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## III. Think Like Beethoven

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# Think Like Beethoven: *Fidelio*, Lafayette and LaRouche—or, the Big Elephant in the Room

by David Shavin

*In memory of Donald Phau*

Prelude—Introduction—And the Composition in Four Movements:

- I. The Story of the Lafayettes
- II. The British Role—Whether ‘Pizarro’ Is William Pitt
- III. Through Beethoven’s Eyes
- IV. *Fidelio*—Beethoven’s Secular Mass for Humanity

*Part I of this article was published in the November 13 issue of EIR. This week, we present the final parts, II, III, and IV.*

## II. PITT/PIZARRO: THE BRITISH FOCUS UPON ELIMINATING LAFAYETTE

**Or, “Wee see the very man who wanted to crush England ... & I am sure he will meet with his reward.”**

This section comprises four scenes, presented more or less chronologically, with the first two building to the testimonies of Lafayette’s wife Adrienne and the British Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger. They exemplify what was at stake for the British Empire in the imprisonment of Lafayette, Pitt’s role, and why the Queen was feeling so sure about Lafayette’s reward.

### A. George III, Pitt and Grenville Preferred Scuttling the 1794 Peace Negotiations Rather Than Have Lafayette Released

Lafayette’s collaborator, Mathieu Dumas, attempted a peace negotiation in 1794, contingent only upon the good faith gesture of releasing Lafayette. Earlier, Dumas

himself, as Lafayette, had been caught in between the feudalists and the Jacobin insanity. In August 1792, Dumas was the head of the Military Committee of the French Assembly, when Danton and Marat launched their bloody coup against the French Constitution. He spoke up in defense of Lafayette’s intervention and was promptly assaulted, twice, by mobs outside the Assembly. (On a third assault, 48-hours later, the frenzied mob succeeded in murdering an unfortunate man whose name, Delmas, was mistaken for Dumas.) Despite all this, Dumas, working with Lazare Carnot, kept to his job that August of organizing the fortifications to defend Paris.

Danton escalated by having Dumas’ papers seized and sealed in preparation for a legal pretense to destroy him. However, Dumas simply challenged Danton’s Committee of General Security to lift the seal and read his true sentiments. He then offered the Assembly the Cross of Cincinnatus that he had been awarded for services in the American Revolution. A week later came the September Massacres, a search of Dumas’s home, and the beginning of two years of living underground. He ended up in Switzerland, under the secret protection of another “Fayettist,” the French ambassador, François-Marie Barthélemy—the same man who would work with Carnot in 1797 to free Lafayette.<sup>29</sup>

In Switzerland, Dumas proposed peace negotiations with the British/Austrian Coalition, based upon the realities of the situation. He proposed that the Coalition

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29. To protect his wife from having their estate seized while he was underground, Dumas offered her the cover of a divorce. During this time he also composed a play, described as “a double intrigue of politics and love,” which opened with the 1791 overthrow of the Constitution. The playwright, Beaumarchais, was a friend, so it is possible he benefited from the latter’s advice.

lacked the resources to defeat France outright, and the use of force to restore the monarchy was only serving to prop up the Jacobins. Hence, the Coalition should establish a truce, which would allow moderates, both republicans and royalists, to emerge and defeat the Jacobins. Then they could govern together under the Constitution. However, he added, those royalists who only wanted their feudal rights restored really had nothing to offer; so they simply should no longer be propped up. The release of Lafayette would be a mark of good faith to open the negotiations.



Louise Adélaïde Desnos, 1842



*Lafayette's collaborator, General Guillaume-Mathieu, Comte Dumas (left), attempted to negotiate peace between France and the British/Austrian Coalition, contingent on the good faith gesture of the release of Lafayette. The French Ambassador, François-Marie, Marquis de Barthélemy (above), provided Dumas with secret protection from the Jacobins.*

On October 3, 1794, Lord William Grenville, the British Foreign Secretary, marked Dumas' plan "for the perusal of Mr. Pitt" and reported to George III the next day on their deliberations. The king told them to choose "some very wary men to go to Switzerland." The Foreign Office sent William Wickham, but they bound him with Grenville's orders to profile the French and to agree to nothing but the old order, and forbid a constitution:

The Constitution of 1789-90 has always been considered as vicious and destructive. ... No approbation can therefore be expressed from hence of any Government founded on that basis. ... The restoration of the monarchy ... must necessarily imply the recall of the Princes and the vesting of powers meant to be left to the king. ...<sup>30</sup>

Dumas told Wickham that the freeing of the Olmütz prisoners was a matter of simple justice and key to their estimation of the British intentions. At the next meeting, with Wickham still bound to Grenville's instruc-

30. In the *Wickham Papers*, Volume I., Count Trophime de Lally-Tolendal, at the center of the pro-Constitution monarchists, reported that Grenville was "struck with fear concerning the influence that M. de Lafayette, once set at liberty, could have in the contemporary struggles in which Europe was engaged."

tions, it became clear to Dumas what their intentions were—and he ended the meetings. Wickham was upset that his profiling operation had come to an abrupt end. Weeks later, Grenville's Swiss ambassador reported that Wickham had concluded it was all simply a fabrication "by the friends of Lafayette, who have no other motive than that of engaging the British Cabinet in a negotiation ... for the recovery of his liberty."<sup>31</sup> What Dumas proposed as a simple act of good faith was already a deal-killer for the British—so they continued a doomed war for three more years.

