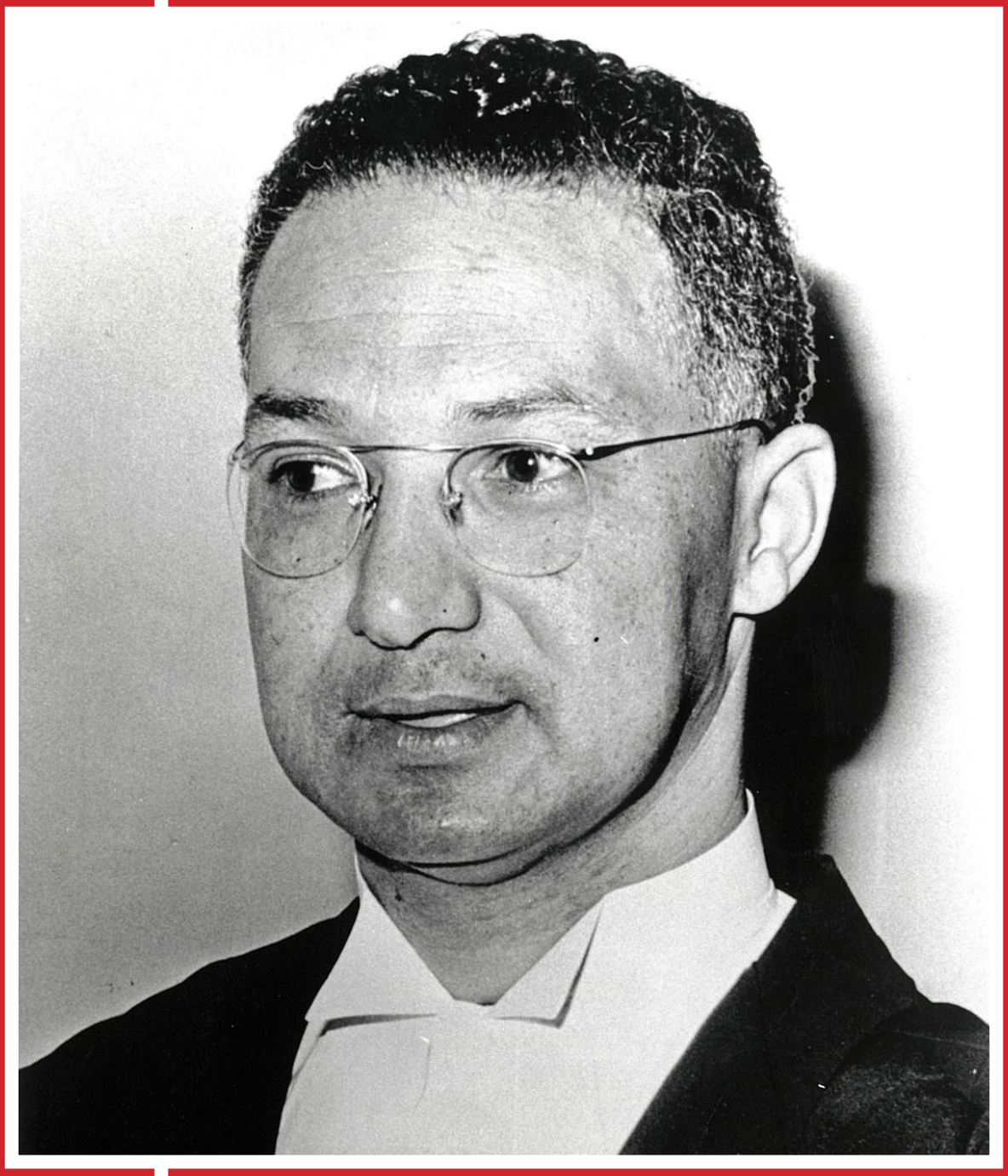
Special 40th Anniversary Commemorative Edition



The Contribution of the Non European Peoples to World Civilisation

BM Kies/ November 1953

AJ ABRAHAMSE MEMORIAL LECTURE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Benjamin Magson Kies was born in Woodstock, Cape Town, on 2 December 1917. He graduated from UCT with a BA degree in 1937 at the age of 20 years. He went on to obtain an MA degree and a B.Ed degree before starting his career as a teacher at Trafalgar High school in 1940.

He was instrumental in the formation of both the Anti CAD (Coloured Affairs Department) and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) and played a leading role in transforming the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) into a militant, progressive organisation. Because of his involvement with the TLSA and the NEUM he was summarily dismissed from teaching in 1956. In 1959 he was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. After his dismissal from teaching he studied law and was admitted as an advocate of the High Court in Cape Town in 1961. A further banning order was imposed upon him in 1962.

He collapsed and died while addressing a court in Hermanus on 19 December 1979 where he was defending four people, who were facing charges under the Terrorism Act.

He was married to Helen Kies (nee Abrahams) and together, they were a formidable political force.

This is a Special Issue to commemorate the 40th anniversary of his death. The Contribution of the Non European Peoples to World Civilisation forms part of the Unity Movement History Series and is part of a trilogy of BM Kies's political writings. The others include The Background of Segregation (1943) and The Basis of Unity (1945). He also made regular contributions to the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) Educational Journal until his death in 1979.

COVER IMAGE: Benjamin Magson Kies is admitted to the bar as an advocate on 3 May 1961. Picture Credit: Dennis Cavernelis

BACK COVER IMAGE: Adinkra are Ancient African symbols that represent concepts and aphorisms used extensively in, among others, fabrics and pottery among the Ashanti of the Ashanti Kingdom and the baoules who historically migrated to Ghana. Picture Credit: Robert Sutherland Rattray (1927) Wikipedia

FOREWORD (Original)

The AJ Abrahamse Memorial Lecture is delivered triennially, under the auspices of the Teachers' League of South Africa, to commemorate the life and work of a scholar and teacher who was a devoted and indefatigable worker in the great task of establishing the ideals and implementing the aims of the organisation. In accordance with the example of the late Mr AJ Abrahamse, the Memorial Lecture is intended to embody the results of serious research, conducted by the lecturer in a branch of learning related to the sphere of interest of the Teachers' League of South Africa.

In this, the second AJ Abrahamse Memorial Lecture, delivered in the Cathedral Hall, Cape Town, on 29 September 1953, Mr BM Kies has chosen for his research a subject of paramount interest to everybody. For the concept of a "European" or "White" or "Western" or "Christian" civilisation has spread to all parts of the world and finds adherents even in the most obscure and unexpected places. And in addition, numbered its supporters and protagonists today are some of the most powerful and dominant forces who command not only the widest range but also the most subtle of weapons for the conduct of modern ideological warfare. The battle, therefore, assumes global proportions. And it stands to the credit of the lecturer that he has dismissed from his purview the parochial and domestic and has examined the whole world, in time and place, to prove the concept chimerical and mystical.

To us in South Africa, particularly, his expositions and conclusions are of tremendous significance. We live in a country where the doctrine of racial superiority has always received official sanction and where the shibboleth of white civilisation is patently and overtly used as a diabolical political instrument for the domination and subjugation of the Non European people. Indeed, the whole machinery of the State has been purposefully constructed on the assumption that that all Non Europeans are innately and inherently inferior because "Western Civilisation" has given eternal superiority to the Europeans, as if by some divine right of Geography. And consequently, the irrefutable evidence that a "European" civilisation does not exist and that, in point of historical fact, Europeans and Non-Europeans have both contributed to the only real civilisation – the civilisation of homo sapiens – adds an important retaliatory weapon to our ideological armoury. It gives no little pleasure to note that the lecturer has brought to his subject a remarkable wide scholarship and a deep erudition. His academic research has raised the treatment of the subject to a level which can never be reached by those who have a vested political interest in the "maintenance of white civilisation" and who must remain content with such willfully deceptive clichés. His thesis, therefore, has a permanent value for all and, in particular, for those who are engaged in the struggle against white hegemony and domination. It is for that reason, above all, that we commend it most highly.

Edgar L Maurice
Cape Town November 1953

FOREWORD

It is because of our profound belief in the correctness of the policy of nonracialism adopted by the New Unity Movement (formerly the Non European Unity Movement, NEUM) after its formation in 1943, that we have deemed it necessary to commission the reprinting of this seminal work in a more easily readable format, for a younger generation of students and political activists. With hindsight one can now see that this work – which was published by the TLSA in 1953 as the second AJ Abrahamse Memorial Lecture was well ahead of its time for articulating ideas that we believe are more relevant today than ever.

In a most insightful manner, Prof Crain Soudien in his book *The Cape Radicals* [1]gives a brilliant exposition of the historical context that has led to the genesis of the ideas contained in this work, which he describes as being "magisterial" and describes this groundbreaking work thus:

> "The impact of this lecture was profound. It significantly advanced the theoretical discussion of what 'race' was and how it could be understood historically and sociologically. The perspicacity of the work as an ontological route-marker for the movement he belonged to was of profound importance."

This work, then, clearly sets out the basis for the belief that there is only one race, the human race; and that racism is a by-product of the system of capitalism-imperialism. The Contribution of the Non European Peoples to World Civilisation forms part of a trilogy of works by BM Kies, the others being, The Background of Segregation (1943) and The Basis of Unity (1945), which contain ideas that underpin the NEUM's espousal of its policy on nonracialism and building a single undivided nation.

It should be a prescribed work as part of the decolonised curriculum for which the youth of today are clamouring.

Basil Brown
President, New Unity Movement
December 2019

1 C Soudien, 2019. "The Cape Radicals: Intellectual and political thought of the New Era Fellowship (1930s-1960s)"

I

In every social system based on privilege, the privileged always rationalise their position by claiming inherent or divinely bestowed superiority which, moreover, gives meaning, purpose and protection to the lives of those not so fortunately endowed.

No caste or class claiming such superiority, however, has sufficient belief in its own claims to omit the precaution of entrenching its position by means of a code of law duly fortified by the forces of order. When such a system deteriorates and the twinviolences of "law and order" prove insufficient to dupe or suppress those in revolt against it, then decadent and despotic privilege invariably invents a myth – if not a mythology – by means of which it seeks to contain and, if possible, bind afresh the unprivileged. In this war upon the forces of progress, truth is the first casualty. Every despotism has anticipated or echoed Nietzsche's words: "the falseness of an opinion is not for us any objection to it ..."[2] The paramount consideration is acceptance by the oppressed of this opinion whether true or false. To this end, history, science, philosophy, anthropology, religion – in fact, all aspects of activity and thought are recruited or conscripted into the service of the myth by which despotism hopes to fight off the embrace of the grave. With varying degrees of subtlety and cynicism, all human experience is reinterpreted or rehashed to fit in with the requirements of the myth.

Thus, it is that coinciding with the development of nineteenth century Capitalism-Imperialism, there was the birth and ascendancy of the myth of race as a rationalisation of colonial plunder. Imperialist conquest was offered as claim and proof of the inherent "racial" superiority of the conquerors and the inherent "racial" inferiority of the conquered. With the advent of Nazism, the myth of race reached its crudest and most bestial expression in the "Nordic myth", in which the "Noble Aryan Race" of Count Gobineau and his chief English disciple, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, gave birth to abominations such as Hans Günther's "Nordic man", Clauss's "racial soul", and the "kismet of the blood", whose gospel declared that "In Germankind the world once more its weal will find"[3]. The leaders of the blonde beasts, Hitler and Goebbels like so many of their South African imitators – hardly qualified in terms of their own "racial" anthropometrics; and their chief allies, Italy and Japan, had been flung out of the Aryan stockade by Alfred Rosenberg and Otto Hauser as "degenerate", "effeminate", "talentless", "promiscuous", "racially" inferior "mass men" whose "sullen souls" had no "historic mission". Nevertheless the "Nordic myth" was one of the chief ideological weapons, not only in the contemptuous spurning of Negroes as "semiapes", not only in the persecution and extermination of millions of Jews (who are not regarded as a "race" even by those who claim that the term "race" has a scientific meaning as applied to human beings), but also as a weapon in a global war fought mainly for the redistribution of spheres of economic interest inhabited by the lesser breeds without the myth.

