

The cult of populism and opinion

The immorality and pragmatism that St. Augustine proved caused the fall of Rome, plagues us again today, as Elisabeth Hellenbroich demonstrates.

The following is edited from Mrs. Hellenbroich's presentation to the semi-annual conference of the Schiller Institute and International Caucus of Labor Committees on Sept. 5. She is an executive member of the ICLC in Germany.

Sixteen hundred years ago, St. Augustine wrote his *City of God*, in which he examined the causes that led to the collapse of the Roman Empire. It was moral decay, the praise of the false, pagan gods, but, in particular, the arrogance of power and the negation of a divine natural law, which transformed the Roman state into a lawless robber band, St. Augustine concluded in his book. St. Augustine showed that there are two types of human societies: one which orients toward the Idea of the Good, the eternal City of God, and one which only lives in the ephemeral finiteness and thus opens the door for evil. Said Augustine: "The one state consists of people who want to live according to the flesh, the other according to people who want to live according to the spirit. . . . Animosity, jealousy, rage, are the work of the flesh; but the chief and root of all these evils is pride, which rules in the devil even without flesh. . . . For the human being has become similar to the devil, not because he is of flesh which comes from the devil, but because he has lived according to himself, thus according to man, therefore is he similar."

We are faced today with a global moral crisis which goes far beyond what St. Augustine described as the evil of his time 1,600 years ago. The tragedies which we see unfolding, the historical injustice which made Lyndon LaRouche a prisoner of a profoundly unjust system, these were made possible because of the cult of populism and opinion.

Populism is a technique of lying. It has its roots in the philosophy of Aristotle, the Sophists, and in the philosophy of the empiricists such as Locke and Adam Smith. The essence of this philosophy is "that opinion is knowledge," and that there is no universal truth. Man, according to the philosophy of Locke, Hobbes, and Smith, is a selfish egoist, who is driven by survivalist instincts, the instinct to seek pleasure and avoid pain. These empiricists deny that the human mind has an "innate" faculty for creating universal ideas; they deny that "the laws of the universe are inscribed in the heart of man, and that man's inclination to form an idea of God is within man's nature," as St. Paul had said. For them thinking is just sense perception, memory, experience, and informa-

tion. These empiricists deny that there is an active principle of love, that Pauline principle of *agapē*, the love to perfect oneself by developing another, which guides creativity. If anything moves man, as Adam Smith develops it in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, it is the Fabian sense of pity, of "sympathy," which man feels toward the suffering of the other. Man acts, not because he wants to do good, but because he imagines that the same evil could befall him as well, says Smith. There is no passion, there is only an administrative kind of "ethical conduct," whereby man suppresses his worst impulses, such as envy and lust, and whereby man tries to be benevolent, approving or not approving.

LaRouche, in his chapter on "Microcosm and Macrocosm" in his essay "Science as History," picks out of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* that quote which he sees as the essence of immorality: "The administration of the great system of the universe . . ." Smith writes, "[and] . . . the care of the universal happiness of all rational and sensible beings, is the business of God and not of man. To man is allotted a much humbler department, but one much more suitable to the weakness of his powers and to the narrowness of his comprehension: the care of his own happiness, of that of his family, his friends, his country. . . . But though we are . . . endowed with a very strong desire of those ends, it has been entrusted to the slow and uncertain determinations of our reason to find the proper means of bringing them about. Nature has directed us to the greater part of these by original and immediate instincts. Hunger, thirst, the passion which unites the two sexes, the love of pleasure and dread of pain, prompts us to apply those means for their own sakes, and without their consideration of their tendency to those beneficent ends which the great Director of nature intended to produce them."

Adam Smith's immoral dogma, that man should not care for the universe, finds its modern expression in today's cult of populism and opinion. It is what David Riesman, in his ideological portrait about American society called *The Lonely Crowd*, identified with the "other-directed man."

