
Remembering Carlos Cota Meza

A Touch of the Sublime

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

The Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA) on June 13 held a memorial celebration of the life and works of the late Carlos Cota Meza, an Executive Committee member of the MSIA and of the International Caucus of Labor Committees (ICLC) until his death on March 21. (See obituary in EIR, April 5.) Cali, as he was known, worked in the international movement associated with Lyndon LaRouche for nearly three decades, and is known to readers of EIR through his incisive economic analyses, particularly his studies of the Mexican economy.

The Mexico City commemorative event included a concert by the Schola Cantorum children's choir, directed by Maestro Alfredo Mendoza, as well as other musical performances. A special "Homage to the Life and Works of Carlos Cota Meza" was presented, containing selections of Cali's economic and historical articles, photographs, an essay written by his brother and fellow ICLC Executive member Rubén Cota Meza, and an introduction by Lyndon LaRouche.

The following is LaRouche's introduction.

May 20, 2002

True leadership is a quality expressed by those relatively rare individuals, like the Rev. Martin Luther King, or such modern saints as Jeanne d'Arc and Sir Thomas More, who efficiently address the challenge of that quality of great tragedy which a nation's, or people's ruling body of popular opinion may inflict upon itself. I mean tragedy as depicted by the great playwright-historian, such as Friedrich Schiller, on the Classical stage, as in the real life of nations and cultures. The technical term for this needed quality of leadership is "the sublime."

Jeanne d'Arc played a crucial role in bringing into being the existence of the first modern nation-state, that France of Louis XI, which gave the world a nation, like England under Henry VII, or the United States of Benjamin Franklin, in which the legitimacy of government depended upon that government's efficient devotion to what has been known since by the terms general welfare, or common good. Without Jeanne d'Arc's devotion to her mission, even in face of her tortured death at the hands of those who betrayed her into the hands of the evil English inquisition, the first modern nation-state would not have come into existence.

This attribute of "the sublime," does not always require that a hero die as Jeanne and Sir Thomas More did, but those deaths, viewed as Thomas à Kempis viewed a life in the imita-



Carlos Cota Meza speaking at an EIR press conference in Washington, Jan. 18, 1994, on the release of a Special Report on the Chiapas insurgency against the Mexican nation-state.

tion of Christ, are of special importance for us today, because they show us most clearly, how human life may efficiently transcend death, even as if before our eyes, when death comes of old age, or a life struck down early by disease. Such lives by the exceptionally good individuals, produce the great acts upon which the progress of the human condition often pivots. Such lives also teach every person what the meaning of life must be, as Cotton Mather and Benjamin Franklin taught, to live, above all, to do good, to promote the common good as Jeanne and Thomas did.

Today, we are assembled here, in this fashion, to reflect upon the life of a man among us who served the common good of both his nation, Mexico, and us all, serving that cause with a devotion which transcended the calumnies and dangers he endured in the course of that mission. Today, when his life has been struck down by a cruel disease, his devotion and services to his mission stand out as an example of that principle of the sublime which must be the source of inspired strength of us all, at this moment, a moment when the continued existence of a civilized form of life is imperilled, not only in Mexico, and this hemisphere, but world-wide. So, the higher, sublime meaning of individual human, mortal life, is impressed upon the conscience of us all.

The quality of the sublime is typified in its simplest, most elementary expression, by experimentally valid discoveries of universal physical principles, as the dialogues of Plato and

the development of the methods of physical science by his school typify this, from Plato through Archimedes and Eratosthenes, or by the work of Nicholas of Cusa and such of his followers as Luca Pacioli, Leonardo da Vinci, and Johannes Kepler, in both ancient and modern times.

Such individual acts of universal discovery could not further the implicit mission of mankind, except through their social expression as revolutionary changes in the culture of society as a whole. These changes in culture are, in a crucial degree, the socialized fruits of universal scientific progress, but they are, more immediately, transformations in social relations typified by the greatest Classical principles of artistic composition. The application of such artistic composition, and its complement, Classical humanist modes of education, are the great instruments of statecraft, without which physical science were not fruitful, and, indeed, could not long exist. Such acts of statecraft and great Classical artistic composition, are therefore the epitome of the sublime.

The highest standard of statecraft, and all related artistic and other leadership of society, is the standard of the sublime, as the great historian and Classical artist Friedrich Schiller discussed the contrast between the profane (the tragic) and sublime, on the Classical stage, as in the real history whose essence is captured on Schiller's stage.

The essential corruption of nations and cultures, is that lure of the sensual gratifications of mortal life, which seduces the morally weak and ignorant, into the corruption of substituting the littleness of the temporary gratifications of personal, family, and community interest, for service to those immortal interests which set the human individual apart from, and above the beasts.

What are we, but as mere beasts, if we are not persons of ideas, as valid original discoveries of universal physical principles merely typify ideas? What are we, if we do not relive, and keep in trust, such original discoveries transmitted to us from earlier generations? What are we, if we, like mere followers of Kant, do not recognize that process of discovery, the non-deductive enactment, and re-enactment of such discoveries, as a standard for definition of truth? What are we, if we lack the strength and sense of honor, to discover such truth, and to live by the standard of truth commonly expressed by valid universal discoveries of universal physical principle, as typified by the method of Cusa and discoveries of Kepler? What are we, if we do not apply that standard of truthfulness to matters of artistic composition, and statecraft?

It has been the known history of mankind, as the famous poem of the aging Solon to his decadent contemporaries attests, that no society today has yet achieved that generalized intellectual and moral maturity, where it could put truth above habituated popular opinion in more than rare moments, and could put the interests of mankind generally, or the future of its own nation, above the smallness of mind of perceived immediate personal, family, and community interests. In that fault, lies the essential corruption of society throughout this tragic planet of ours today. Nations thus wear their moral

mediocrity with insolent pride; that is the essence of their tragic folly, now, as it has always been with the awful tragedies of societies of the past.

"What of your immortal soul?" It is asked.

To which the reply might be, "But, I go to church."

"Then, why are you, sitting, small-minded, in church, complicit in sending your society to Hell? How can you be true to your soul, if you do not recognize the true meaning of your mortal life, as reposing in that which you contribute to the development of souls born after yours?"

So far, in history, most people may touch that sense of an immortal interest, as Jeanne d'Arc did, only in exceptional moments of great personal, or national inspiration; but, soon, they slide back into old habits of pettier obsessions, as I witnessed this as our veterans returned from World War II. Such is the essential nature of the tragedies of all nations and peoples. Such is the need of every people, for some rare persons who, by rising above tragic mediocrity of the commonplace, may lead a nation to safety through a practical conception of the true, higher nature of mankind. It will continue so, until mankind at large achieves that dedication to the sublime which has occurred, so far, only in the exceptional individual, of which our Cali was one.

Thus, in a time of global tragedy, such a good soldier has fallen, in sickness, from our ranks. Who shall now step forward in his place?

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