

**J. POSADAS**

**THE ROLE OF THE PLAYS OF ARISTOPHANES IN  
THE PROGRESS OF HUMANITY**

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**INTRODUCTION**

**ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRUCTURE OF HUMAN  
CIVILISATION**

J.POSADAS

9<sup>th</sup> July 1978

The development of the structure of human civilisation implies that there are other forms of civilisations. If there is human civilisation, then there must be others. There is an animal form of it and, in other parts of the world, there is another. But we talk of this one which is human. That of the animals has less importance perhaps, even though it has some importance. We have to measure nature on the basis of what we know it today, but everything points to life in the cosmos. The Soviets already accept this, and also the North Americans. Some now propose that there is life, and even superior to that on earth, and that it is millions of years old. This is very important in order to see where we are going and what the objective of human civilisation might be.

Marx proposed the objective of the class struggle, and then he left the way open. Thus we can now see the way. It is not resolved in practice, because capitalism is still there and it is going to make the atomic war. But already in people's mind there is the idea that capitalism is not a necessity. Even the way of arguing of the big capitalists is not "Marx versus us". All they do is to defend what they have. Before, the big capitalists created the university to defend the capitalist system. Now they study, and people go to study who have to defend the capitalist system, and these very people reject the capitalist system. This is because the development of intelligence is against the system of private property, against capitalism, against war, and it is also against bureaucracy.

The intelligence that is developing is not, as it was, for the acquisition of knowledge to resolve the technological problems, but to solve the social problems. The most elevated intelligence is in the social problems. The other sort of intelligence only allows you to solve this or that question. Some children are pianists, but the children of today have the intelligence to solve the social problems, and it is this that gives the real measure of intelligence, which can then be extended afterwards, wherever needed, even to music if necessary. Therefore we are saying that the problem is that one measures intelligence in relation to the social problems on which all other problems depend, including the economy. This is so in spite of the fact that, originally, it was the economy which created the social problems. Later, it was society that created the relations of the economy, and it will be so particularly in Communism. I am preparing a work on this, 'The structure and construction of human civilisation'. These are parts and chapters that I will write afterwards.

The function of Greek theatre is very beautiful. It was the differentiation of a civilisation, a society, which developed culture through the theatre. At that time, one of the main and fundamental bases of culture was formed through theatre. In part, they reduced it to problems imposed by the ruling class, but they created schools, and the school of Socrates. They all made schools to reason. They were against the system of private property, and that's why they were all liquidated.

J.POSADAS

9<sup>th</sup> July 1978

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**ABOUT THE PLAY 'PEACE', BY  
ARISTOPHANES**

10.08.78

The audience who went to see 'Peace' by Aristophanes in the theatre of Epidaurus did not just go to see Aristophanes and the Ancient Greece. They went to see how the Ancient Greece can be used for the transformation of Modern Greece. The director, the artists and the audience, through the

Ancient Greece and Aristophanes, have integrated themselves in order to reach the sentiments of justice which were limited in the epoch of Aristophanes, i.e. the sentiments of a necessity of history, the elimination of all forms of property, arrogance and war.

A great number of children were present, and they participated in the work and no one heard them crying, weeping or wanting to go, not even one felt bored or annoyed. There were a great number of children, and it showed the parents' resolution to incorporate their children into this activity, even though it was not an organised militant activity. It was an activity of intellectual preparation to understand and interpret where humanity is, where it is going, and therefore to be able to intervene.

There were also a great number of young people, women, young couples, who, with the rest of the audience, were totally integrated with the artists. There was applause every three or four minutes – less loud – and every twenty or thirty minutes the applause was more general, more than half the audience applauded. Every five minutes or so, there was some well sustained applause of at least about a third of the audience, and sometimes it was up to half. This indicates that the audience was really taking the artists to their hearts, to make them feel their warmth, encouraging them to make a living representation, and they communicated the following to the actors, 'We accept you, we agree, and we are living this work of art today'.

In this way, as much the director and the artists as the public, through Aristophanes, were uniting the Ancient Greece with today's problems, uniting him to present day life. They did it so that it would have an impact and impel the struggle for transformation to facilitate the justice of history, not by creating courts of justice but through the class struggle. One has to have the highest degree of love to appreciate the purity with which the young people have intervened there, and their concern to make the artists and the director feel that 'We want to transform society, we want to participate, and we want these works'. It was not only that the actors acted well, they did a good job, but the applause for the actors was directed, at the same time, to sustain the significance of the work politically.

