

I. The Power of the Sublime

SCHILLER AND THE SUBLIME

Only Classical Beauty Can Guide Our Political Pathway

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

The following is an edited transcript of the keynote address of Helga Zepp-LaRouche to the January 18, 2021 Schiller Institute Conference, “A More Perfect Union Through the Coincidence of Opposites: Martin Luther King and the American Presidency.” Her presentation followed video excerpts from Marian Anderson singing “My Country ’Tis of Thee” at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 and the National Anthem at President Eisenhower’s inauguration. Subheads and embedded links have been added. The full video of the conference is available [here](#).

I think everyone who is alive at this moment and reflects upon what we have experienced in the last days, and what we are looking towards in the next days ahead, probably somehow feels that this requires something out of the ordinary; that each of us has to find a way of invoking within ourselves that higher power you get a sense of when you listen to Marian Anderson singing—that power of beauty, that higher power of the sublime which she gets across so beautifully.

Now, what we are looking at is, indeed, something enormous. And I think no one in our lifetime has any reference for these incredible events that are unfolding before us, nor is it easy to come up with an easy recipe for how to resolve this situation, which is not just one for the United States—it affects the whole world.

It is being reported that there will be 25,000 troops in Washington for Inauguration Day on January 20. I don’t know if people have a clear understanding of the

magnitude of this: that is one and a half divisions, about half the size of the entire German combat army. According to retired Gen. Mark Hertling, in an interview with National Public Radio, this is four times the size of what the United States has deployed in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, combined. And against what? For what are these troops there? Against a so-called “insurgency.” The same General Hertling said that they are looking at



Marian Anderson performs on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Easter, 1939.

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the situation in the same way as they have looked at the insurgents in these countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.

We have all been surprised by the events of January 6. Despite the fact that there were clear warnings that there could be violent action, security was absolutely inadequate. And it is quite obvious that parallels can be drawn to both the Reichstag’s Fire in [1933] Germany, but also 9/11, which after all was the pretext for the introduction of the Patriot Act, whose consequences the



U.S. Air National Guard/Matt Hecht

Over 25,000 U.S. soldiers were deployed to Washington, D.C. for Inauguration Day, January 20, 2021. Shown are New Jersey National Guard soldiers and airmen arriving near the Capitol, January 12.

whole world is suffering from today, with the total surveillance and many other aspects of that.

What is behind all of this? Is it just what you seem to see, or is there some story behind all of that? Well, I can tell you, that there are right now massive efforts—and they’re quite open. You don’t need to believe in a conspiracy: The efforts to impose a Green New Deal on the entire Western world, and possibly lure other countries, such as Russia and China into it as well, are all out in the open. In the European Union, they already are introducing what they call the “Green Deal.” The central banks have been quite explicit that they want to have a regime change, whereby all financing only goes into Green investments. With the Biden Administration, that is what they have campaigned for; they also plan to implement the Green New Deal in the U.S.

What Is the ‘Green New Deal’?

What is this Green New Deal? In an article released just a few days ago, Eric Heymann, a senior economist at Deutsche Bank Research, commenting on the Green Deal, said that he really does not like what he calls the dishonest

debate by the European Union on this Green New Deal. It should be clear to anybody, he writes, that you can only implement this by an absolutely massive reduction in living standards, for the obvious reason, that every euro and every dollar that is invested in Green technology, means cuts in education, in healthcare, in infrastructure.

But it’s not just that. It’s even worse because the root causes of the systemic crisis of 2008 were never remedied. All the central banks did in the meantime, was to go for massive quantitative easing that favored the speculators to the disadvantage of the average family and household. The speculators have become richer, the middle class has become smaller, and the poor have increased in number.

There have been trillions of dollars of quantitative easing, creating a gigantic bubble and a frenzy about Green investment. What they are not telling people is that by going solely with Green energy—solar, wind, going out of fossil fuels, and not investing in nuclear energy—you have so reduced the energy flux density in the production process that no modern industrial nation can be maintained.