2 F. Nietzsche. Beyond Good and Evil

3 Rudolf Rocker, "Nationalism and Culture", Bk 2, Ch 3

Since the defeat of the "Nordic" Axis, two of the victors, America and Britain, have resurrected and reminted the Nordic Myth, which is now presented as "Western Civilisation" or "European Civilisation" or "White Civilisation", with the term "Christian" added whenever divine agreement is deemed suitable. There is a "Western man" with a "Western soul", a Western philosophy", a "Western science" and a "Western way of life", whose gospel opens with the words: "In the beginning was the West". The high priests, disciples and alchemists of this largely AngloAmerican version of the "Nordic myth" are drawn from all levels of society, ranging from South African backvelders, backbenchers and university backscratchers to learned anthropologists, psychologists, educationists, Unesco pamphleteers on "The race question in Modern Science" and the Princes of the Church from Transvaal's Dr Nichols to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope. Vulgarity fights cheek by jowl with refinement in the Holy Crusade to defend "Western Civilisation", to "preserve the cultural heritage of the Ancient Greeks, Romans and Christianity", to "prevent the torch of European Christian civilisation from being extinguished by the teeming millions of pagan Asia", and to "maintain the outposts of white civilisation against the semisavage hordes of Africa".

And with the same "Nordic" disregard for logic, which Nazi Germany displayed in its choice of allies, occupied Japan has become a pillar of "White Christian civilisation", together with honorary "whites", "Christians" and "Westerners" like Pakistan, Ceylon, West Africa, Turkey and the Sudan, while India's final settling down in the camp of "European civilisation" would cause more rejoicing in Whitehall and the Pentagon than over the ninety-andnine already "Westernised".

The creed of the new myth requires the changing of only one word in the Nordic gospel, and it reads: "In Westernkind the world once more its weal will find." The peoples of Asia and Africa are regarded as belonging to "backward" or "child" races, whose "inherent inferiority" is patent from their numbers, skin colour, queer customs, heathen gods, laziness, treachery, primitive methods of farming, irresponsibility, immorality, sexual promiscuity, failure to develop industrially, fatalism and disregard for the sacredness of human life. In so far as it is admitted that the peoples of Asia have made any contribution to civilisation, it is conceded that they stumbled upon certain discoveries without appreciating their worth or developing them in a way from which society could benefit. For example, when it is admitted that the Chinese invented gunpowder, it is invariably pointed out that they made crackers with it until the advanced "Western mind" showed how it could be used for killing people. And when it is admitted that the Chinese invented the compass, it is usually claimed that the invention came into its own only at the time of the socalled "voyages of discovery" in the fifteenth century.

But as far as Africa is concerned, no such concessions are made. It is represented as being from its inception what DH Lawrence once presumed to call, and Laurens van der

Post still regards as, "the continent of dark negation".[4] This socalled "Dark Continent" is generally held not only to have made no contribution to world civilisation – except in so far as African slave labour built up what Unamuno called the "realms where neither the sun nor injustice ever set"[5] – but also to be the home of permanently child races whose intelligence and capacity have been so blighted by the sun and paralysed by endemic diseases, that they will always require "European Christian" tutelage. Without this "white civilisation", they claim, it will relapse once more into a Zimbabwe of desolation and silence.

One of the more important tasks of our time is to dissect this myth of "European" or "White" or "Western" or "Christian" civilisation and to give our reply to it, on the level of ideas and in the field of practice. And perhaps the most economical way of striking at the ideological roots of the problem, is to ask, and outline the answer to, the fundamental question: "What is civilisation?" In the process we shall be in a better position to understand why, at the very outset, we are rejecting as a myth the concept of European, White, Western or Christian civilisation.

Purely as a working formula, however, and without trying to analyse or define the term European, it would make things clearer if we stated that we are using the term "Non-European peoples" in a geographical sense to mean peoples outside the Continent of Europe. It will soon become apparent that the idea of such a dividing line on racial, historical, or cultural lines is also largely a matter of myth and political metaphysics. But here in South Africa the term Non-European is used sometimes to mean the "Cape Coloured People", as distinct from the Bantu, and sometimes to mean all the African, Coloured and Indian people, whereas Japanese and some Chinese are "European" without being "white", and a Parsee could be "white" without being "European". Thus, we must repeat that the "Non-European peoples" whose contribution to world civilisation we are discussing are those of any skin colour, height, hair texture, skull or nose shape who live outside of the Continent of Europe. These would include the peoples of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and the Americas before their "discovery", invasion and conquest by adventurers and imperialists from Europe.

4 Laurens van der Post. "Venture to the Interior."
5 Arturo Barea, "Unamuno". p23

II

With these provisos and precautions, then, we turn to the question, "What is civilisation?" James Harvey (JH) Robinson reminds us that: "It is instructive to note that the word civilisation is by no means an old one. Boswell reports that he urged Dr Johnson to insert the term in his dictionary in 1772, but Johnson refused. He preferred the older word 'civility'. This, like 'urbanity', reflects the contempt of the townsman for the rustic or barbarian".[6]

It is open to question whether the redoubtable Johnson was baulking at the difficulty of definition, but it would be understandable if he was. So many have fallen at this hurdle, their definition of civilisation being little more than their class or national interests, prejudices and aspirations writ large. The more reckless spirits, such as AD Richie, start off with a bold deduction: "Civilisation I take to mean everything that differentiates the bulk of the inhabitants of Europe, North America and certain other parts of the world from primitive peoples"[7], and end up with a defence of the status quo, because "history is the working out of God's purpose"[8] The more aesthetic souls, such as Clive Bell, start off with an exaggerated modesty to discuss "what civilisation is not" and, on the grounds that "wageearners and capitalists agree very well on all questions save that of the division of spoils … the trade-unionist is as good as the profiteer; and the profiteer is as good as the tradeunionist"[9] they create and glorify an historical demiurge, "the will to civilisation", working down the centuries through a cultured elite of which they are the latest representatives. For Bell, as for Benedetto Groce and Giovanne Gentile, there are only civilised minorities but never a civilisation; the firstnamed preferring Tory England and the two latter, Fascist Italy as the patron of the civilised elite.

Then there are the John Bunyanesque professors of history, like Arnold Toynbee, for whom there have been 21 civilised societies through which has pulsed the elemental beat of Yin and Yang. With historical wool furnished in the six volumes thus far provided by Toynbee, the *Spirit of the Earth* has woven on the *Loom of Time* a pattern of "challenge and-response, withdrawalandreturn, routandrally, apparentation-andaffiliation, schismand-palingenesia". Toynbee's seventh volume is to decide whether the Western Pilgrim is to be as blessed as Bunyan's hero and meet the Evangelist who will save him from the City of Destruction.[10]

In fine, it could be a fascinating game to play skittles with the host of definitions and formulae of civilisation, which have been preferred since Johnson declined, but we would be generating more sparks than light. As the Red Queen remarked to Alice, it would be taking

---

6 JH Robinson, Article on "Civilisation", Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 5
7 AD Ritchie, "Civilisation, Science and Religion" p7
8 Ibid., p176
9 Clive Bell, "Civilisation". p157
10 Arnold Toynbee, "A Study of History", Abridgement of Vols I-VI, by DC Somervell

"all the running you can do, to keep in the same place". And so we turn rather to a more fundamental approach: the examination of the emergence and development of civilisation as what Robinson called "a single, unique and astonishing achievement of the human species".[11] In the popular, nontechnical language of Fred Hoyle, "there were a number of big primordial planets that broke up about 2,500,000,000 years ago, and one of the bits of the debris was our Earth ..."[12] This splinter, the Earth, became a planet revolving on its own axis around the sun. It took millions upon millions of years before it cooled off, and many more millions before the physical conditions existed for the emergence of the first, single-celled signs of life in the intertidal slime. "Man's body has a history reaching back to (these) onecelled creatures."[13] As far as the geological records have gone, it seems that the first vertebrates appeared in the Lower Paleozoic Era, about 300 to 500 million years ago.

But the first mammals appear in predominance over the reptiles of Mesozoic times only during the Tertiary Era, about 50 million years ago. Says T Neville George: "During Tertiary times the distribution of continents and oceans was in fundamental plan much as it is today. The Old World formed a self-contained unit more or less freely open to mammalian migration. It was, however, not completely severed from North America, and there was for most of the era a wide landbridge in the region of the Bering Straits which allowed a common range to such OldWorld and New World forms as horses, elephants, oxen, camels, deer, cats, wolves, and bears."[14] Man's immediate ancestors, the hominids, whose only history is to be found beneath the rocks, emerged from an apelike ancestor about the time of the glacial periods or Ice Ages which visited Europe and Asia at least half a million years ago. V Gordon Childe says that "During the Ice Ages several species of man already existed, contemporary with the mammoth: they hunted the beasts and drew pictures of them in caves"[15]. And Rachel Carson reminds us that, at the time of the Pleistocene glaciations, "The tremendous lowering of sea level must have affected the life of Paleolithic man" in his wanderings and in the security of his caves.[16]

In the struggle to conquer the rigours of the natural environment by changing and improving his material culture, the species known as homo sapiens evolved, and all people now living belong to this single species. The place traditionally looked upon by scientists as the "cradle of the human race" is an area located somewhere in Central Asia. This may well be the case. But, according to LSB Leakey, "recent discoveries in South and Central Africa have consistently altered the whole picture"[17] and the "cradle" may well have been Kenya. Similarly, the researches of Dart and Broome have led to the view that the "cradle" lies in

---

11 JH Robinson, *Loc. cit.*, p735
12 Fred Hoyle, "The Nature of the Universe", p84
13 . JH Robinson, "The Human Comedy", p57
14 T Neville George, "Evolution in Outline", p63
15 V Gordon Childe, Man Makes Himself, p18
16 Rachel Carson, "The Sea Around Us" p166
17 LSB Leakey, "The Early History of Man", Science News, 17, p37

Southern Africa. We are in no position at the present time to pronounce upon the weight of the evidence thus far produced by the newer line of research. It is sufficient for our purpose to say that we, the socalled "children of Ham", together with Messrs DF Malan and Eric Louw, derive from the same stock, homo sapiens, as Dr Leakey and the Mau, whom he is now so bitterly fighting.[18]

There is not the slightest possibility of any member of the South African Herrenvolk's having derived from some primitive "white race" allegedly discovered in South West Africa a few weeks ago by some colourphobic eccentric.[19] The human race is now, as it was when homo sapiens evolved, one biological species, with the same number and formation of bones, the same brain and nerve structure, the same internal organs, the same four types of blood groups – A, B, AB and O – and the same capacity, in fact, propensity, of interbreeding. There is no way of knowing with any certainty the colour of emergent man, although most scientists are agreed that he was probably darkskinned. But one thing is quite certain, and that is that mutations in skincolour, hair texture, shape of nose or skull, and stature, owing to geographical dispersal, isolation and diet, have made not the slightest difference to the biological unity of man as a single species, and provide no scientific basis for a division into what are popularly miscalled "races".