The sense of the work 'Peace' is that we do not want war. At the time, war was the common thing; to live without it, one died. The meaning of the dialogue where they were saying 'down with war', and the denunciation of the war traders, the denunciation of the oligarchies, is directed to support the conclusion 'down with capitalism which makes the wars.' The applause was directed at the artists to make them feel this inclination of the audience.

To analyse, it is necessary to consider the behaviour of the audience today and the usefulness of such works. There are many parts in the scenes where the main actor addresses them and was applauded. The audience did not applaud him because he was speaking to them, but because the main actor, through the director's guidance, was trying to have an echo and a welcome in a political demonstration against the capitalist system using the priest, the chief, the king and the soldier who appeared in the play. He wanted to make the audience grasp that they were feeling the applause. The play was lively, very much so, in the way they danced – they danced very well – and the way they sang – they sang very well, passionately. They felt themselves with the audience making progressive work for humanity. It is one of the most beautiful things one can see, with the struggles of the proletariat and the parties.

In the final part, the sustained applause was for the director, to encourage him to continue with this type of work, to continue Aristophanes like this, and to let the director know not to make Greek tragedies that remain in the past, but to make comedies that are useful today. Not all Greek comedies or tragedies are useful today, but some are – like this work.

At the end, when the people were coming down from the theatre, there were many of them, thousands. The young people felt a sense of having contributed to impel Greek history and indeed they did. The tourist who went to see the play contributed too, by his presence and his applause, to the class struggle in Greece. It is a support to the proletariat and the workers parties, and to the trade unions, for social transformations. It also indicates a change in the tourist's attitude, whether it was the Greek tourists or the foreigners who were present in great numbers. In fact 40% were not Greek, they were foreigners, there were many German, French and Italian cars, and many Japanese youth came by bus.

It is a contribution made by the youth, the adults and the children by means of tourism. They felt that they formed an integral part of the class struggle in Greece. They do not form part of the daily struggle, but they are a great part because they stimulate and encourage the actors and, in this way, transcend the Greeks who were there, and also those who were not. The world's youth and the world's tourists do not go to amuse themselves or to forget the problems of their own country and their own life, but they come to see how culture, knowledge and science develop, and they feel that knowledge, culture and science mean social transformations, therefore they incorporated themselves. The tourists' participation is really beautiful. All the interventions of two comrades age three and six have moved me. I have spoken with them at different times and they were completely engrossed in

the play. When I asked the six-year-old one what he thought of the play, he said to me, 'Can't we make plays like this where we come from?' One must be aware of the smallest comrade's participation; she was hardly three and should have been asleep. She had been in the sea which tired her a great deal. She had walked a lot, didn't sleep in the afternoon, she had eaten badly because she had skipped either lunch or supper. She sustained the intellectual concern to see the play because she saw it as part of our work and participation in history. We need to understand what it means when a three-year-old child can be so concerned to see the different characters, to intervene as she did with good judgment. The sole fact that this small comrade could live the play, and was only three, is part of our contribution to the history of humanity. Besides, her capacity to see the significance of the play when she gave very good opinions is one of the most important aspects for our activity and our organisation.

I reiterate how I was moved by these small comrades' concern. I was most affected by the younger one because she is only three, but the little six year old boy shared the same feelings about the play as the younger comrade, and he lived everything he saw passionately.

The youngest comrade stayed until the end, without sleeping or eating, and when she was really sleepy tried to do so three times, but kept waking up and could not keep her eyes closed. Even though she really needed to sleep, she kept giving her opinion on how to improve the presentation of the play, not presenting the artists as bad or fanciful, believing that was the best thing to do, because she could not yet have a historic sense of this play.

We should give some weight to the importance of the participation of these small comrades. The play had a great effect on the smaller comrade who was three, not because she liked it, but because she already had the intellectual formation and lived all these problems passionately. This is a conclusion from this experience which is our incorporation in the education of humanity. A three-year-old child can put up with both sleepiness and hunger to see a play that she sees as linked with human relations. This shows the intellectual capacity and the organisation of the highest feelings.

