

Goodwill in World Affairs

World Goodwill
Newsletter

Issue 2
2019



The Dignity of Labour

“We have to reimagine work — we can’t talk about jobs any more. We can’t beg for jobs or hope for jobs. And we have to recognize that jobs in the industrial period were actually a way to fragment our humanity. We began to depend on higher wages and consumer goods to compensate for our dehumanization. We have to create forms of work that create community and expand our humanity.”

Grace Lee Boggs

The process of spiritual evolution is sometimes described as “One Work”: forms and techniques and interpretations may differ, but the inner purpose is one. It is interesting that it is spoken of as “Work” – and the Agni Yoga teachings often discuss the central importance and the joy of labour. The key point is that this should not be for oneself alone, but for the Common Good. It is here that the concept of work connects with world service, for what is world service except working for the Common Good? Being able to constantly expand one’s understanding of the Common Good requires patience, persistence, and intelligent compassion. Thus, one can move from the traditional stage of the apprentice, through the tried worker, towards that of the master – the person ▶

Emerging Aquarian Principles in the Work Place

p.6

International Labor Organization: Programs & Principles

p.13

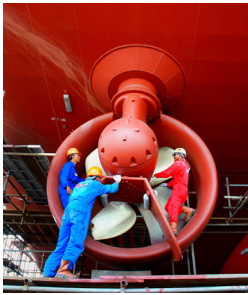
Festival Week of the New Group of World Servers

p.18



or group capable of producing a masterpiece which contributes towards the Common Good. So ultimately, the true worth, the *dignity* of labour, resides in how one can contribute to the overall evolution of all Life; and in doing so, the self is ennobled and dignified.

Such elevated concepts seem to bear little connection to the lived experience of most workers, for who among us can claim that our daily work allows us the full expression of our gifts in service to the Common Good? Most often, the average person is only seeking to allow at least some small portion of their abilities an outlet in the hard-won niche they have found in the world of work; and in so doing, to obtain at least their basic needs of shelter, sustenance and security. To present them with the picture in the previous paragraph would seem the most naive idealism. Part of the blame for this lies in the excessively narrow definition that



humanity has given to the meaning of 'spiritual', thinking of it only in relation to the pieties of religious ritual or to the private experience of mystical connection with the Universe.

But every form of life, every activity, (and what is work or labour if it is not activity?) can rightly be called spiritual, when it moves both the individual and society one step closer to mutual connection, understanding, and freedom of interplay among all manifestations of the One Life. Reflecting on this wider definition, and how it may apply to our own work situation, is a useful exercise.

Labour and society

Taking this picture down to the level of our most basic needs, we can recall the arresting image from the book of Genesis: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread..." This passage reveals the essential link between work and sustenance that has characterised society down the ages. Society, i.e. our fellow humans, provides us with the means to survive physically: in return, the expectation is that every adult member should make some contribution towards its maintenance, according to the needs of that society and the talents of the individuals who compose it. What has perhaps never yet existed is a society in which these two things have been perfectly reconciled: where every person has been able to contribute to the best of their abilities, and has been fairly rewarded; and society has similarly flourished. There may have been isolated pockets of relative ease, but supported by gross inequalities and injustices: for example, the rich intellectual culture of ancient Greece, where only a certain number of adult males enjoyed full political rights, and most work was undertaken by slaves and semi-free workers.

From the simple imperatives of hunter/gatherer life, through the emergence of settled agriculture, the creation of guilds of artisans (closely associated with mediaeval city-states), to mass production and urbanisation, the world of work, and the kind of societies which it produces, are closely inter-twined. What is evident is an increasing level of complexity and organisation: and one of the major steps forward in this process was the creation, in the nineteenth century, of the labour movement, which refers to two

distinct but interdependent strands. Firstly, there is the trade union movement, which consists of the collective organisation of working people, created to represent them and campaign for better working conditions and treatment from their employers; and, by the implementation of labour and employment laws, from their governments. The standard unit of organisation is the trade union. Secondly, there is the political labour movement in many countries, which includes a political party that represents the interests of employees, often known as a 'labour party' or 'workers' party'.

Alice Bailey suggests that the creation of the labour movement was one of the most successful attempts in all history to awaken the masses of people to the idea of general betterment. She remarks that, "[a]long with the development of the labour movement, mass education came into being, with the result that—from the angle of developed intelligence—the entire level of conscious awareness was universally raised..." (*The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, p.664)

She goes on to propose that the future of the labour movement relies upon spiritualising the ideas of both the labour party in every country, and those of industrialists, thus turning them towards the goal of right sharing, as a major step towards right human relations. Included in the theme of right sharing are the challenges of barter and exchange, the significance of money, the value of gold, the production of right attitudes towards material living, and the entire process of right distribution. Capitalists (such as Bill Gates and George Soros) and labour leaders, economists (such as

Thomas Piketty and Gabriel Zucman), bankers and representatives of multilateral institutions (such as Christine Lagarde), thinking workers, and members of all the differing ideologies exist-



ing in the world today are exploring these issues in collaborative ways. Where such work is governed by right motive, and by the impulse towards intelligent, selfless service, it can be a major contribution towards humanity's spiritual evolution. It can revolutionise our attitude towards the physical world, producing a more enlightened materialism. One significant approach to this problem in recent times is the concept of the gift economy, as outlined by thinkers such as Charles Eisenstein in his work, *Sacred Economics: Money, Gift, and Society in the Age of Transition*.