There are important things to notice about the evolution of man to a position of dominance over the lower animals. He had assumed an upright posture, a development of the brain and sense organs. These advances, together with the development of stereoscopic vision (i.e., the ability to focus into one the two images received by the eyes and to distinguish solids), and the creation of language as a means of facilitating and organising the procuring of food and the performance of other communal labours, were the evolutionary mutations which enabled the comparatively weak creature, man, to develop from a mere food gatherer to a producer; from an animal which adapted the external environment or perished, to a toolmaker who adapted the external environment to himself and changed it to satisfy not only his needs but also his pleasures. In short, when the first groups of men emerge they are already makers of culture and, in fact, this creation of culture had already "taken the place of further organic evolution".[20] For, as Elliot Smith so aptly put it, "Man has the seeing eye, the understanding ear, and the skilful hands to shape his own destiny." The tremendous leaps from apelike ancestor to subman to homo sapiens cannot be overestimated, but man's animal origin should not be forgotten. Then, too, there are certain features of animal society which should not be underestimated or overlooked. Among the animals there was not merely the "struggle for existence", pointed out by Charles Darwin and Wallace, and later distorted and applied to human society by the disciples of Malthus and other supporters of Hobbesian "natural" law of the "war of all against all". There was also, as was so brilliantly pointed

18 LSB Leakey, "The Mau Mau and the Kikuyu"
19 "Cape Times", 11 September 1953
20 V Gordon Childe, "Man Makes Himself", p33. See also "The Evolution of Man", G Elliot Smith

out by Petr Kropotkin – following Kessler – the presence of "mutual aid" as an important factor in animal evolution.[21] In fact, "mutual aid" in the search for food and in the face of common danger was a necessary precondition for the survival of many species and become patterned in their instinctive behaviour. As we advance nearer to man, however, so the purely instinctive recedes and we approach the level of human consciousness and selfconsciousness. But in no matter how primitive a stage we find man, we find, too, the culture that is coincident with him has had as an important social element – what Julius Lippert called the "care for life" (Lebensfürsorge) – "as a cultural principle"[22]. It is necessary to stress this at the very outset, as an answer to those who, like TH Huxley in the nineteenth century, represent primitive man as living a life of "continual free fight" and who, in the face of all the evidence produced by the past 75 years of archaeology and anthropology, would elevate this error to an ethic to rationalise their treatment of the socalled "Children of Ham".

Thus, it is popular with certain South African university defenders of the status quo – who often seem willing to accept that NonWhites are "superior apes", while they themselves are fallen angels – to depict "white Christian civilisation" as coming in the nick of time to save the Ke, KhoiKhoi and Bantu from extermination by one another. All we need add to this stage is that if this view of primitive men were true, there would have been no cultural evolution from savagery to barbarism, and, still less, from barbarism to civilisation. The exponents of this viewpoint would never have reached the shores of Southern Africa and, in all probability, would not have been able to read or write.

With the emergence of man, then, we have the beginnings of culture and of cultural evolution as distinct from organic evolution. Perhaps we had better make clear immediately the sense in which we are using the word "culture". As V Gordon Childe says, 'To certain circles culture, spelt with a capital C or even a K, seems restricted to Art (with a capital A), functionless architecture, literature that does not sell, opera but no, of course, Gilbert and Sullivan and hardly even Puccini – and so on."[23] On this monstrous distortion we might well endorse the words (though not the motives) of Herbert Read, when he echoed Eric Gill and said, "To hell with culture, culture as a thing added like a sauce to otherwise unpalatable stale fish!"[24] We are using the word culture as briefly summarised by Grahame Clark: "Culture may, indeed, be defined as the measure of man's control over nature, a control exercised through experience shared among social groups and accumulated through the ages. It is by deepening and extending the scope of this control that man has added so immeasurably to the potentialities of his life. … It is the sum total of the technical, social, and conceptual apparatus evolved in this process, that we term culture ..."[25]. It is from this culture, used in this sense, that "man derives his humanity" and begins his social history. And the process,

21 Prince Petr Kropotkin, "Mutual Aid"
22 Julius Lippert, "The Evolution of Culture ", Ch 1
23 V Gordon Childe, "Social Evolution", p30
24 Herbert Read, "To Hell with Culture", p7
25 Grahame Clark, "From Savagery to Civilisation", p1

let us repeat for the discomfiture of the white chauvinists, though not for the inflation of the nonwhite chauvinists, first flourished outside of Europe. The glacial periods again and again drove man and beast out of Europe until the final recession of the ice made the continuous colonisation of Europe possible.

Then, too, as Hertz says, "Scientific research along the most different lines has arrived at the same end, namely, that the actual population of Europe is the result of some thousand years of migrations and crossings of races"[26] Cutting across the wordy jungle of technical terms employed by archaeologists, geologists, anthropologists and the school men of pre-history, the most convenient shorthand description of the various cultural stages of man's history is still Morgan's broad division into savagery, barbarism and civilisation developing out of the urban revolution during the higher stage of barbarism. We must warn in advance, however, against too schematic an approach to these "stages".

It would make for some measure of modesty in all of us to realise that approximately 98% of man's history thus far is covered by the period of savagery. During the early part of this period he spent much time in the forests and found by trial and error which roots and fruits he could eat. Later he lived on fish and shellfish and when, in addition to missile weapons, he had developed the spear, the net, the fishhook and, above all, at this period, the bow and arrow, he could eat both fish and meat more regularly. Very important, too, was the discovery and preserving and then the actual making of fire, which led not only to a revolutionary change in his diet, but also to a change in the weapons with which to regularise it; sometimes, through hunger or superstition, he was a cannibal. His clothing and utensils were mainly of animal or vegetable origin; he painted on the walls and ceilings of his caves, in all probability as an aid to hunting; he chipped stone and carved in wood, bone, horn and ivory, depending on the animal or vegetable materials available; he made tools with which to make tools; he often made primitive shelters; he painted his face and body, wore ornaments, developed hair styles and danced; he created the idea of spirits to explain and control what he could not understand and to help him in securing his food and safety; he strove to establish the nexus between cause and effect; he developed small social units and buried his dead. Only an ignoramus blinded by arrogance and sheer illiteracy could underestimate the importance for mankind of even this, the very first cultural stage in man's social history.

The pace was indescribably slow, development was not continuous and the imagination staggers at the timespan involved, but the broad general pattern was similar everywhere, from China to the New World, from Spain to Kenya, from Alaska to the Cape and Southern France. The priority of the barbed hook or the amulet or rock painting in this or that part of the world is as unimportant as it is unknown: a "vast similitude" links all. The individual discoverers or improvers are anonymous gatherers, fishermen and hunters in untold numbers and generations. These were implicitly the pioneers of the process known

26 F Hertz, "Race and Civilisation", p118

as civilisation, for in the womb of the upper paleolithic period the seeds of barbarism were maturing, and it is both arbitrary and mechanical to insist that civilisation begins only after the Neolithic revolution, in the higher stages of barbarism. There is, of course, no doubt at all that the Neolithic revolution is ushered in by two very striking modes of intervention in the processes of nature: the cultivation of foodplants and the domestication of animals. The former is generally held to precede the domestication of animals, although differences in natural resources between America and the Old World do tend towards cultural differentiation and a different rate of development. There is one view that wheats and barleys were first domesticated from wild grasses in India, Western Asia and Afrasia, but there is equally strong evidence that Afghanistan and Northwestern China were the original centres for wheat growing.

However that may be, it first took place largely outside what is now known as Europe. The earliest centres of the new economy were all in areas that are today among the driest in the world. In fact, it was this climatic deterioration and the consequent scarcity of foodstuffs that provided one of the chief motive forces towards cultivation and domestication. It is probable that "the idea of cultivation and the cereals cultivated were first introduced by hoe cultivators spreading from North Africa over Western Europe and by others expanding from the Danube Basin into Belgium and Germany".[27] The dog was partly domesticated for hunting purposes in the period of higher savagery already, and the process was completed during early barbarism. But the main animals domesticated during this period were those that provided milk and meat.

The climatic changes restricted both men and beasts to the better watered areas and provided more opportunity for domestication. The animals were no longer regarded purely as booty, but rather as property for breeding so that the surplus could be eaten or traded. On the whole, barbarian societies, tend to be more settled and to foster a growth in population. As Gordon Childe puts it, too, " … children become economically useful. To hunters, children are liable to be a burden. They have to be nourished for years before they can begin to contribute to the family larder effectively"[28]. In addition to the domestication of oxen, goats, pigs and the llama, rice and corn were cultivated, and in many places mudbricks were used for houses, and architecture began to evolve. Cannibalism tends to decrease and where it still exists the reasons are religious rather than economic. Pottery and weaving are characteristic of this period; tools and weapons are more elaborate; there is already some differentiation of labour on a sex basis, with the men hunting and women tending the fields and, because of the increased property in the ownership of cattle, land and tools.

Women probably were among the chief inventors of this period. In the higher stages of barbarism, in the period sometimes described as the "second revolution", the smelting of

27 V Gordon Childe, "Man Makes Himself", p75
28 Ibid., pp6970

iron, the use of the plough, the harnessing of animal power and the extension of cultivation to the vine, vegetables and flax enabled society to develop in the most remarkable manner. This stage, too, usually sees the development of prealphabetic scripts and a means of measurement as techniques closely associated with and necessitated by the developing forces of production. That is why the period of higher barbarism is usually taken as the transition period to civilisation conceived of as "essentially the culture of cities".

Rejecting this definition as too arbitrary and constrictive, we would prefer to view barbarism in general (making allowances for the unevenness of its development in the Old World and the New and within the same continent) as a period of accelerated and elaborated growth caused by fundamental advances in the mode of man's continuous struggle to solve the problem of securing his food, clothing, home and pleasure. Within this period of barbarism, the relatively prodigious advance in production enables a surplus to be produced, stimulates the growth of small farming communities and villages and gives rise to the first cities. It should be noted, too, that since the use of a thing constituted its ownership, landed property was, on its first establishment, allotted to the women. They had to work on the land, and this continued usually until the growth of slave labour through conquest and famine.

This brings us right into the period of the urban revolution, about 5,000 years ago, in the valleys of the rivers Hwangho, Indus, TigrisEuphrates and Nile. The outstanding achievements of these river valleys have misled many into describing them as the beginnings of civilisation and others into regarding them as different civilisations. We have already made it plain that the beginnings are much earlier, and we now make the point that, arising out of the Neolithic period of cultivation, domestication and the production of a surplus, giving rise to social classes, to a more highly complicated social structure and to trade, these river valley cultures are really one civilisation. This is not to suggest that they are identical but that they represent basically the same stage in a process. Before coming to them, however, let us briefly summarise the fantastic technological advances causing, and caused by, the economic revolution out of which they grew.

Agricultural tools were elaborated; the plough, the yoke, and the harness were invented so that the ox could relieve and then replace women in the fields. (Those who are so inclined to sneer at the "bonelazy" African male "lying in the sun" while the women till the soil, might well note that this was the accepted practice until the oxdrawn plough made the work easier and more attractive to men.) Sledges and fourwheeled carts were manufactured, the wheels of the latter usually consisting of pieces of solid wood mortised together and turning in one piece with the axles. The ass, the horse and the camel were used as pack animals and for riding. [It is a very interesting and revealing aside to note that Western Asia invented and taught Europe the harnessing of a horse so that its throat pulls the weight – what Winter describes as a method "which showed a lack of knowledge of mechanics and of a

horse"[29]. This "wrong" way of harnessing a horse was replaced in China about 200 BC by the breastharness we use today, but it reached Europe from China only between 6001000 AD! No Chinese, we may add, has yet suggested that this proves any inherent inferiority, laziness or ripeness for enslavement on the part of the inhabitants of Europe.]

Apart from land transport, boats and ships were considerably improved and developed, some by a change in shape, size and oars, others by the addition of sails, so that seas were no longer barriers but links; carpentry became a more specialised trade, while the potter's wheel revolutionised pottery as the cart-wheel had revolutionised land transport. The potter's wheel was very well known throughout Asia but probably came much later to Africa and Europe. Among the most important developments, too, was the advance in the mining and working of metals, which was one of the main accelerating factors in the economic and social revolution, making the civilisation of the great rivers possible.

Neuburger says that "the beginning of civilisation among the individual peoples coincided with that of mining"[30]. And if we link this to what Rickard says, namely, that "the Ancients, that is, those living before the Christian era, recognised six metals, namely, gold, silver, copper, iron, lead and tin"[31], we find that Asia and Africa – China to Ethiopia were again the pioneers in the mining and process of one more of these "sinews of civilisation". China and India probably sank pits for copper about 5,000 years ago; it is thought that the Egyptians mined copper on Mt Sinai about 5000 BC; gold was probably first discovered in Africa – the Egyptians called it "nub" and it was supplied by Nubia, the "land of Gold"; gold was also mined in Persia, the mining of iron came very early, perhaps first, in Africa; the Phoenicians (from Asia Minor) first obtained their tin from India, but discovered it in Spain and perhaps introduced it into Egypt.[32] Hand in hand with the development of metallurgy, too, went increased knowledge of chemistry, physics and mathematics. Quite often war acted as a spur to the growth of metallurgy.