It is essential to live this and to feel that this is our contribution to the history of humanity – not only in the history of the class struggle, but in the history of humanity. One must see and understand that a child, even though only 6 years of age, can feel the problems passionately and accompany his parents very well.

The quality of Aristophanes' play is that it shows the type of criticisms being raised at the time of Aristophanes – this play is not the only critical one he wrote – but also the director's capacity to adapt the play to today. Even though the play of Aristophanes was so original, a whole series of additions were made which adapted it very well to today. He respected the structure of ancient Greece but, on the other hand, took the Greeks in their historic significance – that of before and now. Therefore the director's attitude is very good, of having adapted the play to today, for today's objectives, the objective of the struggle against the capitalist system, by means of a criticism on behalf of those who wanted peace – even though it was between the Spartans and the Athenians. It is also important because it shows the situation in Greece.

The work is not very important. There are many that are more significant, more direct, among this type linked to the problems of today. The importance of this play is to how they were already discussing these same problems 2,500 years ago, and how an author like Aristophanes, who came from a layer of the oligarchy, had written against war. True, war did perturb the oligarchy and a sector which he represented. He had written not so much against this war, but he wrote and impelled things against all wars. He has given social, scientific and political conceptions against war and against the organisation of the powers which make war.

The Greek Communists are saying that if Aristophanes wrote like this, it was because the sector he represented, the oligarchy, was perturbed by war. This is true, but he has written not so much against this war but has given arguments to educate people against war. Only the oligarchy could write, who else could write? The people could not create writers; these could not arise from the base of the people. There was no political or social life, and there were not the economic conditions to do this. The writer had to arise from the ruling class or the petty bourgeoisie attached or linked to the ruling class.

When a writer makes a play, it is the same, the significance is the same. Therefore the significance of this work is more profound than the play in itself. It was not just against war, it was a method of education which belonged to a process of scientific-cultural development. This play has to be looked at this way, and this is why Aristophanes is useful in the struggle against capitalism. He has written a play that the oligarchy could not use because it was against them. It is the same thing as Balzac, the French novelist, the greatest French writer who wrote an analysis of bourgeois society in the name of the monarchy. He was a monarchist and, to criticise

and defend the monarchy, he criticised the bourgeois society, and did it well.

Everything that he wrote the monarchy could not use, because the analyses, the characterisation and the rejection that he made of the bourgeoisie could not be used by the monarchy. The objective function of the writer was that, whilst wanting to defend the monarchy, the analysis he made was against capitalism and did not defend it. The historic proof is this: the monarchy was destroyed and soon capitalism will be.

It is important to see the function of an author or playwright according to the usefulness of what he writes. It is true one must see what the origin is, but also what is written and to whom the written work is useful. Because capitalism and private property cannot always strictly determine what should be done, because there is the influence of the economic and social relations, the scientific development, and there are people arising from the midst of the ruling class who write against it. One should not wait for this in order to decide to do things and to work. But this is so and can be used in order to impel the development of history.

When Aristophanes' plays, such as 'Peace, were written 2,500 years ago, it is because there were already discussions about war in Ancient Greece, not on this war, but on war in general. Also, before this, there had been discussions against war, so as to be in agreement among them and to distribute equally. Aristophanes play is not to defend the smaller oligarch and his small tribe. No. He expresses an idea which goes much further than concrete action. A representative of the bourgeoisie does not do this consciously, neither did Balzac who when he was a realist wrote against the bourgeoisie and made a very accurate description of it so much so that Marx recommended that one should read Balzac. Balzac was reactionary. He defended the king against the republic. But when he wrote, he made a description of the bourgeoisie just as it was. He did not do this to show just how the bourgeois were, but only to defend the king. He had to do this in his function as an author.

It is different in the case of someone who is a conscious representative of politics or of war. All the principles in Aristophanes' play are not to defend a caste, but a class – because he defended the interest of a sector of a class, but still the classes were not constituted in an organic structure. This developed much more afterwards with the Romans, and later still with feudalism. It is in capitalism that the classes had a specific clarity about them; there the classes are clearly expressed. In other societies however, distinct sectors of classes appear but are quite intermixed. It was not the

case for the proletariat or the exploiting classes, but within the ruling classes themselves there were a series of divergences which, at times, led to ruptures.