There are three types of society and man that Riesman analyzes, and three types of population models: The tradition-directed, the inner-directed, and the other-directed man. The tradition-directed type belongs to the primitive agrarian society, where man's identity is rather group- and family-



On his way to govern his "island," Sancho Panza receives Don Quixote's benediction. "The key in statecraft is justice and love," the knight-errant admonishes his squire. Engraving by Gustave Doré (1863).

oriented. The inner-directed man, the Renaissance man, is the one who masters nature and production by means of inventions, and who—guided by inner, universal values—optimistically thinks that there is no problem on earth for which man could not find a creative solution.

The other-directed man, the modern man, gets his norms of behavior, not from universal ideals, but from the peer group and the opinion of the peer group. He is not concerned with morality, but with popularity and acceptance. Be loved and liked and have fame, is what counts. It is the corporate manager, the gray bureaucrat, who cannot judge or think through for himself whether something is good or bad without consulting friends, without finding out "what the line is," without being tutored by the TV. He is constantly on the ready to feel out what others think and say. And everything he does, his taste in fashion, his taste in food, his taste in sex, is other-directed. Therefore, there is nothing more important to him than banal gossip, sex, and food, not because he really enjoys it, but because "sex . . . provides a kind of defense against the threat of total apathy. This is the reason," says Riesman, "why so much excitement is channeled into sex by the other-directed person. He looks to it for reassurance that he is alive." Now there are, as Riesman shows, very definite techniques—the technique of soap operas, the cult of sincerity displayed in the TV talk shows, the opinion polls—which

serve to enforce other-directedness. In Classical Greece and in Rome, Riesman writes, "defamation in politics, ostracism, when introduced in the fifth century [into Greece], became a formidable weapon of public opinion, wielded capriciously as a means of ensuring conformity of taste and of 'cutting down to size' those statesmen, playwrights and orators of markedly superior ability. . . . In addition, the common people produced a numerous brood of informers, who were constantly accusing the better and most influential men in the states, with a view to subjecting them to the envy of the multitude."

Man, the microcosm in relation to the best of all possible worlds

Populism is the negation of that which is the unique quality of man: "Man's nature being a little under the angels, and including the spiritual as well as his sensuous nature, concentrates in himself the universe, and this is the reason why the Classics called man a microcosm or a little universe," Nicolaus of Cusa writes in *On Learned Ignorance*. LaRouche in "History as Science" refers to Cusa's notion by emphasizing that man's uniqueness is that he is created as in the "image of God" (*imago Dei*) with the capacity to participate in God's creation (*capax Dei*). This concept of man, as LaRouche says, "defines the human agency of universal, ontologically transfinite change, the human agency which generates hypothesis and higher hypothesis, to be situated entirely within the sovereign individual creative personality. This creative person, if so developed, is the *microcosm*; successful change in upward development of mankind's self-reproductive, self-developing relationship to the universe as a whole, is the unperfected reflection of the corresponding *macrocosm*." So, only if man identifies with the principle of change as the essence of true knowledge, by making his own discoveries physically efficient for the survival of his species, that man acts as a true microcosm. And it is that "transcendental" quality of man's mind, as Plato says in the *Philebus*, to discover "That everything consists out of a One and a many, which contains limitedness and unlimitedness. And that we have to look in everything for the one, the one idea," which makes man transcend his own finiteness so as to become "an actual infinity."

Justice and the principle of self-government

How, then, do we make man conscious of his uniqueness? How do we transform him in such a way that he becomes a moral personality?

In Plato's dialogue *The Republic*, this question is hotly debated between Socrates and some of the young Athenian intellectuals. The issue is: What is justice? And "Can we create a just state?" "Well," Thrasymachos says, "this is very clear. Judging from our experience, justice is nothing but the right of the stronger. Those who rule give the criteria for justice. Thus, in dictatorships, the dictators say what is just;

in democracy, the crowd dictates what is just.” This thesis corresponds to that of the famous Nazi judge Carl Schmitt, whose principle — “justice is not in the state, but the state is just” — became the basis of Nazi law. In reference to Thrasymachos, Glaucon adds in *The Republic*: “If it were not for the ethical codes of society to suppress our greed, we would ‘by nature’ all commit injustice and fulfill our secret wishes.”

