

7. WHITHER THE LEFT AND THE POLITICAL MOVEMENT OF OUR TIME

What are the watchwords of our political movement during this period? For a clear answer to this question, we shall have to derive the motivating energy from the opening words of the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte - a historical essay written by Karl Marx.

"Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add; the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. Caussidi'ere for Danton, Louis Blanc for Robespierre, the *Montagne* of 1848 to 1851 for the *Montagne* of 1793 to 1795, the Nephew for the Uncle. In addition, the same caricature occurs in the circumstances attending the second edition of the eighteenth Brumaire. Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language".

The fundamental achievement of the French Revolution was the creation of economic and political conditions in France and elsewhere that made it impossible for the *ancien regime* to re-generate. To be sure, it made certain that the prospects of the *new life* would grow apace all the time on an all-round basis. In practice, it created fertile circumstances for the class of moneyed people to multiply in the cities together with the early foundries of the stock market. In the countryside, it put an end to the manorial system. Socially it established a liberation of human ideas opening up the possibilities of experimentation leading to the growth of modern towns, cities, universities and modern schooling systems. It ruthlessly removed the Bible as the fountain of knowledge, putting to the sword the notion of "the fear of God", and especially the dictum "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom". A new society was in the making through-

out France all the way to the Alps in the south, to the Elbe River in the east and to the southern border of Holland in the north. To the west, the English Channel segregated France from England. This was not all. A series of Bonapartist Republics were set up in the south, in the north and in the east that performed two functions. They acted as a political buffer between France and the reactionary regimes all around. They served to introduce the new ideas to the surrounding world of reaction. In England Cromwell had anticipated the French Revolution. The agency of the Ecclesiastes had ended. The sun had risen, bright and crystal on a new day that ushered in the agency of the bourgeoisie. History itself was now throwing its ultimate challenge to the toiling masses of the world and to the men and women of science and universal knowledge: *Hic Rhodus, hic Salta!* (*Here is the rose! Here the moment to dance*). In other words - show us the marvels of the new world! Demonstrate to us the particulars of your superiority. Such was the open challenge put before the new ideas of revolution by the very conditions themselves clothed in the robes of the ancient world. This is a particularly poignant assignment that is presented to the idea of the revolution. Why? The dominant features of the surrounding world of reaction reveal themselves day in and day out and especially in the present day as the credo of barbarism. Allow us to select three typical calls to the past in contemporary society.

A number of psychiatric patients have recently been transferred, against the feelings of Qendani Mahlangu, the former MEC for health in Gauteng province. These patients have been moved from facilities of the Life Esidimeni Hospital to facilities owned by unlicensed and ill-equipped NGOs. This process has had the effect of finding out how the "civilised society" of today is treating its most vulnerable members who are wholly dependent on the virtues of civilisation. In the arbitration hearings conducted by retired Justice Dikgang Moseneke, the following incredible facts were revealed.

In Gauteng Professor Malegapuru Makgoba has explained how 141 psychiatric patients have recently died both during transfer to and after they had been transferred to a number of NGOs in Gauteng who were required to take over these patients from the public system. Note that the transfer had to be effected for the purpose of *saving money* (around R320 per patient in the public system

to R112 per patient in the hands of the NGOs). The method of affecting the transfer was itself so brutal that 10 patients died in transit. In the hands of the NGOs the conditions of sustenance, particularly food and other forms of upkeep were so poor that they put paid to the lives of 131 patients. What kind of society is so incapable of taking care of the ill among its weakest members? Has modern society inaugurated conditions of primitive cruelty, not to animals (as the SPCA would have come up in defence) but rather to fellow humans themselves? The modern system of scientific care to the sick has placed all the current resources of money, knowledge and love into a system of universal medicine that should easily take care of all the ailments of the sick together with their comforts. Gone is the day when man is no more than a wolf to fellow human. In addition, how much more the situation of those who have been placed squarely and solely in the universal system of human caring? Moreover, it is astounding to recall that when the Democratic Party, more out of shame than out of honour, made a motion in their parliament that all the members should stand up and observe a minute of respect to the dead, the motion was ruthlessly rejected and vetoed by the African National Congress majority. Truly, the ANC majority has neither shame nor honour.