Finally, we should note that magic was still much in evidence, while the superstitions and fantasies that were to be the ingredients of the major religions still flourished. Despite the undoubted skill of the Neolithic surgeon, who could perform a trepanation (i.e., operation for the removal of a section of the skull) with very much the same ratio of success as his modern heir, medicine was much more closely associated with and retarded by magic and superstition than it is in the present age of allergy and aspro. The physician of this period, in addition to his amulets, offerings, prayers and religious mumbo jumbo, had a wide knowledge of medicines, could circumcise, infibulate, amputate, reduce dislocations, devise a truss for hernia, and even perform cystotomy and urethrotomy for stone.[33]

---

29 HJJ, Winter, "Eastern Science", p21
30 Albert Neuburger, "The Technical Arts of the Ancients", p1
31 A Rickard, "Man and Metals", Vol I, p6
32 See Neuburger and Rickard, works cited above
33 See RA Leonardo, "History of Gynaecology", and "History of Surgery"

This, then, puts in a nutshell the achievements of man up to the period of higher barbarism. If it seems that we are laying a very heavy stress upon it, the reason is not to be found in any special pleading because the development is predominantly NonEuropean. On the contrary, the reason is that this is the history of humanity up to that time, about 98% of human history thus far. This is what JH Robinson calls "… the long, dark period in which for hundreds of thousands of years savage man was making the discoveries upon which all civilisation has ever since depended"[34]. It is this perhaps that inspired Claude LeviStrauss, basing himself upon Leslie A White's *The Science of Culture*, to say: "Ninetenths of our present wealth is due to our predecessors even more if the date when the main discoveries made their appearance is assessed in relation to the approximate date of the dawn of civilisation. We then find that agriculture was developed during a recent phase, representing 2% of that period of time; metallurgy would represent 0.7%, the alphabet 0.35%, Galileo's physics 0.035% and Darwin's theories 0.009%. The whole of the scientific and industrial revolution of the West would therefore fall within a period equivalent to approximately one half of one thousandth of the lifespan of humanity to date. Some caution therefore seems advisable in asserting that this revolution is destined to change the whole meaning of human history"[35].

However, as a Parthian shot at all racialists and chauvinists of all skull shapes, we must add that those who have patiently dug up and scientifically studied man's prehistory have always found people of all the different skull shapes and skeletal measurements buried in the graves and other places. There was never any sign of a "pure race", but so-called Caucasoids lay mixed with the Negroids and Mongoloids in a way which admits of no way of telling whether one of them had invented a dolicocephalic harness, or another a brachycephalic wheel or still another a mezzocephalic alphabet or whether the longocephalic was more energetic than the others.[36]

34 JH Robinson, "The Human Comedy", p45

35 Claude LeviStrauss, "Race and History", p37

36 See Max Muller's caustic comment on a "dolichocephalous dictionary" or a "brachycephalous grammar", quoted by Hertz in "Race and Civilisation" p77

III

We turn now to a brief glance at, and estimate of, civilisation in the great rivervalleys. The rate of development in all of them was uneven and their specific cultural florescence different, but they were all similar in their fundamental economic and social structure; they were all what the South African Herrenvolk (dumbly unconscious of the debt they owe them) would describe as "racially mixed" and not fit for the franchise.

Their "group areas" were all outside of Europe but, fortunately for the progress of mankind, they mixed as freely as their means of communication would permit and influenced one another on all levels, from the shape and design of utensils, clothing, tools and weapons, to the development of chemistry, mathematics, poetry, music, medicine, laws, astronomy and even to the creation, borrowing and capture of one another's gods. If it had not been for this free intercourse and diffusion, there is no knowing whether Van Riebeeck would have reached the Cape yet; assuming that he had reached here (without a compass), there is no knowing whether the present rulers of the country would have had the paper, the alphabet, the press or the legal knowledge to draw up a Mixed Marriages Act or a Bantu Anti Education Bill. There is even no knowing what sort of god they would have prayed to, or in what type of building; they may not even have had the technique or the material to spin the type of bathing costume required to satisfy the moral appetite of the Dutch Reformed Church Synod. Indeed, one does not even know what sort of morals they would have had.

But, to return from speculation to fact, we should first explode the notion that life was easy in the rivervalleys and that they were natural "gardens of Eden". In fact, they were often choked with weeds and silt and liable to the most destructive floods; rich in foodstuffs, they were often poor in the other raw materials necessary for sustaining, let alone developing, a civilised society. The Nile Valley lacked timber for building, freestone, ores and magic stones. Sumer was still worse off. The only native timber was supplied by the datepalm, quarries of building stone were more remote and less accessible than in Egypt; not only was copper ore lacking, but flint of which the Nile cliffs furnished an excellent supply was equally hard to obtain. Indeed, on the alluvial plains and marshes even hard pebbles, suitable for making axeheads, were rarities. From the very first the Sumerians had to import Armenian obsidian or other exotic stones for cutting tools. Sindh and Punjab suffered from the same shortage of essential raw materials as Sumer."[37] The Hwangho was in no better case until the Hsia Dynasty, earlier than 2000 BC. Consequently, one may say of the civilisation of the rivervalleys that it made such spectacular advances because, with the tools it had from the second revolution, it was able to develop new tools for the domestication of the rivers.

In this process, science was developed as the most advanced tool yet invented or evolved for the taming, control and exploitation of the environment. All scientific historians

37 V Gordon Childe, "Man Makes Himself", p141

of science are agreed that the origin and growth of science in this period is inseparable from the development of techniques. And the development of techniques was not caused by the "genius" of the Babylonians or Assyrians or Chinese for this, that or the other. Nor yet was it caused by the sudden emergence of individual "geniuses". The number of the authors of this advance is legion, the names unknown. The development of techniques came about, in the first instance, because there was a practical need for it, and because there were already tools and techniques to make further development possible to satisfy the need. Because of the difficulties already mentioned in domesticating the rivers, economic self-sufficiency was not enough; the surplus had to be developed even beyond what sufficed during the preceding period, because this surplus had to be traded for the materials lacking or in short supply. Hence craftsmen become more specialised; merchants embark on travels; soldiers are needed to protect the convoys, and scribes to keep records. In short, there is a founding of the first States, complete with class divisions and a code of laws to sanctify and enforce them, with priests, princes, officials and a host of others withdrawn from the primary task of food production.[38] Then, too, much more than in any previous period, expansionist wars and defence against aggression play an appreciable part in the development of technology. That is, of course, up to a point.

Let us briefly detail some of the major achievements of the civilisation of the river-valleys. Bedrich Hrozny holds that … the most important cultural accomplishment of the time was the creation of the earliest known writing in the history of mankind. Just at this Uruk period (archaeological stratum 1Vb), about 3200 BC, there originated from humble beginnings, that is from the records of business transactions in the temple enclosure, the picture writing, which in later times developed into the cuneiform writing ... The earliest writing known in the history of the world is that of Babylonia"[39]. And, for the benefit of those who are accustomed to sneer at those peoples in Africa who, cut off from the main stream of civilisation by deserts, jungles and parasite-infested swamps, did not develop an alphabet or writing, we may quote Frederick Bodmer on the alphabet: "Unlike the invention of zero, this liberating innovation has only happened once in the history of mankind. Available evidence seems to show that all the alphabets of the world are traceable to one source"[40].

The Phoenicians were the main carriers of the alphabet, as of so many things. Among other things, the invention of writing was one of the foundations of science. Out of SumeriaBabylonia, too, come mathematical calculations that are perhaps some of "the most outstanding preHellenist contributions to abstract thought, some of them algebraic in character"[41]. Closely connected with architecture they developed a sexagesimal system of numbering and, says Lancelot Hogben, " … knew how to make an angle of 60 degrees by

38 See V Gordon Childe, "Man Makes Himself", Chs VIIVIII. and "What Happened in History", Chs V, VI
39 Bedrich Hrozny, "Ancient History of Western Asia, India and Crete ", p36, 38
40 Frederick Bodmer, "The Loom of Language", pp. 4849
41 HJJ Winter, "Eastern Science", p6

inscribing a figure of six equal sides (hexagon) in a circle"[42] while Sherwood Taylor, adapting from a French authority, shows that they were able to solve quadratic equations.[43]

Out of astrology they developed astronomy, the hourglass and a calendar. HJJ Winter said: "The tablets of MulApin deal with two specific methods of reckoning time, neither of which was supplanted until the discovery of the isochronism of a simple pendulum by Galileo when a student at Pisa, 15815, and its elaboration in the clock by Huyghens in 1673." Their medicine and surgery were still rather primitive, it seems, but they founded the medical profession and, Leonardo says, "One of the most important documents pertaining to AssyroBabylonian medicine is the famous Code of Hammurabi (about 2000 BC), which contains details regulating not only the legal side of the medical profession, but also proving the importance of surgery in Babylonia …". The Code laid down a scale of fees for various operations to masters and slaves. Fatal mistakes to slaves required replacement of the value, but fatal mistakes to a master resulted in the surgeon's hands being cut off.[44] The Code of Hammurabi, of course, was the earliest known codification of law, and all we need say here is that the socalled pillar of "Western Civilisation", Roman Law, is rooted in Babylonia.

There is recent evidence to show that the origins of technical chemistry are possibly Mesopotamia. In India, says Stuart Piggott, "… though writing was known and employed in the third and second millennia BC, the peculiar script is still undeciphered … This Indian script may have been used up to about 1500 BC, but after this there is a complete gap in any known written documents on stone or clay or metal until we come to the inscriptions of Asoka, set up about the middle of the third century BC"[45]. And, says WE Clark, "At present it is impossible to give any adequate account of early Indian achievements in science and technology"[46].

Here, as in China, a great deal of research work has to be done and, no doubt, will be done in the historical epoch now opening up. But we do know from the excavations and researches at MohenjoDaro in Sind and Harappa in the Punjab that, 3000 BC, the peoples of the Punjab and Sind were living in wellbuilt cities of burnt brick, had a high standard of craftsmanship and art, possessed an adequate system of drainage, worked in copper and bronze, had shaft mines and used weights. Neuberger says that "An iron industry existed in India, probably in the year 2500 BC and certainly in 1500 BC" and, in the Province of Rewah in Central India, "specimens of worked iron have been discovered of enormous dimensions; this is the more wonderful as even nowadays, in the age of the steam hammer, pieces of this size can be produced only in the largest workshops. Such colossal pieces of iron could never be worked in the small furnaces in use in India at the present time."[47]

42 L Hogben, "Mathematics for the Millions", p57
43 HJJ Winter, op. cit., p42
44 RA Leonardo, "History of Surgery", p3
45 Stuart Piggott, "Prehistoric India", p11
46 WE Clark, Article on "Science" in "The Legacy of India", edited by GT, Garratt, p335
47 A Neuburger, 'The Technical Arts of the Ancients", p2

In mathematics, India had the Sulvasutras or "rules of the cord" (probably written between 400 and 200 BC) which deal with problems of squares, rectangles, diagonals and circles in relation to the construction of altars, temples and palaces. The first arithmeticians seemed pre occupied with the problems of taxation, debt and interest. But the most revolutionary contribution was the invention of the concept of "0" or zero, sunya, which, says Hogben, "… liberated the human intellect from the prison bars of the counting frame"[48]. Dantzig, quoted by Hogben, says, "… even when compared with the slow growth of ideas during the dark ages, the history of reckoning presents a peculiar picture of desolate stagnation.

When viewed in this light, the achievement of the unknown Hindu, who at some time in the first centuries of our era discovered the principle of position, assumed the proportion of a world event"[49]. Dantzig, by the way, is very puzzled about why the Greeks did not stumble upon it and could develop geometry so far; but Laplace, the brilliant eighteenth century mathematical astronomer, says that it was "… a profound and important idea which appears so simple to us now that we ignore its true merit, but its very simplicity, the great ease which it has lent to computations, puts our arithmetic in the first rank of useful inventions, and we shall appreciate the grandeur of this achievement when we remember that it escaped the genius of Archimedes and Apollonius, two of the greatest men produced by antiquity"[50].

