

LABOUR AND CAPITAL, THE STRUGGLE

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Alice A Bailey

Certain nations, because of their international character and the multiplicity of races which compose them, are normally more inclusive in their thinking and planning than are the others. They are more prone to think in terms of humanity as a whole than are the others. Such nations are the United States, the British Commonwealth of Nations and the united Soviet Socialist Republics. Many nations and races constitute these three Great Powers—the central triangle at the heart of the coming new world. Hence their opportunity to guide mankind at this time and their innate responsibility to act as world leaders. Other races have no such inherent capacity. They are not, for instance, successful colonists and are more nationalistic and exploiting in their approach to "subject races". For the three Great Powers, the fusion of the many elements composing their nationals into a united whole has been a necessary conditioning impulse. The basic intention of the United States is the well-being of all within its national jurisdiction and the "pursuit of happiness" is a familiar citation of this intent; the fundamental principle governing British rule is justice for all; the underlying motive of the U.S.S.R. is right living conditions, opportunity for all and the general levelling of all separative classes into one thriving group of human beings. All these objectives are good and their application to the life of humanity will guarantee a happier and more peaceful world.

In every country without exception there are the good and the bad elements; there are progressive and reactionary groups. There are cruel and ambitious men in Russia who would gladly exploit the world for the gain of Russia and who would seek to impose the will of the proletariat upon all classes and castes throughout the civilized world; there are thinking men in Russia and men of vision who are opposing them. There are reactionary and class-conscious people in the British Empire who fear the growing power of the masses and who hang on desperately to their inherited prestige and standing; they would hold back the British people from progress and would like to see the restoration of the old hierarchical, paternalistic and feudal system; the mass of the people, speaking through the voice of labour, will have none of it. In the United States there is isolation, the persecution of such minorities as the Negro race and an ignorant and arrogant nationalism, voiced by some Senators and Representatives with their racial hatreds, their separative attitudes and their unsound political methods.

Fundamentally, however, these three Great Powers constitute the hope of the world and form the basic spiritual triangle behind the plans and the shaping of the events which will inaugurate the new world. The other powerful nations, little as they may like to realize it, are not in so strong a position; they have not the same idealism or the same vast national resources; their national preoccupation limits their world vision; they are conditioned by narrower ideologies, by a greater struggle for national existence, by their fights for boundaries and material gains, and by a failure to offer full cooperation with humanity as a whole. The smaller nations have not quite the same attitude; they are relatively cleaner in their political regimes and constitute basically the nucleus of that federated world which is inevitably taking shape around the three Great Powers. These federations will be based upon cultural ideals and will be formed to guarantee right human relations; they will not eventually be founded on power politics; they will not be combinations of nations banded together versus other combinations for selfish ends. Boundaries and regional controls and international jealousies will not be controlling factors.

To bring about these happier conditions, one major adjustment must be made and one fundamental change brought about. Otherwise no hope of peace will be found on earth. The relation between capital and labour and between both of these groups and humanity as a whole must be worked out. The problem is one with which we are all familiar; it is one which evokes violent prejudices and partisanship and in the clamour of all that is being said and in the

violence of the battle it might serve a useful purpose to approach the subject from a more universal angle and with an eye to the emerging spiritual values.

First of all, it must be recognized that the cause of all world unrest, of the world wars which have wrecked humanity and the widespread misery upon our planet can largely be attributed to a selfish group with materialistic purposes who have for centuries exploited the masses and used the labour of mankind for their selfish ends. From the feudal barons of Europe and Great Britain in the Middle Ages through the powerful business groups of the Victorian era to the handful of capitalists—national and international—who today control the world's resources, the capitalistic system has emerged and has wrecked the world. This group of capitalists has cornered and exploited the world's resources and the staples required for civilized living; they have been able to do this because they have owned and controlled the world's wealth through their interlocking directorates and have retained it in their own hands. They have made possible the vast differences existing between the very rich and the very poor; they love money and the power which money gives; they have stood behind governments and politicians; they have controlled the electorate; they have made possible the narrow nationalistic aims of selfish politics; they have financed the world businesses and controlled oil, coal, power, light and transportation; they control publicly or sub rosa the world's banking accounts.