The second case is what has been happening in Vanderbyl Park. Here it has been revealed that a group of Nigerian drug dealers, as part of a malady that has infected the whole community there, have actually made themselves guilty of going out to attack the police. Of course, this is in defence of their precious loot. The first salvos in the attack opened up against a unit of six police officers. When these police officers showed some resistance and every intention of wanting to impound the drugs in the hands of these desperadoes, the drug dealers opened up a broader assault. The current problem has tendered to be that of police brutality. If anything this was typified by, what the police did to workers on a now notorious *copy* in Marikana in 2012. The situation is indeed brand new that the roles became reversed and the police came under a pre-emptive attack. The employment of unbridled violence in these kinds of situations is itself barbaric. But how much more is this the case when the violence is pre-emptively meted out by criminals against the justice system? And from the police, who will be the next target of the criminals- the magistracy, or the judges

or both? Truly, the barbarism of this development is taking things many notches lower in the scale of the uncivilised.

The third situation truly makes the mind boggle. At the A.B Xuma School in Soweto, human experience has been transferred to unimaginable depths. A 56-year-old security guard whose job it was to protect the young wards under his care apparently understood his function from the predatory point of view of a Jackal. When this sad and distasteful turn of things began, it has not been revealed. However, it is now known that the teachers at the school have been aware since February 2017 that this security guard has been carrying out a systematic sexual pillaging of the young children in the school. The victims range from grade R to grade 7, that is to say from ages 5 - 13. The average age of these victims would therefore be about 9 years. The man has actually established a bedstead in his guardroom from which he has been carrying out his primitive sexual assaults on the children. What kind of human type at the age of 56 would derive pleasure in the one-sided sexual encounters with a body of virtual babies with his victims now grown into a total of 87? We cannot help repeatedly ringing the refrain: What dastardly behaviour! What primitive conduct! What barbarism! What barbarism!! What barbarism!!! What the school authorities will do to the teachers will be a matter of record. What the justice system will do to the character who was only arrested on October 11 will again be a matter for the law courts. How society will treat these children and ensure that they have received appropriate medical and psychological care will again depend on the level of civilisation now extant in our society.

These things we are uncertain of at this time. However, the three cases we have cited above concerning 1. the psychiatric patients, 2. the drug dealers in Soweto and 3. the very young children at AB Xuma school - these are all indicative, not just of the frightening level of barbarism in our society they are in fact indicative of a far more troubling challenge before us all today. At the beginning of the 20th century, Leon Trotsky already observing the alarming degree to which society in Russia and in Europe had degenerated at that time was convinced that the challenge before humanity is stark: either socialism or barbarism! With the international socialist revolution now delayed by another century since that time, how far worse is the crisis of human civilisation? The general

sociological review covered in this paper is indicative of all agonies from which our society suffers. What we have done with the three examples we have finally cited in our concluding remarks is to put into clear relief all the problems whose subject matter is the broader review in this paper. We wish to conclude these observations by putting up the bold poser - *Kangakanani*. How much more shall the poor have to suffer and grovel all for the pleasure of the human ravens who are ruling our society?

In addition, why do we fall back on socialism as the final answer to current human decadence? We are comforted by the superior social values contained in the socialist system. Here the antitheses to the vulgarities and decay of old social systems have given way to a world in which science, knowledge and kindness take precedents in all the affairs of human kind. It is in the essence of our civilisation, for that matter in the very economic system where socialist principles show the dominant arch type ruled by "the milk of human kindness" as opposed to the demands of necessity. Need is driven not by want and hunger but by plenty and human satisfaction.