### **B. Liancourt and Washington on the British Hatred of Lafayette's Americanism**

Angelica Church sent Lafayette's friend, François Liancourt, to Alexander Hamilton in America. He would travel the country extensively for Lafayette. On his return to Philadelphia, his exchange with Washington was most clear.<sup>32</sup> He wrote that when Mrs. Lafayette—

31. The singular nature of the Lafayette case arose again in 1795, when the Austrians dearly wanted to retrieve Marie Antoinette's daughter from France. Austria offered to trade the Beurnonville group of eight—radicals who had supported both the overthrow and the execution of the French king—in preference to Lafayette. He remarked that these "arbitrary governments ... must really detest the honest friends of liberty more than the Robespierres, Marats, and all the others who have soiled its name."

32. Dated July 25, 1796. Some minor elements (e.g., punctuation, capitalization) have been simplified and standardized. (Liancourt had made

implored of [the Emperor] her husband's liberation, [the] Emperor answered to her, his own hands were tied up on that Subject, and Mr. de Lafs. liberation being out of his own power. You know the Emperor's ministers [undoubtedly led by Thugut], less reserved a little than their master had been, did pronounce to her that, if His Imp. Maj. should be to grant Mr. de Laf.'s liberation, or even if the watch upon him to prevent his escape were less rigorous, the Emperor should then become an object of difference to his own ally, the King of England: and you have, Sir, unquestionably concluded, with all of those who are acquainted with those [authenticated] answers, that, the part of Lafy.'s conduct by which his fetters have been forged, & are now daily riveted, is not his participation in the French revolution, but only his participation in the American revolution, his unbounded devotion to the cause of liberty & independence of the United States. That is the very real crime never to be forgotten by the King of England, and on account of which only Lafayette is plunged in a dungeon.



Gilbert Stuart, 1795

*George Washington: "With respect to Mr. Lafayette, I may, without troubling you with the details, venture to affirm that [I will work] to effect his liberation."*

He also provided Washington with letters from both of the Lafayettes. Liancourt explained that he had travelled to almost all the states, had Adrienne's letter published, and had found great "friendship and interest" in the Lafayettes' case. Lafayette's letter to Washington, shorter, and evidently written in his own blood, pointed to his role in the American Revolution as the key to the hatred:

... but if my own Liberty should be too difficult matter to obtain, my friends must ... direct all efforts to my two fellows' deliverance [that of fellow prisoners, Pusy and Latour-Maubourg]—for, so great as may be my esteem & tender af-

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his own translation from French to English, explaining that he avoided a professional's smoother translation so as to limit any leaks.)

fection to them, I permit me to say, they are not hated so deeply as I am myself, they having took part in only one revolution. ...

In response, on August 8, 1796, Washington addressed the covert nature of his operations, given the fevered interventionism of the Jacobin faction in the French government:

Mr de Liancourt must be too well acquainted with the history of governments; with the insidious ways of the world; & with the suspicions and jealousies of its rulers; not to acknowledge that men in re-

sponsible situations cannot, like those in private life, be governed solely by the dictates of their own inclinations, or by such motives as can only affect themselves. ... [I]n spite of all the circumspection with which my conduct has been marked towards the gentlemen of your nation, who have left France under circumstances which have rendered them obnoxious to the governing power of it, the countenance said to be given to them, is alledged as a cause of discontent in the Directory of France against the government of the U. States. ... With respect to Mr La Fayette I may, without troubling you with the details, venture to affirm that whatever private friendship could require, or public duty would allow, has been, & will continue to be essayed by me to effect his liberation, the difficulty in accomplishing of which has, no doubt, proceeded in a great measure from the cause you have mentioned. ...

Washington ends by asking Liancourt to treat this as a private letter. He simply thought that Liancourt deserved an explanation, so that "the appearance of mystery" in Washington's actions might be removed.

### C. Adrienne: Pitt is 'Lafayette's Principal Enemy'

Both Lafayettes maintained, throughout the five years, that King George III, and particularly his minis-



Joseph-Désiré Court, 1834



Adélaïde Labille-Guiard

*Lafayette and his wife Adrienne. Adrienne: "Mr. Pitt, who [has] adopted a position of personal antagonism to France, is twice over the personal enemy of [Lafayette]."*

choice of freeing her husband or putting her in the dungeon with him. She reported his response: "... as for his liberty, that would be impossible—my hands are tied; it is a complicated affair." On May 10, 1796, she described to Victor de Latour-Maubourg (the younger brother of their fellow prisoner, Charles de Latour-Maubourg) that Pitt was in control, whereas the emperor "did not appear to be any more than a little fool whom I think is neither good nor bad."

That same day, she wrote to her Aunt, the countess of Tesse (Adrienne Catherine de Noailles), that the King of Prussia and the Emperor point at each

ter, William Pitt, ran the imprisonment and merciless treatment of the two; and that the reason was that the voice and example of the American Revolution had to be kept out of France—that, and blind vengeance. Most of the evidence comes not from his hand, but from hers, as it was easier for Adrienne to write and smuggle letters out. But it is known that she was speaking for both of them.

One letter by Adrienne is cited in Donald Phau's 1978 article, "*Fidelio*: Beethoven's Celebration of the American Revolution." It was on the occasion of yet another delay in their release, during their last summer in the dungeon. Written on July 18, 1797, it cited Pitt, even more than Vienna, as detesting Lafayette:

Yet not only are we still here, but we have redoubled evidence of ill-will. With the exception of Mr. Pitt, who, having adopted a position of personal antagonism to France, is twice over the personal enemy of Gilbert [Lafayette's given name], there is no Court in Europe which detests him so cordially as does that of Vienna.

