

# THE COWS

## Intent of this Fable

- ✓ *To study the basic assumptions of both capitalism and communism.*
- ✓ *To see how, both systems have dehumanized and de-personalized man.*
- ✓ *To open to our eyes to the fact that the world's economy is run by greed, not by love and concern.*
- ✓ *To question the legitimacy of the private ownership of the means of production.*
- ✓ *To exemplify the theory of 'plus-value'.*
- ✓ *To explode the myths of the capitalist and consumerist ideologies.*
- ✓ *To understand how in the world the rich become richer and the poor, poorer.*
- ✓ *To realize that the workers are not free in a 'free economy' market.*
- ✓ *To realize that the Marxist ideology is one thing and its actual practice quite another.*
- ✓ *To discover that both, capitalism and communism are just the same dog with different collars. One is Liberal Capitalism the other is State Capitalism. One is capital owned by a small number of individuals, the other is capital owned by the State*
- ✓ *In both cases, the cows - **the common men and women** - are just pones in an economical chess-game of profits.*
- ✓ *To take note of the fact that both Capitalism and Communism have forgotten God and the spiritual nature of man and that they have both enslaved him rather than freed him.*

## The Cows (Part I)

**Narrator:** The meadows were carpeted with fresh grass. The water in the ponds sparkled with crystal purity; the sheltering trees were swaying gently in the breeze. It was a bovine paradise! The cows were grazing leisurely and ruminating with a happy, carefree abandon. Once in a while, one of them calved, adding to the growing bovine population. On an unfortunate one day a wise cow confided to her circle of friends:

**Cow:** Our numbers are increasing alarmingly. Did you not realize that the meadows are getting overcrowded? Look! At the rate we grow, I am afraid that, very soon there will not be enough grass and water for all of us.

**Narrator:** To this some greedy cows replied:

**Wise Cow:** We had better fence in, as many grazing grounds and ponds as possible to make sure that we, at least, shall never lack grass and water for ourselves and our calves.

**Narrator:** It was no sooner said than done! The greedy cows, before the others could realize what was happening, enclosed the best pastures and the larger ponds of water and appropriated them exclusively for themselves. From then on, they had plenty to eat

and drink. They had never had it so good!. Now, they felt secure. A bright future awaited them and their progeny! They would never suffer hunger and want!

The other cows, however, by far the large majority, began to suffer hunger and want. There wasn't enough grass to eat or water to drink! Their calves were lean, skinny and underfed. Finally, the poor cows were compelled to approach the wealthy ones. They pleaded:

**Poor Cows:** Please, give us some water and grass to feed ourselves and our children. We are starving

**Narrator:** The wealthy cows replied:.

**Rich Cows:** Yes, we are most willing, but only on condition that in return for our giving you 'our' grass and water, you will have to give us the milk you produce. Of course, it is understood that you are perfectly 'free' to accept or to decline our offer. We can't force you!

**Narrator:** The poor cows 'freely' were forced to agree to give them the milk would produce as long as the wealthy cows would give them some water and grass in payment for it. Having bound the poor cows to an agreement of their own devising, the rich cows constructed in their large estates big stables for the poor ones. When the stables were ready, they said to them:

**Rich Cows:** Come to our stables. We have built them for you on "our" estates. In our stables, we shall give you sufficient grass and water to live, in return under our 'kind' supervision you will produce milk for us.

**Narrator:** Finally, the poor cows came into the stables of the rich cows to work for their employers. They were indeed large, dark and impersonal structures. Now, the poor cows, in those stables, 'freely' began producing milk for their bosses.

The rich cows collected milk, more milk and still more milk, in quantities far beyond their capacity to consume. They stored it in big containers. The number of containers kept increasing. Their stores grew bigger and bigger. In the meantime the poor cows had hardly enough milk to feed their calves; with the little grass and water they were given, their calves were thin and undernourished.

On the contrary, the rich cows, with the surplus milk they got, began processing and manufacturing cream, butter, cheese, ghee and other dairy products. They stored them in huge godowns; thus increasing their wealth and capital.

Then, they started trading in their products. They opened shops and supermarkets, of course, for the rich only. The poor cows could not afford to buy costly and luxury items.

Finally, the rich cows began exporting their products to foreign countries. With the help of advertising, marketing techniques, trade tariffs and foreign investments they captured the world markets.

With the wealth pouring in from their exports and foreign trade, they surrounded themselves with all kinds of luxuries and sophisticated items – the trappings of the affluent, like jewelry, superfine fabrics, wines and liqueurs, fridges, cars, costly color TV sets and the like. They now were counted among the monopoly-capitalists, the super-rich, the multi millionaires. They had palatial mansions; they had reached a ‘high’ standard of living. They preened themselves like princes; they rolled in the lap of luxury.

