

DAVID LUBIN AND THE FAO

## The American Who Fought 'Globalization' 100 Years Ago

by Marjorie Mazel Hecht

To stop the greatest food crisis humanity has ever faced, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) must take up the American System policies typified by David Lubin (1849-1919) one hundred years ago, and Lyndon and Helga LaRouche today.

Lubin organized the predecessor group to the FAO, the International Institute of Agriculture, in 1905.<sup>1</sup> His mission was to break the death grip of Free Trade (now called "globalization"), and the cartels and speculators who enforced it with their stranglehold over food production worldwide. Lubin summarized the evils of Free Trade in a single polemic: It turns human beings into slaves.

One hundred years later, the same enemy—globalization—holds the world population hostage by its control over the food supply. Nations can break free of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other Free Trade policemen. They can take back control of the FAO and double world food production *now*, saving billions from starvation. The technology exists. The political force can be mobilized, as Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder of the Schiller Institute, has called

for.<sup>2</sup> The evil of Free Trade can be defeated—if the nations of the world move *now* behind the LaRouche program to do it.

### Lubin's Battle To Feed the World

David Lubin was a Jewish immigrant who came to America with his family in 1856, at the age of six. A self-educated humanist, Platonist, and Lincoln Republican, he became a successful and innovative merchant in California. He got involved in agriculture in California in the mid-1880s, after a trip to Europe and Palestine convinced him that there had to be a more scientific way to mechanize and organize agricultural technology for the betterment of farmers and consumers. Recognizing the unjust treatment the farmer received from the railroads, the speculators, and the food cartels, Lubin began a campaign to improve the American agricultural system.

Lubinism, as it came to be called, was a program of government-protected prices for farmers (parity), fair rates for the shipping of farm produce, and farmer credit unions and banks to loan money to farmers at reasonable rates, for seed, advanced machinery, and land. Lubinism was fought out in newspaper editorials, and in political groups across the country. Lubin's polemical articles and letters against Free Trade and for parity—guaranteeing farmers a fair price for their products—were printed in the popular press and the *Congressional Record*, and his frequent travels to Europe by steam-

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1. There are two excellent biographies of Lubin, one by his longtime secretary in Italy, Olivia Rosetti Agresti (*David Lubin: A Study in Practical Idealism*, 1922); and the other, a children's book, by Azriel Louis Eisenberg (*Feeding the World: A Biography of David Lubin*, 1965).

Lubin's letters and papers—thousands of them—are collected at the FAO library in Rome, the David Lubin Memorial Library. (The library is seeking funding to scan this collection and make it available electronically.)

There is also an extensive Lubin collection at the Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, Calif.

I thank Ms. Jane Wu, chief librarian at the David Lubin Memorial Library in Rome, for her help in providing some of the material for this article.

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2. For details of this program, see Helga Zepp-LaRouche, "Humanity Is in Mortal Danger: Instead of Wars of Starvation, Let Us Double Food Production," *EIR*, May 9, 2008, [www.larouchepub.com/hzl/2008/3519double\\_food.html](http://www.larouchepub.com/hzl/2008/3519double_food.html).

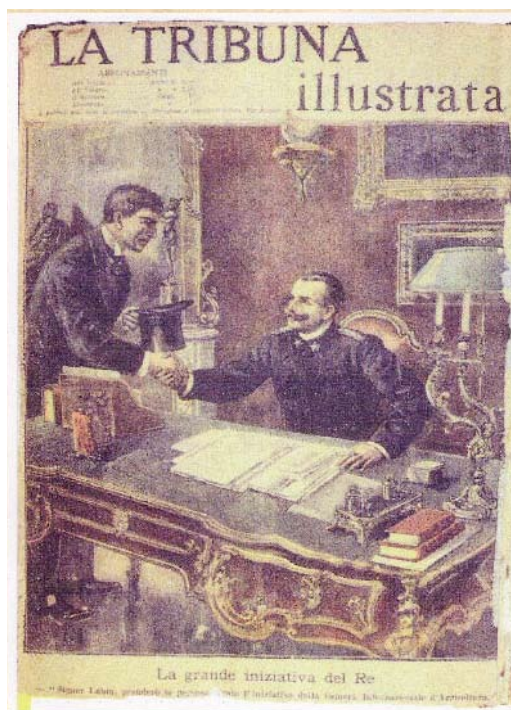
ship made news in the *New York Times*. In 1894, Lubin's proposals were on the California Republican Party platform, and debated at the National Grange convention (where they lost by only one vote). Lubin addressed the American Federation of Labor, debated Democratic Presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan in St. Louis, met with professors of economics at universities and the agriculture committees of Congress, and spoke before forums across the country.