Why is this all happening? It would be so easy to go for the alternative, which was designed by Lyndon LaRouche over many decades: You would reconnect with Franklin D. Roosevelt’s real New Deal, which



President Franklin Roosevelt (seated), shares a laugh with Rep. Henry Steagall as he signs the Banking Act of 1933 (the Glass-Steagall law). Sen. Carter Glass is at left with hands in pockets.

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included a New Bretton Woods system, a new credit system which would address the incredible underdevelopment of the developing sector—the reason we have a pandemic in the first place. We could contain COVID-19 very easily, if there were a modern health-care system in every country, but this is not being done.

And it would also be easy to remedy the financial crisis, exactly as Franklin D. Roosevelt did in 1933, by implementing the Glass-Steagall law, by going back to the national banking system created by Alexander Hamilton, and was just reintroduced by Franklin D. Roosevelt with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation: All of these tools are there, and with them we could immediately start a reindustrialization of the United States and all the partners and allies around the world, and overcome the underdevelopment of the developing sector immediately.

Why do people not respond to that? Why do they drift around, like motherless children, like lost sheep, no orientation? Well, I think if you want to get out of this crisis, we have to start a serious reflection on what went wrong, how we got to this horrible point.

How We Got to this Horrible Point

Lyndon LaRouche has pointed out where it really began, which he experienced as a young man coming back from India after the Second World War. At that time, he said it was really the shift towards suburbia, when the high commitment the American people had had when they fought against the National Socialists and for the ideas of the American republic were very dear to the heart of every patriot, started to very quickly go away. It was with the move to suburbia, with the acceleration of consumerism, the flight from reality, the TV soap operas, the “entertainment,” which became more banal as the years went by, having absolutely no correspondence to reality; the engagement in spectator sports, rock videos, the increasing use of drugs.

In 1992, Lyndon LaRouche wrote an [article](#), when

he was an innocent man sitting in jail, describing the condition of the American population as rife with illusion and delusion, of collective insanity. And that was in 1992. Now, we know that that was not entirely organic: there was a lot of behavior modification, the drug use, which nowadays is legalized almost everywhere, despite the fact that there is no question about what that does to the cognitive powers of people; we know about the LSD experiments which were done by official institutions in the United States.

Then, if you look at the present condition of the pop-



Photo by David Shankbone

After World War II, many Americans, in a kind of collective insanity, abandoned the cities and flocked to suburbia.

ulation—yeah, sure, you still have some scientists who are rational. Many of them have sold their soul, because the money flows only for Green research.

In the general population, the number of people who are rational has shrunk to a scarily small portion. A lot of people believe all kinds of things, crazy things, conspiracy theories, mixing cause and effect and turning it upside down.

QAnon and ‘Apophenia’

There is a very interesting [article](#), titled “A Game Designer’s Analysis of QAnon: Playing with Reality,” which I find absolutely fascinating. It’s written by Reed Berkowitz, a designer of games, including alternate reality games. In it he says that when he looked at the

phenomenon of QAnon, he found that it has all the attributes of the kinds of games he is designing, including the factor of what is called “apophenia.” That is a notion which comes originally from psychology, and it describes a tendency to perceive connections or meaningful patterns between things which are completely unrelated or at random, and one sees clues that are not there.

Berkowitz says he recognizes in QAnon not only apophenia, but what he calls a “guided apophenia” because it is very clear that there are puppet-masters who are hinting, and sort of steering the often clueless victim to the desired conclusion; that they lay a trail, a kind of bread crumbs trail away from reality, away from the solutions, and they give pseudo-explanations and give the person the feeling that they have figured it out all by themselves, and therefore they own it, and therefore they’re absolutely convinced that their explanation is the right one.

If you look at the present, extremely confused condition of the American population, I think the role of big tech, of Silicon Valley IT firms and their control over not only the media but also the social media, is largely responsible for the present condition of the population—not to forget Hollywood, naturally.

This is a subject we have to discuss much more in the next period. These big tech companies have decided that they’re more powerful than the elected President of the United States, because they can ban him and with him, 88 million Americans from having access to what this President thinks, by putting a ban on his communications. So, we better look at that, because this is something which is going to be here, and we have to somehow figure out what to do about it; otherwise we are living in a dictatorship. There is too little time now to dwell on that more in depth.