The ILO and Decent Work

Another significant step in the history of labour was the creation, in 1919, at the Paris Peace Conference which set up the League of Nations, of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ILO celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, as even after the dissolution of the League of Nations in 1946, it continued to function, and then became the first specialised agency of the UN. A piece exploring the history and current agenda of the ILO is included in this issue. It is interesting to note that in the Philadelphia Declaration made in 1944 before the end of the second World War, which was annexed ►

to the Constitution of the ILO, we read the following aspiration:

“the employment of workers in the occupations in which they can have the satisfaction of giving the fullest measure of their skill and attainments and make their greatest contribution to the common well-being;” (emph. added)

This speaks once again to the notion of dignity in labour, which is also connected with the current ILO emphasis on Decent Work – both ‘decent’ and ‘dignity’ stem from the same Proto-Indo-European root concerning worth or value. To fully realise a system in which every person’s talents are utilised not just to their own satisfaction, but also to the greatest benefit of society, is a significant challenge indeed. It would require a profound yet subtle shift in the nature of the education and training of young people, with much more attention given to the psychology of the individual, so as to really identify the true potential of a person. Then, the educational curriculum could be shaped to reinforce opportunities for development and, where possible, address challenges and difficulties in the psyche, thus allowing the full maturation of talents and abilities for functioning within society. Recognition of the fact that different types of individuals may mature at different rates should also be taken account of – especially relevant for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. And only once this highly differentiated education was completed would the individual be in a position to fully enter the world



of work, becoming a productive contributor to society, a citizen in the truest sense.

At this point, the whole question of carefully designed career advice would also need to be considered – and in general, the nature and importance of career advice in secondary and tertiary education would, in such an ideal system, be much more important and more tightly integrated into the curriculum than it is at the moment in the most advanced current

nations. Indeed, the whole notion of what a ‘career’ means, and how much control the individual has over the trajectory of their working life, is one

that deserves careful consideration. Is there some middle way to be found between complete freedom of choice by the individual (if such a thing truly exists) and the imposition by the state of quotas for jobs and production of goods that characterised some forms of communism? Could this be through a deepening sensitivity on the part of both individuals and society to the ideal of the Common Good? As things currently stand, it is the so-called ‘free market’ that allocates work in most societies, and which establishes what jobs are most valuable, and therefore most rewarded. And it is, for most people, employers who largely dictate the terms and conditions of employment, thus constraining the degree of freedom of action and creativity that the employee might display. Of course, the most forward-thinking employers are seeking ways to release that creativity, as we will investigate in the article *Emerging Aquarian Principles in the Work Place*.

Another dimension of career is that the conditions of most industrialised economies now mean that people should expect this to be much more varied than in previous decades, with the idea of a 'job for life' having almost vanished. There is now the concept proposed by Charles Handy of the portfolio worker, where individuals develop 'portable skillsets' to work on projects for different organisations at different times of their life. In some ways, the current labour market in many nations, characterized by the prevalence of short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs (sometimes called the 'gig economy') is a crude approximation to some aspects of this, but it seems to reduce things to the lowest common denominator, with the rights of workers minimised, and the power retained by the employing organisations. This is where the increasing discussions around Universal Basic Income (1) become important, as it is seen by some as a means of giving the worker the security that he or she needs to be able to have a measure of choice in their employer, or indeed to combine part-time work in employment with their own projects, an idea explored in more detail as 'ownwork' by the writer James Robertson. (2)

Humane conditions of labour

Also included in the Preamble to the ILO Constitution is the significant observation that "the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries". This thought ties in very directly with the current world crisis concerning

migration, and underlines how the nature and conditions of work in the world have a direct effect on global society.

So for example, certain forms of labour, mainly hazardous – two prominent examples are shipbreaking, and the recycling of contaminated waste – have been 'outsourced' by rich nations to poorer ones; although now there are signs that this trend is beginning to meet resistance. And in some countries, systems of labour which are difficult to distinguish from bonded labour (3) exist, and primarily exploit migrant workers from poorer countries. At issue is the undeniable fact that every year, many people make the difficult choice to leave their home country in order to find work elsewhere, because they feel the employment opportunities in their country cannot support them and their families. There may be many reasons for this – ongoing violence or political instability; the aftermath of war or natural disaster; systemic corruption; racial or religious discrimination; and/or other political and social factors that may impact the labour market, including the lack of safety and regulation of labour cited above. So to label every person who migrates for work an 'economic migrant' oversimplifies a complex set of issues, all of which need urgent attention from the UN and other multilateral institutions. And to further complicate matters, there is an increasing trend at the moment for some nations to reduce, or even seek to block entirely, nearly every form of immigration. ►



In thus blocking immigration, these nations seek the preservation (some might call it fossilising) of national identity – but a preserved or fossilised identity will struggle to deal with all the other changes which social and economic forces are producing. In nature, healthy, resilient ecosystems consist of a diverse range of organisms, and there is every reason to suppose that the same ought to be true in the human kingdom. As noted earlier, the aim should be to increase connection, mutual understanding and free interplay.