More on the driving forces towards socialism. We would like to review these drivers of social development by casting a glance at the monumental contribution made by IB Tabata. In his "*Awakening of a people*" he reviews the history of the struggle for liberation in South Africa throughout the first half of the twentieth century, that is to say from 1909 - 1950. He is convinced that this history is divided into two parts. The first part is dominated by the politics of Cape liberalism, early trade unionism (the ICU), and African nationalism. The second part consists of the history of a principled political development where the social struggle is maturing towards a revolutionary cataclysm. This refers to the situation after 1943. Now the conditions for the making of a successful revolution are building up towards their fulfilment. Throughout this period, IB Tabata is clear that the principal drivers of social change are the landless peasantry and the urban working class. It is the specific task of the intelligentsia to understand these social struggles and derive a theory for them. He calls his work "*The awakening of a people*". It is that theory which was elucidated by both IB Tabata and BM Kies in the insightful addresses to the Non-

European Unity Movement which these writers elucidated in *"The basis and Building of Unity"* in 1945. It is not lost to that theory and strategy that in the hands of liberalism and African nationalism the South African revolution is bound to be aborted and will not flower into revolution. Indeed that expectation was fulfilled in 1994 when the betrayal of the liberals and African nationalist resulted in a restatement of bourgeois revolution in *partibus*, so to say in the hands of imperialism. These are the conditions that cry aloud for the conversion of 1994 into a socialist revolution *and since the attainment of any revolution is dependent on the intellectual and political energy of the toiling masses, these new tasks of revolution will demand the re-awakening of the people of this land.* What are the intellectual and political tasks of the socialist revolution that must now be borne by the toiling masses? And what class forces need to stand in the forefront of the revolutionary movement?

In 1953, BM Kies published his scholarly work, *"The contribution of the Non-European Peoples to world civilisation"*. This work covers the civilising effort of humankind in the valley of the Nile, especially the Egyptian sector. It goes on to look at the civilising mission of *Homo sapiens* in Mesopotamia in the Near East, proceeding to the valley of the Indus on the Indian sub-continent. Going on to China, it comes back to Africa examining early civilisations on the Sudan, Mwana-Mutapa in the South, Dahomey and some other parts of west Africa onto the Magriep; crossing the Mediterranean onto the Iberian peninsula covering Arabic and Moorish centres of learning in Spain and Portugal. It entered Europe through the Alps proceeding down the valley of the Po into Italy covering the old Greek cities of Genoa, Venus and Florence. Access into the rest of Europe was made via the great movement's struggles against Catholicism of the Renaissance and the reformation. Gunpowder was an essential ingredient in the distraction of the feudal system and the erection of the modern cities, centres of commerce and citadels of learning. The cyclical movement that griped continental Europe where a cultural movement whose power and tempo would not be spent until the great revolutions of the 19th and early 20th centuries. By now, it was no longer possible to arrest and segregate from the Caribbean and the New World the forces of modern civilisation. In America, these storms linked up with the foundries of the specific culture of the Red Indian scholars among the Aztecs

and Incas. This worldwide review of human civilisation principally in the hands of the non- Europeans was specifically geared to dethrone the false notion of a western civilisation and the superior "western mind" that dwarfs all else. It was principally designed to show that civilisation is a common pool of experiences, knowledge and ideas from which all of humanity has derived an immeasurable degree of value in equal measure respective of whether the human types were white in colour or black. This was a stupendous task.

The collective intellectual contribution of human thought is contained in the scholarship of all the pupils of the political South. To this is added the mental energy of the pupils in the political North controlled as they are by imperialism. The critical factor is that the modern working class is the decisive force in the advance of history. The combined power of all these efforts moves ineluctably into a socialist resolution of the affairs of humanity. If the Russian revolutionaries of the early 20th century were convinced that such a resolution could only be *socialism* or *barbarism*, the Cuban revolutionaries in the middle of the 20th century however had no doubt that the energy of the toiling classes would end in no less a social conclusion than *socialism* or *Death!* Moreover, for this we shall need nothing less than the re-awakening of all the people of the world.

WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL LANDS, UNITE!

Eastern Cape branches
New Unity Movement

23 October 2017 mpg