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QAnon’s “guided apophenia” steers the victim away from reality, away from solutions.

Beauty in Classical Culture

I would like to approach this question from still another angle, and that is the question: How did America, this beautiful republic, with an absolutely outstanding Constitution, how did this republic which was a beacon of hope and a temple of liberty, how did it come to this point? And maybe it is of some help that I asked myself that same question many years ago: how was it possible that Germany, which produced one of the highest cultures—I would say, one of the very, very highest cultures—of any nation on the planet, with the Classical culture of Bach, of Beethoven, of many other Classical composers; of Schiller and many other poets; of some of most creative scientists, discoverers, and thinkers: How was it possible that Germany could plunge into the abyss of twelve

years of National Socialism?

There are obviously differences and I’m not saying this is exactly the same. However, some of the mechanisms and some of the principles are quite parallel and therefore may give a clue of how one can fall from extremely high development to something which is almost the opposite. This evokes the famous prophetic statement of Benjamin Franklin in which he answered a question by saying that the United States now had “a republic, if you keep can keep it.”

Germany in the period of Beethoven and Schiller had developed what was up to then, the highest form of the Classical culture—Classical music and Classical poetry. That had a lot to do with the standard of Classical composition in both music and poetry, the question of the role of beauty, the role of the standard of the artist, and the idea that it is only the beauty of great Classical art which makes man free.

As Schiller said in the introduction to his drama *The Bride of Messina*, he is not talking about outer freedom,

but rather the inner freedom of thought, that inner freedom which makes people free in an individual sense, that kind of inner freedom, which each individual can develop within themselves. Schiller discussed the standard of emotional quality of this Classical art, in his [essay](#), “On Grace and Dignity”:

Love alone, therefore, is a free emotion, for her pure source flows from the seat of freedom, from our divine nature. Here it is not the petty and low which mingle with the great and high, not sense, which gazes dizzily aloft at the law of reason; it is the absolutely grand itself, which finds itself imitated in grace and dignity, and satisfied in sensuousness, it is the Legislator himself, the God in us, who plays with his own image in the world of sense.

The idea of beauty which Schiller had, and there was his big difference with Immanuel Kant. Kant said that you can't define beauty. Beauty is completely arbitrary: It is something which one cannot ever establish in a reasonable way. Schiller was very, very upset about that, and he developed much of his entire aesthetical theoretical works against Kant. In the 10th of the *Aesthetical Letters*, he writes:

The pure rational concept of beauty, if such a thing may be adduced, can be drawn from no actual case. Rather does it itself correct and guide our judgment concerning every actual



From a print in the British Museum
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) playing an organ circa 1725.

and move the audience, he must purify himself to be an ideal man, at least in that moment of performance.

case. It must, therefore, be sought along the path of abstraction, but it can be inferred simply from the possibility of a nature that is both sensuous and rational. In a word, beauty must be exhibited as a necessary condition of humanity.

Now that notion, that “beauty is a necessary condition” of man, if man is to survive, is a very important idea, which Schiller developed in many of his writings. That is why he also had an extremely high standard for the artist, about whom he said:

Before the artist can dare to stand in front of his audience

and stand in front of his audience

and stand in front of his audience



Bronze statue by Ernst Reitschel, 1857
Monument to the poets Johann Wolfgang Goethe (left) and Friedrich Schiller; in Weimar, Germany.

I think you have seen this in Marian Anderson: The reason she touches the heart, in all this simplicity, but incredible beauty, is because she is such a beautiful soul in the moment she sings. She was a beautiful soul beyond that, but when she was singing, she got across this quality of the “beautiful soul,” which according to Schiller, is a person for whom, reason and freedom, passion and necessity, are the same. Because he or she has educated his or her emotions up to the level of reason so that he or she can blindly follow these emotions because they would never tell anything different than reason commands.