Labour and the transformation of the planet

In energetic terms, labour is the chief way humans have of transforming one set of resources or circumstances into another. This process of transformation underscores the fact that humanity is having a major impact upon the whole planet: its soils, its seas, its flora and fauna, its air. Thus the world of work is explicitly connected with sustainability, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), well beyond the fact that there is one Goal, number 8, which specifically concerns employment. Living as we do in a time of climate emergency, it's clear that the careful re-imagining of the world of work is essential to ensure our planetary survival.

Economists would suggest that labour is done primarily to add 'value', which is conventionally measured by money. Leaving aside whether there can be any simple way of translating 'value' into money, it is perhaps timely to consider how much of humanity's collective labour in transforming

resources from raw materials into consumer goods and services is truly 'valuable', i.e. is in the service of values that genuinely enrich the human spirit. How much of what we currently produce expresses or enables goodwill, beauty, community, freedom, sharing, trust, compassion or wisdom, and how can we move towards societies where our labour promotes these values? Visionary thinkers like Handy, Robertson and Eisenstein have pointed the way towards such positive futures – it is up to all people of goodwill to help bridge the gap between vision and reality, and dignify labour with its proper role of contributing towards the social and spiritual evolution of humanity and the planet. §

1. Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a periodic cash payment delivered to all on an individual basis without means test or work requirement.
2. See for example the book *Future Work*, available on jamesrobertson.com as a free download (under Books).
3. Bonded labour is the pledge of a person's services as security for the repayment for a debt or other obligation, where the terms of the repayment are not clearly or reasonably stated, and the person who is holding the debt and thus has some control over the worker, does not intend to ever admit that the debt has been repaid. The services required to repay the debt may be undefined, and the services' duration may be undefined, thus allowing the person supposedly owed the debt to demand services indefinitely. Debt bondage has been described by the United Nations as a form of "modern day slavery" and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery seeks to abolish the practice.

Emerging Aquarian Principles in the Work Place

One of the things that unites readers of this newsletter is a recognition that as Aquarius rises an electrifying life force is pulsing through the human community. While this might give us a positive sense of the future, right now it means that principles of oneness,

cooperation and interdependence are rubbing up against entrenched ideas of competition and separation, producing chaotic, testing times. Ancient writings speak of such times as initiatory, providing all the requirements for transformation.

In order to orient ourselves to the transformational potentials in these times it is important to identify authentic, solid evidence of where the higher Aquarian aptitudes are finding expression and becoming anchored in people, communities, cultures and civilizations. Where can we identify thinking and practice grounded in recognition of oneness, universal thinking, service to the whole and selfless group work? Where are human beings finding creative ways to express their natural goodwill?

This is challenging because so much of the conversation about what's happening in the world is coloured and shaped by language and slogans designed to give an Aquarian veneer to everything – whether it represents old outmoded separative and divisive thinking or the newer sense of free spirits aligned with the greater good of the whole. What is more, some of the popular expressions of the incoming energies in social media are still airy abstractions, lacking the gritty wisdom that comes from pioneering efforts to centre relationships around recognition of oneness in ways that impact real life issues and problems facing people and the natural world today.

Nowhere is this truer than in the

world of work and employment. It's not just the relations between capital and labour that are going through testing times and being discussed through politicized soundbites; it's much deeper than that. Moving beyond visionary slogans to create a world where sharing and cooperation are part of labour relations depends on the often quiet and unspoken willingness of people to work hard to build something new. Positive work environments with a healthy balance between capital, management and labour are not created overnight. They are the result of a significant investment of creativity, sweat and toil freely given by those inspired to create something new in the world of work.



What is more, in recognizing the absence of a cooperative spirit in the work-place, it is essential that we do not forget the vast number of work environments where a cooperative spirit *does* flourish. Indeed, some large employers are notable for the degree of goodwill brought into their employee relationships. Matthew Gonnering, head of global marketing technology company Widen, for example, was featured in a *Forbes* magazine article: “Why This CEO Leads With Eudaimonia: A Commitment to Happiness, Health and Prosperity for All”. Widen focuses on building relationships within the company that encourage all staff to “strive for sustainable happiness by achieving excellence while pursuing actions that demonstrate a grander sense of purpose”. (<http://bit.ly/WGLead>) Yet beyond this and other outstanding examples of leadership ►



we need to affirm that countless workplaces (large and small) around the world are imbued with a spirit of cooperation and respect that is a result of the goodwill of leading

workers, managers and employers. This is the spirit that is the seed of the future.