Now, they employed more and more poor cows, not only to produce milk for them, but also to gain from them all types of services. They used them as cooks, attendants, sweepers, butlers, chauffeurs, accountants, receptionists, secretaries, gardeners, security personnel, and the likes. Their stars were up! Dame fortune smiled on them. Life was roses and more roses all the way! The entire world was at their feet! Economically, socially, politically, culturally they had reached the top of the heap of the cow world!

If someone were to ask: “What happened now to the poor cows who ‘freely’ agreed to be employed by their greedy masters? Were they any better off now than in former days when in freedom? This is a superfluous question.

It goes without saying that in any well-ordered, just and peaceful society –like the one of the wealthy cows - the poor ones had to remain cribbed, confined and locked in their stables slaving away for their lords and masters. They were ‘milky cows’ who ‘freely’ had agreed to give their milk to the wealthy cows, just in exchange for a bundle of grass and a few pints of water! What else could they ask for? Is it not just for all concerned to honor promises and agreements ‘freely’ entered upon?

## **POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION.**

### **The Cows** (Part II)

**Narrator:** At last, after many years, some of the poor cows began questioning the whole damned situation in which they found themselves....

**Poor Cows:** How is it that we - the poor cows - after working unremittingly for donkey’s years in these putrid stables still remain as poor as ever? Why should it be so? Why? O, why? How is it that the rich ones have, in the meantime grown wealthier and wealthier? Why should it be so? Why? O, why? To begin with, what right had the rich cows to appropriate to themselves the best grass lands and the perennial streams and ponds? All of us cows have the same ‘bovine’ nature; the same needs and wants the same rights and aspirations!

If this be so, why should some cows own large prairies and vast expanses of land while others do not have a place to lie down? Why should some of us have to starve to death while others

loll in the lap of luxury? Why such differences? Why such discrimination? Why? O, Why? Why have we, for so many years allowed ourselves to be exploited so mercilessly? Why have we submitted to such iniquitous oppression? Why? O, Why? Why have we not stood up for our rights? Why have we not reclaimed our dignity and integrity? What? O, Why?

**Narrator:** The ‘revolutionary’ cows called their poor exploited comrades to a meeting. There, with thunder in their voice, they addressed them thus:

**Revolutionary Cows:** Dear Comrades, now is the time to unite and fight for the restoration of our rights and dignity. The socio-economical and political system we live in, is nothing but an instrument of naked exploitation. Under the pretext of law and order, we are being despoiled, humiliated, maltreated, bullied and taken advantage of! Our masters insist on us to be ‘peace-loving’ and ‘law-abiding’ citizens. They tell us to respect the sacrosanct laws of our society and to honor the agreements ‘freely’ entered upon! Pooh! This whole bloody order, this blasted society is nothing but legalized robbery, institutionalized injustice, downright oppression and exploitation! Down with it all! Away with it! Comrades, our only hope, our only strength, our only salvation lies in our unity! “Cows of the word unite you have nothing to lose but your tethers’!

**Narrator:** The poor cows of the world united and built strong labor unions and revolutionary parties. They fought for their rights tooth and nail. There were labor strikes, street fights, lockouts, morchas, gheraos, hartals, riots, class clashes, up-risings, revolutions, violence, wars... In the end the poor cows won the day. Their old bosses were dethroned, exiled, sent to concentration camps and ruthlessly liquidated.

A new messianic age dawned on the cow world! A vanished bovine paradise made a triumphant return, the proletarian state was born. In that new dispensation, all the cows were supposed to be equal citizens without any class distinction. All were comrades of the same state, all had the same rights and privileges, and everyone had to give according to his own ability and receive according to his own needs. A classless society was born. Indeed heaven was supposed to have descended on earth!

***Was it really so? Of course, it goes without saying that in all well-ordered, just and peaceful bovine societies in today’s world without distinction - under any political regime and ideology, monarchy, capitalist, socialist, communist, - still the larger number of cows are poor and remain cribbed, cabined and confined in huge monolith stables slogging away for a small minority who milk them.***

Of course, that large majority of cows in our world are just ‘milky-cows’ who “freely” or out of repression are compelled to work for the aggrandizement of their masters.

***Their masters today – in all regimes: monarchy, communist, socialist, capitalist, etc - are a small dominant minority of technocrats, politicians and state bureaucrats - that wield absolute power over them.***

## **POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION.**

- Are all the cows, in our world, today under any political regime free to live, thrive and enjoy in their pasturelands? Why?
- Have they the rights over their prairies, grasslands, springs and ponds? Why?
- Can they now, enjoy their human rights and preserve their dignity? Why?
- Have they now the liberty to think, talk, move and freely associate? Explain.
- Have all of them equal opportunities for development? Explain.
- Can they freely now dispose of their milk, butter and cheese? Why not?