However, as we shall see, that was only the last of several prison communications that she wrote on Pitt.

Earlier, on October 12, 1795, Adrienne had met with Emperor Franz II, confronting him with the

other, but "Mr. Pitt has said to Parliament that he has nothing to do with the matter, and, during that time, the three prisoners were turned over to the Court of Vienna, whom Mr. Pitt was taking into his pay." Pitt was financing Austria to maintain the land war against France.<sup>33</sup>

However, Adrienne, in writing on May 22, 1796 to Dr. Bollmann, provided the most explicit description:

It is quite certain that, notwithstanding the hatred of all the other governments, the cabinets of Vienna and London are the only ones that can persecute us here. You know that the court of Vienna, in addition to its hereditary aversion for every species of liberty, has a particular antipathy for Lafayette. ... [However, the] conduct observed towards the three prisoners, towards you and ourselves, does not depend on the disposition of that court [Franz II], but the malevolent action appears concentrated in the internal cabinet [Thugut]; and I might hope for some advantages, were not that party itself, as the letters

33. Otherwise, Lafayette himself is referenced cursing Pitt on June 18, 1796. And on various other occasions, Lafayette wrote that Pitt is "our principal enemy," "our common adversary," and the "prime minister of 'anti-liberty'" (respectively 1/21/96, 7/5/96, and 10/20/96).



Thomas Gainsborough

*William Pitt, the Younger, lectured the House of Commons: "The detention of Lafayette, considered as a question of political relations, is not one which does at all come within [your] cognizance."*

from Vienna state, in the servile dependence of England. In that quarter is Lafayette's principal enemy to be found: Pitt and he have long formed a judgment of each other; and that minister, who is no less perverse in his means of execution than in his views, has every kind of superiority over the governments under his direction. ...

You will not be tranquillized by a recent and secret information, of the truth of which you can entertain no doubt ... M. Thugut, the prime minister, and wholly devoted to Pitt, no later than a fortnight ago, represented Lafayette as dangerous to the public tranquility of Europe. ...

I know not what instructions you may have brought from the United States. ... It is true that England, considered either as a power or as a banker, would always be the stronger [than Austria], and to force her to relax her hold, she must be pressed at home. There at least public opinion is of some weight, and as our object should be not to caress or persuade Mr. Pitt, but to make him feel more personal inconvenience from Lafayette's detention than from his liberation, no means must be neglected of exciting public opinion against him in that respect.

## Pitt's 'Personal Inconvenience' and Bald-Faced Denial

Bollmann did report back to John and Angelica Church in London. Indeed, they did not neglect the route of "exciting public opinion," and, consequently, Pitt was pressed to make his most explicit and bald-faced public comments on the Lafayette imprisonment in December 1796. Previously, Fox's Whig faction, with whom the Churches were working, had brought the matter to the Parliament in 1792 and again in March 1794—eliciting such denials from Pitt as, Lafayette's "fate was never at the disposal of this country. ..."

But on December 16, 1796, Fox's close collaborator, Richard Fitzpatrick, spoke before the House of Commons, now able to explicitly cite Adrienne's 1795 meeting with Franz II. He quoted Franz II: "With respect to his liberty, it is a complicated affair, upon which my hands are bound." Hence, Fitzpatrick concluded: "La Fayette is not the prisoner of the Emperor." So, by whom are the Emperor's hands tied, "unless by his allies"? Hence, England is dishonored. Fitzpatrick's motion called for the King "to intercede with the court of Vienna ... for the deliverance of those unfortunate persons" who had been illegally detained for over four years.

In previous years, Pitt had insisted that it was a matter solely of their Prussian and Austrian allies, and that Britain, on principle, doesn't interfere with such sovereign decisions. But now, he abandoned such nice lies and lunged flight-forward at the Parliament's audacity:

The House [of Commons] are in possession of no facts which authorize them to take any decided step on the occasion: there is nothing to satisfy them, that the detention of La Fayette is a circumstance at all to be influenced by their authority, or connected with any exertion of their power. However their humanity may be interested, considered as a question of political relations, it is not one which does at all come within their cognizance. ...

That is, you in the Commons lack both the facts and the standing. But, if you had such, Pitt continued, "... by what inference can it be concluded that the king of Great Britain is either implicated in the motive, or a party to the engagement?" Goodness! by what inference? What about, to begin with, the inference that La-

fayette was key to the French contribution to turning the world upside-down on the British Empire at Yorktown? Might a motive have arisen thereby?

But now, Pitt goes from the ludicrous to the solemn:

As to the question of any such engagement, I now declare in the most public, solemn, and explicit manner, that I know of no obligation expressed, implied, or understood, by his majesty, as at all connected with the transaction. I know of no communication that has passed on the subject between the courts of London and Vienna. No opinion has been asked from this country, nor has any reason been afforded to believe that it is a question on which we could have any influence to decide. It is a transaction in which his majesty has not had the smallest participation, and with respect to which he can have no right to interfere.

It is hard to make this stuff up. Would it not be poetic justice to put such a character on stage?<sup>34</sup>

### **‘Not Had the Smallest Participation’**

Otherwise, Pitt reported to George III that very evening of the events, including that the War Minister, William Windham, had called upon the House of Commons to “rejoice,—to see such men [as Lafayette] drink deep of the cup of calamity which they had prepared for the lips of others.” The retired Edmund Burke bothered himself to send to the Commons his thoughts: Fox’s remarks about “this poor puppy de La Fayette ... [were] indecent, unparliamentary, unpolitick.” Lord Chancellor Loughborough seconded Burke, “... this Fayettism ought to be driven out of the House with indignation and scorn.”

