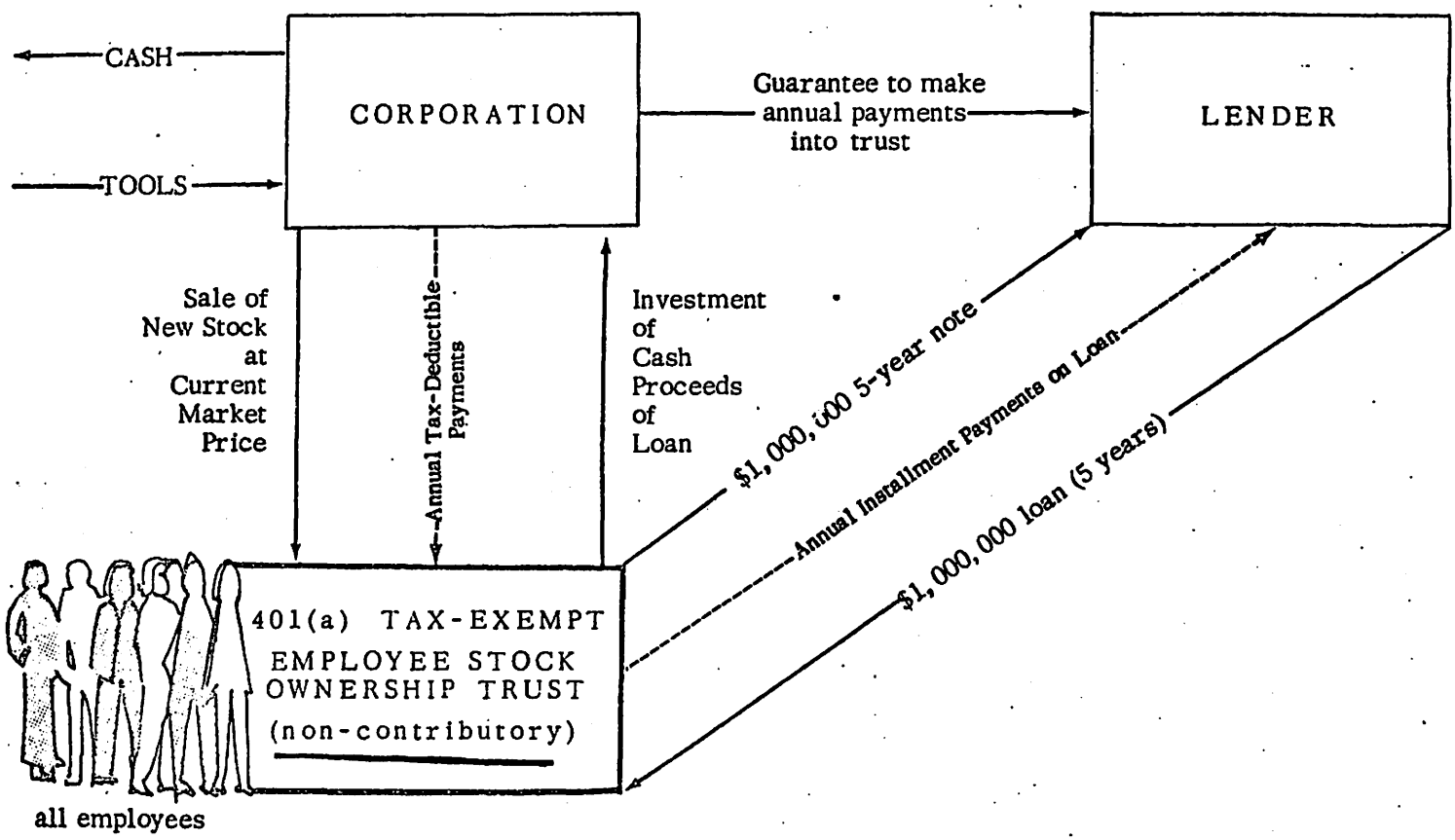
--The fiscal integrity of government is being destroyed at every level, as a result of our defective corporate strategy and incomplete economic policy that attempts to solve the income distribution problem through employment alone rather than jointly through employment and broader ownership of capital, the other factor of production. From the municipality, the county, and the state, to the Federal government and the United Nations, staggering but still growing debt (the not-so-secret source of our precarious present prosperity) is being piled upon unwilling taxpayers and the taxpayers of the future, while the underproductive and non-productive masses demand more welfare, more subsidies, more redistribution.