The responsibility for the widespread misery to be found today in every country in the world lies predominantly at the door of certain major interrelated groups of business-men, bankers, executives of international cartels, monopolies, trusts and organizations and directors of huge corporations who work for corporate or personal gain. They are not interested in benefiting the public except in so far that the public demand for better living conditions will enable them—under the Law of Supply and Demand—to provide the goods, the transportation, light and power which will in the long run bring in heavier financial returns. Exploitation of manpower, the manipulation of the major planetary resources and the promotion of war for private or business profit are characteristic of their methods.

In every nation, such men and organizations—responsible for the capitalistic system—are to be found. The ramifications of their businesses and their financial grasp upon humanity were, prior to the war, active in every land and though they went underground during the war, they still exist. They form an international group, closely interrelated, working in complete unity of idea and intention and knowing and understanding each other. These men belonged to both the Allied Nations and the Axis Powers; they have worked together before and through the entire period of the war through interlocking directorates, under false names and through deceptive organizations, aided by neutrals of their own way of thinking. Today, in spite of the disaster which they have brought upon the world, they are again organized and renewing their methods; their goals remain unchanged; their international relationships remain unbroken; **they constitute the greatest menace mankind faces today**; they control politics; they buy prominent men in every nation; they insure silence through threat, cash and fear; they amass wealth and buy a spurious popularity through philanthropic enterprise; their families live soft and easy lives and seldom know the meaning of God-ordained work; they surround themselves with beauty, luxury and possessions and shut their eyes to the poverty, stark unhappiness, lack of warmth and decent clothing, the starvation and the ugliness of the lives of the millions by whom they are surrounded; they contribute to charities and church agencies as a salve to their consciences or to avoid income taxes; they provide work for countless thousands but see to it that these thousands receive so small a wage that real comfort, leisure, culture and travel are impossible.

The above is a terrible indictment. It can, however, be substantiated a thousand times over; it is breeding revolution and a growing spirit of unrest. The masses of the people in every land are aroused and awakening and a new day is dawning. A war is starting between the selfish monied

interests and the mass of humanity who demand fair play and a right share of the world's wealth.

There are those, however, within the capitalistic system who are aware of the danger with which the monied interests are faced and whose natural tendency is to think along broader and more humanitarian lines. These men fall into two main groups:

First, those who are real humanitarians, who seek the good of their fellowmen and who have no desire to exploit the masses or to profit by the misery of others. They have risen to place and power through their sheer ability or through inherited business position and they cannot avoid the responsibility of the disposal of the millions in their hands. They are frequently rendered helpless by their fellow executives and their hands are largely tied by the existing rules of the game, by their sense of responsibility to their stockholders and by the realization that, no matter what they do—fight or resign—the situation remains unchanged. It is too big for the individual. They remain, therefore, relatively powerless. They are fair and just, decent and kind, simple in their way of life and with a true sense of values, but there is little of a potent nature that they can do.

Second, those who are clever enough to read the signs of the times; they realize that the capitalistic system cannot continue indefinitely in the face of humanity's rising demands and the steady emerging of the spiritual values. They are beginning therefore to change their methods and to universalize their businesses and to institute cooperative procedures with their employees. Their inherent selfishness prompts the change and the instinct of self-preservation determines their attitudes. In between these two groups are those who belong to neither the one nor the other; they are a fruitful field for the propaganda of the selfish capitalist or the unselfish humanitarian.

It might be well to add here that the selfish thinking and the separative motivation which distinguishes the capitalistic system is also to be found in the small and unimportant business men—in the corner grocery, the plumber and the haberdasher who exploits his employees and deceives his customers. It is the universal spirit of selfishness and the love of power with which we have to contend. The war has, however, acted like a purge. It has opened the eyes of men to the underlying cause of war—economic distress, based on the exploitation of the planet's resources by an international group of selfish and ambitious men. The opportunity to change things is now present.

