

From the editor

Prof. Das Steyn 2018

To understand the present, it is necessary to understand the past. Unfortunately, we often also deal with foul news and the distortion of the past. No wonder George Orwell warned that, "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past." Therefore, planners must check their facts, as incorrect information can send the future in a wrong direction.¹ It should also be remembered that information/events are viewed through ideological glasses. History is thus judged by value glasses/goggles. People with different values will thus judge history differently. This is where planners should cool-mindedly confront ideological statements with facts. One can have the most beautiful ideological plans, but they must be tested on the reality (facts). However, we live in an age where some political role players no longer consider facts, but rather the political support that can be obtained from populist talks (see third period below).

J.H. van den Berg (1977) distinguishes two intellectual revolutions that divide Western thought into three periods. The first occurred shortly before 1700 and the second in approximately 1900.

- The first era is that before 1700, characterized by belief in God. It was generally accepted that all power was granted by God, with theocracy as the mode of government (Van den Berg, 1977: 150).
- The second lasted from approximately 1700 to 1900 and was characterized by mankind practising the natural sciences rationally and desiring to practise the humanities in the same way. During this period, parliamentary democracy was considered the ideal form of government.
- In the third, supremacy goes to politics, an era in which everything is discussed and all is relative. Van den Berg

¹ In an article "Planning in the face of power", in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 48(1): pp. 67-80, Forester, J. shows that (information) may contain different types of power for planners, but they are often confronted by false information (misinformation).

(1977: 157) calls this form of government “psythocracy” from the Greek word “*psythos*” which, according to him, means “babbling over”. In other words, the rule of babblers in a time of democratization in which the opinion of fellow human beings is the measure of all things. In scientific terms, this coincides with post-modernism.

Religion and, more specifically, Christianity played a leading role in the development of the building blocks of Western civilization. They introduced the rules of society, the rule of law as well as the emphasis on individual freedom with associated responsibility, reason as well as capitalism and participatory government. Unfortunately, usefulness as well as socialism in the past century highlighted new philosophical approaches to problems. Although European civilization was highly successful after the Second World War and the student uprisings of 1968/1969, it was questioned by cultural Marxism² and placed in the accused’s bench.

It is, therefore, necessary to understand who Karl Marx is and what his understanding of history entails. He characterizes history as negative; each historical period is considered a process of alienation, in which people are classified as victims or oppressors through their dependency relationships. What happens to you is someone else’s fault and the state power must now be used to correct it. In this era of babblers, even the truth is not a factor, because the truth is what the majority decides³ and the struggle is now to address the heart and reason of the babblers.

The slogan in planning that solves all problems is ‘social justice’, but people

2 “The standard definition of cultural Marxism is that, unlike classical Marxism, it is an ideology preoccupied with the transformation of Western culture generally rather than the replacement of Capitalism with Communism. Cultural Marxists are dedicated to gender equality through the abolition of male and female traditional roles in society; to sexual equality through the downgrading of heterosexuality and the celebration of polymorphous sexual relations; to the replacement of Christian morals with politically correct morals.” (Duchesne, R. 2017. *Faustian man in a multicultural age*. London, Arktos).

3 If the majority decides that $1 + 1 = 3$, then it is three.

do not realise that justice is an ethical question. The origin is usually from value concepts or religious views or philosophical approaches to the life and community where it plays off. It has to do with the relationship between individuals as well as the relationship with the community, also that between different communities and world at large. It is not a value-free concept, but a Marxist view of justice. Now one must be removed from the injustices of the past in order to show that one is in line with the present. The more distance one can do, shows that one is solid. Whoever is the furthest removed from that oppressor, and the least look alike speaks the truth!

Righteousness means that all people are equal before the law, and should be treated as such. The law should not be overtaken to promote multiculturalism and to impede the individual by selective acquittal and legislation to enforce so-called equality. In planning, populist statements must be politically confronted by politicians. Good intentions or the redistribution of wealth will not work in South Africa to create job opportunities and to solve the poverty issue. In all those countries where the recipe was followed, this led to greater poverty and deterioration. Nobel laureate Friedrich von Hayek warns in his book *The road to serfdom* that freedom means that the individual has both the opportunity and the burden (responsibility) of choice, because every action has consequences – freedom and responsibility are inextricably linked.

From the fact that people are very different it follows that, if we treat them equally, the result must be inequality in their actual position, and that the only way to place them in an equal position would be to treat them differently. Equality before the law and material equality are therefore not only different but are in conflict with each other; and we can achieve either one or the other, but not both at the same time (Friedrich August von Hayek).