Lubin visited Europe in the 1880s and 1890s. His proposals for farm credit unions and banks were based on his observation of the success of the Germany's Raiffeisen System set up prior to, and under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. To educate Americans about these co-operative credit systems, he organized a delegation of U.S. farmers and legislators to visit Germany in 1912. The mortgage bankers and banking association opposed Lubin's plan, and sent their own delegation there, to come back with alternative recommendations.

### From California to Rome

Lubin's battle for agriculture began in California, with his founding of a model scientific farm. Despite its high productivity and high wages, Lubin could not profitably market the food and grain he produced, because of the cartel/speculator control of shipping and commodities pricing. Lubin saw this as a threat to the welfare of California and the nation. He organized to force equitable railroad shipping (by convincing the head of the railroad that it was in his self-interest) and Parcel Post rates for farmers, including a proposal for using the U.S. Post Office system for ordering and daily pick-up of staples like butter and eggs.

Lubin rapidly extended the California battle to protect the farmer, with his proposal for parity prices nationwide, and then worldwide. He recognized that to counter the political and intelligence networks of the grain and other cartels, would require an international body of nation-states that would compile accurate crop statistics, monitor drought and other natural disasters, develop agricultural science and technology, regulate agricultural ocean transport, and research plant and animal disease. He knew firsthand that all of these areas were tightly controlled by the speculators, the trusts, and the cartels, to the detriment of the farmer and the consumer.



Courtesy of FAO

*David Lubin meeting with Italy's King Victor Emmanuel III in 1905, as depicted in the Italian press. The only inaccuracy in the illustration is that Lubin was wearing his broad-rimmed California hat, not a top hat.*

To set his ideas into motion, Lubin travelled to Europe in 1904, to organize heads of state and diplomats from other continents around his idea for a world agriculture organization. The first head of state to say yes was the King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III, who agreed to sponsor Lubin's proposed International Institute of Agriculture (IIA), and give it adequate headquarters in Rome.

The first IIA meeting took place in Rome in May 1905, drawing official representatives from 40 countries. They wrote a charter and statement of purpose, and set up committees to spell out the tasks of the new organization. In May 1908, the first official meeting of the IIA took place, with 46 nations signed on—including Russia, China, India, Tunisia, Australia, New Zealand, and several Ibero-American countries, most of which were personally organized by Lubin.

Thirty-nine volumes of his correspondence are collected at the FAO library, which is named in his

memory. Lubin's letters—to Senators, Congressmen, Presidents, farm leaders, governors, diplomats, and other political figures—testify to his effective and enthusiastic organizing method, which was often in the form of a Platonic dialogue. His many articles, reports, and official testimony spell out his proposals in detail for the general public.

Lubin also carried out a public exchange of letters with British Fabian H.G. Wells, who hoped to draw him into his one-world-government scheme. But Lubin opposed Wells' degraded and Godless conception of humanity. Lubin is mentioned in several of Wells' works, and appears as a character in a 1926 novel. But Wells and Lubin had different agendas. Lubin, the promoter of global righteousness, wrote to Wells on Nov. 4, 1916: "So much to be done and so precious little done, and the family is so large (about one billion eight hundred million)."

Lubin's work drew the retaliation of the cartels he was seeking to rein in. In 1909, for example, as he was organizing the international crop reporting bureau of the IIA (to break the monopoly of the cartels on crop and weather information), the great wheat speculator/cartel magnate Louis Dreyfus went to Rome to see what Lubin was up to. He told Lubin: "Remember, the eyes of the world are on the Institute, and you must do nothing, give out no statements, no information, until you can be sure that it is absolutely reli-

able.” Dreyfus advocated ten years of study before the IIA put out anything!

Lubin replied: “Yes, we must remember that the eyes of the world are upon us, and it is for that very reason that we should begin the work without any delay; if we sit with folded arms, the ‘eyes of the world’ will see in us consumers of funds and nothing more.”

