

with the Franklin/Colden/Logan circle 15 years before. When Franklin arrived at the University of Göttingen, a hive of Leibnizian intellectual life, it was Kästner who hosted Franklin to a “Science Festival,” at which Kästner presented a special paper on the nature of electricity, along with various electricity experiments. Franklin compiled a reading list which his Leibnizian friends in Hannover and Göttingen recommended to him, and left funds with Raspe for them to be sent to him in America. Thus was a fresh flow of the work of Leibniz and his collaborators directed to the American colonies in the decade leading into the American Revolution—a flow intensified with Franklin’s circulation of the great work of Leibniz-follower Emmerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations*, in its first

English translation, into the First and Second Continental Congresses of 1774 and 1775.

So, for the 250th birthday of the American Republic, it is indeed time to un-Locke its founding principles. The great mathematician and physicist Bernhard Riemann (1826-1866) famously concluded his habilitation dissertation of 1854, “On the Hypotheses Which Underlie Geometry,” with a dramatic assertion, in the paraphrase of Lyndon LaRouche, that “to settle the underlying issues of mathematics, one must depart that domain, into physics.” So, the substitution of “Pursuit of Happiness” for “Property” in the formulation of inalienable rights in the Declaration of Independence, is to depart the domain of Locke, into that of Leibniz.

## Locke vs. Leibniz

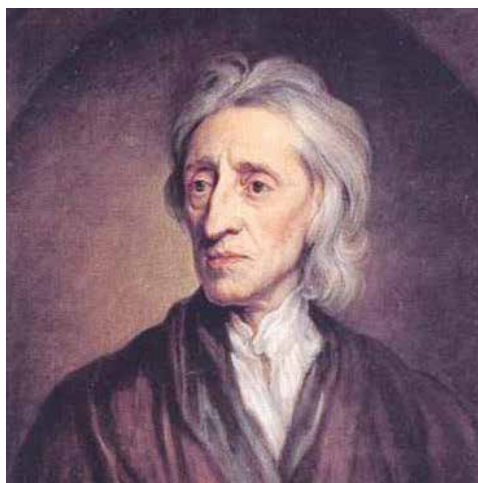
*Excerpted from “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: How the Natural Law Concept of G. W. Leibniz Inspired America’s Founding Fathers,” by Robert Trout, [Fidelio magazine](#), Spring 1997, Vol. VI, No. 1, pp. 8-11. Subheads have been added.*

The Eighteenth century was defined by the attempts of the financier oligarchy, or Venetian Party, then headquartered in England, to wipe out the modern nation-state. The Venetian Party launched the Enlightenment, to spread the ideology that man was no more than a hedonistic animal, controlled by his sensual urges. By destroying the ability of men to think and act like citizens, they aimed to destroy the basis for the existence of the nation-state as an opponent to their oligarchical control of human society.

The prevailing theories of the Enlightenment were based on the method introduced by the Venetian, Paolo Sarpi. Sarpi’s writings became the basis for such English writers as Hobbes, Locke, Mandeville, and Bentham. All these writers started by assuming that the individual’s hedonistic de-

sires are self-evident facts, and built up society from that premise. Thomas Hobbes is generally known for his bestial portrayal of human nature. John Locke, who is usually portrayed as the source of the ideas of freedom and government which motivated the Founding Fathers, was no better.

Locke wrote that the souls of the newly born are blank tablets. He asserted that thinking is only sense perception, and that the mind lacks the power “to invent or frame one new simple idea.” He wrote,



*John Locke, painted by Godfrey Kneller.*

The knowledge of the existence of any other thing, we can have only by sensation: for there being no necessary connection of real existence with any idea a man hath in his memory; ... but only when, by actual operating upon him, it makes itself perceived by him. ... As to myself, I think God has given me assurance enough of the existence of

things without me: since by their different application, I can produce in myself both pleasure and pain, which is one great concernment of my

present state. (“An Essay Concerning Human Understanding”, Vol. II)

From this bestial view that the human mind consists of only sense certainty, pleasure and pain, Locke developed an equally bestial theory of the nation. Man originally existed in a State of Nature of complete liberty. If he was attacked by another, he was justified in seeking retribution. Men, however, being filled with self-love, extracted more retribution than they justly deserved. The community or state came to be an umpire, by setting rules for the proper amount of “just retribution.” And thus, the commonwealth came into existence to set just punishments and to defend itself against outsiders. It follows that Locke’s conception of freedom was no more than the right of each man to follow his hedonistic instincts in all things, where not prohibited by the umpire’s rules. Not surprisingly, when Locke wrote the “Fundamental Constitution for the Government of Carolina,” in 1669, he established a feudal system which included both Black and White slavery.