Let us now look at the opposing group—Labour.

A powerful group, representing the capitalistic system, both national and international, and an equally powerful group of labour unions and their leaders, face each other today. Both groups are national and international in scope. It remains to be seen which of the two will eventually control the planet or if a third group made up of practical idealists may not emerge and take over. **The interest of the spiritual workers in the world today is not on the side of the capitalists nor even of labour, as it is now functioning; it is on the side of humanity.**

For thousands of years, if history is to be believed, the wealthy landowners, the institutional heads of tribes, the feudal lords, the slave owners, merchants or business executives have been in power; they exploited the poor; they searched for the maximum output at the minimum cost. It is no new story. In the Middle Ages, the exploited workmen, the skilled craftsmen and cathedral builders began to form guilds and lodges for mutual protection, for joint discussion and frequently to promote the finest type of craftsmanship. These groups grew in power as the centuries slipped by yet the position of the employed man, woman or child remained deplorable.

With invention of machinery and the inauguration of the machine age during the 18th and 19th centuries, the condition of the labouring elements of the population became acutely bad; living

conditions were abominable, unsanitary and dangerous to health, owing to the growth of urban areas around factories. They still are, as witness the housing problem of munitions workers during the past several years and the situation around the coal fields both in the States and Great Britain. The exploitation of children increased. The sweat-shop flourished; modern capitalism came into its own and the sharp distinction between the very poor and the very rich became the outstanding characteristic of the Victorian era. From the angle of the planned evolutionary and spiritual development of the human family, leading to civilized and cultural living and to fair play and equal opportunity for all, the situation could not have been worse. Commercial selfishness and wild discontent flourished. The very rich flaunted their superior status in the faces of the very poor, paralleled with a patronizing paternalism. The spirit of revolution grew among the herded, overworked masses who, by their efforts, contributed to the wealth of the rich classes. The spiritual principle of *Freedom* became increasingly recognized and its expression demanded. World conditions tended in the same direction. Movements of every kind became possible, symbolizing this growth and the demand for freedom. The machine age was succeeded by the age of transportation, of electricity, of railroads, the automobile, and the airplane. The age of communications paralleled this also, giving us the telegraph, the telephone, the radio and today, television and radar. All these merged into the present age of science which has given us the liberation of atomic energy and the potentialities inherent in the discovery. In spite of the fact that a machine can do the work of many men, which greatly contributed to the wealth of the man with capital, fresh industries and the growth of worldwide means of distribution provided new fields of employment and the demands of the most materialistic period the world has ever seen gave a great impetus to capital and provided jobs for countless millions. Educational facilities also grew and with this came the demand by the labouring classes for better living conditions, higher pay and more leisure. This the employers have constantly fought; they organized themselves against the demands of the awakening mass of men and precipitated a condition which forced labour to take action.

Groups of enlightened men in Europe, Great Britain and the United States began to agitate, to write books which were widely read, to start discussions, and to urge the monied classes to awaken to the situation and to the appalling living conditions under which the labouring class and peasantry lived. The abolitionists fought slavery—whether of Negroes or of whites, of children or of adults. A rapid developing free press began to keep the "lower classes" informed of what was going on; parties were formed to end certain glaring abuses; the French Revolution, the writings of Marx and of others, and the American Civil War all played their part in forcing the issue of the common man. Men in every country determined to fight for freedom and their proper human rights.

Gradually employees and labourers came together for mutual protection and their just rights. The Labour Union movement came into being eventually with its formidable weapons: education for freedom and the strike. Many discovered that in union there is strength and that together they could defy the employer and wrest from the monied interests decent wages, better living conditions and that greater leisure which is the right of every man. The fact of the steadily increasing power of labour and of its international strength is well known and a primary modern interest.