Lubin kept American farmers and others apprised of his activities in Rome by mass mailing to 50,000 farmers, farm groups, and elected officials (at his own expense) regular reports on the IIA. For this, he hired a team of Italian youths to address envelopes by hand in the “American Room” of the Institute.

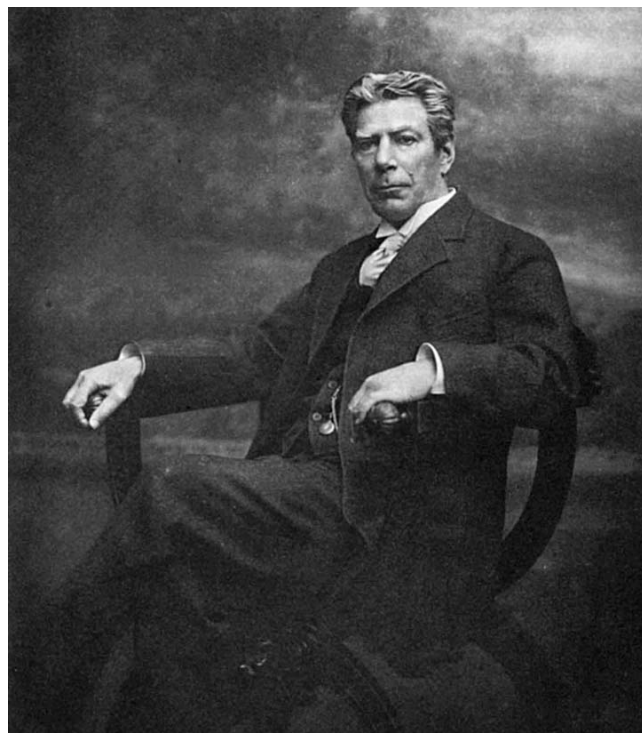
World War I interrupted much of the work of the IIA, and Lubin, who continued organizing during the war, was weakened by severe heart disease, and died in the flu pandemic in January 1919. After World War II, the FAO was formed to carry on the work of the IIA.

### Spreading the ‘Empire of Light’

All of Lubin’s proposals were situated in terms of spreading the republican ideas of the American Founding Fathers to nations around the world, to elevate the condition of mankind and fulfill “America’s destiny.” He constantly returned to this theme, no matter what particular issue or audience he was addressing. He concluded his testimony to a congressional committee on March 3, 1915, on behalf of the Rural Credit Bill, HR 344:

Among the founders of the Republic were men whose minds transcended the commonplace and the mediocre. These transcendent minds looked forth into something beyond the mere practical. It was their purpose to build up an empire of light—light which should tend to dispel the darkness from the face of the earth. This was the empire that they intended to build, and this is the empire which you, as the lawmakers of this Republic, are called upon to guide forward in the direction which they have set for you. If you have lost the spirit and hold only to the letter, then they have builded in vain; then they have builded upon a rotten foundation, and the rottenness is in yourselves. But if you have within you the spirit that transcends the letter, the spirit that inspired and moved the mighty founders of this Republic, then their labors will not have been in vain; they will then have builded to a purpose; the experimental days in the life of this Republic will be at an end and the experiment will have materialized into a structure which shall be enduring, permanent.

Lubin, who was born in a Polish ghetto, knew firsthand the difference between freedom and liberty in America, and life under the oligarchical boot in Europe and elsewhere. He saw that Free Trade was absolutely opposed to the American



*David Lubin (1849-1919)*

System, and also that Protectionism, which protected U.S. manufactures by an import tariff on goods manufactured abroad, needed to be extended to farm products. Lubin proposed to protect the farmer by imposing a government “bounty” (premium) on the export of agricultural products. This meant that agricultural exports would be maintained at a fair, parity price—enough to repay the farmer for his cost of production and guarantee a fair profit.

To promote this program, Lubin debated not only the Free Traders, but also the leading Protectionists among his fellow Republicans, who were reluctant to extend protection to agriculture, by Lubin’s suggested bounty on the export of agricultural staples. Lubin argued for “equitable protection,” instead of “one-sided protection.” He observed that the protective tariff “artificially enhanced the home price of imported and of home manufactures” and he advocated the export bounty on agricultural staples as “just,” “constitutional,” and “practicable.” His argument was based on the principles of physical economy.

