

Social Suicide—the last stage of Capitalism, an apocalyptic death wish

Two days after finishing Shakespeare's Henry VI trilogy, I read James Pogue's fascinating piece, *The Myth of White Genocide—An unfinished civil war inspires a global delusion* (Harper's, March 2019). I think Pogue's investigation has much to teach us about our contemporary human world, yet, in another frame, it's all writ clear enough in Shakespeare--only the historical particulars are new. Unfortunately the particulars involve things like ecologic decimation, global warming, weapons of mass destruction, automation, the growing risk of the Third World War, worldwide social collapse, failed states, mass starvation, epidemics and mass migration. We're up against a lot. Today we've replaced the earlier European delusions of chivalry, honor and seizing royal reign with the shibboleth of apocalyptic doom and the devaluation of human life in general. When you get down to that depth, I think racialization adds up to ruling elites' recognition of their vulnerability as dominators. The evils of racism, though historically tenacious and vicious in the extreme, are but one measure of the stupidity of homo sapiens seeking domination. But understand its interstices we must.

First off, as we know, in South Africa racialization was the clever work of the British in their subjugation of the indigenous (African) peoples (as they did too in the Americas, India, the Middle East). Understanding the subjugation and resistance of indigenous peoples, Nelson Mandela told us in his US visit shortly after his release, is key to social transformation even in the U.S. Students of South African history know that the 1948 imposition of an apartheid regime by the Boer's Nationalist Party was actually the culmination of British imposed step by step pass code legalized segregation (of the indigenous people). Racialization of class conflict here in the US derived mainly from the Virginia elites' (the Founding Father's) dependence on slavery. But after the overthrow of Reconstruction had assured pauperization of the freedmen, the systematic recruitment of Blacks to work as replacement workers (scabs) against strikes in the North (where unions were segregated) assured that racism would become a major force in the US working class going forward. Today, the anti-immigrant hysteria sweeping some population sectors in both Europe and the US is likewise a legacy of both colonialism and its evolution into imperialism, World Wars and globalization. Racialization has been a staple of that system, but it is almost always derived from earlier conquests that predate capitalism, imposed by cynical calculation to incite tribalism (and national chauvinism). It flows right up to the contemporary irony of the Zionist State and its supporters accusing its critics of anti-Semitism when the Zionists themselves are the purveyor of anti-Semitic tribalism against the indigenous Palestinian people who are, after all, the actual Semites in the Middle East.

Once any struggle for rights, power, property etc. has been racialized it becomes difficult to de-racialize it other than by a new social order and contract to wipe the slate clean, removing all structures and key individuals of the power elites irrespective of race who have promoted those divisions. Without such class targeting, strata in between the insecure masses and the elites will continue to seek protection in blocking with the elites. Racialization guarantees the perpetuation of that attachment for most—irrespective of whether people are consciously or ideologically racist—because they are institutionally bound to systemic racism.

The ANC successfully established and effected the Truth and Reconciliation efforts; yet they failed to rescue SA by refusing to expropriate (including bank nationalization) the wealth, property and influence of Apartheid leaders and institutions. Similarly, in every recent crisis the world over, refinancing loans from the IMF and accepting their conditions—which has amounted to national servitude, humiliation and decimation of public services--seemed to the trapped government leaders a better choice than economic collapse. And yet in hindsight, forestalling the crisis to another day makes the social crisis and ensuing chaos expand over time.

The level at which the Alex Joneses and Marie Le Pens and so forth make any sense to people is an extremely superficial and limbic one. And yet for millions these arguments always “make sense” even though the superficiality annuls human intellect, analytical capacity and an historical assessment. Why? Maybe our educational systems are too weak, oversimplifying and avoiding dialectical nuance; maybe group/tribal paranoia is just who we are as we overestimate our social intelligence. I think falling into the trap is a preconscious response to fear, insecurity and growing anxiety—a retrenching tribal response. This becomes a self-reinforcing feedback loop that is as suicidal in its essence as an opioid addiction because the insecurity spawned by elites’ attack on peoples’ rights and wellbeing drives human responses that are centered in the instinctual autonomic nervous system; and that annuls analytical clarity, and promotes the otherness syndrome.

To counteract that human reactivity, educational institutions and their leaders have to be forced to recognize that technological prowess and technical innovation are not a useful measure of species adaptability (i.e. social evolution), nor general intelligence. The academic focus on training individuals to fit into an ideological system, its institutions and a labor pool which all promote insecurity and require allegiance to a death wish is terrifying. Meanwhile, we all know that when people work and fight together they learn trust and the power of social collaboration to overcome most obstacles including fear. Unfortunately, socialization is a two sided coin. As in the Hitler era, the anti-social apocalyptic Right also learns this lesson even when they are duping millions into cheering and defending courses of action that lead to mass murder, terror, wars, and ultimately social suicidal. Nonetheless, Martin Luther King’s legacy can’t be erased by his murder, nor can Chelsea Manning’s courage by her imprisonment, nor Joe Hill’s tale, nor Mandela and the ANC’s and the list is obviously endless. We carry on still, but recognize the importance of exposing and fighting to restructure all our major death-wish defending institutions.

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