George III was proud of the motion’s defeat, noting to Pitt the next day:

Besides the very objectionable conduct of that gentleman towards this country, which would be reason enough for not appearing in his favour, I cannot see any right this or any country has to

34. So, what of Donald Phau’s suggested identification of Pitt as Bouilly’s “Pizare” and Beethoven’s “Pizarro”? It is hard to hear it otherwise. One could argue it was a coincidence, but what would one conclude, e.g., seeing an evil character named “Hitlaro” in a play in 1946?

meddle with the Executive Administration of any foreign one.<sup>35</sup>

Four days later, Gouverneur Morris wrote from Vienna<sup>36</sup> to Lord Grenville:

I mentioned to M. de Thugut the situation of Monsieur de la Fayette. ... He told me that if England would ask for him, they would readily give him up; and the King might, if he pleased, let him loose in London.

Months later, this impertinent offer from their sovereign ally, Austria, still bothered the King, who wrote to Grenville on April 4, 1797:

I forgot to answer you last week on the subject of La Fayette—You mentioned it to me [first, back in December] immediately after the debate in the H of C and I said I was perfectly sure that it was not understood at Vienna that we had anything to do with that business. There I conceived (and still remain of the same opinion) that the matter ought to rest.

Was Vienna really confused as to whether Britain was involved? Indeed, that was never in question. King George III means that not only does Austria have no right to free him without “our” consent, but they also have no right to let it be known that Britain’s consent is needed. George III then ordered Grenville to continue to not respond to Austria, as responding would suggest that there was an injustice that the two allies might have needed to address.

Must one assume that the confidence of his wife, Queen Charlotte, expressed years earlier in the first days after Lafayette’s flight and illegal seizure—“Wee see the very man who wanted to crush England ... & I am sure he will meet with his reward”—was the random comment of a bystander, lacking any indication of a motive or a capability?

35. Jared Sparks recorded, on a visit in 1828, that Lafayette well remembered that Pitt had refused when asked to intervene against his imprisonment, saying “the feelings of the King were so strongly against him that no hope could be entertained of his sanctioning any measures in his favor.”

36. While in Vienna, Morris also attended the Midnight Mass at St. Stephen’s Cathedral. Morris noted in his diary, simply: “The musick was good.” Mozart’s funeral service had been performed there at St. Stephen’s five years earlier.

### III. THROUGH BEETHOVEN'S EYES

Any sentient republican of the 1790s would have been familiar with some of the above story. However, Beethoven was that and more—a passionate republican who kept abreast of newspapers, politics, and coffee-house discussions. One example, at this period in his life, is his attendance at the music evenings of Dr. Johann Zizius, a professor of political science in Vienna. (Also, coincidentally, Zizius had studied at Olmütz just prior to Lafayette's imprisonment there.) How much does one have to ignore, in order to pretend that Beethoven chose Bouilly's text because it was merely about an anonymous woman who saved her husband from an unjust official, with no allusion to the Lafayettes?

There is a multiply-connected and demonstrable history of Beethoven's interest—after the horrors of the Jacobins—in the remaining republican faction, Lafayette's faction, winning Napoleon away from an oligarchical reaction, during the years 1798-1804. This is concentrated in 1803, when Beethoven decided both to move to Paris and to choose Bouilly's text. His thinking about his *Eroica Symphony* and his *Leonore* opera coheres rather closely with his 1803 decision to relocate to Paris in about a year-and-a-half, and his 1804 decision to stay in Vienna.

Early in 1798, in the months after Lafayette was finally freed, Beethoven was a frequent visitor of the French Ambassador to Vienna, Jean Bernadotte, a friend of Lafayette.<sup>37</sup> It has long been thought that it was Bernadotte who suggested to Beethoven that he create a *Bonaparte Symphony*. In their discussions on the affairs in France and on Beethoven's music, discussions nowhere recorded, it is hard to believe that the subject of

37. Both Bernadotte and Lafayette were leading French Generals, active at the beginning of the Revolution. James Monroe, in writing of his 1804 meeting with Lafayette, described Bernadotte and Lafayette as "intimately acquainted with each other."

Bernadotte's close friend Lafayette had not arisen.<sup>38</sup>

In Vienna, Bernadotte hosted the violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer, who played duets with Beethoven. One known occasion was in April 1798 at Prince Lobkowitz's palace. Beethoven's description of their time together appeared later, in a note to his publisher, Simrock, sent on September 4, 1804, on the occasion of the publication of his *Kreutzer Sonata*:

... I will send you at once a little note for Kreutzer and you will be so kind as to enclose it when you send him a copy. ... This Kreutzer is a dear, kind fellow who, during his [1798] stay in Vienna, gave me a great deal of pleasure. I prefer his modesty and natural behavior to all the exterior without the interior which is characteristic of most virtuosi. ..."



Christian Hornemann, 1803

"A passionate republican, Ludwig van Beethoven transformed Jean-Nicolas Bouilly's *Lenore* text into a cultural revolution like the world had never seen."

Of note, Kreutzer was also a proven opponent of the Jacobins; and it is even rather likely that Kreutzer had actually attended the February 1798 premiere of Bouilly's *Leonore, ou l'amour conjugal* a few weeks, or even a few days, before meeting with Beethoven.