Then Socrates asks, is this really true, or is there a self-subsisting positive, something which we can define as divine natural law, which ought to be the basis of statecraft? Socrates emphasizes that in order to understand what the principle of justice is, one has to create a reciprocal relationship between man’s soul and the state. A man who knows how to govern himself, as the dialogue shows, is able to govern himself, i.e., his identity lies in the use of his creative power, his reason, with which he governs his emotions and orders his thinking. The more man concentrates on how to “generate” ideas, that is, the more he concentrates on perfecting his capability to understand the laws of the universe, the more he understands with the help of his hypothesis-creating faculty what the difference is between the “ephemeral” — the “opinion” — and the “invariant” — “eternal” ideas — the more he will be able to understand that which “causes” the “becoming”: the “Idea of the Good,” which is the cause for the intelligible, as well as the sensible things. If this concept, the “Idea of the Good” as the absolute which generates the becoming, is grasped, then it is upon this idea that a just state should be founded. And only the philosopher-king, who identifies with the Idea of the Good, who becomes a true lawgiver by discovering new scientific laws which change society for the Good — only he should rule as a living image of justice.

Don Quixote

There is a metaphorical example given by Renaissance poetry of what Plato means by the principle of self-governing and justice. It is Cervantes’ famous Socratic dialogue *Don Quixote*. The theme of this poetic dialogue is: How can Spain — at that time very backward and full of corruption and illiteracy — become truly self-governing? In this Socratic dialogue we see two personalities going through a process of becoming self-conscious about themselves. On the one side Don Quixote, who is a fool, “ignorant” in the Pauline, Erasmian, and Cusan sense of learned ignorance, who “knows” that he does not know. He is a moral man, who courageously fights for the idea of the Good and wants to liberate Spain from superstition and backwardness. But it happens that he, a big admirer of chivalric novels, sometimes confuses illusion with reality, and, in that way, gets involved in all kinds of funny adventures and confrontations.

“Don Quixoterie” is the attempt to find a difference between illusion and reality, to make the imagination the source of new ideas. On the other side, there is Sancho Panza, the peasant. He is an original genius, with a very



Governor Sancho is denied his “right” to eat all the food put in front of him, and a crisis erupts. Engraving by Gustave Doré (1863).

developed common sense, no formal education, but with the naiveté that geniuses have. With a tremendous thirst for knowledge, he accompanies Don Quixote in his many adventures, a voyage through the Spain of that time and its social problems.

At one point, Sancho has the opportunity to become governor of an island. Without being pedantic, he tries to be a true representative of natural law and to apply all that he has learned during the voyage and that Don Quixote has taught him about statecraft, before he takes that responsibility. Thus, Don Quixote had told him: “If you take your wife with you, teach her and make her better. Don’t interpret the laws arbitrarily. This is what ignorants and scholastics do. Exert justice toward the rich and poor. Don’t be blinded by self-love, nor become corrupt. The key in statecraft is justice and love. . . . Cut your nails, wash and don’t run around like a bum, because this indicates a sloppy character. Don’t artificially speak, and don’t burp in front of everybody.” So Sancho does good work as governor. He is not fixated on details and paragraphs, but tries to be just. There is one thing, however: Sancho loves food, and a crisis erupts around this question. Sancho is given all the fantastic meals on plates. But the minute they are put in front of him, with the odor wafting into his nose, the minute he wants to eat, these meals are pulled away, and, instead, he gets some sour apples, because

American populism preys on desperate farmers

American populism is spreading with particular virulence among enraged American farmers, preying on the belief that fate (often mislabeled "God") will take care of everything, and that local actions, not organizing to change national policy, are what is needed to defeat their political oppressors. Contrary to a well-cultivated mythology, it is not a grass-roots phenomenon, but is remote-controlled by social engineers trained in British psychological warfare methods of manipulation.

