

Socio-Economic Power is the Major Cause of Human Suffering

From the book *Work & Capital* by Norberto Keppe

When I see the people in their daily suffering, taking public transportation, working in the factories and government agencies, in agriculture and commerce, to enrich the powerful, I realize that we are suffering uselessly, like half-wits. There is no need for us to continue working for those few who have socio-economic power; we can have our own factories, farms, businesses, homes and transportation. Humanity has been fooled for centuries and centuries by the people who have held socio-economic power. Yet we have been fools in the hands of the powerful only because we were not aware of the abnormality the situation.

One of the most curious characteristics of power is not so much that one person controls others, but rather the fact that the power holder can do, think and want anything he wishes to without any restriction. One example I can give of the fact that the more megalomaniac individuals thinks about what he would like to accomplish, not about what he is capable of doing, is my patient C.E., a 17-year-old boy. Although both socially and economically devoid of possibility, he repeatedly spoke of his wish to take courses that were beyond his reach (medicine, law) and do work that he was incapable of doing (computer programming), inasmuch as he made no effort whatsoever in this direction or any other.

It is precisely this sort of delirious personality that is selected to direct the big enterprise of which he is part so that he will oblige the workers to put forth their greatest efforts for the purpose of making others rich. That is why I am of the opinion that the employer/employee relationship is always problematic, for it is not in keeping with human nature, which is free.

It is indeed a very strange phenomenon, the fact that the least capable individuals; the most unbalanced, judge themselves the sanest and most capable. I refer to those who hold socio-economic power at the moment, as the monarchs and bishops did in the past. This is an inverted situation that must be changed without delay so that humanity can finally free itself of its fetters.

As long as mankind is guided by the ideas of the powerful, people will not succeed in developing as they should, let alone live in peace. An article by John Togliabue, with the heading «Bonn May Reduce Rates, Officials Say,* which appeared in the Business Day section of The New York Times, September 10, 1986, states:

The officials, who are close to the Bundesbank's operations, said today that it remained unclear whether the cut would form part of a coordinated international action or whether Washington might respond by acceding to West German requests for a discussion of steps to halt the dollar's slide.

They have the idea that it is possible to increase the value of currency or correct the economic situation by means of mere top-level determinations. As long as society is «guided* by such as these — unscientific persons — any sort of effective growth for civilization is an impossibility.

Our human existence is as difficult as it is, not merely because we are obliged to work like slaves for the powerful, but, mainly because our possibilities for action are so reduced. The labour market is so restricted and blocked that:

- 1) We cannot dedicate ourselves to a sane activity (research for its own sake, mutual help, free work); 2) the social environment is extremely coercive, created by the powerful out of envy of the people
- 2) (useless laws, excessive policing, accumulation of public debt) and
- 3) the horizons are very limited.

That is, we are pressured into this coercive type of existence (professions that are lucrative only for the powerful; standardized homes, vacations and entertainment). Most of humankind has nothing to do because all of its wealth has been usurped by the powerful. The people in general have been held alienated by being forced to work:

- 1) to make the powerful rich;
- 2) in inhuman activities;
- 3) in services that are often wholly unnecessary for the well-being of society.

Those who applaud and admire the people with power do so, not because they like them, but rather out of relief at being able to continue living. All of us are aware of the danger that lurks in the individual who wields power — and especially of the hatred and envy with which they are imbued. Because of this, anyone who is far from them, prefers to stay away; and those who are near, take pains not to be harmed or perhaps even destroyed.

People with power believe that is the way to achieve happiness. And we know that they do not succeed, because they are afflicted with serious physical problems and not infrequently meet death prematurely. I can say that, in fact, they fool themselves more than they fool the people, who are still able to enjoy themselves at least, whereas the powerful are not. And all of this is so because they try to follow a path that is opposite the one that is correct.

It is with profound surprise that I realize that the whole erroneous foundation of social life has been left intact while the people suffer all sorts of oppression, not only from powerful individuals but also from the institutions that have long dominated them. The people kept their basic equilibrium, but became the target of their oppressors, who are more unbalanced. When the ancient Greeks said that the voice of the people was the voice of God, they were referring to the closeness of the Creator to human beings. However, the demons and the most insane humans put themselves between them to jeopardize humanity — a phenomenon that is still occurring, hut one which is on its way to being changed.