The composer of the music for that first *Leonore* was one Pierre Gaveaux, who was already famous in 1795 Paris for his popular, anti-Jacobin song, *Le reveil du peuple* (*The people's awakening*). Following upon Gaveaux by a few months, Kreutzer had composed the music for another anti-Jacobin work, *Le Brigand*. Kreutzer and Gaveaux were fellow composers in this political fight—hence, the increased likelihood of Kreutzer attending the Bouilly/Gaveaux premiere of their *Leonore* that February 1798, shortly before leaving for Vienna and Beethoven. And even if Kreutzer's departure for Vienna was prior to the premiere, he certainly would have been aware of, and interested in, Gaveaux's *Leonore* opera. Not only the subject of Lafayette, but also, specifically,

38. Napoleon appointed Bernadotte his ambassador to the United States in 1803.

the Bouilly libretto was a very natural common interest for Kreutzer and Beethoven. This would certainly explain an awareness by, and interest of, Beethoven in this particular libretto as early as 1798.

Lacking such considerations, and having no better idea, musicologists tend to suggest that Beethoven must have latched on to the libretto because he had heard that Ferdinando Paer or Simon Mayr were setting it to music. But this is rather silly, as they know that Beethoven had Bouilly's text from Sonnleithner no later than December 1803—that is, he was working on the opera prior to any news about the plans of Paer or Mayr.

Earlier in 1803, Beethoven had signed a contract with Emanuel Schikaneder and his Theater an der Wien to compose an opera, *Vesta's Fire*. Schikaneder, less than a dozen years earlier, had produced and starred in Mozart's opera, *The Magic Flute*. (In both operas, Mozart and Beethoven, with Pamina and Leonore, create the paradigm of a woman's role in changing history.) Beethoven was slow on proceeding with Schikaneder's libretto—in part because he was concentrating on his *Bonaparte Symphony*. By no later than November 1803, he had discontinued any work on *Vesta's Fire*—though, happily, we owe to his work on it, the music Beethoven used for the opening of the incomparable “*O namenlose Freude*.” Before the year was over, he had arranged for his collaborator, Joseph Sonnleithner, to provide him a German libretto from Bouilly's French.

Also in 1803, and of some note, Beethoven began his long relationship with a new student, the 15-year-old Archduke Rudolph. Rudolph was only a child when his older brother, Emperor Franz II, had held Lafayette in prison. However, Franz and the family had resented the assaults upon his reputation during the Lafayette controversy, and Rudolph may have been a fascinating source for Beethoven. Rudolph did not view Beethoven as most aristocrats viewed their music teachers. He fully appreciated Beethoven's informality, as witness a telling anecdote provided by another of Beethoven's



Both a student and patron of Beethoven, Archduke Rudolph, the Archbishop of Olmütz, as portrayed by Johann Baptist von Lampi.

students in 1803, Ferdinand Ries:

Etiquette and all that is connected with it was never known to Beethoven, nor was he ever willing to learn it. For this reason he often caused great embarrassment in the household of the Archduke Rudolph when he first went to him. An attempt was made by force to teach him to have regard for certain things. But this was intolerable to him. ... Finally one day when, as he expressed it, he was being tutored [*als man ihn, wie er es nannte, hofmeisterte*], he angrily forced his way to the Archduke and flatly declared that while he had the greatest reverence for his person, he

could not trouble himself to observe all the regulations which were daily forced upon him. The Archduke laughed good-naturedly and commanded that Beethoven be permitted to go his own gait undisturbed—it was his nature and could not be altered.

Rudolph would not be constrained by formalities with his new music teacher. Beethoven and the Emperor's brother collaborated for over two decades on a mutually respectful basis, culminating in Beethoven's creation of the unique and masterful *Missa Solemnis* for Rudolph's appointment as Archbishop. (Ironically, Rudolph was appointed the Archbishop of Olmütz—where Lafayette had been imprisoned a generation earlier.) As Beethoven began working with Bouilly's text, he had direct access to Franz's brother, Rudolph.

However, most underappreciated is that, in the summer of 1803, Beethoven decided that he would leave Vienna and move to Paris! His student Ries wrote on August 6: “Beethoven will stay here at most for another year and a half. He is then going to Paris, which makes me extraordinarily sorrowful.” That same day, Beethoven had received, as a present from France, an Erard piano. (Beethoven's brother, Joseph,



reported that the piano had an inscription indicating that the piano was a gift from the city of Paris.) His Paris plan may well have been behind his dissatisfaction with Schickaneder's libretto, and his adoption of Bouilly's. First, Beethoven planned a three-month visit to Paris for that winter. In December, Beethoven turned down 400 ducats for his *Bonaparte Symphony* with the explanation, again, from Ries: "He now doesn't want to sell it and will reserve it for his journey [to Paris]."

Evidently, Beethoven's planned trip was to be from January to April 1804, as Beethoven tells Sonnleithner in January, that he should finish "the poetical part of the libretto" (the parts to be treated as arias) by April, when he is to return to Vienna. It remains to be fully determined exactly what individuals were pushing for Beethoven to move to Paris, but it is clear that, with his *Bonaparte Symphony*, he planned an intervention upon Napoleon, in collaboration with the remaining republicans (e.g., Lafayette, Lazare Carnot).