The solution is to facilitate financing a significant portion of new capital formation, and normal business changes in the ownership of existing assets, by techniques that legitimately build the ownership of viable capital holdings into corporate employees without taking anything from their take-home pay or their universally inadequate (or non-existent) savings, and to do this by making the self-liquidation investment logic, traditionally used by the corporation itself, available to the corporate employee to whom capital ownership is traditionally only a frustrated dream--the frustrated American Economic Dream.

The basic building block for bringing about such change in the pattern of ownership of capital in the U.S. economy is ESOP financing (the possible variations are numerous). Using the assumptions referred to in connection with the discussion of traditional financing, Model I (See page 16 above), it may be described as follows:

MODEL II

EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP FINANCING



The most important aspects of the ESOP financing techniques are:

--The loan is made not directly to the corporation, but to a a specially-designed ESOT that qualifies as a tax-exempt employee stock bonus trust, or money-purchase pension trust designed to be invested in employer stock, under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code. Such trusts normally cover all employees of the corporation; their relative interests are proportional to their relative annual compensation (however defined) over the period of years that the financing is being paid off. The trusts are normally under the control of a committee appointed by management and its membership may include labor representatives.

--The committee invests the proceeds of the loan in the corporation by purchasing newly issued stock at its current market value.

--The trust gives its note to the lender, which note may or may not be secured by a pledge of the stock. If it is so secured, the pledge is designed for release of proportionate amounts of the stock each year as installment payments are made on the trust's note to the lender and the released stock is allocated to participant's accounts.

--The corporation issues its guarantee to the lender assuring that it will make annual payments into the trust in amounts sufficient to enable the trust to amortize its debt to the lender. Within the limits specified by the Internal Revenue Code, such payments are deductible by the corporation as payments to a qualified employee deferred compensation trust. Thus the lender has the general credit of the corporation to support repayment of the loan, plus the added security resulting from the fact that the loan is repayable in pre-tax dollars.

--Each year as a payment is made by the corporation into the ESOT there is allocated proportionately among the accounts of the participants in the trust a number of shares of stock proportionate to the participant's allocated share of the payment. Special formulas have been designed to counteract the relatively high proportion of early amortization payments used to pay interest and the relatively high proportion of later amortization payments used to repay principal.

--As the financing is completed and the loan paid off, the beneficial ownership of the stock accrues to the employees. Most trusts are designed to permit the withdrawal of the portfolio in kind, subject to vesting provisions, either at termination of employment, or at retirement. However, it is desirable to so design the ESOT that any dividend income on shares of stock that have been paid for by the financing process and then allocated to the employees' accounts be distributed currently to the employee-participants, thus giving them a second source of income.

--Diversification of the trust can be achieved after a particular block of stock has been paid for by exchanging the stock, at fair market value, for other shares of equal market value. Since the trust is a tax-exempt entity, such diversification is without tax impact.

--While there is temporary dilution of the equity of existing shareholders at the outset, due to the fact that both stock and a limited and special type of loan obligation are outstanding, each year as the corporation repays its debt in pre-tax dollars through the trust, a cash accumulation is set aside that eventually, either within the financing period of thereafter, taken in conjunction with the considerations mentioned in the following paragraph, restores the dilution because of the yield on invested net worth of the tax saving.

-- --When all factors are considered, including the cost and relative inadequacy of most alternative private retirement systems (for which the ESOP becomes a substitute), the probable costs and losses to the corporation resulting from (i) the inevitable demands of employees for progressively more pay in return for progressively less work input where they have no opportunity to accumulate significant capital ownership over a reasonable working lifetime; (ii) the shrinkage of markets for the corporation's products or services from the otherwise inevitable inflation of its product prices; and (iii) the added costs to the employer from alienation and demotivation of employees not enabled to acquire capital ownership in an economy where capital is a chief productive factor, etc., the cost of capital under Model II ESOT financing over the long term, i.e., beyond the financing period, is no greater, and will normally be less than the cost of capital resulting from any of the techniques discussed under Model I above.