In a debate on “Equitable Protection” sponsored by the New England Free Trade League in Boston, Lubin debated a Free Trader, the Hon. John E. Russell, on Nov. 6, 1897. (Russell was a Congressman from Massachusetts and a well-known orator.) Lubin patiently explained why it was to the benefit of the United States for farmers to be protected, and why Free Trade was un-American. Free Trade might be thinkable, he said, only after all the nations of the Earth were repub-



lics, like the United States! In his summation, Lubin talked about the present lack of freedom in the world:

When my youngest son reached Europe, he, on seeing many soldiers on the street, asked me if this was not the Fourth of July in that country. I answered him by saying that every day in Europe, so far as seeing soldiers is concerned, is like our Fourth of July. There were soldiers to the right of us, soldiers to the left of us, in front of us, and behind us. Soldiers were everywhere,—not in one country only, but in every country in Europe,—not only for protection against foreign countries, but mainly for the maintenance of the conditions as they are. And what are those conditions? What but for the subjection of the many, for the special benefit of the few! The power of might and the power of the sword holds sway over the millions of toilers in the countries of Europe today almost as completely as under the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt. Even women and children are in servile bondage. It is no uncommon sight in Berlin or Vienna to see gangs of women carry the hod or do laborers' work in the construction of railways. What madness would it not be to put ourselves in direct competition with these enslaved millions in Europe for the purpose of producing, in competition with them, the manufactures for foreign trade which free trade would give us! Have we not something better, higher, nobler to do than this?...

The United States was “teaching the world, the millions of enslaved ones in Europe,—teaching them the blessings of civil, political, and religious liberty,” not by its “great brainy men,” who give themselves more credit than they deserve, Lubin continued, but by its mail sacks with letters “from the laboring people to their friends and relatives in Europe, which on their arrival there are distributed in the slums of the European cities and in the huts of the tenant farms in every country of Europe.”

### **‘Cheap’ Labor Is the Most Expensive**

Today’s free marketeers who defend the exploitation of “cheap labor” in China and other developing countries, in order to keep expenses down and profits up, should learn from Lubin, who asserted that “cheap” labor is the most expensive—because it keeps human beings enslaved. Lubin, after a visit to Spain in 1888, wrote that he had formulated a “new axiom” to add to the list of “old saws”:

“Blessed is the land that has a labor question and has labor troubles.” I know that there are many who fear and do not wish to see labor agitations in our country, but it is an undeniable fact that through the medium of labor agitations we owe much of our standing as a

nation of freemen and a people of progress. The price of labor determines the physical, intellectual and spiritual welfare of a people, and a land where there is no labor question, no labor troubles, no labor agitation, is dead and the people are starving slaves. Spain has no labor question, and the laborer has no choice but to accept the miserable few coppers a day for his toil.

Lubin cuts through the self-serving gobbledygook of today’s Free Trade advocates, with the American System idea that cheap labor in less developed countries is against their own long-term interest, an argument that Lyndon LaRouche has elaborated today.<sup>3</sup> Lubin told the British Board of Agriculture meeting discussing ratification of the Treaty for the IIA, in 1906:

I can see what’s in your minds, gentlemen. You think that England is a buyer not a grower of the staples and you fear that the activities of the Institute would tend to level up prices, making it increasingly difficult to secure “deals” in the less highly organized countries, such as Argentina or Russia or the Balkans. The cheap loaf is good for the British workman, and may not the Institute interfere with the cheap loaf? Now the cheap loaf may be all very well, but there is another side to the story. You have some industries in England, you sell your manufactures abroad—your cotton stuffs, your machinery, your boots, your valises, and suspenders, and what not—And you export capital. England holds bonds and stocks and shares in those very countries. Now, if you squeeze the life out of them, if you force down the prices of their staples through price manipulation, it may mean a cheap loaf and a big stomach for the British workman today, but, mind you, it may mean unemployment for him tomorrow. That same workman will soon find his job gone, for such a policy amounts to strangling your best markets; your bonds and shares will not be worth the paper they are printed on; you will kill the goose that lays the golden egg. Help to build the Institute up and make it a living force working for equity in exchange, and you will be building up the economic strength, the purchasing power of those great agricultural countries which are the natural markets for British manufactures.