In his [essay](#), “On Matthison’s Poems,” Schiller writes:

Two qualities are therefore indispensable in every work of art: a necessary relationship to its object, i.e., objective truth, and second, a necessary relationship between that object or its description, and the emotional faculties (i.e., subjective universality). Everything in a poem must be true nature, since the imaginative powers obey no other law, and tolerate no other compulsion, than that which the natural order prescribes; but also, nothing in a poem must be actual (historical) nature, since all actuality imposes some sort of restriction upon that universal natural truth. Every individual human being is less human, to the extent that he is a mere individual; every type of emotion ceases to be necessary and purely human, insofar as it remains peculiar to a particular person. Only by discarding what is accidental and by expressing unalloyed necessity, do we develop true greatness of style.



Louis Amy Blanc, 1861

Friedrich Schiller: "Beauty must be exhibited as a necessary condition of humanity."

I cannot do justice to all aspects of what constitutes true Classical art. I can only say that in the periods when Schiller and Goethe worked on aesthetic laws, they established something which is as universal as scientific laws. Lyndon LaRouche has said many times that unless we get the population back to think that way, there is little hope that we can save civilization.

Now, if you look at what happened to that beautiful outlook of the German classical period, it's parallel to what happened in the United States in the political realm. And in Germany, it was the Romantic movement which started to take apart this form. It was such people, such Romantics as Novalis, Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who began it—probably for their own reasons in the beginning—but were then promoted with the rise of Metternich after the restoration of the French monarchy.

They began to take apart and destroy the Classical form. And they began by replacing the idea that art is

only art when it is beautiful. More and more art became not beauty, but the interesting and the not interesting, what is interesting today, is boring tomorrow. So, it has to be more interesting. It has to challenge the senses more, to move away more from the strict, thorough composition of the poetic or musical idea. Go into a mixture between day and dream. Art no longer has a clear end but becomes a kind of endless soap opera. Just take every form apart. Introduce a little bit of ugliness, because ugly is interesting. In a later phase they even introduced the explicit cult of ugliness.

And this started a long series, going down all the way to the modern art destructionists, in which standards no longer exist, and everything is completely destroyed.

A Need for the Sublime

We can begin to undo all of this by reconnecting to the highest forms of Classical art in all cultures. But we need something else. We need another concept introduced by Schiller, his notion of the Sublime. Schiller developed this notion in a more powerful form than any other

writer I know. I encourage you to read the two works by Schiller about the Sublime, "[On the Sublime](#)," and "[Of the Sublime](#)—Toward the Further Elaboration of Some Kantian Ideas." These works are extremely helpful for the moment we face today.

He discusses how to develop this inner strength. We, as mortal human beings with a physical element to our existence, are not that physically strong. Any large animal, an elephant, a bear, is stronger than a human being. So, if we are threatened in our physical existence, there is not much inherent in our physicality that gives us safety. Schiller develops the idea that if we manage to connect our deeper identity to those ideals which go beyond our mortal existence and are connected to the higher causes of humanity. Then the constant fears that may be associated with threats to our physical existence, go away in a certain sense. Those fears are replaced by a moral security.

Now, in this moment, in which no one knows what

will happen, we face an incredible danger, and not merely in one country. We are really facing the danger of fascism, akin to that which was initiated by Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's finance minister. He introduced fascism based on a specific economic system, which ground up the labor force, and ended up, in its last form in the forced labor and extermination of concentration camps.

Today, this takes a different form. Here is not the place to discuss the economics further. However, I think that the question of how to deal with such truly frightening threats, requires this inner quality that all of us need to strengthen, which is the Sublime. The Sublime and Beauty are the two things we can find in great art. This is what brings together the great work of Marian Anderson, of Martin Luther King. It inspired Albert Einstein. It inspired my late husband Lyndon LaRouche.

In this period, we must put ourselves on this elevated level. We are strong only if we try to live in the realm of the Sublime, and if we do not allow any thoughts other than beautiful thoughts, thoughts and emotions that are identical with the idea of Love and Love for mankind. Other thoughts and emotions, such as rage, or being driven by a certain sentimentality, can be manipulated. This is the antidote; this is inner freedom that I have been talking about.

