

III. Conference at Lyndon LaRouche Centennial

Jacques Cheminade Optimism: To Recover from Our Mortal Illness

This is the edited transcript of the presentation by Jacques Cheminade as part of Panel 4, “The Art of Optimism: Using the Classical Principle To Change the World,” of the Schiller Institute’s Sept. 10–11, 2022 Conference, “Inspiring Humanity To Survive the Greatest Crisis in World History.” Mr. Cheminade is the President of the French political party, Solidarité et Progrès, and a three-time candidate for President of France. Subheads have been added. The full video of Panel 4 is available [here](#).



Schiller Institute

Jacques Cheminade

after fighting both the internal and external enemies of the Revolution, the bloodthirsty barbarians at the French Convention, for example, and was finally thrown out of France and exiled to Magdeburg, Germany. Despite the lack of recognition from his own compatriots, he never complained, and fought for his ideas until the last moments of his life, always enthusiastically optimistic, hoping always for the best to happen. His commitment is the secret behind such a relentless optimism, the sublime blossoming

emerging in a great soul.

The word “enthusiasm” comes from the ancient Greek *in théo*, which means the inner God potentially located in each of us. It demands from us to look at the universe in resonance with the best inside ourselves; to look at our capacity to create in resonance with the continuously created universe. It teaches us to be inner-directed by our commitment to the highest causes, and not other-directed by the deadly rumors of public opinion.

Look at Johann Sebastian Bach’s “*Jesu, meine Freude*.” It’s pure enthusiastic optimism. Joy—joy at the birth of Christ as a potential for the good and the beautiful. And, Bach adds, “may my joy endure,” a commitment to keep that joy alive, even among the worst pains and worst dangers. It is hope, hope in the sense of true optimism; it is also one of the three theological virtues in Christianity, along with love and faith. It takes different forms in the main theological and moral moments of human creation: *prathidi* or *apêksh* in Hinduism; or in the words of Confucius:

Education breeds confidence, confidence breeds hope, hope breeds peace.

The Lesson of Lazare Carnot

*Enthusiasm, love of beauty!
Sublime blossoming of great souls.*

These are two short verses of Lazare Carnot’s poem, “Ode to Enthusiasm.” Carnot was a key figure of the French Revolution, known as the “Organizer of Victory.” He defeated the coalition of four European feudal regimes against the Revolution. But he was much more than a General. It was he who inspired the École Polytechnique, which later became the model for America’s West Point Military Academy. He was also the first scientist to coin the term “physical economy.”

Beyond that, he wrote poems such as this ode to celebrate the creative powers of human beings acting for the common good. I am starting my speech with this, first because enthusiasm is the highest expression of human optimism; second because his poems explicitly refer to Friedrich Schiller; and third because Lyndon LaRouche always mentioned him as a *homo universalis*, an explorer of all fields of knowledge, exploring to ensure the advantage of the other.

Carnot reached the top of glory during his lifetime,

Pessimism Engenders Death

Why is what I am trying to convey to you so key today? Because what you hear everywhere in our Western nations, in the midst of this potentially deadly crisis for humanity, is nothing but different shades of pessimism. “They are too powerful”; “You can’t challenge them”; “I am just a second fiddle, can’t you mobilize somebody else?”; “What you’re saying sounds good, but too good to become true,” etc.

Such pessimism is deadly; it leads to abstention or to impotent rage. This is the true tragedy of our times! When a mobilization is needed to save our nations and humanity, to awaken our people with a program for security and development for all nations; when an opportunity to react is opening up, now, because the crimes of the oligarchy are impacting our own and others’ private lives, pessimism becomes then our worst enemy. And those who are “conscious of the problem,” as they themselves say, and do little or nothing, must be called either enemies or prostitutes.

Why so? If you do nothing to save others, if you are not optimistic, you refuse to be human, you indulge in the sleep of reason which has already produced monsters—look at Liz Truss, or better, at Jerome Powell’s speech at Jackson Hole; look at Volodymyr Zelensky and Joe Biden, look at Emmanuel Macron who is a “Life in Death” algorithm. Look at them! And look at those who pessimistically comment, and do nothing against them: They become part of that crowd, clowns in a slaughterhouse.

Pessimism is a crime against humanity and against your own soul. Because if you’re pessimistic, you don’t think, you have given up your creative powers. Then you side against the principle of reason, the principle of creation, you become a beast worse than any of them. You take things for granted, a pathway to the graveyard of humanity. So let’s not go there; it stinks.

The Optimism of Prometheanism

Let’s instead give to our nation, to our society, and to humanity as a whole a share of immortality, as Lyndon LaRouche did, to be freely in resonance with the laws of the universe. Freedom is to discover new principles which are the newborn babies of the mind, to inspire the sublime to confront the worst and win.

Sure, the cynics will say, but Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and John Kennedy were murdered. Julian Assange and Lyndon LaRouche were thrown in jail. Well,

all of them, each in their own way, have been human and reached their share of immortality, even if, as LaRouche said, they had to physically drink from the cup of Gethsemane. Sometimes your life or your physical freedom is the price to pay to be human.