### **Government Regulation**

Lubin argued the necessity of a government role in regulating trade and commerce, especially of food staples, in direct

3. Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., discusses the folly of “cheap labor,” and how it lowers the level of productivity worldwide, in many articles. For example, see “Create a New Bretton Woods; End Post-Industrial Society,” *EIR*, Nov. 9, 2007.

opposition to the “invisible hand” theory of Adam Smith, which supposedly guided the marketplace.

Lubin repeatedly lashed out at the crime of the unbridled monopolists who were ruining agriculture and the world food supply in order to accumulate profits. His testimony to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, March 31, 1910, applies to the lying supporters of biofuels today, who withhold the vital information that biofuels take more energy to produce than they can deliver, and that biofuel production is taking food out of people’s mouths—while filling the pockets of its supporters.

In calling for crop-reporting of stocks on hand and growing conditions to be a government function, Lubin stated:

It is this that gives the information of the supply, which information is the determining factor in arriving at the price. To permit the knowledge of this price-determining factor to be the private property of private interests is to give these interests a most dangerous monopoly. . . . Surely in all the sources of crime, there can be none greater than that of a nation that deliberately permits this evil monopoly to remain in the hands of private interests, unchecked, uncontrolled.

### **The Advantage of the Other**

Lubin provided an answer to today’s China bashers and greens, who attack the improvement in diet of China and India—greater meat consumption—as a threat to the rest of the world, instead of a blessing of progress.

Lubin defined it as a national interest of nations to be self-sufficient in food and to consider that equity in agricultural prices worldwide was to the advantage of each and every nation. He saw that just as a national economy depends upon an alliance of farmers, workers, and industrialists, so the international economy depends upon alliances among nations, based on the principle that advancements in the less developed nations would give their populations the purchasing power to buy manufactured goods from the more developed nations. The trusts and the cartels interfered with this principle with their unending lust for profit.

In an 1896 trip to Europe, Lubin observed that Europe was moving ahead in the use of agricultural machinery, and that U.S. farmers would face growing price competition. He met with agricultural experts to discuss what he saw as a coming agricultural depression. In Germany, Lubin met with the Prussian Minister of Agriculture and German agrarians, and took up a suggestion by Prof. Max Seering for an international agricultural alliance to protect the common interests of farmers.

On the same trip, Lubin was invited to speak at an international congress on agriculture in Budapest, as the only American present. It was there that his idea for the IIA took shape, elaborating on Seering’s suggestion. In his speech, Lubin attacked the concept of Free Trade, and the warfare that he saw

coming between East and West—not so different from today’s war-mongering against China. Lubin said:

This warfare is actually being fought now, but the state of the fight is as yet only a skirmish; England with her 75 cents a day wage-rate against the German 60 cents, or the French 55, and the American \$1.25. This is a mere prelude to the fierce battle which will ensue when several hundred millions of Orientals will step to the front and operate throttle and lever at the rate of from 8 to 20 cents a day. . . . In the world-battle the Oriental sought peace, the Occidental privileges. Characters are now stereotyped, the one in submission, the other in aggression; the former defenseless, the latter armed, armed in his more developed mind, in conceded rights, in his method of production, in the mechanical appliances for labor. These he created, invented; and so long as he alone is the exclusive user of them, so long may he continue to hold and enlarge his privileges. When, however, the time will come when the Oriental will likewise employ these appliances, these machines, then will have arrived a time of new and strange struggles for new adjustments.

. . .What then should be done now, at this time? Cease exporting machinery? No, that cannot be done. All that can be done is to agree to unite all the power at our command in an endeavor so to modify conditions as best to promote our several advantages, not advantages which one individual holds or intends to obtain at the expense of his brother, not an advantage to one country at the expense of another; that is barbarism and robbery. We should aim to cultivate that which will be of advantage to our neighbor, and in this we will most surely find our own highest advantage.

When Lubin returned to America, he settled in Philadelphia, from where he waged a fight for a protective tariff for agricultural staples. He organized his California political friends to support equity in protection, lobbied Congress, campaigned throughout the state, and rallied support from organized labor and churches. But although Lubin had been the treasurer of the McKinley for President Club of California, the just-elected President William McKinley was not moved, and the new tariff bill passed Congress without equity for farmers. One of Lubin’s prophetic arguments was that without parity, farmers would become disillusioned with American ideals, and be drawn in to populist and anarchist causes. (Lubin opposed the “isms” of anarchism, socialism, etc., and argued for a harmony of interests on every level of society.)