Yet there are problems that need attention. Unemployment, under employment, employment in poorly paid jobs, and the eroding of basic social nets in the informal economy all reflect a collective disrespect for the purposeful energetic life of human beings. They are a sign of the lawlessness of the time, and a disregard for the wellbeing of citizens. The situation is particularly desperate for low-skilled workers. As noted by the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality:

If the first type of “jobs problem” is that there still are not enough of them, the second is that the jobs that are available do not always provide the requisite hours, wages, or security that are needed for a sure pathway out of poverty. As a result, low-skill individuals are not just working less but, even when they are working, there is no guarantee that their jobs will lift them and their families out of poverty.

<https://stanford.io/2YauCFa>

As philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah noted recently in *The New York Review of Books* (1), the goal “isn’t to eradicate hierarchy and to turn every mountain into a salt flat”.

After all, “we live in a plenitude of incommensurable hierarchies and the circulation of social esteem will always benefit the better novelist” and so on. But inherited class identities have a damaging effect on notions of self-worth, and if left unchecked, wealthier classes have advantages to ensure their continued dominance. As Appiah notes: “It remains an urgent collective endeavor to revise the ways we think about human worth in the service of moral equality.”

The potential for the Aquarian future is for work to be increasingly organized in ways that enhance the development of workers and the communities in which the workers live. In Rudolf Steiner’s vision of a three-fold social organism, adults in a world of healthy relationships would organize social activity around three independent domains: economic, legal and cultural. The purpose of economic activity would be to meet the needs of all human beings on the planet, and all would contribute their labour to this task, receiving payment for the value they contribute. In the words of Steiner inspired economist, Stephen E. Usher: “To properly perceive the economic life, it is necessary to picture each wage earner as actually running a little business that creates value and to interpret the wage as the price paid for the value.” (<http://bit.ly/WGRSEcon>)

This may sound unrealistic, especially at a time when more and more workers are becoming self-employed and losing the protections of hard-earned employment regulations. But the reality is that thinking about responsible and ethical working environments (or *associative economics* in a Steiner sense) is implicit in a wide

variety of approaches to sustainable, regenerative development and business practices that are gaining traction around the world. Traditional development measures like GDP or productivity are being replaced by new measures of resilience, cooperation and wellbeing. This is happening at local, national and international levels; in the industrialized and developing worlds. There are now plenty of examples of best practices where new approaches are being put into action with good results; and there are research institutes, think-tanks and the like providing a body of vibrant thought and analysis leading into a whole new understanding of the world of work.

The Sri Lankan development movement *Sarvodaya Shramadana* which began in 1958 has become the most broadly embedded community-based development organization network in the country, linking over 3,000 legally independent village societies. It now boasts a wide range of services supporting local villagers in their efforts to build ‘no-poverty, no-affluence’ communities with reliable and sustainable work opportunities, healthcare, and education for all. Drawing on the inspiration of Gandhi and the Buddha, the movement became famous throughout the country by organizing vast networks of volunteers into camps for the sharing of labour where hundreds of people from across the island nation joined with villagers from impoverished rural communities to build something necessary for the village’s development – often a road. In the process of building the road, the community spirit of the village began to come alive. As the movement

says: “We build the road and the road builds us.” This is how it is with these new approaches to work – change the working environment to enhance the freedom, dignity and creativity of the work force and you begin to see the spirit of cooperation and goodwill grow across all the inter-locking lines of relationship in a community.

Cooperatives

One of the effects of Aquarian energies flowing into humanity will be a growing sensitivity to the cooperative spirit in all areas of relationship. Competition has been the dominant pattern in economic relations throughout the Piscean era. Cooperation requires a sense of common purpose and responsibility for the well-being of the whole which is largely absent from industrial relations. But it is far from totally absent. The cooperative model of employment is one of the clearest signs of a growing thirst for cooperation in the workplace. Lest we dismiss the model as ‘fringe’, it should be noted 10% of the world’s employed population work in cooperatives.

Worker owned cooperatives can offer an efficient model for doing business. The world’s largest federation of worker



owned cooperatives, the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation, is a multi-national that employed 74,000 people in 2015. It’s a good transitional model, representing a healthy mix between worker-owners and employees. Not all workers are cooperative ▶

members (worker owners). Of the 261 companies in the corporation, 101 are cooperatives, and most of these are based in the Basque country where the movement began and is a dominant economic force. Production plants now operate in 33 countries and none outside of Spain are cooperatives. One of the reasons for this, the company reports, is that “the setting-up of cooperatives requires cooperative members who are used to working within a cooperative culture, and this is a process that takes time.” Building a spirit of cooperation into any area of relationships, including employment and work, take time. It is not a matter of quick political slogans. Education is needed.