Powerful individuals among the union leaders came to the surface of the movement. Some of the employers, who had the best interests of their workers at heart, stood by them and aided them. They were relatively a small minority but they served to weaken the confidence and power of the majority. The fight of the workers is still going on; gains are steadily being made; shorter hours and better pay are constantly being demanded and when refused the weapon of the strike is used. The use of the strike, so beneficent and helpful in the early days of the rise of labour to power, is now itself becoming a tyranny in the hands of the unscrupulous and self-seeking. Labour leaders are now so powerful that many of them have shifted into the position of dictators and are exploiting the mass of workers whom they earlier served. Labour is also becoming exceedingly rich and untold millions

have been accumulated by the great national organizations everywhere. *The Labour Movement is itself now capitalistic.*

Labour and Labour Unions have done noble work. Labour has been elevated into its rightful place in the life of the nations and the essential dignity of man has been emphasized. Humanity is being rapidly fused into one great corporate body under the influence of the Law of Supply and of Demand which is a point to be remembered. The destiny of the race and the power to make national and international decisions, affecting the whole of mankind, is passing into the hands of the masses, of the working classes and of the man in the street. The inauguration of the labour unions was, in fact, a great spiritual movement, leading to the uprising anew of the divine spirit in man and an expression of the spiritual qualities inherent in the race.

Yet all is not well with the labour movement. The question arises whether it is not sorely in need of a drastic housecleaning. With the coming-in of labour governments in certain countries, with the growth of democracy and the demand for freedom, with the uprising of the rule of the proletariat in Russia, and the higher educational standard of the race, it might well appear that new, better and different methods may now be used to implement the Four Freedoms and to insure right human relations. If there is a realization that there should be right human relations among nations, it is obvious that such relations should exist also between capital and labour (composed as both groups are of human beings) and between the quarrelling labour organizations. Labour is today a dictatorship, using threat, fear and force to gain its ends. Many of its leaders are powerful and ambitious men, with a deep love of money and a determination to wield power. Bad housing, poor pay and evil conditions still exist everywhere and it is not in every case the fault of the employer.

Power in the future lies in the hands of the masses. These masses are moving forward and by the sheer weight of their numbers, by their planned thinking and the rapidly growing interrelation now established between labour movements all over the world, nothing today can stop their progress. The major asset which labour has over capital is that it is working for countless millions whilst the capitalist works for the good of a few. *The norm of humanity lies at the heart of the labour movement.*

We need to grasp somewhat this picture of a world-wide condition of misery, based on both the capitalistic and the labour movements, to see this entire picture realistically and fairly. In some form or another the interplay between capital and labour, between employer and employee and between the monied interests and the exploited masses has been present. With the steam age, the scientific age, the age of electricity and the age of planetary intercommunication, this evil grew and spread. Capital became more and more potent; Labour became increasingly restless and demanding. The culminating struggle was presented in the world war and its aftermath, a thirty year war in which capital implemented the war and the efforts of labour won it.

Certain questions arise. In the answering of these questions, humanity will solve its problems or, if they remain unsolved, the human race will come to an end.

1. Is the capitalistic system to remain in power? Is it entirely evil? Are not capitalists human beings?
2. Will labour itself, through its unions and its growing power, vested in its leaders, become a tyranny?
3. Can labour and capital form a working agreement or amalgamation? Do we face another type of war between these two groups?
4. In what way can the Law of Supply and Demand be implemented so that there is justice for all

and plenty for all?

5. Must some form of totalitarian control be adopted by the various world governments in order to meet the requirements of supply and demand? Must we legislate for material ends and comfort?

6. What standard of living will—in the New Age—seem essential to man? Shall we have a purely materialistic civilization or shall we have a spiritual world trend?

7. What must be done to prevent the monied interests from again mobilizing for the exploitation of the world?

8. What really lies at the very heart of the modern materialistic difficulty?

This last question can be answered in the well known words: "The love of money is the root of all evil". This throws us back on the fundamental weakness of humanity—the quality of *desire*. Of this, money is the result and the symbol.