It is not known exactly what prevented this trip,<sup>39</sup> but in the early Spring of 1804, Beethoven had a fair copy of his symphony handed over to the French embassy in Vienna, for transmission to Paris.<sup>40</sup> The French ambassador to Vienna at that time, Jean-Baptiste de Nompère de Champagny, had been, in 1781, a midshipman in the Comte de Grasse's fleet, penning in the British at Yorktown, Virginia, where Lafayette and Hamilton were leading the final charges against the trapped British army. Further, in 1793, Champagny had also been imprisoned by the Jacobins and, like Adrienne Lafayette, barely escaped the guillotine.<sup>41</sup> It makes sense that Champagny would be an ally in an intervention into Paris. It is not known how or when the fair copy was actually transmitted, but if it reached Napoleon, it ap-

39. Shortly after Beethoven told Sonnleithner, in January 1804, to go into high gear on the *Leonore* libretto, Schickaneder's theater was bought by Peter von Braun, who promptly dumped Sonnleithner. This takeover might have reflected some larger brawl, contributing to Beethoven's staying in Vienna that winter. (Later, in 1805, in the production of *Leonore*, the Baron would prove a hindrance to Beethoven on several occasions, including cheating him on the proceeds and denying him access to his own score of the work.) But the unraveling situation in Paris, around Napoleon, could also account for it all.

41. While in Vienna, Champagny worked closely with Vienna's foreign minister, Cobenzl—himself an early and important supporter of Mozart, and one who had aided Adrienne Lafayette in 1795. Champagny returned to Paris in August 1804, became the Minister of the Interior, organized the 1806 *Exposition des produits de l'industrie française*, and completed several public works projects—a good argument that he might have benefitted from the *Eroica*!

pears that it was too late for the poor soul.<sup>42</sup>

In May 1804, Napoleon was, by his own solemn proclamation, declared the Emperor of France. Ries famously described Beethoven's reaction upon hearing the news, forecasting that Napoleon would simply become a tyrant. Later, when the *Eroica Symphony* was published in 1806, Beethoven added the description: "Composed to celebrate the memory of a great man."

A great man, rising to the occasion of a critical turning point for society, a *punctum saliens*, is indeed a most efficient solution. However, such was no longer an option for Beethoven. He turned his passion and focus toward his opera, and the necessity to develop the universal, agapic quality embedded in the capacity of any human being to love, a requirement for the sustained development of a republican form of government.

#### IV. BEETHOVEN'S SECULAR MASS FOR HUMANITY

Beethoven's sustained passion transformed Bouilly's *Leonore* text into a cultural revolution like the world had never seen. France, and Europe, would not be saved by a hero riding in on a horse. Rather, beyond the *Eroica*, Beethoven fashioned a direct appeal to the population to rise above their sullen rage, their abiding littleness, and to match the depth and greatness of their hearts and souls to the problem at hand. It was a hard-won truth, but it addressed what Schiller had diagnosed as the problem of the French Revolution in his famous epigram: "A great moment in history had found a little people."

According to his sketchbooks, Beethoven did most of the work on the opera in the three months after he had ripped out the title page of his *Bonaparte Symphony*, May-August 1804.<sup>43</sup> However, all of the sketches were not completed until June 1805. Rehearsals began in the late summer, but on September 30, two weeks prior to the scheduled premiere, Pergen's Imperial Court police censor banned the opera. The next day, Sonnleithner consulted with the State Councillor, Philipp von Stahl, and submitted a petition the following day that emphasized:

(a) "the plot takes place in the 16th-century, thus there

42. Otherwise, the second movement of the *Eroica* gained its own fame from the Franklin Roosevelt funeral and the spontaneous performance for John Kennedy by the Boston Symphony on November 22, 1963. Lesser known is its performance in 1847 for Felix Mendelssohn's funeral.

43. Theodore Albrecht's work on the Beethoven sketchbook called "Mendelssohn 15."

could be no underlying relationship” with 1805 Austria;

(b) “the evil-minded governor” was an underling gone out of control, who had been brought to justice by a wise ruler; and

(c) the Empress, Maria Theresa of Naples, was interested in the project.

This last point was probably Sonnleithner’s strongest card against the censor’s attempt. Since Beethoven’s *Creatures of Prometheus*<sup>44</sup> had been performed for the Empress back in 1801, one can assume that she appreciated his work, and that Sonnleithner had some basis for invoking her name. He also made clear that the premiere was chosen for her *Namensfest*, October 15. Negotiations ensued and the opera was allowed, largely intact. However, the 1805 French invasion of Austria caused disarray that October, and the opera did not premiere until November 20, a week after Vienna had been captured. The Empress never witnessed Beethoven’s opera, having fled a week earlier ... to Olmütz.

Finally, to the opera.

While Bouilly wrote a compelling libretto, it was no secular mass. For example, when the evil Pizare is defeated, the chorus/population cries out, “Vengeance! Vengeance!” Or, when Leonore and Florestan request the Minister not to chain Pizare in a dungeon for two years as punishment, an “eye for an eye,” the Minister insists upon the law. However, in the Beethoven/Sonnleithner libretto, there is no vengeance, and the Minister is human. He knows that the King will be happy enough that Leonore and Florestan are out of the prison. The Minister knows to avoid the heat of the moment, and that he should deliberate as to what to do with Pizarro. These are obvious explicit variations. But the telling difference is what Beethoven does musically.

## Beethoven’s Grasp of Schiller’s Moral Theatre

We will simply identify four elements.

We open with how evil sings. In the Bouilly/Ga-

44. The program notes for the 1801 performance opens with: “This allegorical ballet is based on the myth of Prometheus. The Greek philosophers, who knew of him, elucidate the story in the following manner—they depict Prometheus as a lofty spirit who, finding the human beings of his time in a state of ignorance, refined them through art and knowledge and gave them laws of right conduct.” Beethoven took the theme from his “Finale” for use in the fourth movement of his *Eroica Symphony* (and for his *Eroica Variations*).