What distinguishes Mondragon from other large businesses and makes it one useful model for Aquarian approaches to labour is that it is organized around a set of social principles, rather than being driven by the profit motive of those who provide the capital. These principles include:

- the democratic organisation of cooperatives through a General Assembly of worker-members who elect governing bodies and collaborate with managerial bodies;
- the Sovereignty of labour, with the recognition that “Labour is the main factor for transforming nature, society and human beings themselves.” The group’s Basic Principles state that “the wealth created is distributed in terms of the labour provided and there is a will to extend the job options available to all members of society.”
- Capital is considered necessary to business development, and therefore worthy of fair remuneration,

but it is treated as subordinate to labour and to the development of the enterprise.

- ‘Payment solidarity’, meaning sufficient and fair pay for work.
- Social Transformation requires expansion of the business so that it can contribute towards economic and social reconstruction... and a freer, fairer and more caring society. The added principle of Universality proclaims “solidarity with all those who work for economic democracy.”
- In order to promote the principles, and develop sound, profitable businesses, significant human and financial resources are allocated for cooperative, professional and youth education; these include a cooperative university (Mondragon University) open to all; alongside R & D departments and technology centres which employed 1,700 people in 2013.

Union Coops

Mondragon’s business success is emerging as one model for achieving decent work. Recognizing this, in 2009 the United Steelworkers Union in US entered into an agreement with the Spanish corporation to establish new Union Coops. In this model, the General Assembly of all worker-owners elects a Board of Directors that appoints a management team to run the business; they also elect a Union Committee which negotiates agreements with management for wages, hours and working conditions; and the Union Committee represents the Co-op’s workers in larger national unions which, because of their size, give access to favourable health care and retirement plans, and which

enable the worker-owners to cooperate with other workers outside the company. Examples of companies throughout the US applying different forms of the Union Coop model can be seen at 1worker1vote.org, which describes itself as “a national network of hybrid, shared ownership, regional and municipal ecosystems starting with unionized worker-owned cooperative businesses to overcome structural inequalities of opportunity, mobility, and income”. Supporters of Union Coops argue that they offer a strong viable model for small and medium sized privately-owned companies to transition when their owners are ready to retire. Selling out to larger corporations often means that the social capital built by these firms (including the organizational memory of workers) are lost, whereas the movement to a union coop has a strong incentive to develop the integrity of the firm, enhance its competitiveness and expand employment opportunities by drawing on a knowledgeable workforce in a re-imagined relationship with management.



protections, and little security. Most digital platforms used by self-employed workers are financed and controlled by venture capital, focused on maximizing profits for the investors. The cooperative approach focuses on collective ownership (and democratic control) of the platform by those who use it in their work (taxi drivers, designers, IT workers etc) under a wide variety of forms. Examples include well-known producer coops like Stocksy where self-employed photographers use a cooperatively owned platform to find clients and boost members' income. Multi-stakeholder coops like Fairmondo where ethically sourced products from fair trade companies are marketed, share a common mission aiming at raising the quality of human relations. Belgian based SMart cooperative, with over 35,000 members throughout Europe (mostly in the creative fields), offers an interesting model. Members gain the benefits and protections of an employment contract by invoicing their clients through the SMart platform. Contracts with clients are negotiated by the member, and payment is then received from SMart as if it were salary – insurance, healthcare, taxes and social security payments are all made on the members behalf by SMart.

Platform Coops

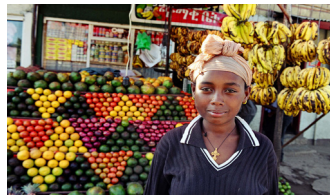
One of the prime problems in today's work environment is the growing number of people who are being forced (by a lack of formal jobs) to invest their homes, cars, money and labour to offer services through new on-line platforms. In industrialized and developing countries increasing numbers are either self-employed or otherwise engaged in the informal economy with few regulatory

Sustainable and Regenerative Models

The UN's mutually agreed Sustainable Development Goals are perhaps the most outstanding sign of a global recognition that the well-being of humanity and the ►

planet are threatened by current patterns of economic development (capitalist and socialist) which foster massive inequalities within nations and between nations and which threaten the health of natural systems. Sustainable approaches to economics, endorsed by numerous large corporations, governments and civil society networks seek to replace humanity's exploitive relationship with the natural world with an equilibrium between people and the eco-system enabling both to thrive.

This impacts the work environment in a multitude of ways. Perhaps the greatest impact is in the creation of new jobs and new professions to help develop, understand, and manage sustainable practices in energy, industry, business and government. Young people wishing to contribute to the creation of a better world have a wealth of opportunities to devote their professional lives to that purpose because of the sustainability approach. Beyond this companies are using their newly acquired sustainability missions to tie the success of their company with the successful development of a sustainable world. Unilever, for example, has updated its original purpose of "making cleanliness commonplace" with the new goal of "making sustainable living commonplace." While it is easy to be sceptical of such companies' motives, after all they are still driven by the need to maximize profits, it is also true that workers are apt to find greater fulfilment in work that emphasizes positive social goals, and hence to give more of themselves into their work.