And lastly, Ancient Hindu medicine and surgery stood very high, and Buddhist tradition tells that Atreya, a physician, taught at the university of Ka si (Benares) and Susrata, a surgeon, at Taksasila. They knew a good deal about anatomy, physiology, obstetrics, pediatrics, the plants used in medicine, hernia, the caesarian section and plastic surgery. The Chinese, during this period, had irrigation, a pictographic wiring that evolved into latter-day logographic script with 4,000 to 7,000 characters, a year with 366 days, calendar makers who were less priestly than in Babylon or Egypt, star charts, accurate records of eclipses, an advanced knowledge of metallurgy – especially the working of bronze and white specular metal used in making mirrors. Hogben says that there is good reason to believe that "they had established important general rules about figures half a millennium before the Greeks"[51]; with the Babylonians and Hebrews they had calculated the value of π as 3.0, as against the Egyptians' 3.16 (about 1500 BC), Archimedes' between 3.140 and 3.142 (240 BC), and the presentday 3.14159. The view has been expressed that their observations on optics were very penetrating and that their work on images is superior to that of contemporary Greek thought.[52]

We have already mentioned that it was the Chinese, too, who originated the present-day harnessing of horses – collar harnessing. Nef suggests that they possibly knew the

48 L Hogben, Op. cit., p285
49 L Hogben, Op. cit., p283
50 L Hogben, Op. cit., p284
51 L Hogben, Op. cit., p112
52 HJJ Winter, Op. cit., p20, quoting J Needham

use of coal before the Christian era, although it seems to have been known in Europe only somewhere in the 13th century AD.[53] Their knowledge of medicine and surgery, despite the typical hampering by demonology, magic and, later, Confucian philosophy, was by no means negligible. The whole of life was held to be dominated by two principles – Yang, male and positive, and Yin, female and negative. Preponderance of one or other determined character, sex, and sickness or wellbeing. The strangulating influence of this mumbo jumbo may well be imagined. One has only to see what it has done to Arnold Toynbee.

Anyway, it gave rise to acupuncture, the introduction of hot or cold metal needles into the human body for almost anything from rheumatism and fractures to leprosy. On the positive side, however, there was quite a remarkable knowledge and cultivation of medicinal herbs, some knowledge of anaesthesia and skin cauterisation and a (quantitatively) prodigious medical literature. "If it is true that the Nei Ching, the famous Chinese medical book, was written by the Emperor HuangTi (26882599 BC), it would mean that it represents the most ancient medical text we have …"; but it may have been written much later.[54]

We are finishing off this section with the Egyptians for several reasons. One is to show that, even on the present comparatively limited knowledge, the world's indebtedness to Asia is at least as heavy as it is grudgingly conceded to be to Egypt. Another is to point to the similarities in achievement, resulting from similarity in basic socioeconomic structure plus maximal interchange and diffusion through trade or war. A third is to stress once again that progress in civilisation is not dependent upon a special group or "racial" or national genius, still less upon individual geniuses isolated from, and elevated above, the toiling, sweatbegrimed mass. And the fourth is to show that Africa, too, has a weighty contribution, because the civilisation of the Nile Valley did not grow as the result of a geographical accident which placed it physically on the African mainland and culturally in Europe, as most school textbooks and a good many arrogant, bourgeois historians try to make out.

William E Burghardt Du Bois sums up the position very well: "The Egyptians, however, regarded themselves as African. The Greeks looked upon Egypt as a part of Africa not only geographically but culturally, and every fact of history and anthropology proves that the Egyptians were an African people, varying no more from other African peoples than groups like the Scandinavians vary from other Europeans, or groups such as the Japanese from other Asiatics. There can be but one adequate explanation of this vagary nineteenth century science: it was due to the slave trade and Negro slavery. It was due to the fact that the rise and support of capitalism called for rationalisation based upon degrading and discrediting the Negroid peoples. It is especially significant that the science of Egyptology arose and flourished at the very time that the cotton kingdom reached its greatest power on the foundation of American Negro slavery. We may then without further ado ignore this

53 L Hogben, "Science for the Citizen", p365
54 RA Leonardo, "History of Surgery", p19

verdict of history, widespread as it is, and treat Egyptian history as an integral part of African history."[55]

There is a wealth of indisputable evidence to show that the earliest colonisers of Egypt were Negroid, that Negroes were found in all walks of life despite the later invasions. Intermarriage with peoples coming from Asia Minor eventually produced people, Pharaohs and Gods, whose colours ranged from white to bronze to Nubian black. The fertility god, Osiris, evolved from African animism, and Sir JG Frazer in *The Golden Bough* shows many African parallels from the Shilluks of the White Nile to the Baganda of Central Africa, the Barotse and other Southern Bantu. Osiris's sisterwife, Isis, was also of African origin. By virgin birth she had Horus, is represented on Egyptian monuments as virgin mother and child, became very popular in Rome under the Republic and the Empire, was later taken over by the Christians, Europeanised, and is still adored in Rome as the Virgin Mary.[56]

The Egyptian contribution to civilisation is better known because it is taught in the schools and universities as European history. So, now that we have made the fundamental correction to establish it as an essentially AfricanAsian contribution, we need not dwell upon it except for one or two further notes. Hogben says that: "The only reason why we customarily speak of the Greeks as the first mathematicians is that the Egyptians have left practically no literature telling how they achieved what are still some of the most astounding feats of measurement in the history of mankind. … They left so small a literature because the literate class had no disposition to broadcast its priestly secrets, and the craftsmen class of surveyors, engineers, architects and mariners, not being scribes, passed on their knowledge by oral tradition. The class basis of education in the ancient times led to much loss and wastage of valuable knowledge"[57]. The Greek Hippocrates may still be styled the "Father of Medicine" but his medical grandparents came from Egypt. "Medicine among the Egyptians was so well developed 3,500 years ago, that Egyptian practitioners were in demand in foreign countries."[58]

The Ebers, Edwin Smith, Kuhun and other papyri show that, despite the vitiating influences of magic and priestcraft, the Egyptian *materia medica* was extensive. There seems to have been a high degree of specialisation, appreciable knowledge of anatomy and women's diseases, recognition of the heart as the centre of the blood system; there were midwives, and women surgeons who performed the Caesarian section. It is possible that they knew the use of colchicine for the treatment of arthritis – which Elliot Smith called "the bone disease of the ancient Egyptians and Nubians"[59] – because the Greeks knew it from Colchis in Asia

55 WE Burghardt Du Bois, "The World and Africa", p99

56 See Sir JG Frazer, "The Golden Bough", Part IV, Vol. II; Vivian Phelips, "Concerning Progressive Revelation", p19; Grant Allen, "Evolution of the Idea of God", Ch 8

57 L Hogben, "Mathematics for the Million", p60

58 RA Leonardo, "History of Gynecology", p17

59 SG Blaxland Stubbs, "From Magic to Modern Medicine", p21

Minor.[60] The tradition that the nastier the medicine the better it is, probably stems from Egypt too.

The great brake on medical progress was probably the fact that the practitioner had to follow the six sacred books of Thoth very rigidly. If he did not and the patient died, his life was forfeit.[61] One cannot resist ending this section with a quotation from Du Bois: "The list of things which Egypt learned and handed down to us from that far day is enormous: the art of shaving, the use of wigs, wearing of kilts and sandals, the invention of musical instruments, chairs, beds, cushions, and jewellery. The burial customs discovered in Europe came without reasonable doubt from Africa, brought by African invaders. Later, the improvements the Egyptians made were imitated in Sicily and Italy. Egyptian culture was in this way the forerunner of Greece."[62]

60 HA Skinner, "Origin of Medical Terms", p99
61 Diodorus Siculus, quoted by Leonardo, "History of Gynaecology", pp1718
62 WE Burghardt Du Bois, "The World and Africa", p101

IV

We turn now to a consideration of Greece, Rome, and Europe in general, not to describe their many, rich and brilliant contributions to civilisation but to correct some of the falsehoods purveyed by school textbooks, eminent University dons, priests and politicians. By now the myth of "Western", "European" or "White" civilisation should have become somewhat deflated and we want to emphasise that the phase we are to interpret is what even Draper called "the advancement of Europe in civilization.".[63] Not "European" civilisation, but civilisation in Europe; not "Western" civilisation, but civilisation in the socalled West; not "Western" philosophy, science, art, music, architecture, literature – but the development of these accomplishments of civilisation in Europe. It should be obvious by now that the term White as describing civilisation is beneath serious consideration except as part of the epitaph on the funeral urn of the South African Herrenvolk. First, we propose to examine the three so-called pillars of European or Western civilisation: Greece, Rome and Christianity.

The great impulse that was to carry civilisation a stage further in Europe came from Africa and Asia. Those whose knowledge of Ancient Greeks is derived from Sir Richard Livingstone, HAL Fisher, and other "Aryan" purgers of history, would never know it, nor would the devotees of the calcified Bertrand Russell, but the parts of Europe most advanced in civilisation about this time were those nearest to, and in closest contact with, Egypt and West Asia. From Egypt and West Asia came the impulses which completed the Neolithic revolution in Crete and led on to the flowering of the culture generally designated "Minoan". From these two directly, and semidirectly through Crete, came the impulses which carried the higher stage of civilisation to Greece and developed into that grandeur associated with Hellas, "one of the most splendid and all-embracing cultures that humanity has ever produced"[64].

As to the Greeks themselves, they were as happily intermixed as any of the peoples we have yet described, and the greatest cultural developments came from those parts where there was the greatest mixing. Says Hertz of the so-called Father of History: "Herodotus, who, though a native of a Dorian town, was Ionian and Athenian in his innermost heart, states that the lonians, and more particularly the Athenians, were originally Pelasgi and that they only later adopted the Hellenic speech, in contradistinction to the Dorians, who were genuine Hellenes. Thus just the one Greek tribe that created the noblest part of Greek culture and whose preeminence is attested by the name of Athens and Homer, was of non-Hellenic extraction"[65]. And Benjamin Farrington says, "For those historians who like to ascribe the achievements of the lonians to their being Greeks, it is unfortunate to have to face the fact that they were of mixed racial composition. The settlers freely intermarried with the Asiatic peoples"[66] It is very amusing to note that the darling of the "White" and "Western"

63 JW Draper, "The Intellectual Development of Europe", Vol I, p1
64 R Rocker, "Nationalism and Culture", p354
65 F Hertz, "Race and Civilisation", p110
66 B Barrington, "Head and Hand in Ancient Greece", p17

civilisation fanatics, Aristotle, "extols the intelligence and the artistic gifts of the Asiatics, while he holds the Northerners permanently incapable of culture and statecraft for climatic reasons"[67]. On the question of the .origins of their knowledge of mathematics and natural science, Frederick Lange says, "The fact that, in the eastern portion of the Greek world, where the intercourse with Egypt, Phoenicia, Persia, was most active, the scientific movement began, speaks more decidedly for the influence of the East upon Greek culture than the fabulous traditions of the travels and studies of Greek philosophers"[68]. Athens developed precisely because it was on the main trading routes with Africa, West Asia and the Far East. Sparta, more "purely" Hellene, was exclusive, and paid the price of all apartheid – mental sterility. In philosophy, generally acknowledged to be the greatest contribution to civilisation made by the Greeks, it is equally true that the roots were in the East, outside Europe. This is the testimony of the leading historians of Greek philosophy and it runs like a golden thread through the profound studies of the greatest of them all: Dr Eduard Zeller.[69]

It is important to note, too, that it was in the most "mixed" part that the very flower of Greek philosophy flourished, namely, the Ionian School, from Thales to Leucippus and Democritus, the first known formulators of an atomic theory of the structure of the universe. Farrington says of them that they "had offered a materialistic explanation of the evolution of the cosmos, they inculcated the ideal of positive science and the reign of universal law, they gave an account of the civilisation in which man, through his conquest of techniques, figured as the author of his own progress, they supported the contractual theory of justice"[70]. Contrary to popular belief purveyed by the epigones of reaction and the defenders of class privilege in society, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle represent the decline of Greek philosophy that went hand in hand with the period of reaction and degeneration in Greece. It was Plato who declared that the works of Democritus ought to be burned.[71] Moreover, their medicine also advanced furthest in Ionia, and their mighty Alexandrian School was founded in Africa.