### Jefferson Locked Up

The myth that John Locke was the philosopher behind the American Republic, is easily refuted by examining how Locke’s philosophy steered Thomas Jefferson, for example. Jefferson’s actions make it clear that, had Locke’s philosophy been the inspiration for the American Revolution, the U.S. would never have become the world’s leading nation and industrial power. Jefferson, who claimed that the three greatest men in history were the British empiricists Francis Bacon, John Locke, and Isaac Newton, adopted their outlook that sense certainty is the basis for all knowledge, writing: “I feel, therefore I exist. I feel bodies which are not myself: there are other



White House Historical Association  
*Thomas Jefferson, painted by Rembrandt Peale.*

his ability to produce. He rejected national economic development through the increase of the productive powers of labor, and instead accepted Adam Smith’s free trade doctrines. Jefferson saw slavery as appropriate for Blacks, whom he considered as inherently inferior.



*Thomas Malthus*

instincts, however, whose cognitive ability was limited to sense certainty, mankind would today be no more than a few million bestial individuals on the entire planet, scratching out an existence in the dirt. In his own period, it fell to Gottfried Leibniz, who represented the best of the tradition of the Renaissance that had

existences then. I call them matter. I feel them changing place. This gives me motion. Where there is an absence of matter, I call it void, or nothing, or immaterial space. On the basis of sensation, of matter and motion, we may erect the fabric of all the certainties we can have or need.” (Letter to John Adams, Aug. 15, 1820)

Having denied that human nature is creative reason, Jefferson saw society and economics as based on fundamentally fixed relationships. Consequently, he endorsed Thomas Malthus’s ideology, that man’s needs must exceed

Jefferson opposed Hamilton’s measures for the development of the nation, and in a private letter stating his opposition to Hamilton’s National Bank, for example, he raved that any person in the state of Virginia who cooperated with the Bank, “shall be adjudged guilty of high treason and suffer death accordingly.” Jefferson was fanatically opposed to the development of American industry, and described the growth of cities in America as “a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution.” He fought to keep the nation as a feudal plantation.

If man were nothing more than a bundle of hedonistic in-

established the modern nation state beginning with the France of Louis XI, to demonstrate that Locke's premises were an inhuman fraud.

## Leibniz's Creative Reason

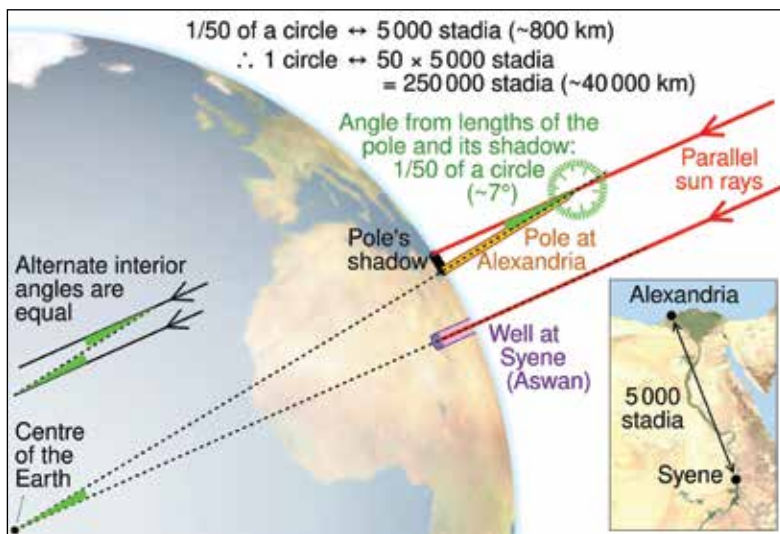
Leibniz developed a science of the mind, which was coherent with human nature as creative reason, rather than animalistic instincts. For the human species to make fundamental changes in its methods of existence, men must be capable of creative reason, instead of merely taking in sensual impressions and acting on instincts. Leibniz described how the mind functions by recognizing the contradictions in sensual impressions and generating Platonic ideas, which are "by far to be preferred to the blank tablets of Aristotle, Locke, and the other recent exoteric philosophers."

In his writings, Leibniz demonstrated how the principles of science and law are also "not derived from sense, but from a clear and distinct intuition, which Plato called an idea." Plato discussed, in the *Republic*, how some sense impressions do not provoke thought, because the judgment of them by sensation seems adequate, while others always invite the intellect to reflection, because the senses give the mind contrary perceptions. These sense impressions force the mind to conceptualize an explanation, which is intelligible rather than visible. The best example of a Platonic idea, is the demonstration which Lyndon LaRouche has developed of Eratosthenes's measurement of the size of the earth, which Eratosthenes accomplished more than two millennia before anyone had actually "seen" the shape of the earth's curvature.

Leibniz's and Locke's different conceptions of how the mind works, were reflected in their different understanding of the nature of God. Leibniz's God is the Creator, who is able to transform the universe to higher levels of perfection, in a fashion which is reflected in man's transformation of human society. To illustrate how God transforms the universe, Leibniz used the example of an eternal book on the Elements of Geometry. Each new copy is made from the previous one, with new advances being added, in a lawful process of change. The nature of this lawful process of change from one copy to the next, is illustrated by the scientific discoveries made by Leibniz and his collabo-

rators. The new copy of the Elements of Geometry is not reached by principles of formal logic, but through a scientific discovery which takes the form of a Platonic idea. "What is true of books, is also true of the different states of the world; every subsequent state is somehow copied from the preceding one (although according to certain laws of change)." Leibniz quoted Plato's *Phaedo*, to describe how the Creator orders the universe according to reason, and is continually acting to further the perfection of his creation.