## **THOUGHTS FOR STUDY AND INPUT**

- In fact, if not in theory, all the socio-political and economical systems and ideologies obtaining in our world, consider man as ‘homo economicus’, a being for whom the satisfaction of his material needs is the end-all and the be-all of his existence.
- Without denying that man has material needs to satisfy, we contend that these are not his only or his highest needs
- Besides economic and material needs man has many and even greater needs to satisfy, namely, intellectual, aesthetic, moral, social, and spiritual. Unless these needs are satisfied he will never become fully human and fully alive.
- Communism takes for granted that men are not greedy, and that all that is necessary to usher in a Marxist paradise on earth is to ensure that everybody gives according to his capacity and receives according to his needs. This again is a myth!
- Capitalism is based on human greed. Its basic tenet- to express it in a crass way - is that through every body’s greed the condition of all will improve. This is another myth!
- Both systems ignore the selfish inclinations that nest in the heart of all men.
- What has made the world the mess it is, is the greed of our human hearts.
- No political or ideological system can change the world until the human heart is changed.
- In communist countries today, we witness ‘revisionism’ in ‘ideology’ and in their mode of production, even in their type of leadership, but the roots of it all are materialistic.
- Man lost his soul; he is a being from the earth, of the earth and for the earth.
- Both, the capitalist and communist systems do not show much respect for the dignity and the sacredness of the human person.
- Both systems are ‘oppressive’ because they have forgotten the soul of man.
- Both systems are either in practice or in theory ‘atheistic’ and ‘materialistic’.
- Communism in a totalitarian depersonalized mode, Capitalism in a selfish individualistic way
- Both systems are caught in the ‘consumerism’ trap and have succumbed to the materialist philosophy of ‘produce more, consume more’.
- Both systems subscribe to the myth of an indefinite economical progress of human society.
- In practice both systems are ‘anti-God’, ‘anti-Gospel’, ‘anti-Human’
- Christianity cannot redeem a crass liberal capitalism which from its roots is radically materialistic and anti human. Radical liberal Capitalism and Christianity are antithetic.
- Christianity, though it may have no truck with Communism, would do well to promote many good points preached in the “theoretical Marxist gospel” – concern for the poor,

equality, egalitarian ideals, equitable distribution of material goods, social justice and the like.

- The cooperation of all men of good will must be enlisted to build a better tomorrow, in which in love and brotherhood prosperity and opportunities may be available to all and not only to a privileged few.
- Conscientization, dialogue, persuasion, education, organization of the masses, human and religious values - these things are wanted to revitalize society
- Any change for the better will not be accomplished without a change of heart. .
- The human heart holds the key to a better and a more just tomorrow.

### **Bible texts in keeping with the ideas of the Parable.**

#### **Note:**

*There are no Bible texts bearing directly on the topic of Capitalism and Communism: there are, however, some texts that teach us the proper attitudes and values about life, man, society, money and progress.*

Ex The whole Chapters 1 to 12	God free his people from the slavery of Egypt. God does not satisfy only their Material needs. The people's spiritual and Moral needs are cared for.
Lev 6/1-5	God punishes the defrauders and exploiters
Job 20/18-28 , 24/1-4 & 6-12	God's wrath and vengeance on the Oppressor.
Amos 5/7-12; 8/4-8	Woe to the exploiters
Prov. 12/20-21, 17/5, 19/6-7; 21/13; 22/23-24	Blessing and cures.
Is 10/1-3	Do not oppress the helpless.
Sir 31 / 1-8	A rich man is subject to many worries.
Mt. 4 / 1-4	Man does not live on bread alone
.Mt. 5 / 1-11	The Beatitudes. Change of heart.
Mt. 6/19-21	Riches in heaven. Where your riches are...
Mt. 6/24-34	You cannot serve two masters.
Mt. 9/35-38	Jesus' great concern for people
Mt. 14/13-21	Feeding of the 5000. Jesus cares for Material needs.
Mt. 16/5-12	The yeast of the Pharisees. It's not only Bread that counts
Mk 1/14-15	First message of Jesus. Repent. Turn your Hearts...
Mk 10/17-31	The rich young man missed the best of life.
Mk 12/28-34...	The great commandment. Without love for God and neighbor, no human society
Lk 3/1-14	Preaching of John the Baptist. Justice for all

Lk 4/16-22	Jesus' Mission 'socio-religious'
Lk 12/13-21	The rich fool. It's not only wealth that counts.
Lk 16/19-31	Social inequalities are condemned by Jesus.
Lk 19/1-10	Zacchaeus. It all begins with conversion of heart
1 Cor 6/9-10	No exploiters will inherit the Kingdom of heaven
2 Cor 8/13-15	Share our abundance with others.
1 Tim 6/3-10	Enough is enough
Jas 1/9-11, 2/1-9, 5/1-6	Poverty and riches Warning against prejudice