However, having corrected the major falsehood in connection with the roots of Greek culture, we go on not to describe its specific contribution to civilisation but rather to attempt to evaluate it. One could do no better than to begin with the verdict of JH Robinson: "They discovered scepticism in the higher and proper significance of the word, and this was their supreme contribution to human thought"[72]. The explanation of this is not to be found in the socalled "Greek genius" but in that, unlike the Egyptians, Sumerians, Indians and Chinese, the Greeks had no entrenched priestly caste to bind and cramp their freedom of thought. It was not only a Xenophon who made the discovery that man created the gods in his own

67 F Hertz, "Race and Civilisation" p4

68 FA Lange, "History of Materialism", p9

69 See E Zeller, "A History of Greek Philosophy from the earliest period to the time of Socrates" and "Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy"

70 B Farrington, "Greek Science", Part I p80

71 See FA Lange, "History of Materialism"; B Farrington, "Greek Science", "Science and Politics in the Ancient World", "Head and Hand in Ancient Greece", "The Civilisation of Greece and Rome"

72 JH Robinson, "The Mind in the Making", p71

image. The Greeks in general had a very friendly and familiar attitude to their God-Heroes, had no idea of hereditary sin and did not prostrate themselves in the dust before their gods. Their decentralisation and mixed origin were largely responsible for their happy lack of holy books and a traditional priestly class. It is this freeing of the mind that has given the world the dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, the beauties of Greek epic and lyric poetry, and that helped the Greeks to make greater strides towards a rational medicine than the Egyptians, Persians or Chinese had been able to make.

Their second great contribution – and we are still thinking in terms of ideas and not artifacts – was their formulation of scientific generalisation, both in philosophy and mathematics, and their profound revaluation of all values. In this sense, they were laying the foundations of modern science and philosophy. We consciously refrain from the usual practice of describing the concept of a "democracy" as a Greek contribution to civilisation. Greece was not a democracy but a slave state. We say this in no sense of outraged sensibilities, but merely to record the fact that civilisation in Greece, as in the great river-valleys, had reached the stage when slavery "first made possible the division of labour between agriculture and industry on a considerable scale". As we have shown, this stage of the urban revolution was an advance upon the previous or Neolithic, which had been an advance upon the lower stage of barbarism and savagery. Later, as we shall see in the case of Rome, this culture fell into decay because its very slave base prevented it from developing its resources to a higher level.

We turn now to Rome. Here we must first make precisely the same point as we made in connection with Greece: even more so than that of Greece, Roman culture was created by a thoroughly "mixed" population from North Africa, Western Asia and the Mediterranean Basin, and the result was as cosmopolitan as the people who achieved it. Even the professional falsifiers and writers of history textbooks find it very difficult to hide or distort this fact. Normally they depict the "spirit" or Greece as "Europeanising" or "Westernising" or "whitening" Rome, but we have already seen the indebtedness of Greece to Africa and Asia, so this need not detain us. It is an amusing sidelight that "the cause of the decline and fall of Ancient Rome, according to Gobineau, Chamberlain and their school, was the physical and moral degeneracy of the Roman people occasioned through incongruous race mixture".[73] It is always a characteristic of "Nordic" or "Aryan" "race" fiends that they can recognise what they call "race mixture" only as a source of decadence, never of building.

Much more important than such considerations, however, is that Rome was the great Imperialist appropriator, imitator and carrier. When, after the Punic Wars, Rome had grown into a "robber's cave", it carried to all corners of its Empire whatever ideas it had taken over from Greece, Africa and Asia. To Rome every cult was acceptable on the one condition that it subordinated itself to the power of the State; and every conceivable cult did find its way

73 F Hertz, "Race and Civilisation", p137

to the Capitol and, side by side with what was really worthwhile, was diffused throughout the Empire. Rome's one contribution to advance lay in this quite unintentional carrying of all that was brightest in Greece with all that was darkest in Greece and the Empire, along roads which are masterpieces of construction. Roman Law, highly extolled by the soldiers and professors of the status quo, was an application and extension of the Code of Hammurabi to the mightiest slave-based state yet. Well might one echo with the great German writer, Heinrich Heine, "What a frightful book is the *Corpus Juris*, the Bible of Egoism! I have always hated their legal code as I have hated the Romans themselves. These robbers wished to safeguard their booty and what they won by the sword they tried to protect by the law; therefore, the Roman was at the same time soldier and lawyer, presenting a blend of the most revolting type. Actually, we have to thank those Roman thieves for the theory of property which had previously been just a fact – and the development of that doctrine in all its despicable consistency is that lauded Roman Law which lies at the base of all our modern state institutions ... "[74].

Perhaps the most brilliant contemporary picture of the disease that ate like a cancer into the vitals of this second contributor to the socalled "genius of the West", was given by the great Spanish teacher of Stoic philosophy, Seneca. It could almost have been written by a Jean Anouilh or a JeanPaul Sartre about presentday Imperialism. Writing to his friend Lucilius he says: "What is there that can tempt you away from death? You have tasted all the enjoyments that might make you hesitate; none of them is strange to you; you have had your fill of all. You know the taste of wine and of honey; it is not a matter of indifference to you whether one hundred or one thousand bottles of them pass down your throat? Also, you have tasted oysters and crabs. Thanks to your splendid living, nothing remains untasted for you in the years that are to come. And you cannot separate yourself from these things? What is it you may still have to regret? Friends? Home? Do you really value them so highly that you would sacrifice yourself for them to the extent of postponing your supper hour? Oh, had it been in your power, you would have extinguished the sun itself, for you have accomplished nothing worthy of the light. Confess it: You are hesitating to die, not because you will be sorry to leave the Curia, the Forum, or the beauties of nature. You are merely sorry to leave the flesh market, and yet you have already tasted all its supplies."

The cancer infected the whole Empire: "The expenses of running the vast machine were greater than the returns it could be made to yield. The Romans could administer but not exploit their empire ... Increasing taxes exhausted the accumulated wealth of centuries. Building ceased, roadmaking ceased, the empire went out of repair. The exigencies of taxation necessitated the introduction of a caste system. The duty of every taxpayer in every walk of life was to leave a replica of himself behind. Society became static, enterprise stagnated, the Feudal Age was at hand. The slaves, now settled on the land, no longer

74 Heinrich Heine, "Memorien", quoted by Rocker, op. cit., p397

bought, used up and cast aside, as in the period of the formation of the vast estates, acquired the status of serfs. Learning, losing all conception of progress, relapsed into pedantry. The Spirit of Ionia was finally exorcised, and the governmental myths of Plato triumphed over the science of Alexandria. The Dark Ages were at hand".[75]

And now let us briefly examine the socalled third pillar of "Western" or "European" or "White" civilisation, namely, Christianity. The first thing to note, of course, is that it is of Asian origin and came to Europe from Asia. There is not a single thing in the Christian dogma and revelation that did not have its antecedent and parallel in Asia and that had not been known for hundreds of years. We cannot here go into the proofs of this fact, but they are there for those who wish to seek them in that monumental work, *The Golden Bough* of Sir JG Frazer; in those brilliant works and monographs of Vivian Phelips, who spent his last years in this country, *The Churches and Modern Thought*, *Modern Knowledge and Old Beliefs* and *Concerning Progressive Revelation*; and also in JM Robertson's *Christianity and Mythology*. Hinduism and Buddhism were probably the immediate sources of Christian borrowing, through Judaism, although Zoroastrianism and Confucianism were no doubt secondary Sources and influences. Krishna and Buddha in India, Fohi and LaoKiun in China, Quetzalcoatl in Mexico, Horus in Egypt, Zoroaster in Persia, all were miraculously conceived of virgins. At one time the claim was even made for Plato. Stars appeared, voices from heaven spoke or sang, and wise men visited all of them at their birth. They all have similar lifestories, involving the slaughter of the innocents, the temptation and forty days fast, the miracles, the Crucifixion darkness and descent into Hell, the Resurrection and Ascension, the Second coming and Day of Judgement.[76]

There is nothing in the moral teachings of Christianity that hasn't come out of one or all of the Asian religions. Dr Malan can make another visit to the holy stones in Israel, and he may find good business contacts, but he won't find anything "White" or "Western" or "European" in the origin of Christianity. Just as dying British Imperialism sometimes takes its opponents out of prison and sets them up in Parliament to prolong Imperialism, so dying Rome stopped persecuting the Christian (although the persecution is greatly exaggerated and pales before the presentday antiCommunist witch hunt) and adopted Christianity as a State religion on the twin doctrines of "the poor ye have with ye always", and "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's". As Rocker puts it: "... dying Rome revenged herself even in her hour of dissolution by infecting with her poisonous breath the very movement in which it seemed that new hope for an enslaved world might be looked for and transforming it into a church. So out of the world dominion of the Roman State there developed the world dominion of the Roman Church; in Papism, Caesarism celebrates its resurrection"[77].

75 B Farrington, "The Civilisation of Greece and Rome", p 82
76 See Vivian Phelips, "Concerning Progressive Revelation"
77 R Rocker, "Nationalism and Culture", pp406407

V

For a thousand years after the fall of Rome, Europe was plunged into darkness. That is, Europe except for Spain, where Non-Europeans, the Arabs and the Jews, kept the lamp of learning alight. Joseph McCabe says that: "Towns that had given to the world Aristotle and Democritus were lost to memory, and all the great cities that Greek genius had inspired, from Ionia to Sicily, were but the mouldering refuges of a few thousand peasants and their goats"[78].

As Finlay caustically remarked: "... if our modern civilisation was the outcome of Christianity, the length of time between the appearance of the cause and the effect had no parallel in history"[79]. It took a mere 1,000-odd years from cause to effect! This, as McCabe remarks in another connection, will no doubt come as a surprise or even shock "to a generation which has been inoculated with such old fables as that the Church of Rome inspired countless martyrs and raised civilisation to a higher level, that the monks preserved the classics, the knights and ladies of the Middle Ages shone in the refulgence of an Age of Chivalry, and the people of Europe were deeply attached and submissive to their spiritual rulers ..."[80]. But it is a fact which any serious student of history may investigate and substantiate. The story of the Christian preservation of civilisation in the Eastern Greek or Byzantine Empire, centred at Constantinople, is a myth.

Whatever of civilisation was preserved, was in the hands of Jews, and Greek, Roman and Asian nonChristians. The Coptic Church in Egypt alone had not sunk into complete debauchery and degradation. "It is material to appreciate that the Arabs entered the arena in the gloomiest period of reaction that the world had felt since the dawn of civilisation, the first half of the seventh century. Had there been a philosophic thinker anywhere on earth in the early part of that century he would surely have pronounced that the story of man's long endeavour to create civilisation had ended in failure. Pope Gregory I, whom some would recommend to us as the most thoughtful observer of the age, resolutely announced that the end of the world was at hand, and his millions of subjects listened daily for the ring of the silver trumpet from the c1ouds"[81].

But now we have to explode another myth. This is the fable that the Arabs, who – together with the Jews – preserved in Spain the heritage of GraecoRoman philosophy and science, were faithful sons of Islam or fanatical followers of Mohammed. Nothing could be further from the truth. As McCabe authoritatively asserts: "... it is an historical fact that it was in Syria, not in the sacred cities of Islam or the cities captured from the Christian Greeks or those of the followers of Zarathustra, that the Arabs first learned the ideals of real civilisation; and from Damascus these were transplanted to Spain. It is a matter for serious historical

78 J McCabe, "The Splendour of Moorish Spain", p2
79 Quoted by J McCabe in "The Social Record of Christianity". Preface pviii
80 J McCabe, "A History of the Popes", Preface px
81 J McCabe, "The Splendour of Moorish Spain", p1

consideration that it was neither the Avesta nor the Koran, nor the Bible that inspired the work, for the great constructive Caliphs of Damascus were nearly all sceptics"[82]. Many of them derided the claims of Mohammed. The contribution they made to civilisation was only "nominally Moslem".