Recently, 150 citizens of North Dakota were interviewed by teams from the Stanford Research Institute, the California-based arm of Anglo-American efforts to propagate a New Age "let it be" paradigm shift. The result was a profile of the American farmer, showing that farmers believe the economy is in crisis, but that solutions are beyond their control. The Stanford brainwashers then set about developing strategies to make farmers believe that something was being done for them at the local level, and prepare them to be led like lambs to the slaughter.

One leading carrier of the populist virus is traveling con artist Roy Schwasinger, who duped Jerry and Betty Herdon, William Bivens, and at least seven other Texas farmers into filing do-it-yourself lawsuits and liens against assorted bankers, lawyers, Farm Credit System officials, and judges. As a result of falling for Schwasinger's populist pitch, on July 28, all 10 farmers and Schwasinger himself were indicted on 13 counts of obstruction of justice by an Amarillo, Texas grand jury. If convicted, they face up to 10 years in prison.

The middle-aged, portly, crew-cut Schwasinger sings

his siren song to those who rightly believe that the United States should return to constitutional government, but who ignorantly swallow the line that this means a return to pre-Revolutionary America. According to the bill of goods sold by the populist slicksters, the farmer was a free man back in the days when he didn't have government to "oppress" him. (The illogic of a return to constitutional rule modeled on the state of affairs before the Constitution does not faze the populists, nor, sadly, their victims.)

A variant of this line is that federal entities such as the Farm Credit System have no legal authority to operate in individual states, and that instead of being citizens of the United States, we are citizens of the "republic" of Nebraska or Iowa. This dovetails, not accidentally, with the arguments of the Confederate rebellion during 1861-65, when the British oligarchy ran its third war against the United States through the breakaway slaveholders, many of whom believed they were defending "states' rights."

Step right up with your \$300

In the 1992 presidential campaign, Schwasinger was boosted by a strange network known as Cosmos, which offered weekly conference calls spewing wildly improbable political scenarios. Since then, Schwasinger and his associates have been meeting with hundreds of farmers throughout the Midwest. They promote participation for \$300 per person in a class-action lawsuit, which has been filed in Colorado against the Farm Credit System and various other entities. For the \$300, farmers get to add their name to the suit. Schwasinger lies that the government has already made a decision to compensate the victims of farm foreclosures.

The lawsuit is an appeal of a bankruptcy dismissal by a farmer named William Baskerville, to which Schwasinger has added numerous other plaintiffs and defendants. The lawsuit was dismissed in June, however, and the judge

this would be better for his health. Dark-red and full of rage, he explodes: "Either I get something to eat in a proper way, or I'll throw away all governorship. Because a responsible position that does not get enough to eat properly is not worth a damn."

This story, which ends with both men becoming self-conscious, is an illustration of what it means to be self-governing: namely, what it means to have reason govern your greed and fantasies, and to become self-conscious.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

But there is another dimension given by G.W. Leibniz to the debate about justice. In commenting on the Thrasymachos argument, which we went through earlier, Leibniz

said in his essay "On Justice": If Thrasymachos' thesis were true, that power and not natural law determines what is just, then all powers would be just and all court sentences would be just. This thesis of Thrasymachos is like the one of Hobbes who created *Leviathan*. It conceives a God Who is almighty, without wisdom and love. But there can be no justice, neither in man nor in God, if power is not based on wisdom and goodness.

Justice in Leibniz's sense derives from a God, Who in His infinite goodness, love, and wisdom created out of all infinitely possible worlds, "the best of all possible worlds." Yet, in this best of all possible worlds, there is evil. But Leibniz shows: "God is not the origin of evil, but He allowed evil as the potential to contradict the best of all worlds, as the

has given leave for any of the defendants to sue for costs incurred in removing their names from the case. Nevertheless, Schwasinger continues to make extravagant claims about the power of the suit.