And while some companies adopt sustainability missions purely as a marketing tool, others find that as key staff members are inspired by the mission the company itself begins to be transformed.

Economic thinking is changing in response to the sustainability vision. One of the clearest signs of this is what has been termed 'regenerative economics.' New enterprises are organized around the model of natural eco-systems with the goal of producing wealth while simultaneously increasing the health and vitality of the surrounding community and environment. In a report titled *Regenerative Capitalism*, US think-tank, the Capital Institute, proposes an economic world view centred in the inter-dependence of holistic systems. Rather than proposing one solution to problems of inequality, worker abuse and environmental degradation, the report emphasizes the value of a wide diversity of locally based enterprises centred in innovation and adaptability. Communities are made up of a "mosaic of peoples, traditions, beliefs, and institutions uniquely shaped by long term pressures of geology, human history, culture, local environment, and changing human needs." The report points to countless locally based sustainability initiatives including socially responsible investors, B corps, and responsible businesses, which when seen as a whole, provide living proof that a new regenerative economy is emergent. (<http://bit.ly/WGRegen>)

Another sign of a new model

emerging is the US based Bargaining for the Common Good Network where unions, community groups, and social justice organisations are working together to develop a common front in labour negotiations with the goal of benefiting not just the union workers, but the wider community as a whole. (<http://bit.ly/WGUnion>)



Aquarian Principles

Clearly a wealth of creative energy and will is being invested around the world in developing new approaches to work. Aquarian principles of oneness, cooperation and sharing are finding

expression in a multitude of different ways of managing the relationship between capital and labour. As a result it is becoming increasingly possible to imagine a future where people of all ages, skills and class backgrounds are able to find meaningful dignified work through viable enterprises that contribute to the workers' own development as human beings as well as to the development of the community in which they live. §

1. "The Red Baron" by Kwame Anthony Appiah in *The New York Review of Books*, October 11 2018 – www.nybooks.com (subscription may be required).

'B' Corporations

'B' Corporations are a new type of private business enterprise certified to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance including worker engagement, community involvement and governance structure. There are currently over 2,500 Certified B Corps in more than 50 countries. They include well-known companies Patagonia, Ben & Jerry's, and Seventh Generation. One sign of the positive working environment in B Corps is that employee retention rates are high – a good sign of a healthy working environment. As one B Corp CEO commented: "Our employees love to work here", and as a result we can "attract millennial talent and maintain a 98+ percent employee retention rate." (<http://bit.ly/WGBcorps>) Benefit Corporations are a further development of the B Corp. They are legal forms of incorporation which differ from regular companies in that they are legally empowered to pursue positive stakeholder impact in addition to profit. They voluntarily agree to report on the public benefits created by the company for the community.

International Labor Organization: Programs & Principles

The International Labor Organization (ILO), one of the United Nations' oldest agencies, serves as a guardian of human dignity in the workplace by advocating for social justice and workers' rights across its 187 member states, in more than 40 countries. Headquartered in Geneva, the ILO acts as an organizing body through which three cohorts—governments, employers, and workers—may address human rights issues in employment.

Among the ILO's primary concerns are maintaining productive dialogue among these three cohorts, ►

ensuring social protections for workers, and establishing mutually agreed-upon standards for decent work globally. By tackling these issues head-on, the ILO serves a vital function in laying the groundwork for lasting peace and furthering goodwill in the world.

At the heart of the ILO's work is the promotion of equitable treatment of all workers, regardless of age, class, ethnicity, or gender. The ILO stresses that such equitable working conditions globally are necessary for fair and peaceful exchanges among nations; lasting peace among nations is not possible if any members of the human family suffer from exploitation or denigration at the hands of employers or governments.

History of the ILO

Critical public discussions about how workers should be treated started to form during the mid-19th century, when disenfranchised populations in rapidly industrializing nations suffered grievously as a result of inhumane working conditions in factories and sweat shops. By the early 20th century, the exploitation of workers had emerged as a human rights crisis, made all the worse by the growing economic interdependence among all nations. The formation of the ILO was a response to this crisis.

In 1919, at the end of the First World War, the authors of the Treaty of Versailles made a strong, progressive

declaration: Respect for workers everywhere is the lynchpin of social justice, they claimed, and social justice, in turn, is the foundation on which lasting peace among nations can be built. As part of the Treaty, they continued, they would create the ILO, then an agency within the League of Nations, to mandate the respectful treatment of workers among all member nations.