Agnes Janet-Lang

*A scene from Fidelio, Act III: Leonore confronts the evil Pizarro.*

veux *Leonore*, the personification of evil, Pizare, never sings. His is a speaking part. By contrast, listen to Pizarro’s [opening outburst](#), in his infamous aria, “*Ha, Welch’ ein Augenblick*”—and ask, how did such evil get into the world? Ask further, whether it was possible to step around such a problem, or whether it was an evil that had to be confronted? Pizarro lunges at the audience:

Revenge I’ll take on him,  
Your fate is calling you!  
I shall probe his heart,  
Oh joy, oh great delight!

And,

In his final hour,  
The steel deep in his wound,  
To shout into his ears:  
Triumph! Victory is mine!

And Pizarro is no less evil when, in his “[Er sterbe!](#)” he comes to plunge in the knife:

He dies—But first he shall be told  
Who’ll tear to pieces his proud heart.  
The dark veil of revenge be torn.

Is there such sadistic evil afoot, evil deprived of all human joy but for the perverse joy of causing pain and suffering? Or, in one translation, are there those whose greed and hatred of life have gotten so out of control,

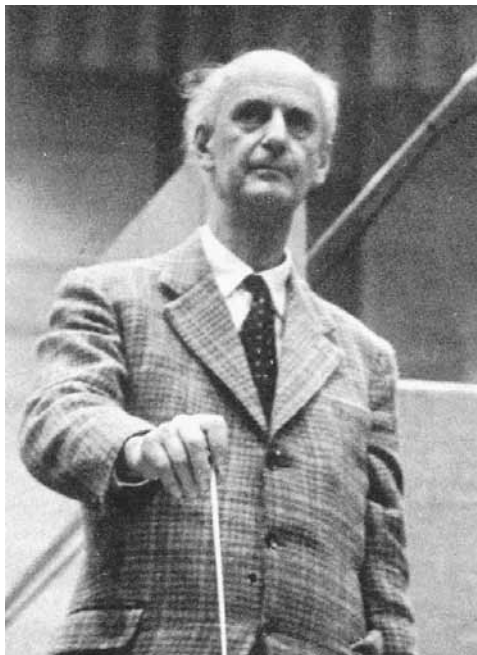
that they would gladly take down the world rather than admit to a Ponzi scheme?

Second, consider the ineluctably intertwined fates of the four voices of the beatific canonic "[Mir ist so wunderbar](#)." It is a new scene that Beethoven introduced into the libretto. Three common souls sing in canon with a fourth—and that fourth holds the intention of making history. The three decent souls sing variously of domestic happiness, of one's intended being infatuated with another, and of the need for hearts to be harmonized in marriage. However, Leonore, whose husband is unjustly imprisoned, with no hope in sight, has history thrust upon her. She, in some agony, sings of the nameless pain ("[O namenloser Pein](#)"). That the four sing the same canonic material, certainly puts into contrast her unique role and appears incongruous. Yet, as it is a canon, it promises that there is some strange underlying bond in the fates of the four.

Both the "[Augenblick](#)" (sudden moment) of evil Pizarro and the "[O namenloser Pein](#)" of Leonore become the focal points of a rather miraculous double-transformation, as the opera comes to its triumphant end. The "[Augenblick](#)" idea—here, such an ugly one—Beethoven will wholly invert into a sublime "twinkling of the eye"! And, the transformation of Leonore's nameless pain to the nameless joy ("[O namenloser Freude](#)") is the key to the opera, the work of a decent soul rising to the call of history, to whatever level is necessary to defeat evil.

Third, Beethoven's overlooked scene from a mass is first prepared by the evocative, hopeful, and yet unfulfilled scene of the "[Prisoner's Chorus](#)." It presents the audience with a mass of wretched political prisoners, finally given a breath of fresh air and sunlight—which evokes the small light of their inner humanity, not yet crushed. A more touching, inspiring, universal, and yet bittersweet scene is hard to imagine.

With this added to the audience's expanding emotional development, they hear Leonore's vow, down in



Deutsche Gramophone  
The great German conductor, Wilhelm Furtwängler: "Beethoven makes us feel a 'nostalgia of liberty' that moves us to tears."

the dungeon where Pizarro will shortly arrive to murder the prisoner:

Ah! Whoever the unhappy one  
may be,  
No weapon shall smite him!  
No, no: this feeble hand, I hope,  
Will restore him to this liberty.

Leonore has not yet been able to determine whether the prisoner for whom she is digging a grave is indeed her own husband. In a gut-wrenching situation, her agapē spills out to this poor man, even if a total stranger to her. That is, her initial courageous decision, to intervene to save her beloved husband, has brought her to an agapic moment for all mankind. The man regains consciousness, and Leonore finds

that it is indeed her dear Florestan. He is too weak to recognize the guard as his wife, but he receives bread and wine from her—in what he thinks is his final act on Earth.

Wilhelm Furtwängler, three years after the gut-wrenching Nazi assault upon German civilization, put it this way:

Certainly, *Fidelio* is not an opera in the sense we are used to, nor is Beethoven a musician for the theater, or a dramaturgist. He is quite a bit more, a whole musician, and beyond that, a saint and a visionary. That which disturbs us is not a material effect, nor the fact of the "imprisonment"; any film could create the same effect. No, it is the music, it is Beethoven himself. It is this "nostalgia of liberty" he feels, or better, makes us feel, this is what moves us to tears. His *Fidelio* has more of the Mass than of the Opera to it; the sentiments it expresses come from the sphere of the sacred, and preach a "religion of humanity" which we never found so beautiful or necessary as we do today [1948], after all we have lived through. Herein lies the singular power of this unique opera. ...