To measure the function of an author either historically or concretely, one must measure the effect his writing produces, whether as a drama or literature. To defend the monarchy, Balzac gave a description of the bourgeoisie, thieving, incapable, impotent, and just described the way it was. He did it well. In doing this, he did not succeed in making people defend the monarchy! On the contrary, the people were against the monarchy, and against the bourgeoisie. This is the function of the writer, even if he did not plan it this way. The more conscious a writer is the better. But between an author and a playwright there is little difference. In essence it is the same thing. Both are concerned with the problems of society, of human relations. One does it in the form of a novel and the other in the form of a play. At one time the novel had more importance than the play. The novel has or had a more extensive diffusion than the play, or it has been so at times. But in Aristophanes' epoch the novel did not exist, and theatrical works were fundamental. Homer, for example, is little known in Greece, and he did not write what Aristophanes did. Homer carried out another task. On the other hand, the work of Aristophanes allowed the people's understanding to be raised by making them see the necessity to be against war and he raised their understanding of the differentiation of interests. Even if this was done in an average way, or superficially, he voiced a criticism which removed the mystery of gods or the representatives of gods. He gave priority to the earth, even though he held onto the heavens, it was earth that decided.

It was part of the scientific thought of that society. The Greek Communists are against this because they have to admit that they have been incapable of writing anything. They have never written anything, not just in Greece, but in any part of the world. As they have low confidence in Socialism, the Communist parties and the Communist movement under the leadership of Stalin and for a long period of history of more than thirty years, proceeded with the automatic conception of development – that they would develop endlessly, give ideas and take everything into their hands – all without them having any notion of what was going to happen, and without any idea of the process. This is why they did not see the role of Trotsky: they had different interests against Trotsky's policy.

Therefore one has to take the function of the writer, not as a conscious representative directly from the process of history, but what he represents. In this epoch the writer is different compared to Aristophanes' epoch.



There is the Soviet Union, and it is clear that Marxism is the instrument, the method of interpretation, of analysis, of capacity, of knowing and foreseeing. For example, Aristophanes did not foresee, and practically no Greek has done so, only in a much limited way. Those who have foreseen most are the dialecticians, for example Democritus. He did not foresee socially, but he foresaw the course of the dialectical process in nature, which extends to society. The writer has to be understood as writing about one aspect of human activity, or a playwright trying to intervene by expressing what he believes.

When one of these writers defends the interests of a layer of a ruling strata, if he poses principles that damage the sector he represents (in order to defend himself), he no longer represents just that sector. He writes as a function of the progress of history. Michelangelo created whilst the Pope stood over him. The Pope said, 'Do this like this', and Michelangelo answered, 'Yes, yes...' And then the Pope said, 'But this one could not be God!' Michelangelo said, 'Ah! I thought it was'. As for people like the Virgin Mary, she was not much of a virgin but very much a Mary.

In the works of Aristophanes the influence of progress is expressed, and that of intelligence. He wrote in defence of a group or caste, or sector, or city, or state or tribe-state, but nevertheless he wrote using his intelligence. The politicians of today do this too, but they lie, whilst the positions of Aristophanes were no lie whatever. They were against war, saying: we are against war, we have to unite, and we have to reject all other things, those over there who organise war, out with them! This is what is being said in 'Peace'. The knowledge of that time was not the same as today. The society was not structured; it needed another 2,500 years before this could be done. So, one has to see that we look at the authors in history for their objective function, and the objective function of such a play is certainly not in favour of bourgeois thought. The proof is that Aristophanes is taken up by this director of a theatre, to incorporate him in the struggle of today, for social transformations in Greece. If it was not like this, the play would be of no use.

For a play to have an echo and be accepted by the audience with such a paucity of resources - indeed most of the time the spectator simply had to imagine as the scenery was very limited - means that there was some parallel going on between the author and the director, and the artists and the public. They all looked for the same thing. If it were not so the public would have felt differently and demanded a better performance, décor and scenery. But here everyone could imagine the scene and its background, and in the relation between the play and the public all interpreted what they

wanted, that is to say the rejection of capitalism. And through the criticism and rejection of war, they rejected the war profiteers, the bourgeoisie and the powerful. When a play can achieve this level of identification between the play and the public, it is because the situation is ripe for change. Had it been a small theatre of fifty people or so, it would not be so. But when 12,000 people went there of whom 40% were tourists, it is because they want changes and the maturity for change exists, consciously, numerically and materially.