### **The IIA Becomes Reality**

As his ideas for securing an adequate living for farmers developed, Lubin again travelled to Europe in 1904, to meet with agriculture ministers, diplomats, and heads of state, seek-



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David Lubin (front row, third from right) with the staff of the International Institute of Agriculture on the steps of the Villa Borghese in Rome.

ing state sponsorship for his idea of an international agricultural organization. He met with dozens of officials, getting the brush-off from France, England, and others, but he found the possibility of an audience in Italy, through dogged persistence. He was advised on what to wear before the King (top hat, gloves, and so on), but learning at 9 p.m. of a 9 a.m. meeting the next day, Lubin went dressed in the plain clothes of a Californian, with a broad-brimmed hat—attire more suited to his manner of diplomacy.

At the FAO memorial to Lubin in 1969, the French representative, Michel Cépède, described Lubin's meeting Oct. 24, 1904 with King Victor Emmanuel III as follows:

Victor Emmanuel, taken aback at first, decided to listen to this American citizen who was talking with the impertinence of a man of God coming from the desert. . . . In fact, David Lubin's speech was not of the kind a sovereign normally hears: I bring you the opportunity to perform a work of historic importance, which will entitle you to more enduring fame than the Caesars; they earned fame by wars, you would earn it by working for peace, the peace of righteousness. . . . You are, of course, a very important person here, but remember you are a small potato in the world, the monarch of a third-rate nation. Take up this work in earnest and at one leap Italy can head the nations in the general fight of our days: the fight for Justice in economic relations.

The King may have been unaccustomed to such frank

speech, but he agreed with the proposal, based on his nationalist impulse. After some details were worked out among Lubin and his Italian collaborators, two months later, the King sent a letter to his Prime Minister, instructing him officially to help with sponsoring the IIA:

“A citizen of the United States of America, Mr. David Lubin, has explained to me, with all the warmth springing from sincere conviction, what appears to me a happy and good idea and I commend it to the attention of my Government. The rural classes are generally the most numerous and have great influence on the conditions of nations everywhere but, scattered as they are, they cannot do what would be necessary to improve the various crops and distribute them in line with the requirements of consumption. Moreover, they cannot adequately defend their interests on the market which, for

the most important produce of the soil, is widening more and more to embrace the whole world. Therefore, it might be extremely useful to set up an International Institute which, without any political designs, would study the conditions of agriculture in the various countries of the world and would periodically issue information on the quantity and quality of crops. . . .”

### ‘Will You Make History with Me?’

Lubin approached the organizing and fundraising for the IIA with enthusiasm. “Will you make history with me?” he would ask a prospective collaborator. He organized a circle of economists and agriculturalists in Rome, and they got right to work, drafting plans for the IIA structure and purpose. It was to be a representative intergovernmental body with a general assembly, a permanent committee, and a secretariat, headed by a secretary-general with several departments: statistics, agricultural information, economic and social studies, legislative services, and a library.

By May 1905, the IIA held its first meeting in Rome, with 40 nations in attendance. Although Lubin had personally lined up most of the governments present to accept the King's invitation, Lubin himself was not present, because it was a “diplomatic” meeting. However, Lubin met with many of the delegates privately, and was not discouraged.

For the next three years, Lubin redoubled his efforts to secure official support for the IIA and the funds to begin its work. He wrote hundreds of organizing letters, and circulated mimeographed copies. It was not an easy battle, given the petty rivalries among the European nations, his unofficial

status, and anti-Semitism. But despite these difficulties, Lubin named his biggest enemy as bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy is the biggest eater and the biggest loafer that ever oppressed the sons of man, and the Socialists might well pause . . . before they advocate that all the complicated machinery of modern life be controlled by an enlarged and inflated bureaucracy. The experience in the Institute has been enough to settle my opinion on the value of bureaucracies.

