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### **THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL SOCIALISM** (The strategic pillar upon which the conference of the left should not ignore)

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The term Spiritual Socialism is claimed to be about 300 years old. However, scientific academic research has proved that this ideology is as old as the Christian faith. The seeds and roots thereof even stretch to the period of the Hamurabi codes of Ethics hundreds of years BC. Christ himself taught his disciples a lot on taking care of the social structures. His initial mission is taken from Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and has anointed me to preach the Gospel of the Good news to the poor,.....and declare the year of freedom to all who are oppressed." Christ fought against the hypocrisy of law makers and encouraged *Good Samaritan* principles. Upon the establishment of the Church, the communal way of living and sharing of wealth was actually a command as stated in Acts chapters 2, 5, and 6. "They had all in common and shared all their wealth amongst themselves."

Fast Forward to the Victorian era Spiritual Socialists like John Frederick Maurice played a prominent role in the Christian Social movement in Britain. He founded cooperative societies, critiqued the capitalist system, and competed with militant secular leftists in the wake of 1848 revolutions. In 1852 he wrote, "My business is not to build, but to dig, to show that economics and politics must have a ground beneath themselves" He was criticized by other captured leaders of his time calling him names like a Social Gospel preacher.

**ON CSR and LAND REFORM:** The Original sin, and the mother of all Social ills for Black people

Maurice took initiatives to show that the Church was and has been on a social mission to the poor long before scientific socialism was a thing to pursue. During the Barons of the 19<sup>th</sup> century where the workers or the working class were exploited, the Christian spiritual / religious socialists came up and **conscientized the working class about Cooperate Social Responsibility**. This was as a result of Spiritual Socialism consciousness.

Jose' Arevalo Bermejo the first president of Guatemala (1945-1951) was anchored in Spiritual Socialism. His presidency was eclipsed by his successor, Jacobo Arbenz Guzman who introduced vigorous sweeping Land Reform that started the Latin American cold war. It was the CIA that covertly derailed his second term into office.

Land is where the umbilical chord of revolution gets buried. There is no social development without land.

## **BIRTHING A NEW 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

Spiritual socialists do not repeat or compete with political formations. They set the spiritual social consciousness thus laying the ground work and disappear from the scene, leaving social formations to do their work of liberating society and building socialists programs. Once the programs reach saturation point, we begin to see an emergence of liberators becoming bourgeois and capitalists agendas taking centre stage. And that creates a vacuum and a need to birth a new consciousness from Spiritual Socialism that would revive and restore Scientific and other forms of socialism.

The formation of the ANC was possible from the influence of a spiritio-socialism concept called Ethiopianism which was carved out of Psalm 68:31. That concept worked and built the pillars of the struggle. It was **preached from the pulpits**. It was prayed about by congregants. It was **sung in the hymns** such as *Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrika* and *Lizalise Idinga lakho Tixo Nkosi yenyanyiso*. Govan Mbeki in his works, *The Struggle for liberation in SA* wrote, "The hymns in the churches, were the same songs sung in the political gatherings. The same leadership in the political meetings were the same clergy in the churches"

The fusion of the working class in political formations with the church congregants was a demonstration of a well matured social consciousness.

The formation of Black Consciousness was birthed out of Liberation Theology which was anchored from Exodus 4, **Let my People Go** chant. This gave birth to the 1976 Soweto Student Revolution, which took 14 years to see the defeat of apartheid. The pulpits breathed revolutionary sermons of how people can liberate themselves from chains of oppression.

Since 1994, the church had taken a back seat, relaxed, handed everything to the politicians. It had relegated itself to the periphery of NDR agenda. It had done its job and left the social movements to carry their work.

A new situation has developed, where we have seen the flourishing of capitalism, and beginning to suppress socialist democratic agenda. This needs a birthing of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century consciousness. We may have to transformed the Black Consciousness of early 1970s to a relevant 21<sup>st</sup> century one. As we have seen in history, in South Africa and abroad, THERE IS A CLARION CALL FOR CHURCH LEADERS TO COME ON THE PLATFORM OF "THE CONVENTION OF THE LEFT" and play their part in BIRTHING and MIDWIFING a new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Consciousness for generations to come.

### **The CONFERENCE of the Left pregnant task**

The 2026 Conference of the Left must be understood to its primary purpose. The word conference comes from the word, 'Confer'. We are conferring and must come out of conferring with productive Dialogue, Debates, Discussions and Deliberations that produce a Practical Pact of solutions that are doable.

If we leave on Sunday 31st May with the impression that this conference was good, Then we should know that this conference was a failure. If we go back home to our hurting communities with another common rhetoric of planning to meet again next year for another similar, then this conference was a capital waste of time.

We must go home with an attitude of Leftist militancy, we must go home pregnant with practical ideas that would revolutionize us first and bring a new trajectory of 21<sup>st</sup> century

socialism. A socialist approach that would speak directly to the man in the street, students, churches, trade unions and all political formations.

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