The importance of theatre does not lie in the opulence of the scenery but in the meaning of the play and the quality of the artists. This does not require a great artist, but one capable of communicating what the author wants, and what the public wants. This allows the affirmation of the will for transformations, and the public feels that the play contributes to organising the decision for changes.

The play of Aristophanes attracted all these people because it was not a work in defence of one oligarchy against another. It is a play against wars, those who make wars and the war profiteers. This is why there were 12,000 people, and 70% of them were young people with a very large number of children (several hundreds of them) who participated in this meeting. They integrated themselves in the play. The fact that so many people came from so far – there were 100 buses of 70 passengers each – to see the play shows this.

Many tourists did not just come to see the play. They came to participate and, through it, to impel the progress of society. They went to demonstrate that they came to see Greece, not to see the antiquity, not to feed on the thoughts and the memory of the antiquity, but to educate and support themselves in the progress of history, to transform the country where they come from. They did not come to see what the Ancient Greece was like, but how to intervene today – because now things are not as before and, if you want to know how to intervene today, you look at the Soviet Union. The brainless ‘dissidents’ hold meetings which attracts a hundred people or forty or fifteen, and half of them are old Trotskyist who are old but in fact have nothing to do with Trotskyist. On the other hand, see these 12,000 people who came (!) and the applause was solid every five, eight or fifteen minutes. They were applauding to communicate with the author, with the actors, and this is what communication with history is. These people have seen the Greece of earlier times, of today and tomorrow, in this way. This is because they can see the Soviet Union, which lends them spectacles, and so they had no problems in seeing well even by night. They saw well because it was their intention to see, and when more than half the people

applauded every 5, 8 or 15 minutes, it was a vanguard which communicated and sought to impel. They did not seek to pressure the artists, but to impel them and it so happened that the artists did bring the play to life. They worked as if it was all true, with passion. The people put themselves inside the artists, and the artists in the people, and all of them inside Aristophanes, with Marx, Engels, Lenin and the Soviet Union. This is what history is. History makes use of the ancient Greece, not to see the course they travelled or the nature of Greece, but to see the real nature of Greece, that is, thought which constructs better than nature itself, because it coordinates in a way nature could not. Thought combines earth, air, ground, seas, struggles and flowers. Man combines and orders and creates things superior to nature itself.

This is why the sustained applause was to impel the artists and say to them, 'You are doing well, it is good, we are with you', and this established between the public and the artists an integration of the public, the artists, the director, Aristophanes and the struggle against capitalism. Aristophanes did not envisage all this, but history makes use of Aristophanes against the capitalist system. This shows how the public, the tourists, took advantage of the play of Aristophanes to impel and intervene in the class struggle in Greece. This is why Aristophanes, Karl Marx, Karl Marx, Greece, tourism and theatre all make a unity against capitalism. The tourist intervened to impel the class struggle in Greece. This activity of the public has a very great significance, because it shows that it has tried to participate, and this also shows what the tourist wants. This is not the tourist who comes for egotistical or individual impressions, or to receive education from the system of private property. The tourists came to see how to intervene and collaborate in the struggle in Greece. They didn't come to see the mountains, the countryside, Aristotle, Socrates or Plato, but to see the Socialist Greece. They united the Greek past with the Greek present, and those who did it best of all are Marx, the Soviet Union, Lenin and Trotsky. They are the ones who made this sort of integration. This is why the artists were so moved, and so it appeared that what they were doing was real.

The artists felt they were representing things of today, and not Aristophanes, which was an excuse for them to make an anti-capitalist play. This is why there was that integration between the public, the artists and the director. They were applauded 8 times when they finished acting, and this was not a salute to the actors because they had performed well, but because they had made a good representation of the play, and this is what

united the public, the artists, the director, Aristophanes and the Soviet Union. This is very significant.

This has shown that tourism here and there in the world manages to find where to intervene, as in the case of this theatre. Such works are better than Greek tragedies. There is no more tragedy in humanity. Today the tragedy – which is no longer a tragedy – is of capitalism and also of the bureaucracy. Today, humanity lives with the confidence that it can solve all the problems. Taken individually, various individuals or families cannot resolve them today, but the humanity can solve them all.