In 1906, Lubin visited Washington, D.C., to fight for ratification of the IIA treaty—and move it through the bureaucracy. Support was lukewarm in Washington, and there was opposition from the Department of State and others. But in the end, Lubin secured the support of President Teddy Roosevelt, who sent the Treaty to the Senate for ratification in June 1906. Shortly after that, Lubin was appointed as U.S. delegate to the IIA permanent committee. From that position, Lubin enlarged his circle of correspondents internationally, visited embassies, and continued teaching American System economics to foreign diplomats. In particular, Lubin sought the full participation of Russia in the IIA, stressing to Russian diplomats that Russia was “defenseless” against the speculator/cartels, as wheat magnate Louis Dreyfus had bragged to Lubin.

In the midst of this activity, the U.S. Secretary of State Elihu Root cabled the embassy in Rome with the news that Lubin was being replaced on the IIA Permanent Committee as the U.S. delegate! Lubin was stunned, as were his friends, who organized a campaign to reinstate him, which succeeded five weeks later. The letter of reinstatement from Root made it clear that the U.S. government had complied with the wishes of the King of Italy in backing the IIA, “but it was never the wish or purpose of this Government to take an active or prominent part in founding the Institute. . . .”

Lubin spent the last years of his life working without stop, and without pay, to publish detailed reports and proposals to promote the welfare of farmers and agriculture, and to organize for his ideas in Congress and abroad. His documents include a report on the merits of the “Landschaft System” (Germany’s farm credit system), “Direct Dealing Between Producer and Consumer Through the Parcel Post Service, Employing Mail Order Methods,” “Price Fluctuations in the Staples; Their Influence on the Welfare of the State,” “The IIA and Cooperative Banking,” “An International Commerce Commission on Ocean Freight Rates,” and dozens of other works.

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## Who Was This Man?

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So who was this man, who rose up from poverty on New York’s Lower East Side to wealth, and then spent his fortune fighting to extend the American System to farmers worldwide?

David Lubin was born in Klodawa, Poland (near Cracow) in 1849. At the age of six, his family moved to the Lower East Side in New York City, where he learned English in grade school. One of his early memories is of the draft riots in New York City during the Civil War, where he and his brothers helped shelter a black man who was being attacked by a mob. Lubin tried to enlist as a Union soldier, but could not convince the Army recruiter that he was old enough.

At the age of 12, Lubin set out to make a living, joining an older brother in Massachusetts, who had a job in the jewelry-making business. He soon invented a faster method of soldering sun-goggles for the Union Army, producing a dozen at a time; he earned a promotion, and imbibed New England culture. But the lure of America’s West, where his sister and her husband had settled, drew him to California. In his journey to, and then from, California, he worked as a cowboy, a gold miner, a jeweler, a lamp salesman (he invented a smokeless kerosene lamp), and a Mississippi riverboat crewman. He earned a reputation as someone who would use his fists to defend his Jewish religion against detractors. He also survived the Great Chicago Fire in 1871, escaping only with the clothes on his back and his violin.

During all his youthful adventures, he read voraciously—history and philosophy, poetry and drama, and Plato, Maimonides, and Herbert Spencer, among others.

When his sister’s husband died, she asked him to join her in the dry goods business, along with their stepbrother, Harris Weinstock, serving the boomtown California population of gold-miners. He soon tired of this business, and set up his own dry goods store in Sacramento, with the novel idea of having *fixed* prices. Previously, the dry goods business was one of bargaining or bartering, where each price was determined individually, in a deal between the buyer and seller. The “one-price” store was not an instant success, because it overturned a time-honored practice of haggling, but eventually it caught on, and Lubin gained a reputation for honesty and fairness.

With the “one-price” idea came Lubin’s practicing Platonism, using Socratic dialogue with his staff and as a way of settling disputes and uplifting people. Through such a dialogue, Lubin convinced a young employee to discover, “I am my own boss; my ideas are my boss.” He instituted night classes for his employees under 18, and helped others to get an education and move up in the world. (One became the head of a railroad company, and another became a minister.)

Lubin’s store eventually did so well, that he asked his stepbrother and sister to help him out in Sacramento, as his business grew. He pioneered the idea of mass-mailing a catalogue, becoming the first U.S. catalogue mass-marketer, and he invented and marketed a new kind of no-rip overalls for farmers. (He later sold the patent for almost nothing to a famous dungaree manufacturer.) The Weinstock-Lubin Department store, as it was known, became a huge, successful enterprise, and a Sacramento landmark. (It has since been bought out by Macy’s.)



