

BEHIND THE TIMES

Michael Burgess

There comes a time, in the course of any magnificent dream, when the dreamer can no longer afford to sleep. Left to themselves, lies become reality as easily as truth; and, if our dream was about love, human dignity, and sense of place, it has unravelled badly as we slept.

We are told, on awakening, that our dream was an illusion; that some kinds of love are abominations, that some children must starve, that some life is not worth preserving.

We are told, waking to this most profitable of all possible worlds, that there is only enough for those who already have too much, that power is more virtuous than compassion, and that nobility is the handmaiden of extinction.

We are told by the priests and kings that our dream was an idleness for fools; that war is the only peace, lust is more honest than love, envy is the root of progress, and greed is the only prayer that's ever answered.

We are told that God hates, that the gentle Carpenter from Galilee has risen to crucify innocents, that races have need of cleansing, that we can have our world and eat it too.

The priests and kings tell us our dream is dead but, speaking as a peasant, that is for us to say. As a poet once cautioned those announcing the death of jazz: "You got to be careful of those premature autopsies."

What the magicians do not mention is the new magic rising from the ashes of a malignant myth.

The earth is not a cache of commodities; it is a living being whose forests breathe once each day. It does not belong to us, we belong to it. It lends us our bodies and feeds us.

The creation is a continuum whose only events are relationships. We are no more separate from the furthest galaxy than we are from one another. We are neither islands, you and I, nor enemies. Your success is not my failure; your pain can never be my joy.

There is, in our new magic, no more of thee and me. E pluribus unum is a fundamental truth. We are not many, we are one.

We are Soweto and Birmingham, Auschwitz and Wounded Knee. We starve in Somalia, endure in Sarajevo, face down tanks in Beijing. We are the Dalai Lama, and the murdered monks of Tibet.

We are Father Romero, Desmond Tutu, Bob Marley, and Leonard Peltier. We are Mother Theresa, Chief Joseph, and Albert Einstein. We are Ghandi and Malcolm X, Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

We are the dreamers, and we are awake.

POLITICALLY CORRECT

We are speaking of global warming, Chilling of the human heart, Supply side economics, starvation side humanity, Buying elections, selling politicians. Soon we'll be issued dark glasses and white canes, and we'll be much better off for it.

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Sandra L. Love

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How? to believe that higher pay could abolish the essence of work's misery-- the impersonal serfdom! How? to be talked into thinking that increased alienation within the machine-like workings of a new society, could transform the shame of slavery into a virtual how? to have a price for for which one ceases to be an individual but becomes a unit!

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