The thought of humanity is elevating, seeking the liberty to think, to solve all that has not yet been solved, and in thirty years everything will be solved – not merely establishing Socialism, but solving all the contradictions of life: to kill to live, for instance, having to oppress so to speak, to drown others in order to survive. On the contrary, one will elevate human relations through the development of human intelligence and of human relations, which are going to achieve all that the economy could not do today.

At the end of the play, when all the people were pouring down the steps, they gave the impression of being an immense force which was coming down to organise to take power, or it was a form of taking power and a way to stimulate the artists and all the Greek public by telling them, ‘We are with you, and you are with us’. It is the identification in the same objective of progress of humanity. This is why this was not only a play but, through it, the public assisted, integrated itself in the struggle of each country to intervene and to impel the progress of society. And this is why, at the end, the public came down the steps, but very slowly because they wanted to stay longer. They understood very well the meaning of this play, and this is why the artists had done very well when, in the front row water and rice was thrown about. It was not a theatrical performance, it was real.

The people went out content, happy and communicative. The children were jumping and shouting and people were commenting and still applauding. The public had been part of the artists, and the artists a part of the public. Such a symbiosis could take place, because the two parties wanted the same thing and the play was the instrument that united them. This is the function of literature, of culture and theatre. Theatre forms part of culture. It is a form of literature but superior to literature.

All the people united and each round of applause was intent on stimulating objective political conclusions. The Ancient Greeks are no longer with us, but they are useful today. Greece is useful today, not in the sense of

recording the past as it was, the date of such and such an object or where it was found – although all this is interesting and one needs to know such things to be able to gain the knowledge of how things developed. But the historic conclusion is: What function does Greece play today? Otherwise the discussion has no value.

One has to understand that intelligence has imposed itself in any case in every phase of history, even if in a retarded or contained way, even if crushed or defeated at times, because intelligence represented the necessity for economic, social and scientific progress. But it was limited in the form in which it could appear. There can be delays in history because of the lack of scientific development, or because there is not yet the spheres of development in which intelligence can operate. But when one finds authors who have made theatre plays 2,500 years ago that still serve for today, it is because the motive for writing it 2,500 years ago is identical to the one for playing it today. It is not identical in the context or the structure of the epochs, which are different because the balance of power since then has changed. Now there is progress, but there is the same intention and sentiment that intelligence must decide, and not pressure or property, or the army or the war, or the power or the arms.

In the Greek epoch this intention could not prevail, because the conditions did not exist and only a partial criticism existed aimed at representing group interests that expressed universal ones, and the history of literature is full of this. Authors who did not think that they were making of universal importance turned out to have universal consequences. This is why it is important to see today that both the public and the artists gave to this play a historic significance that they didn't before. The public was integrated in the play! This explains the emotion of the artists. There were times when they were really moved, because they saw an audience that clapped, not because they (the artists) worked well but because, between them and the public, there was a similar identity. This is not the reaction of the artist just satisfied with his work, but the identification of thought. This is what the artist wanted, and this is what the public wanted – and the director directed the play for this purpose.

The scenes, the movement, the singing as a whole, did not correspond to a past epoch but to today, and a red flag was used in certain scenes, whilst in the earlier period there were no red flags – not even to warn against danger.

It would have been most beautiful to have made a film of this, when the public came down still applauding. All this was beautiful. There you see the triumph of Socialism in Greece. Forming part of this very elevated

process of identification between the public, the artists, the play and the director, there were the two comrade children, a three-year-old and a six-year-old, who participated. In particular the little comrade of three who was both hungry and sleepy but did not sleep and saw the whole play. Moreover, she gave judgements on it, not criticisms. When she did not like something – for example, she did not like the puppet that represented ‘peace’, and said, ‘No, they should have done this in another way’, and she asked why they had shown peace in such a way. All this is judgement because, in her head, she lived through the play and felt impacted by the public.

In addition, for the three-year-old comrade, this is great an education because she did not go and see the play as recreation or distraction, but as a relation to culture and life through the theatre. She saw in the theatre a representation, a development of what we want and must achieve. Hence she condemned the bad and applauded the good. She condemned the bad when she saw that it did harm, that it was egotistic and meant war. On the other hand, she approved the good she saw, supporting the peasants against war and for peace, and thus developed her own identification with the theatre because then the theatre is part of life. It is an instrument of life – very limited – but, in some circumstances, very elevated.