Representatives from nine countries—Belgium, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, Japan, Poland, the U.K. and the U.S.—then drafted the ILO's Constitution, which put in place the organization's structure, procedures, and general provisions. This Constitution established universal standards for many practical labour considerations and reflects the values stated in the Constitution's Preamble:

Whereas universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice;



And whereas conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled; and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required; as, for example, by the regulation of the hours of work, including the establishment of a

maximum working day and week, the regulation of the labour supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage,

the protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children, young persons and women, provision for old age and injury, protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own, recognition of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, recognition of the principle of freedom of association, the organization of vocational and technical education and other measures;

Whereas also the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries;

The High Contracting Parties, moved by sentiments of justice and humanity as well as by the desire to secure the permanent peace of the world, and with a view to attaining the objectives set forth in this Preamble, agree to the following Constitution of the International Labour Organization.

Over time, as the world of work and the understanding of workers' rights evolved, the ILO has found cause to clarify its positions. One of its key pronouncements came in 1944, during World War II, with *The Declaration of Philadelphia*. In this declaration, the ILO adopted several new principles that refer specifically to economic development and human rights in the workplace. It stated that:

- Labour is not a commodity;
- Freedom of expression and association are essential to sustained progress;
- Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere; and

- The war against want requires to be carried on with vigour within each nation.

Upon the restoration of peace at the end of World War II, in 1946, the authority and assets of the League of Nations transferred to the newly founded United Nations, and the ILO joined the United Nations as its first specialized agency.

The ILO would go on to become a bellwether for workers' rights, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969 on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. And throughout the rest of that century and into the next, the ILO would continue to further the cause of just standards for labour. Some later forward-thinking motions that the ILO has championed include:

- *The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* in 1998, which asserted the workers' right to bargain collectively and pushed for an end to compulsory labour, child labour, and unfair discrimination among workers;
- *The Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization* in 2008, which expressed a contemporary vision of the ILO's mandate for a world facing labour challenges related to globalization; and
- *The United Nation's Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development* in 2015, which emphasizes decent work for all as a key tenet of policies for sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

Decent Work as a Human Right

As expressed in this last bullet point, the ILO's concept of ►

“decent work” for all labourers bears special consideration today as it is through decent work for all people that humanity can ameliorate poverty around the world. For work to be deemed “decent,” according to the ILO, it must meet several criteria: be productive and provide a fair income; be secure and offer social protection for families; provide prospects for personal development and social integration; allow workers to express their concerns, organize, and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and deliver equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

To promote the concept of decent work globally, the ILO has proposed a four-pillared agenda to its membership. First, governments and employers must support opportunities for job creation, investment, entrepreneurship, skill development, and sustainable livelihoods in their regions. Second, all ILO parties must engage in social dialogue in an effort to increase productivity, avoid disputes in the workplace, and build strong societies. Third, all workplaces should be safe, allow for adequate rest, and take into account personal and social needs. Employment should also provide for access to healthcare and compensation in case of unemployment. Fourth and last, the rights of all workers should be respected.

It was during the September 2015 UN General Assembly that these four pillars of the ILO’s decent

work agenda became a part of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specifically, Goal 8 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls for an ongoing commitment to establishing decent work conditions globally.

Regarding Goal 8, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) writes, “The SDGs [seek to] promote sustained economic growth, higher levels of productivity and technological innovation. Encouraging entrepreneurship and job creation are key to this, as are effective measures to eradicate forced labour, slavery and human trafficking. With these targets in mind, the goal is to achieve full and productive employment, and decent work, for women and men by 2030.”



According to the ILO, more than 600 million new jobs—about 40 million per year—need to be created by 2030 in order to satisfy the increasing demand for labour globally. At the same time, 780 million men and women in the world today are working, but at below-subsistence levels. These are the labour issues that Goal 8 seeks to redress.

While much of the ILO’s good news centres on gains made toward the elimination of poverty—global poverty rates have fallen by more than half since 2000—most countries have not yet succeeded in achieving decent and inclusive work for all, the ILO notes in *Time to Act for SDG 8: Integrating*

Decent Work, Sustained Growth and Environmental Integrity, a recent report for the UN's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Furthermore, progress toward Goal 8 has slowed in some regions. About half of the world's population suffers from subpar income levels, even in places with low unemployment. "A continued lack of decent work opportunities, insufficient investments and under-consumption lead to an erosion of the basic social contract underlying democratic societies: that all must share in progress," says the UN website devoted to SDG 8. "Even though the average annual growth rate of real GDP per capita worldwide is increasing year on year, there are still many countries in the developing world that are decelerating in their growth rates and moving farther from the 7% growth rate target set for 2030. As labour productivity decreases and unemployment rates rise, standards of living begin to decline due to lower wages."

Thus the attainment of sustained, equitable, and inclusive employment for all will require urgent action, the UN says. But the humanitarian benefits from such action will be enormous: quality jobs that support economic growth without harming the environment; access to financial services and investment across all social sectors; and gainful employment for all regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity.