They all shared a higher purpose, and the present state of the world, the threat to see all beautiful things that humanity has created disappear, either through a nuclear war or an economic chaos, or most likely both, compels us to act in the image of those heroes. In that sense, Lyndon LaRouche has been the Prometheus of our two centuries. This is not something with which, as they say in France, “we should inflate our sneakers,” but a responsibility to pay off a moral debt to future generations incurred by the past ones. Our long history of courageous women and men and creative geniuses, this is what is at stake in being optimistic or pessimistic.

The question is, will we “take sides” with Zeus, or with Prometheus? Zeus’ power lies in his Pandora’s box, full of plagues, diseases, greed, envy, anger, and hatred for human beings, whose creativity he fears as a threat to his own system of power. His policy is to divide and conquer, through an indefinite narrative of family feuds. It is the same with the financial oligarchy imperialists, which perceive the development of China, a China having put an end to poverty, as a threat.

Prometheus is not what the greenies of our times somehow believe: power for the sake of power over the universe against the rule of Zeus. Prometheus’ power lies not in a show of force, but in the principle of creation of the potential of fire. Not for himself, but for future human beings, who do not fear fire and shall use it to act creatively upon the universe, to grow and multiply. Prometheus does not fear sharing his power with human beings, as a meaningful principle of participation in the process of creation, as properly and beautifully expressed in Aeschylus’ *Prometheus*. True, Zeus’s eagle in the Greek black legend is bound to eat forever the liver of a bound Prometheus. But is it not our task to unbind his principle inside our minds and to act, now, accordingly?

If we are pessimistic, we tend to be submerged by the virtual reality of screens and accept the euthanasia of imagination. We fall into the trap of the oligarchy: images and money, perception, frustration, and addiction. Lyndon LaRouche denounced the sex-drug-rock counterculture, and now, we are in the middle of it: the

pessimistic escape from reality inflicted upon their children by their boomer and post-boomer mothers and fathers. Optimism is to escape from the prison of an addictive society, our mortal society, based on the greed for money and lust for images, which make you believe that you are an individual, while in reality, both your mind and your savings, are occupied territories!

So let's stop thinking that man is a wolf for man. If not, we will become ourselves wolves. Pessimism is intrinsically an evil sickness. Hope, optimism, are the key to recovery, both for an individual and for society as a whole, and our society is mortally sick. From the standpoint of economics, the remedy is a New Bretton Woods benefitting all nations—LaRouche's New Bretton Woods. In that sense, the Feb. 4 [Joint Statement](#) of Presidents Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin is the best approximation of a door opened towards our common future. Compare it to the racist rejection of anything Russian or

Chinese, or belonging to the best of their cultures, by the fringe of Western "elites" associated with the Black Suns of our times—the Black Suns of our times, whose morbid, nefarious light shines well beyond the borders of Ukraine.

Of course, a World Land-Bridge, as a mental and physical metaphor for all humanity, demands much more. It is what Scott Ritter and others demanded recently: to act as one body, to strike back politically at our enemies. This also includes unleashing a wave of laughter, of laughter against them, because laughter is not only a beautiful revenge against undue respect for them; Rabelaisian laughter is unique to ourselves, to free women and men. To change our way of thinking is, therefore, our immediate challenge in order to avoid any setbacks or suicidal mistakes, and fulfill our mission.

Let our joy remain, and have fun.

Anastasia Battle Beyond Ideology

This is the edited transcript of the presentation by Anastasia Battle as part of Panel 4, "The Art of Optimism: Using the Classical Principle To Change the World," of the Schiller Institute's Sept. 10–11 Conference, "Inspiring Humanity To Survive the Greatest Crisis in World History." Mrs. Battle is the Editor of Leonore magazine. The full video of Panel 4 is available [here](#).



Anastasia Battle
Schiller Institute

Hi! This is Anastasia Battle of *Leonore*, the Schiller Institute's cultural magazine. I'd like to thank you for joining us on this wonderful occasion to celebrate Lyndon LaRouche's 100th Birthday. I have to say, it's really an honor to live in this time period when we have the potential for the greatest change for human history.

I want you to take some time to look back at all the different panels we've worked through together and think about what this weekend really represents. You are now part of a historical process to upshift humanity. Now, the next question you might ask, "How on Earth

are we gonna do that?!" That's what we're going to talk about.

I bet that everybody here has, at some point or another, tried to talk with another person about the different ideas that we've presented here today. If you've worked on something, something very exciting, or maybe you've gone out and done some organizing, or you've gone to your Congressman—something like that—do all the conversations always go smoothly? Sometimes it just seems like the people you're talking to are stuck, doesn't it? They just won't let go of a thought, they

might even get upset, call you some names. They seem to go around in circles with you and they might even get a little bit violent. What you just experienced was an ideological wall.

Now, what we specialize in, as a whole movement, is not only our ability to identify an ideology, but to successfully work people through it to discover what's truthful. Mr. LaRouche called this the "polemical method." In order to get to this, you have to be free in