Sehnsucht

I now want to present one of the really beautiful [poems](#) by Schiller, which was then put to music by Schubert. It's called *Sehnsucht (Longing)*, and you should look at the lyrics. It's a metaphor: it talks about being in a dark valley, not knowing where the exit is from this very, very uncomfortable place. And then the mind wanders and all of a



After a portrait by Gottlieb Doebler
Immanuel Kant: The definition of beauty cannot ever be established in a reasonable way.

sudden, you see beautiful pictures, beautiful landscapes, golden fruits, beautiful flowers which do not die because no winter can ever hurt them. And this is a beautiful description.

But then, a terrible, wild river comes in between, and you cannot reach these beautiful hills and mountains and flowers, and you are really totally upset. But then, you see a small boat, which could bring you across the river, but there is nobody to guide you, no boatman. And then, he says, "But you must be courageous. You

must believe, because only your courage can bring you to the beautiful wonderland."

Now, this is a very, very beautiful poem; it's an extremely beautiful song, and as I said, it's a metaphor: Because, what is this valley? What are these beautiful flowers? It's the creative process. It's the idea that you can have a crisis, you can be in a terrible situation, and then you must have a vision, you must have the beautiful image of what the poets describe, those beautiful visions of the future of mankind. But then, you have a crisis: This is the river which comes in between, and you almost give up, but then you



Franz Gareis
Friedrich von Schlegel



Adolf Hohnack
August Wilhelm von Schlegel

make a courageous step and you start to implement your beautiful ideas, and then you get exactly where your mind determines you have to be. So, it's in one sense literal, but it's much more than literal, and that's the nature of poetry, that it has a message which goes

Longing

Oh! if only, from this valley's depths,
Oppressed by cold mist,
I could find the way out—
Oh! How fortunate I would feel!
Yonder I spy beautiful hillsides,
Ever young and ever green!
If only I had pinions, had wings,
I'd fly over to those hills.

I hear the ringing of harmonies,
Tones of sweet, heavenly calm,
And the gentle breezes carry
Scents of balsam over to me.
I see gold fruits glowing,
Beckoning from the dark foliage,
And the flowers that blossom there
Will be no winter's victim.

Oh! How beautiful things must be
There in the eternal sunshine,
And the air on those peaks,
Oh! How refreshing it must be!
But the raging river bars me,
Angrily rushing in-between.
Its waves tower so mightily
That my soul is filled with horror.

I see a little bark teetering,
But oh! the helmsman is missing!
Quickly in there, without hesitation,
And its sails are filled with life.
You must believe, you must dare,
For the gods give no guarantee;
Only a miracle can carry you
Into the beautiful land of miracle.

way beyond what the words are saying. So now we should listen to it.

[Sung in German by the Schiller Institute Music Director, John Sigerson]

Sehnsucht

Ach, aus dieses Tales Gründen,
Die der kalte Nebel drückt,
Könnt ich doch den Ausgang finden,
Ach wie fühlt' ich mich beglückt!
Dort erblick' ich schöne Hügel,
Ewig jung und ewig grün!
Hätt' ich Schwingen, hätt' ich Flügel,
Nach den Hügeln zög' ich hin.

Harmonieen hör' ich klingen,
Töne süßer Himmelsruh',
Und die leichten Winde bringen
Mir der Düfte Balsam zu,
Goldne Früchte seh' ich glühen
Winkend zwischen dunkelm Laub,
Und die Blumen, die dort blühen,
Werden keines Winters Raub.

Ach wie schön muß sich's ergehen
Dort im ew'gen Sonnenschein,
Und die Luft auf jenen Höhen
O wie labend muß sie sein!
Doch mir wehrt des Stromes Toben,
Der ergrimmt dazwischen braust,
Seine Wellen sind gehoben,
Daß die Seele mir ergraut.

Einen Nachen seh' ich schwanken,
Aber ach! der Fährmann fehlt.
Frisch hinein und ohne Wanken,
Seine Segel sind beseelt.
Du mußt glauben, du mußt wagen,
Denn die Götter leih'n kein Pfand,
Nur ein Wunder kann dich tragen
In das schöne Wunderland.