When a child of three receives the influence of the public, she has an immense maturity. These are the children of today. There were hundreds of children there who all looked at the play as she did. You could not hear any child crying or wanting to relieve themselves. There was nothing of the sort. All the physiological function was contained in the head. The mind dominated all the physiological functioning.

When a child of three can go on without sleeping, without asking for food or drink, asking for nothing, one must see that this forms part of this stage of history and of our function. Our function is in part represented in this child of three and also in the other child of six.

It is important to discuss the significance of this play and how the artists took advantage of tourism to perform this work today, to influence the tourists and Greece, and through Greece, the world.

J.POSADAS

10<sup>th</sup> August 1978

J. POSADAS

## ABOUT THE PLAY 'WEALTH' BY ARISTOPHANES

10.09.78

One has to see this work in the context of what it meant and what function it played in its epoch. It is not to be compared with the present. To have incorporated into the play Yankee songs and dances is not correct, because this hides the epoch in which the play was written. People accept this incorporation because they are against the Yankees. But all the same, it obscures it.

The director of such a play must have, on the other hand, the ability to represent the play as it was in its own time, and to show that it dealt with a historic problem which continues to exist today. This is where the capacity of the director has to be applied. It is not easy, but it is the quality a director must have. Otherwise, the play no longer gives a vision of its contemporary function. On the contrary, they used the play for today and, if it is for today, it does not serve because today the theatre is superior. But in its time, that is to say when the capacity of thought was forming, this play served. The director's talent should have been applied in showing the function of Aristophanes.

Aristophanes came from the ruling class and made works of criticism against the ruling class, and it weakened it. He used culture and knowledge against the ruling class; he laughed at the gods and made them earthly beings. And, at the time, that was a revolution! The rejection of the gods was common before Aristophanes but the social programming of this rejection of the gods had not been done in this way before. This came at the time of the philosophers and so the play has to be seen in this light. People look at all this in its context today, but it is the people who are made to do it, whilst it should be the function of the artist. This gives the play its value, as we do ourselves when we take the past and make it serve the present, in a complete and very eloquent manner. In so doing, the author and the director unify the past as far back as 2,500 years and the present. In this way they show how, from the development of social life, of communities, of the concentration of people, the problems of the organisation of thought and social criticism arose. It also shows that the problem of social criticism did not only arise in capitalism, but also in societies which had begun to organise themselves in state forms. This constituted the culture of people at the time.

I believe that one has to analyse the conduct of the public. One can make a particular judgement of the work, of the author, of the significance of the play and the way of presenting it, the presentation of the artists, the director and all this. Indeed, it used to be important to do all this but, at the epoch of social transformations, the most important is the conduct of the public. And the conduct of the public showed that it understood very well what was being raised. There were youths there, wearing hardly any clothes and with rucksacks on their backs – and these go to the theatre! Capitalism tells us every day, ‘There is the problem of drug addicts, of the decomposition of youth...’ But, in the theatre that night, there were more than 1000 youths, none of them drugged and all without money. That is to say, they were trying to feel integrated and to participate in life. Many of them came with their guitars because the theatre of Aristophanes stimulated them. But above all, what stimulated them was being in a 2,500 year old Greek theatre, developing and integrating themselves into culture. This is why they came. A large audience came to see this play and from the Workers states too. This means that Lenin and Aristophanes are united. Lenin has given people the clear consciousness of what is to be done, and Aristophanes tells us that 2,500 years ago such problems already existed, and through his play, he gave people the confidence to look at these problems. It means that organised criticism already existed at that time. It also proves that it had such a social force that no one could make them disappear. On the other hand, a large quantity of very good writings from Egypt disappeared. The church destroyed numerous scientific analyses – not social ones, because they did not yet exist. It is the church that liquidated this.