For Enlightenment neo-Aristotelians like Sarpi, Locke, and Grotius, the idea that the universe could be both lawful and evolving in a constant process of perfection, was incomprehensible. They saw God as



CC/CMG Lee

Illustration of the method Eratosthenes used c. 240 BC to calculate the circumference of the Earth to within just a few percent of its actual size.

trapped in the same set of fixed rules, in which their minds were trapped. Grotius stated this explicitly, arguing that, "The law of nature, again, is unchangeable—even in the sense that it cannot be changed by God." Since not even God can change these fixed laws, far less powerful mankind must live in a universe defined by these fixed relationships. Aristotle, Locke, *et al.*, developed a system of law, and a model of society, in which people are trapped in fixed categories, such as aristocrat or servant.

Leibniz understood that the idea of man living in accordance with natural law does not mean searching for some set of fixed laws, floating off in the heavens. Rather, man lives in coherence with natural law, by ordering society according to the powers of creative reason,

which makes man in the image of God. For Leibniz, the highest right, and the source of true happiness, is piety, when man lives so that he seeks to perfect himself, in conformity with the perfection of the Creator. ...

Leibniz dedicated his life to efforts to educate people to understand that true happiness is found by locating their identity in benefitting mankind and their posterity. He was involved in far-reaching efforts to improve the productive powers of labor, through fostering education, and developing technology and science, so the population could be lifted out of backwardness. His efforts to develop heat-powered machinery, so that one man could do the work of a hundred, mark the founding of economic science on a basis coherent with the natural law concept of man's increasing perfection. He created whole new branches of knowledge, such as the calculus, and worked to develop links with far-away countries like China.

Leibniz's understanding of natural law is best expressed, today, from the standpoint of Lyndon LaRouche, who describes himself as "in that Leibniz tradition upon which our 1776 Declaration of Independence and 1789 Federal Constitution were premised."

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## Essential Reading

The foundational work is that of H. Graham Lowry, *How the Nation Was Won: America's Untold Story, 1630-1754*, EIR, 1987. 498 pp. This book is a masterclass on how ideas shape history—in this case, the battle raging simultaneously in London and the American colonies in the first decades of the 1700's, between nation-builder factions allied with Leibniz's outlook and initiatives, and a rising British imperial faction rooted in oligarchical methods brought forward by England's "Venetian Party."

Four outstanding articles from the 1995-2005 period, specifically develop the Lowry thesis with rich detail, taking the fight fully into the period of the American Revolution itself. They merit the closest reading.

They are:

1) [\*The anti-Newtonian roots of the American Revolution\*](#), Philip Valenti, *EIR* Vol. 22, No. 48, Dec. 1, 1995, pp. 12-31. "One of the most persistent, destructive historical myths, is the one which claims that the American Revolution against Britain was inspired by British liberal philosophy.... The hub of falsehood around which that Anglophile's myth revolves is the baseless supposition, that the strongest influences on

the American founders include the political philosophy of John Locke (1632-1704) and his predecessor Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), as well as the allegedly rational-scientific system of Isaac Newton (1642-1727). In this report, we examine some of the documentary proof that exactly the opposite was true. The characteristic belief of the leading Americans, as typified by the case of Benjamin Franklin, was their commitment to eradicate any influence of Locke or Hobbes upon the law and political institutions of these United States." This opening statement is amply proved, based on citations from primary sources. A sub-head, "Locke's war against America" has devastating documentation of Locke's promotion of slavery, child labor, forced impressment of unemployed laborers as seamen in Britain's navy, and the looting of the American colonies through Britain's Board of Trade (established in 1696 with Locke as a founding member).

2) Valenti's companion piece, [\*The Leibniz Revolution in America, 1727-1752\*](#), *EIR* Vol. 31, No. 32, August 13, 2004, pp. 19-37, outlines how the "pagan worship of Isaac Newton," in Lyndon LaRouche's words, "had been established as the official cult doctrine of the budding British Empire by no later than 1727," the year of Newton's death, and how the battle against its entropic, mechanistic view of the universe (with attendant implications for human affairs), included leading figures of the American colonies.

"This is why the successful American revolution against the British Empire needs must have been preceded by the passionate rejection of Newtonianism by the intellectual leaders of the North American colonies, especially among the youth, as these leaders embraced the cause of the greatest political and philosophical adversary of British liberalism, the German universal genius Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716). More than this, it was the Americans' bold challenge to Newtonian orthodoxy, which strengthened the resistance to the British-imposed intellectual dictatorship over continental Europe at a crucial point, inspiring the work of Abraham Gotthelf Kästner (1719-1800) and his collaborators and students, and leading to the revolutionary breakthroughs of Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777-1855).

"As new historical researches confirm, it was the debate and dialogue over Leibniz's ideas among the circles of Kästner, with the leading anti-Newtonian American intellectuals of the day—James Logan (1674-1751) and Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) of Philadelphia, and Cadwallader Colden (1688-1776) of New York—which set America on its course of independence...."