The Arab conquest at this time extended from Spain to Mongolia and the Arabian contribution to civilisation must not be considered in "racial" terms. The Arabs had no Mixed Marriages Act. Like most conquerors, they seldom took their wives with them. And all parts of their domains contributed, especially the Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, Spaniards, North Africans (Berbers), and Jews. In fact, they came to Spain via Africa, and hence the term "Moorish". The view of the outstanding Brazilian sociologist, Gilberto Freyre, is worth noticing: "I have already indicated that the Moorish and Berber invasion was not the first to inundate with Negro and Mulatto strains the extreme southern tip of Europe, and particularly Portugal, a region of easy transit by way of which the first and most vigorous waves of African exuberance might overflow the continent. I have also indicated the possibility that the basic racial stratum in the peninsula, looked upon as indigenous, might be of African origin. Looked at in this way, the Arabs, Moors, Berbers, and Mussulmans, in the course of their invasion, would simply have been taking possession of a region where the way had been prepared for them by an infusion of their own blood and culture – theirs, it may be, rather than Europe's ... In their invasion of the peninsula the Mohammedans from Africa must have had the aid of those Hispanic elements opposed to the Visigoths – a circumstance I mention here by way of stressing that, from the first, European and African interests were deeply intermingled ..."[83]

Arabs like Muavia, the AbderRahmans, Ziryab and HarunalRaschid were the patrons of all those scholars from Spain to Samarkand who were not only resurrecting and restoring Greek and Roman manuscripts but also advancing science, mathematics, and medicine. Under A1Ma'mun the works of Aristotle were made known through the rationalist and objective *falasifa* school. Under Arab and Jewish direction, beautiful Spanish cities, such as Cordoba, Granada, Seville, Toledo, flourished. Cordoba, the "jewel of the world", was the intellectual focus of Europe. Under Ulugh Beg the first astronomical observatory of the time was erected and its astronomical tables were still influential in the reign of Charles I, when they were translated from the Persian by John Greaves, Professor of Astronomy at Oxford. The Giralda tower, near to Seville Cathedral, was the first astronomical observatory in Europe. Mathematics was under Indian rather than Greek influence and the greatest Arab contribution was in the branch that then came to be known as Algebra. The leading medieval mathematician was Muhammed ibn Musa al-Khuwarismi, and equally great a mathematician was Umar Khayyam, perhaps better known as a poet through Fitzgerald's rendering of the "Rubaiyyat". It is interesting to note, moreover, that the Rhadanite Jews from Persia

82 J McCabe, "The Splendour of Moorish Spain", p22

83 Gilberto Freyre, "The Masters and the Slaves" Cape Town, 29 September 1953

introduced Indian numerals, zero and the decimal system into the Arab world and Europe.[84] On Arab chemistry, we could sum up through Hogben: "The retort had already become an important instrument of medical research in Alexandria. In the hands of the Arabs, to whom we owe the word alcohol, it became the means of adding many new members to the known list of chemical species. The Moorish physicians made some advance towards classifying the nature of substances. They recognised solutions of acids, alkalis, or of salts, according to their effect on vegetables dyes, used in the preparation of fabrics ... The Arab chemists gave recipes for making the three chief mineral acids (nitric, sulphuric and hydrochloric) of modern commerce by distilling off the vapours formed when various salts are heated".[85] In medicine the Arabs showed the same freedom from hampering dogma as in the other branches. At this period the Jewish physicians were the most advanced and sought after. Medicine under the Church was as dark as it had been in ancient Egypt or China. The so-called school of Latin medicine at Salerno was chiefly remarkable in that it was secular. It was started by Constantine the African after Arabic texts of Greek medicine had been translated into Latin. When the University of Paris was founded, nearly all the books in the medical library were translations from the Arabic. By way of two parting shots at Moslem fanatics and chauvinists, we would like to place on record the great contribution made by the Arabs to the cultivation of the vine, which gave rise to the wine production for which Spain is justifiably renowned. And we would like, further, to record the incontrovertible historical fact that the rise of Mohammedan orthodoxy went hand in hand with the decline of the special culture that had been built up. For Christian fanatics or chauvinists we may add that with the ascendancy of Christianity in Spain came the end of tolerance and a renewed persecution of the Jews.

84 See E Meyerowitz, "The Sacred City of Akan", p205
85 L Hogben, "Science for the Citizen", p361

VI

But the lamp wasn't kept burning by only the Arabs and Jews. Outside the dark continent of Christian Europe there were flourishing cultures that were very much further on the road of civilisation. And we now turn to consider the lamps that were burning in China, India, the New World and Africa just prior to the mighty Renaissance. While the Christian scholastics in the monasteries, in between their intrigues, debaucheries and fleecing of the poor, were busily arguing over how many angels could dance on the point of a needle, and over what sort of excrement the angels emitted, there were very much higher stages of civilisation to be found in China, India, West Africa and the Americas – allegedly still waiting to be discovered by Vespucci and Columbus.

We cannot here go into these in any detail. A good deal of research work has been done into the brilliant achievements of the Aztecs, Mayas and Incas, who were the descendants of people who had migrated from Asia, probably across the landstrip where we now have the Behring Strait. They had achieved the urban revolution and, while they had not invented the plough, they had built up a magnificent city culture.

The Mayas, by 500 AD had independently, i.e., without influence from India, discovered the concept of zero. They all knew and cultivated the potato, tobacco and maize. In short, as is admitted even by a patriot like GC Vaillant, who speaks of the "lavish harvest of PanAmerican civilisation", the "European settlement of the Americas, for all its modern political significance, is just a late phase of the history of man on the American continent ... immigration from Asia produced the American Indian. Without his preliminary development of the resources of the continent it is dubious whether the European occupation would have succeeded as it did. The great Indian civilisations of the Aztecs and the Incas challenged the European imagination and opened a rich life for their military conquerors"[86].

In Africa, very little research work has been done into prehistory or history itself, because the Imperialist conquerors have always considered that life was little above the Neanderthal level before they arrived with bullets, Bibles, liquor, and the divine doctrine of the dignity of black labour. We cannot expect the full history of man on the African continent to be revealed until Imperialism has been eradicated. But nevertheless, work has been done and is going on even under the present restrictive conditions. And, outside of Egypt and the Sudan, we know most, at the present time, about the early history of the West Coast regions of Africa. It is not a great deal, but it is enough to prove beyond any question that during the period now under survey – the 1,000 years of darkness in Europe after the decline of Greece and Rome and the ascendancy of Christianity – there were African States very much further on the road of civilisation than any part of Europe outside Spain and the spheres of Arab-Jewish influence. There were, specifically, beyond the desert barrier of the Sahara, which had

86 GC Vaillant, "The Aztecs of Mexico", p23

limited, where it had not actually cut off, communication, the advanced cultures of the peoples of Akan, Benin, Dahomey and Nubia. Pioneering work was done in this field by Frobenius and, more latterly, a synthesis was attempted by WE Burghardt Du Bois. The former is popularly sneered at, more, one often suspects, for his emphasis than for his errors of alleged shortcomings of sociological method. The latter, Du Bois, is being persecuted in the US for his unAmerican activities, not the least of which is his indomitable championing (admittedly with more than a mere dash of sentimentality) of the Negro American and oppressed colonials everywhere.

Their works, however, are strongly recommended for study by those who will have to dig where they have merely been able to scratch. For further evidence of the truth of the assertions we have made and as proof that we are under – rather than overstating our case, we would recommend as a beginning the study of the following works by orthodox, "recognised" and eminently "respectable" anthropologists: *The Sacred City of Akan*, by Eva LR Meyerowitz; *The Dahomey*, by Melville J Herskovits; *The Golden Age of Western African Civilisation*, by REG Armattoe; and *The Fung Kingdom of Sennar* by OGS Crawford. From these and from the two abovementioned writers they will be able to learn of the connections between the peoples and cultures of Africa and those of Asia; they will be able to learn of "the importance of Akan culture for our misunderstanding of ancient Egyptian and Near East ritual and beliefs"[87]; they will learn of the way in which Islam destroyed the matrilineal institutions of the Akan in the Sudan phase; of the WasaAmenfi State, where the "trading of gold by the individual was regarded as disgraceful.

The person who did it was believed to sell his soul, a view held in many parts of Asante as well"[88]; they will learn of the gold mining operations and the gold weights, which may have come through the Sudan from India; they will learn of the beautiful sculptures and artefacts of Benin, of which Michel Leiris says, it "produced masterpieces in bronze and ivory in an age when Europe would have been in no case to supply Negro artists with models"[89], and which have had a somewhat astounding effect on modern art in Europe; they will learn of the art and social institutions of Dahomey, where the Dahomean "exhibits a capacity for hard work that is in striking contrast to the stereotype of the tropical Negro", and even his conqueror from Europe has to say, "The general aspect of the country confirms the general impression that the Dahomeans, for Negroes, (were) an industrious race, till demoralised by slave hunts and by long predatory wars"[90]; they will learn how the Bantu trekked southward to escape enslavement by the Arabs and "formed, found or transformed a multitude of kingdoms and cultures, and with our present knowledge we cannot say just how a given culture fits into the picture, whether as a civilisation, existing prior to the coming of the Bantu or as

87 E. Meyerowitz, Op. cit., p208
88 E. Meyerowitz, Op. cit., p177
89 Michel Leiris, "Race and Culture", pp34-35
90 MJ Herskovits, "Dahomey", Vol I, p30

a state, which the invaders transformed"[91]; and they will learn of the greatest kingdom of Central Africa, Monomotapa, whose remains are the presentday Zimbabwe Ruins, but which flourished well before the 10th century and possibly goes back many years BC. In short, even on the basis of the present scanty record, there is enough to show that, although isolated by the formation of the Sahara and the floating swamps of the Nile's *sudd*, mankind advanced in civilisation in Africa on the same general lines as elsewhere. Relative isolation affected both speed and content – as it always had done – but the wonder is that, considering all the circumstances, so very much was achieved in isolation.

Of Medieval India and China, we shall have to content ourselves with saying that they were in close touch with each other and, making the necessary allowances for distance and other circumstances, with the parts of the world under Arab influence. Science and medicine were advancing slowly, still impeded by religion and tradition, but there were noteworthy advances in mathematics, especially in indeterminate equations, arithmetical and algebraic notation and the decimal system and trigonometry. China had made remarkable advances in engineering, especially in the development of canals and the paddlewheel propulsion of boats. "The astronomical instruments of equatorial design, built *c.* 1279 under the supervision of KuoShouChing at Pei-ping (Peking) for Kublai Khan, represent perhaps the most advanced observational technique up to their time and anticipate Tycno Brahe in Europe by some 200 years"[92].

Under the Great Khan, the highways of trade and travel from Asia to Europe were kept open. The barriers caused by the feuds of Islam and Christianity were temporarily removed. The three most significant and fateful achievements of this period, however, were the invention of the compass, printing from movable type, and the use of gunpowder – not merely for crackers, but actually, from the 10th century, as a propulsive agent in war weapons. The compass and gunpowder were soon to prove the most revolutionary borrowing Europe had ever made from China, contributing immeasurably to the most significant advance in civilisation yet made in Europe and, at the same time, to the shackling of civilisation outside Europe as the bloodprice of Europe's advance. We refer, of course, to the coming of the Renaissance and the train of events leading to the Reformation and the bourgeois or capitalist revolution.

In short, we are now at the period when civilisation in Europe, through a combination of circumstances, which we shall summarise very briefly, was enabled to take a mighty leap forward and to outstrip all previous and existing cultures. It is the period not only of the ascendancy and predominance of civilisation in Europe but also of that advancement of man's mastery over the resources of nature which – for the first time in the long and tortuous history of civilisation – carries the potential of annihilating poverty and ignorance. of ushering in

91 WE Burghardt Du Bois, "The World and Africa", pp171-172
92 HJJ Winter, "Eastern Science", p35

an age of plenty. of eliminating all those environmental, economic and technological factors which have caused the unequal development of civilisation thus far.