I believe that one has to see such plays with this in mind. There were about 8,000 people in the theatre, half of whom were not Greeks. About thirty coaches came, and many cars, many of which were French and German in the majority. It is necessary, therefore, to see that there was such an audience, keen to communicate with the artists and the director because these were playing a function of organisers of the public. And it was dear to go there, and one had to have the time to go. The public was communicating to the artists its enthusiasm, a stimulus for the artists to work in a vivid manner and for them to live and feel what they were to play: not to mime but to live the play; not to make a theatrical play but a social representation of the struggles, which communicates itself from the stage to the public and spreads. This shows how the unequal and combined development, and how the history of ancient past, serves the contemporary period because it raises the same problems. And this is so in spite of having gone through distinct phases, periods and stages that were different in the form of production, but on the basis of the same system, the same regime



of property, the same system of production. It goes to show that changes have occurred up to a point where the system of production and the regime of property no longer serve. Science, technology, intelligence develop more than military power which oppresses the people. And transformations are necessary. Here there is the unity between the past and the present. Those who sought the equality and justice which could not exist in the time of Aristophanes, elaborated principles and stimulated the thought which was afterwards concentrated in Marx and in an immense number of writers who came before Marx, revolutionaries who came before Marx. And in this, all the thought for progress in history was unified with the struggle for Socialism. It is very simple to understand this now but it was not simple 2,500 years ago, because there were no points of reference to imagine such things.

At the same time, these works serve to accompany our understanding of the dynamic process, whilst the Communist and Socialist parties do not see a perspective or a possibility of progress through the revolutionary struggle. But Aristophanes saw it. And this 'Karamelo' (Karamanlis) who sent one of his ministers to Moscow has seen it too. However the Communists and the Socialists have not seen it. The Communist party should have made a little booklet – a special series – dedicated to the theatre of Epidaurus (this theatre is 150 kms from Athens), to unify him to the progress of culture, showing that culture will only have the bases to develop itself, to complete itself and to create new superior leaps in Socialism. Culture has developed in an unequal and combined manner because it has been determined by the class struggle and it was the ruling class that determined the course of culture. And yet the ruling class was incapable of impeding the development of judgements, writings, plays and songs all against oppression, inequality, criticising injustice and the lack of dignity; it could not prevent them from being transcendent. These were contributions that could only find their resolution in the struggle of the classes organised by the proletariat. The class struggle of the old proletariat came within the scope of a society which was leading to the birth of a new ruling class, but it was the same system of production and the same property regime as the one we know.

Greece was held back because of the economic process of history, but not because of its scientific process. It was not the process of scientific maturing that crushed Greece; it was the inability of the ruling class to develop the economy, and its military power in front of its neighbours and the others. This was not due to some element of predestination in history or any course of history that could have been foreseen and, therefore, prepared for. It's a series of combined factors that appeared which decided

this. This is why world capitalism has hidden Greece, it has buried it. It has no interest in it because it was no good to capitalism for production, and capitalism needed its own philosophers, playwrights, singers, those who sing the praises of capitalist production. But in turn, the slave-based form of production, then the feudal and the capitalist form of production, created the class struggle, the antagonistic classes up to the point of the creation of the proletariat. This means that there was no predestination at all in the fact that Greece had to disappear. The revolution reanimates it; it is the revolutionary struggles that elevated culture, scientific knowledge and preoccupation, which meant the search for Greece and not for capitalism! Capitalism took no interest in Greece because it did not serve capitalist production in any way. On the contrary, the existence of Greece was going against the regime of private property. The elevated thought of the Greeks developed reason and intelligence, and both are against the regime of private property. This is why capitalism abandoned Greece and let it be buried. And whilst capitalism buried Greece, it erected great monuments and statues of the kings and presidents of the countries who you can safely say were, at best, a bunch of idiots manipulated by capitalism. This is why they made monuments there, because this represents private property and the regime of private property. They have statues everywhere dedicated to maintain the continuation of private property, and this is why they left Greece in the distant past. It is the revolution which revives Greece and which is trying to unify Greece with Socialism, with Ancient Greece and with Socialism. It would be a beautiful play that would deal with Ancient Greece, all the thinkers, the philosophers and the scientists who prepared the thought of Marx, a play that would deal with Marx too, with the Workers states and Lenin, with Lenin and the resolution on the nationalisation of the land in which he states that “This has not been superseded by history”. This is the programme of humanity, of the Greeks, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, and the Bolsheviks and of humanity as a whole.

These works of theatre, like this one of Aristophanes, and the theatre of Epidaurus are aimed at tourists. These come in their thousands. They seek to see the past in order to see a Socialist present.

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