Schwasinger's tactics are not new. Rick Elliot and other advocates of *pro se* legal defenses against unjust foreclosures have sold these tactics to farmers since the farm crisis began in the early 1980s. Why should farmers believe they can succeed on the same track where so many before have failed? Schwasinger tells farmers, whose appeals have been exhausted and who are desperately trying to save their farms, that he has secret information that these claims will be successful, because he is supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other powerful people behind the scenes.

Schwasinger keeps up interest in his actions by spreading lurid rumors through the "patriots" network. One week, the rumor was that Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan was dead. Another week, Schwasinger lied that the city of Ft. Collins, Colorado, the location of his office, was under martial law.

Another rumor spread by the network is that a bank holiday will be declared on Dec. 2. At a meeting in Limon, Colorado on June 22, one Joe Mentlick from Colby, Kansas, speaking on behalf of Schwasinger, said, "The government body is going to [appoint] two receivers. They are set up to process 100,000 claims per day. Fourteen hundred people have been trained. You must sign an affidavit. Money [your compensation] will be available July 1." Hundreds of people have shown up at meetings across Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota, Colorado, and Texas to hear Schwasinger's promises and to hear his rendition of American history: "The United States went bankrupt in 1933. We have two governments — the constitutional government of the 50 sovereign states, and the Legislative Democracy. The Trilateral Commission con-

trols all the banks. The World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Federal Reserve, [and other] banks are all fraudulent."

Schwasinger tells people to fire their lawyers and file their own claims in court, that the proceedings which have been brought against them by their creditors are fraudulent. He is under investigation in Minnesota and Iowa, and has been arrested in Colorado for advising farmers to file liens against the judges, lawyers, and farm credit officials who have victimized them. Such liens are illegal in many states, because they destroy the credit of the affected party. This tactic led to the indictments of farmers in Texas.

Seeking revenge, not justice

Schwasinger's confidence game appeals to a state of mind which seeks revenge rather than justice, and leads the afflicted individual to "withdraw from the system." (It is worth noting with regard to this anti-Christian ideology, although space does not permit developing the point here, that Schwasinger adheres to the beliefs of the British Israelite cult, and has stated during meetings, "I am the heir to the blood of the Jerusalem priesthood.") Ultimately, the outcome is vigilantism. One famous case is that of family farmer Arthur Kirk of Nebraska, who was assassinated in 1983 by a state police SWAT team because he was accused of vigilantism after he had been induced to file false liens against local bankers and politicians.

But the real tragedy is even greater. While Schwasinger and his friends say they are not political, their efforts to lure farmers into suicidal populist actions drain energy away from effective political action, such as the movement to regain sovereign control over all national economic policy and turn the depression around, exemplified by Lyndon LaRouche and the publications associated with him. — *Suzanne Rose*

potential to violate the laws of creation." This seems to pose a fundamental paradox. What is the source of evil, then? Well, Leibniz says that we must think the way Augustine does: The source of evil, if we define it as metaphysical, moral, and physical evil, is 1) determined by the inherent boundedness, the finite nature of man; and 2) it is man's free will according to which he decides whether to commit good or evil. Furthermore, man should not project onto God an anthropomorphic image, which conceives God from the standpoint of man, and, since man never will be able to fully understand the totality of the universe and God's will, this best of all possible worlds is created in such a way that, even if evil does occur, it will lead to a greater Good.

This idea is picked up by Schiller, who demonstrated in

his tragedies that only when confronted with tragedies, with destiny — death, destruction, war, treason, cowardice, with evil which threatens the very essence of man — can he look for resources inside of himself and create a strength which makes him intervene positively into the course of history. How is evil, backwardness, stupidity turned into Good? By *bona opera* (good works) Leibniz says. It means building up a true science of Christian economy.

Economics, i.e., *bona opera*, Leibniz says in his paper, must start from the metaphysical principle that it is God "Who creates man for no other reason but that he should serve as His mirror, in which His infinite harmony would be infinitely multiplied. Where God concentrates His infinite beauty in a small point in our souls." Without passion, with-

out love, says Leibniz, there cannot be a just society or economy: "Love is a joy of the mind arising out of the contemplation of the beauty or excellence of another. All beauty consists in a harmony and proportion; the beauty of minds, or of creatures who possess reason is a proportion between reason and power, which in this life is also the foundation of the justice, the order and the merits and even the form of the republic, that each may understand of what he is capable, and be capable of as much as he understands. If power is greater than reason, then the one who has that is either a simple sheep or a wolf and a tyrant."