Fourth, the unrivalled finale. As Leonore releases Florestan from his chains before the whole gathering, the music stretches poignancy itself, so that time almost stops. The chains fall, and “*Augenblick*”—a glorious moment. Hearing Leonore sing a sublime “*Augenblick*” is transformative in its own sake, done in the twinkling of an eye; and doubly so, when the audience’s memory of Pizarro’s “*Augenblick*” is jerked out of that previous emotional space into the present, sublime one.

This launches a [celebratory conclusion](#). Beethoven amplifies Schiller’s treatment of the same subject:

He who a loving wife has won  
 May join our jubilation!  
 No praise too great for she  
 Who is her husband’s savior.

The first two lines—“*Wer ein holdes Weib errungen, / Stimm’ in unserm Jubel ein!*”—are a direct quote from Schiller’s poem, “*An die Freude*.”<sup>45</sup> There, Schiller invites anyone who has ever made a friend or attained a wife, or even held one soul close, to join in the universal choir of mankind.

Beethoven first has the same three common souls that, two hours earlier, sang the “*Mir ist so wunderbar*”—then, confused and disunited, but with such poignancy—now join with the governor, Don Fernando, their voices united in jubilation. They add two lines to the Schiller text, “No praise too great for she / Who is her husband’s savior.” (“*Nie wird es zu hoch besungen, / Retterin des Gatten sein*”). The four have been transformed and united by Leonore’s historic action. (The musically indicated promise of the “*Mir ist so wunder-*



Moritz von Schwind, 1870

*A scene from Fidelio, Act I: The four souls who here sing: “Mir ist so wunderbar,” are later transformed and united by Leonore’s historic act.*

bar” canon of a higher unity is lawfully and surprisingly fulfilled.) And this triggers a reverberation of the verse through the whole chorus—and, of course, the audience.

It is one thing to have a wife who loves her husband, but this has now been raised to the matter of the power of the love being the actual salvation of the husband. Agapic love, or the Creator’s love of all mankind, is what is hinted at in every true human love, but too little realized. Mankind actually fashions history as it enlarges its capacity for such true love. What makes history, it turns out, is in every one of us. And so, a republic is a work of art, one that requires the development of the sovereignty of the citizen.

These four unique moments are not offered as some sort of proof. For that, one must listen to the powerful

and tender genius of Beethoven’s musical treatment. Rather, they are offered simply to promote an insight as to what Beethoven brought to the table, after the hopes of the extension of the American Revolution had been crushed in Europe—with Act I, the two-headed monster of Jacobins and feudal oligarchs, followed by Act II, the savior-turned-beast-man. Beethoven stared into the face of what appeared as insatiable evil, took the painful reality into himself, and fashioned a powerful and beautiful cultural weapon, capable of introducing a population to its own humanity.

### Beethoven’s Gift

Donald Phau, simply and gracefully, observed what should have been obvious to anyone who is aware of the size of an elephant. What Adrienne Lafayette accomplished in real life provoked a unique work of art in Beethoven’s *Leonore* opera. In retrospect, the only difficulty is the amount of work it takes to avoid the obvious.

But, consider: Such stunningly myopic cases are all

45. Schiller’s last verse begins with: “Rescue from the tyrant’s fetters, / Mercy to the villain e’en, / Hope within the dying hours, / Pardon at the guillotine!” It is hard to imagine that the Lafayette case was not also on his mind.

around us: Vast financial Ponzi bubbles do pop. Or, when physical resources are diverted from proper sanitation and nutrition, viruses tend to grow and mutate. Or, Lyndon LaRouche really did analyze the stresses that would dismantle the gold-reserve system in 1971, that if unaddressed would express itself as global pandemics; and, though with no governmental position, both established an “Ecological Holocaust Taskforce” in 1974 to investigate the dynamics involved in leaving underdeveloped parts of the world in such an exposed condition, and testified to Congress on the work.<sup>46</sup>

Or, on a positive note, the American Revolution was not a geopolitical alternative to the British Empire, set up to compete in money-making skills; but, rather, a republic, established upon a principled basis, that required the constant upgrading of the talents of its citizens. “General welfare” actually means something, including human beings having the upper hand over viruses.

The problem, of course, is not actually recognizing an elephant to be an elephant—but what comes with

46. See the May 7, 1985 issue of *Executive Intelligence Review* for LaRouche’s “The Role of Economic Science in Projecting Pandemics.”

the recognition that one is in an unusual situation where the solution is not immediately obvious. The courage to first take in the breadth and depth of the actual situation, and the will to mobilize one’s human capacities to solve problems, some of which may never have been solved before in all human history, are key to the ability to think like Beethoven. They were key to Beethoven’s struggle to fashion a cultural weapon with an unprecedented power to strengthen the human heart and mind.

Should there be, today, any inability to recognize what Helga LaRouche has identified as the triple pandemic—the viral, the financial derivative, and the deep-seated cultural cynicism of Malthusianism, which whispers “This is Mother Nature’s way of culling the human herd”—then perhaps this is a pretty big (elephantine) marker of our present insufficiency.

However, we need not be routed. There should be no cause for panic. Perhaps a decent present for the birthday boy would involve taking him seriously. After all, he had the good grace to gift us his *Fidelio*—a gift with the power to move us from inexpressible pain to [inexpressible joy](#).

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