In recognition of the ILO's Centenary, the official annual meeting of the ILO, the International Labour Conference, has adopted a Centenary Declaration which reaffirms the importance of its core principles. Greg Vines, ILO Deputy Director-General for Management & Reform, described the

Declaration as, "a short but crucial statement that looks at the major challenges and opportunities for the future of work, ranging from technology to climate change, from demographic shifts to the need for new skills. It provides guidance for dealing with these pressing issues and a platform for cooperation

with other organizations in the international system. It is also a strong reaffirmation of the social justice mandate we were given 100 years ago, and the critical role of social dialogue and international labour standards. In short, the Declaration acknowledges our successes, recognizes where we are now, and most importantly looks at where we need to go in the future." §



Festival Week of the New Group of World Servers

December 21-28, 2019

[LEARN MORE](#)

[VIEW EVENTS](#)

Festival Week of the New Group of World Servers 2019

In December 2019, as part of a festival observed every seven years, meditators from around the world will be invoking energies of light, love and spiritual power from the higher worlds; and evoking response to these energies from the New Group of World Servers.

Bringing a World of Goodwill, Unity and Right Relations to Birth

Millions today share the conviction of an inner spiritual unity within humanity, transcending any outer differences of race, nation and creed. Amongst these millions, a worldwide group of servers, drawn from every field of human life, is pioneering the ideas and practices of an emerging spiritual civilization. Through the substance of their lives, a new world of goodwill, unity and right relations is being born. The group is evidence of a living bridge between the heavens and the earth.

In the twentieth century, a leading thinker in Western esotericism, Alice Bailey, pointed to the emergence of this diverse group, as one of the most

significant developments in the history of humanity, and key to the birthing of a New Age. She named the group, the New Group of World Servers

Alice Bailey referred to one week in December every seven years as the Festival Week of the New Group of World Servers. During the Week, a significant cosmic alignment takes place, and the mind and heart of the group of all true servers is energized by Light, Love and Spiritual Will flowing from the Great Beings, Saints and Angels of the Higher Worlds.

Please join with others during the Festival Week this December. Through meditations and concentrated alignments, we can together visualize the inpouring energies of the One Life evoking transformative responses from the New Group of World Servers – strengthening the hands of all who love and serve.

Monthly Webinars on Goodwill

As part of the preparations for this week, World Goodwill is focusing a monthly webinar on the energy of goodwill, which is linked to the rhythm of the Goodwill Meditation Group. The webinars take place on the last Wednesday of each month, at 12 noon EST/5 pm BST. To participate, please go to www.lucistrust.org/world_goodwill/goodwill_meditation_group1 and click on 'Webinar Registration'.

A wide network of groups will be organizing events – the parent body of World Goodwill, the Lucis Trust, has created a website (www.festivalweek.org) which aims to reflect the network of activities in all its diversity – please let us know your plans so they can be featured on the site, with links to your own websites and social media pages.

May the power of the One Life pour through the group of all true servers.

May the Love of the one Soul characterize the lives of all who seek to aid the Great Ones.

May I fulfill my part in the one Work through self-forgetfulness, harmlessness, and right speech.

The Great Invocation

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.
May Christ* return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men –
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power
restore the Plan on Earth.

Adapted version

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into human minds.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into human hearts.
May the Coming One* return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide all little human wills –
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the human race
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power
restore the Plan on Earth.

* Many religions believe in a World Teacher Who is to come in the future (hence 'Coming One'), knowing Him under such names as the Lord Maitreya, the Imam Mahdi, the Kalki avatar etc. These terms are sometimes used in versions of the Great Invocation for people of specific faiths.

Image Credits

All images except those on p.18 & 19 are ©ILO
Photographers: J Go (cover); A Mirza (p.2); M Crozet (pp. 3,4,7-9,11-14,17); S P Ouseph (p.5); A Mirza (p.16)
p.18 image by Kristopher Roller on unsplash.com

Helping to build right human relations

World Goodwill is an international movement helping to mobilise the energy of goodwill and to build right human relations. It was established in 1932 as a service activity of the Lucis Trust. The Lucis Trust is a registered educational charity in Great Britain. In the USA it is a non-profit tax-exempt educational corporation, and in Switzerland it is registered as a non-profit association. World Goodwill is recognised by the United Nations as a Non-Governmental Organisation and is represented at regular briefing sessions at UN Headquarters.

The Lucis Trust is on the Roster of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The World Goodwill Newsletter is published three times a year. Unless otherwise indicated, all articles are prepared by World Goodwill staff members. Multiple copies for distribution are available on request. The newsletter is also available in: Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese (online), Russian, Slovenian and Spanish.

World Goodwill relies solely on donations to maintain its work. The newsletter is distributed free of charge to make it as widely available as possible, but donations are always needed for this service, and are much appreciated.

This newsletter is available at
www.worldgoodwill.org
Editor: Dominic Dibble ; ISSN 0818-4984

Suite 54, 3 Whitehall Court,
London SW1A 2EF, UK
worldgoodwill.uk@lucistrust.org

Rue du Stand 40, Case Postale 5323,
1211 Geneva 11, Switzerland
geneva@lucistrust.org

866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 482,
New York NY 10017, USA
worldgoodwill.us@lucistrust.org