The highest expression of man's love for God and mankind is shown when man conceives himself as an instrument, when he creates *bona opera*. It is "when man combats diseases, invents sciences, contributes to the welfare of the fatherland, eliminates food shortages and hunger that man imitates in his domain what God has done in the world," Leibniz says.

Leibniz is a perfect example of what it means to be a true microcosm. Aside from having made numerous fundamental scientific discoveries, he, as a politician who was in contact with every leading politician of his time and understood that the egoisms of the powers of his time, could only be broken by the common search for a solution to the underdevelopment of mankind. Thus he not only designed the most fascinating infrastructure and education program for Russia, which laid the basis for Russia's scientific development, but he also mediated for the Europeans the cultural and scientific contribution that China had made for mankind; furthermore, he developed the perspective of the need for an economic and political alliance encompassing Russia, Europe, and China, and foresaw the impact this would have for the advancement of mankind.

At the beginning, I said that it is the cult of populism and opinion — the tragic mistakes of having not undertaken *bona opera* — which have brought us to the brink of the greatest tragedy. It is the cult of populism, the use of ostracism, defamation, and lies which made Lyndon LaRouche into a political prisoner. Since his youth, LaRouche was steeped in the thinking of Leibniz, and he created an international movement based on the Leibnizian economic concept of *bona opera*, namely that it is our task to develop the necessary infrastructural and scientific projects which create the means for mankind's moral and economic progress. Because of that, he has become a prisoner of the lawless robber bands of our time. What has been done to us, is the same as what the latter-day Huns in the Balkans have been doing: burning churches, bombing museums, and burning old books. In their hatred of man, in their bestiality, they want to eradicate justice, beauty, and truth.

But, as Leibniz said, despite evil, we have the best of all possible worlds. The principle of justice and love lives in the hearts of men, and it is our task to transform this evil in such a way that we create Good by *bona opera*.

The LaRouche Case

Russians appeal to Clinton for justice

A delegation of four Russian citizens delivered to the U.S. embassy in Moscow on Sept. 8 a letter to President Clinton. The following is a full translation.

Esteemed President Clinton:

We, deputies of the Russian Federation and of the Moscow City Council, and representatives of the public, among whom are human rights activists, scientists, and journalists, are addressing you in order to draw your attention once again to the situation of the prominent American economist and public figure, Lyndon LaRouche, who is serving a 15-year sentence of incarceration, imposed by a federal court in Alexandria, Virginia in January 1989.

We are aware that the formal grounds for L. LaRouche's conviction were accusations against him, of illegal securities operations and violation of the tax codes. In reality, however, the persecution of L. LaRouche and other activists in the movement he founded began in 1982, organized by the American government during the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush, and motivated by an attitude of intolerance toward their ideas and activities, in particular toward their persistent efforts to secure representation in government bodies.

In January 1992, seeking the release of their client, LaRouche's attorneys, Ramsey Clark (former U.S. attorney general) and Odin Anderson, filed a motion in federal court, asking for repeal of the illegal sentence, insofar as — as was shown in previously classified government documents that became available to the defense (comprising six volumes, appended to the appeal) — "the convictions of LaRouche and his co-thinkers were obtained as a direct result of prosecutorial misconduct, including illegal acts and overreaching . . . [as well as] government misconduct during its investigation. . . ."

This statement refers, for example, to the following amply documented facts and circumstances, which were not considered by the court:

- illegal joint actions of the Federal Election Commission, Internal Revenue Service, and Anti-Defamation League, to inflict financial losses on the accused;
- concealment of evidence of illegal activities, aimed at depriving the movement of the capability to repay loans;