As he prospered, Lubin expanded his library and his knowledge. He had a telescope installed on his roof, to study astronomy, and he persuaded a wealthy widow to donate her mansion as a museum for Sacramento—the Crocker Art Museum. One of his later ideas was a unique trade with Italy: California would trade agricultural machinery (such as the new McCormack reaper) for Classical paintings. He also organized Sacramento to build levees, which he had seen in Europe, to prevent flooding.

### Lubin the Farmer

In 1884, already a successful businessman and philanthropist, Lubin fulfilled his boyhood promise to his mother, and took her to Palestine and Jerusalem, as the culmination of a tour of Europe and Egypt. The trip changed his life. Lubin saw the desolation of the land in Palestine, which was largely unimproved, yet had such great potential for development.

It was in Palestine that Lubin got the idea of his personal mission in agriculture, greening the desert and improving marginal land, and he read everything he could get his hands on about the latest agricultural science and methods to irrigate and grow the most productive trees, fruit, and other crops. When he returned to California, he put his new knowledge immediately to work. He bought hundreds of acres of farmland near Sacramento, and set up scientific standards and record-keeping to see which fruit trees, under which conditions, would produce the most fruit, with similar experimental plantings for other crops. He then put out the information gained in his experiments to help other farmers. His farm workers lived in model housing, with good food, medical care, and an abundance of good books. He used the most advanced farm machines, and invented new ones, when he found that the current technology could be improved.

### Lubin the Philosopher

We can know Lubin's life and thoughts in his own words, through his multitude of letters and articles. He often writes about the mission of Israel, of which he sees himself a part. He has nothing but scorn for those Jews who are "Mr. Silverglutt" or "Mr. Goldfresser," accumulating wealth and eating pork to prove their assimilation. In a speech to a group of rabbis, which he titled "Pontifex Maximus," Lubin describes the "mission of Israel":

What I mean is [not religious ritual] but the Mission of Israel as its live working force. Let that Mission be boldly proclaimed from every Jewish pulpit; proclaimed not merely as a theory, but as a practical work, and you will be doing just what the prophets intended you to do. Is there a wrong to be righted in your community, your township, your county, in your state, in the nation, in the world, take it up, have it discussed, and do all you can towards righting it.

For Lubin, the mission of Israel was as a mighty bridge-builder, the Pontifex, or even the Pontifex Maximus. "And all the children of man, in crossing that Bridge, in passing over from the darkness of Egypt to the bright light of Zion, shall greet each other with a joyful *Buona Pasqua*."

In a 1912 letter along the same lines, Lubin spoke of the mission of Israel being accomplished some day:

when there will be a "just weight and a just measure"; when there will be collective righteousness, the righteousness of the city, the righteousness of the State, the righteousness of the Nation, the righteousness among the Nations as well as the righteousness practiced by the individual. This is the mission of Israel. . . . The real Israel is ever catholic, must ever be catholic, just as he must ever protest, must ever be protestant; and thus, in time, trunk and branches will all make one great tree, Israel.

Lubin wrote many letters to his five children. He advised his son Simon, who was at Harvard at the turn of the century, to study science. If you read Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed*, he wrote, you will see that the

"secrets of the Torah" (speculative philosophy) were only transmitted to one who was a graduate in the sciences, and such receiving it were "doctors of the law" whereas all others are of no value as authority. Among the essential sciences mentioned by Maimonides are mathematics, astronomy, anatomy, chemistry, and the healing art. . . . Speculative learning may educate a man to be at home with himself, but in a monk's cell. Science so educates a man that he is always at home in all the world. It is the study of science which fits a man to become a real speculative philosopher. To begin with speculative philosophy is the lazy way of trying to acquire wisdom.

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## The Task Today

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Today, mass starvation and a new dark age stalk the globe. To stop this onrushing hell, the nation-members of the FAO must reclaim that organization and wage a fight to double world food production, revolutionize the needed science and technology, and build the required infrastructure, including nuclear power plants, to support a growing world population. The money-eating so-called green programs, which are nothing but a Malthusian ruse, must be stopped. Helga Zepp-LaRouche and Lyndon LaRouche have put forward the political programs to get the job done. Now, right now, we need to move forward with the LaRouche program and stamp out what Lubin called the "omnipresent leech," that is bleeding the world population to death.