VII

There are four main reasons for this advance in civilisation whereby mankind in Europe was to emerge from a thousand years of darkness and to bound ahead of all existing cultures. None of these has anything to do with a mystical psyche in persons of a particular colour or skull shape. The first reason is the organisation of those gigantic plundering raids organised by the Popes, the feudal kings and the feudal nobility, and falsely described as "Crusades" for "Christianising" the "Pagans". We have already seen enough of the relative levels in civilisation of the "Christianisers" and of the "Pagans" to appreciate the grim farcicality of this claim. The second reason for this tremendous advance of civilisation in Europe is that this sanctified robbery enriched not merely the Popes, kings, and nobles, but even more so the merchants who transported the plunderers and, under their arms, extended and enriched their own commercial interests at the expense of their Mohammedan rivals.

This is the main conversion that took place. Venice and Genoa now became the leading commercial cities and Italy developed into the first capitalist country in Europe and the world. God was God, but trade was the profit of God! The third reason for the advance in civilisation is that the enriched merchants who had fattened on the Crusades availed themselves of two Chinese inventions: the compass and gunpowder. With these two, the so-called voyages of "discovery" were undertaken, maybe patronised by kings and blessed by prelates, but financed by the merchants and manned by plundering adventurers.

Then followed the rape of the New World, "El Dorado" which brought unprecedented wealth back to Spain, Italy and England – with the conquistadors not only plundering the New World but also pirating one another and being knighted for it. The famous Bull of the Spanish Borgia Pope, Alexander VI, immediately after the "discovery" of America (1492-3), may virtually have given Spain and Portugal a mercantilist monopoly of the world market, but there were soon voices expressing the same desire as Francis I of France, to see "that clause in the will of Adam which divided the New World between Spain and Portugal". In the commercial rivalry with Spain, England finally became Protestant under Elizabeth, described at birth by the chagrined Pope, as a "bastard". And the fourth reason why civilisation in Europe took this mighty leap forward is that, with the new wealth of the burgesses, there grew the need to find new social and political forms less hampering to the phenomenal impetus now given to the productive or economic forces.

Hence, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, came the alliance of royalty with the burghers of the towns, which broke the might of the feudal nobility and challenged the might of the Vatican, and which led on to the development of monarchies based solely on nationality. It is by this means that modern European capitalist nations came into being. In the teeth of the increased heresy hunting of the Inquisition, handmaiden of Catholic feudalism, Protestantism developed as the ideological handmaiden of the new economic

and political nationalism. But it was not merely the schismatic Protestantism in the North that contributed ideologically to the break with the Roman Church and the bursting of the old social bonds and intellectual dictatorship. Far from it. Very far from it. Beginning mainly in the South, the cheerful spirit of free inquiry, of scepticism and agnosticism on the part of sections of the rising new class, was tremendously stimulated and inspired by their rediscovery of Greek philosophy and science, which had been preserved and developed mainly by the Arabs and Jews. It is upon this base that the renowned philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries built: Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, Gassendi, La Mettrie, Helvetius, D'Alembert and Diderot.

It is for these four main reasons, then, that there blossomed upon the soil of Europe that great revival of learning and enrichment of the human spirit known as the Renaissance. It was the end of the medieval concept of the universe as "a sigh between two everlasting smiles". It touched all classes and a new spirit of egalitarianism was discernible in the peasant revolts. In Italy there was a flowering of art such as the world had never seen, and a new literature arose. It was against, and not through, the Church that this flowering of culture took place. The Inquisition persecuted science as heresy: Copernicus had the discretion to die as his *De Revolutionibus* went to press; Galileo was imprisoned for saying what every schoolchild today knows, that the earth revolves around the sun; for declaring that blood passes through the lungs, Servetus was burned at the stake, "... though Calvinists may be glad to hear that Calvin would have preferred him to be beheaded"[93]. The Church at first opposed the new art and music as sensual and diabolical until, like Imperial Rome, it embraced to control what it could no longer fight openly. In Germany, France, Britain and Spain a new literature arose and a new science. The men who produced it and were produced by it were versatile intellectual giants like the mighty Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer and a whole galaxy in which some of the brightest stars were Tycho Brahe, Rabelais, Bacon, Boccaccio, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Ronsard, Michelangelo, EI Greco, Holbein, Thomas More, Petrarch, Dante, Camoëns, Harvey, Bruno, Jansen and Agricola.

The history of the English Bourgeois Revolution under the leadership of Olivier Cromwell, which led on to the Industrial Revolution, as also the history of both the American War of Independence and the Great French Revolution is ground with which most of us are familiar or can readily acquaint ourselves if we are serious students. Even more so does this apply to the history of Imperialism, which developed at a later stage of Capitalism. We shall not go into them. We shall limit ourselves to summing up the main contributions made to civilisation by the development of the Capitalist system of production and the rise of the democratic state. Under no circumstances should we allow fear of the atom bomb to lead us to an underestimation of the great achievements of modern science, i.e., science since the Renaissance. In the same sense as Newton implied when he said that if he could see

93 J Langdon-Davies, "Man and His Universe", p101

farther it was by standing on the shoulders of giants, modern science has taken the whole earth and universe into its ken and has created modern industry with its potential of freedom from poverty and from lack of shelter. It has investigated and led to the development of the world's resources; it has annihilated distance through the train, motorcar, telephone, wireless, and aeroplane; it has made unprecedented advances in medicine, hospitals, preventive medicine, the eradication of plagues and epidemics; it has laid the foundations of democracy and pioneered the democratisation of the arts and education.

Since the Renaissance there has been created for the first time in history a world literature and art forms that portray universal man. Through the development of the world market, production everywhere has taken on a cosmopolitan character; national self-sufficiency is a thing of the past and national seclusion, whether in material or intellectual production, is as difficult for South Africa as it is for the Llamas of Tibet. In this sense, the world has been unified. So much for the positive side of civilisation as it developed in Europe and, later, America.

But there is also a negative side to this process that has carried civilisation a stage further. It was achieved through plunder, exploitation and national aggression. British Capitalism grew rich upon piracy, colonial plunder and chattel slavery abroad, plus the wage-slavery of the working class at home. American capitalism, in the elegant words of Mr GC Vaillant, first "ploughed under" the American Indian to enrich "a soil which would otherwise never have produced the lavish harvest of PanAmerican civilisation"[94], and then followed Britain, except that it had chattel slavery at home until it was no longer economical. France, Germany, Holland, Belgium and the rest of Europe all followed a similar path. Wherever they extended their rapacious tentacles they destroyed people or cultures or both. The cotton goods of Manchester were bleached by the bones that lay upon the plains of India. The ancient arts and crafts of Asia and Africa were destroyed. Whatever was progressive in a colony, whatever made or might make for the development of production conflicting with the interest of CapitalismImperialism was arrested or exterminated. India had had an iron industry dating back to 2500 BC and could, as we mentioned earlier, produce the enormous specimens of worked iron found in Rewah. But, after British Imperialism had battened on to it for almost 200 years, HN Brailsford could still say in 1943, in the middle of a war allegedly to defend democracy: "So backward still is Indian industry that no plant exists capable of making an internal combustion engine of any kind"[95]. The missionaries of Christianity – once the poor relation of Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism – followed the guns of Imperialism and, where they could not convert or bribe, the darkest features of the indigenous religion were encouraged, and religious feuds fomented. Rum, arrack, opium, intertribal conflicts, were all used to conquer and enslave.

94 GC Vaillant, "The Aztecs of Mexico", p23
95 HN Brailsford, "Subject India", p11

VIII

In short, civilisation was taken a stage further in Europe and America on the backs not merely of the metropolitan working peoples but of the peoples of Asia, Africa and the rest of what we know as the colonial and semicolonial world. Indeed, peace has often been bought from the metropolitan working peoples with money wrung from the toil of the colonial peoples.

And so we have come to the present stage when there is still poverty, insecurity, exploitation and oppression, despite the fact that now, even without the application of atomic energy to industry, science has developed industrial potential to the stage where there could be a world of sufficiency and even of plenty.

Unfortunately, the very social forces that inaugurated this era have become swollen, dropsical and parasitic. It dare not even use all the wondrous achievements of its own technology, because it fears to undermine its whole economic and social structure. Hence the permanent social and political crisis of our time; hence the incessant wars and war hysteria; hence the myths about the inherent inferiority and backwardness of the Non-Europeans or Non-Whites who are in their "childhood" and cannot appreciate the real genius or psyche of "European" or "Western" or "White" civilisation. Hence the foetid atmosphere of decay in this selfstyled West; hence the keeping of Western Europe on the American dole; and we could do no better than to quote what is verily the modern counterpart of the Seneca letter written at the time of the decline of Rome. It is a passage from Brian Kirman's *This Matter of Mind*: "Parasitism produces, then, a morbid psychology in the ruling class. Unfortunately, the moral and cultural standard set by such a ruling class tends to serve as a model for the whole of society. The American cinema affords an example of the depths of degradation to which art can sink in such circumstances. Pornography, sadism, greed, and violence are the basis of 90% of the films produced in the United States. There arises, moreover, a whole class of secondary parasites who make no contribution to the wealth or culture of society but exist as flunkey and sycophants to do the bidding of the welltodo. Gamekeepers and deer park attendants are less in fashion today, but nightclub proprietors, owners of brothels and gaming houses, drug peddlers and a multitude of other dependents of the rich fulfil a similar role. The warped and perverted psychology of the ruling class is reflected in the art forms which it demands; these range from straightforward obscenity to escapism and obscurantism in its more sophisticated form"[96].

This is the diseased heart of the leadership of socalled "Western" and "Christian" civilisation. This is the leprous psyche of the people who declare that without them Africa and India and China would relapse into barbarism. This is the measuring rod of the people who declare that because the Russian workers and peasants took control out of the hands of the capitalists in 1918, they had thereby cut themselves off from "Western" or "European"

96 Brian H Kirman, "This Matter of Mind", p89

or “Christian” civilisation, and had become “Asiatic”, “barbarous” and “godless”. This is the same measuring rod which is used to declare that revived Japanese and Nazi militarism and Herrenvolk South Africa represent “civilisation”, while China is relapsing into “Asiatic barbarism” since it evicted the AngloAmerican “civilisation” of which Chiang KaiShek was the last bastion. This is the decadence of the bourgeois waste-landers whose epoch of civilisation opened with Leonardo da Vinci and produced a Goethe and a Beethoven and now ends with Johnnie Ray and classic comics; an epoch which began as a heresy at the end of the Dark Ages and now considers Charles Chaplin a dangerous heretic.

We have traced the long history of mankind from the first cell to the hominids and homo sapiens, from the creation under savagery of the first tools, which began the process of civilisation to the era when mankind has the potential of a complete freedom from want and insecurity. We have seen this mighty process of civilisation evolving for the greater proportion of time outside of Europe. And we ask of the oppressed and exploited peoples of the world, whose efforts to free themselves from the poisonous embrace of Herrenvolkism-Imperialism are branded as a return to barbarism, we ask: Who represents the return to barbarism, and who stands on the side of civilisation?

Which “civilisation” represents barbarism and which “barbarism” represents civilisation? In the eyes of the South African Herrenvolk, segregation or apartheid, curfews, locations and the South African laws may represent civilisation, and the liberation from them a relapse into barbarism. But we, together with the majority of mankind who have seen the hateful, degenerate cannibalism to which these defenders of “Western”, “European”, “Christian” civilisation have in fact brought civilisation in the West, we think otherwise.

Unity Movement History Series

The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest (Originally 1952, now as Unity Movement History Series)

Three Hundred Years (Originally 1952, now as Unity Movement History Series)

The Great French Revolution (Originally 1955, now as Unity Movement History Series, 1989)

Imperialism, Profit and Poverty (as New Unity Movement Study Series)

Majority Rule: Some Notes (earlier TLSA, 1991)

The Origin and Development of Segregation in South Africa (earlier TLSA 1951)

The Contribution of the Non European Peoples to World Civilisation (earlier TLSA 1953)

Limited hard copies are available from the New Unity Movement:

michaeltitus@vodamail.co.za or hampet@worldonline.co.za

Soft copies may be downloaded from the following websites:

www.apdusaviews.co.za

www.newunitymovement.org.za

Unity Movement History Series

ISBN No. : 978 - 1 - 928472 - 21 - 6

Published December 2019