

Music, Judaism, and Hitler

The following statement was issued personally by Presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., on Sept. 3, 1999, through his campaign committee, LaRouche's Committee for a New Bretton Woods.

* * *

On the account of what is commonly called today, the Nazi regime's Holocaust against the Jews of Germany, Poland, and elsewhere, there is an overdue debt to be paid. I submit herewith the bill demanding the payment of that debt.

The greatest contributions of the Jew to European civilization, was the movement generated by the work of one of the greatest individual geniuses of modern (extended) European civilization as a whole, Moses Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn was not merely a Jew who contributed to modern civilization; he was a leading, integral part of the late-Eighteenth-century revolution, without which there would have been no modern European science, no modern Classical musical or other artistic composition, and without which freedom and the Federal Constitution would not have been possible.

Not only did Moses Mendelssohn, as a German, play a leading role in creating modern Germany and modern European civilization of the Eighteenth century onward; as a German of Orthodox Jewish faith, he, like Martin Luther King in our own time, freed the Jew by freeing the German to become part of an ecumenical system of justice under the supreme rule of nothing but reason itself. In that process, he mobilized from among German Jews, and, by implication, the Yiddish Renaissance of Poland, Ukraine, and Russia, to make a contribution to modern civilization way beyond all proportion to their relative numbers among the populations within which they lived as part.

Thus, that German Jew, complemented by the forces of the Yiddish Renaissance, is an expression of the soul of the Jew: In the simultaneity of eternity, the Yiddish Renaissance of Germany and Eastern Europe bequeathed to posterity great gifts to which posterity must turn fond attention whenever the name of "Jew" is spoken. With that, every Christian bearing the legacy of Augustine must concur. To deny the Jews hated by Adolf Hitler their claim to that honor, is to subject those who suffered to a virtual second Holocaust, a holocaust of deadly silence, a virtual denial that those millions of victims ever existed except as a mass of nameless dead.

The factual point to be made on this account, is illustrated with the greatest force by one of the most characteristic features of the musical work of Moses Mendelssohn and members of his extended family in Germany and Austria. All that we have today of Johann Sebastian Bach and such direct followers of Bach's as Wolfgang Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, and others, was the direct result of the active role of the extended Mendelssohn family in that family's rescue of Bach's work from virtual oblivion, and that family's direct collaboration with the greatest musical composers of the late Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries.

For example, when Felix Mendelssohn's friend Robert Schumann visited the home of Franz Schubert's brother, the brother gave Schumann the manuscript of Schubert's great symphony, the C Major Ninth. Schumann delivered this to Felix Mendelssohn, the grandson of Moses Mendelssohn, who gave the work its first performance. Schubert, like Beethoven, was a follower of Friedrich Schiller in the matter of the philosophy of poetry and musical composition, which both explicitly preferred to Goethe. Schubert, like Mozart, was a collaborator of the extended family of Moses Mendelssohn in musical and other matters. Schubert contributed a key part in the development of the musical Jewish liturgy. Earlier, Mozart had been a protégé of the Austrian Emperor Joseph II, who pioneered in establishing Jewish political citizenship rights in Europe. There is no part of the leading Classical literary and musical culture of the German-speaking world without the leading role contributed by Moses Mendelssohn and his extended family.

Look to the rosters of not only the leading performing musicians of Nineteenth- and early-Twentieth-century Germany, for example, and note the disproportionately large representation of outstanding German Jewish professionals, for example. Look at the tradition, among violinists, and others of the legacy of Beethoven's collaborator, Boehm, and the legacy of the Boehm-Joachim-Flesch tradition and its impact upon musical excellence over nearly two centuries to date. Accept with silence, Hitler's intent to wipe the contributions of these Jews to Europe from memory, and you have killed the victims in a second holocaust, a holocaust of silence, to make it appear that they had never lived.

A related point must be made for the case of German-speaking contributions to modern science. Look among the roster of pre-Hitler German scientists of note. It was the legacy of Gotthold Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn, who defended not only the musical compositional principles of J.S. Bach, but also the principle of reason in science itself, from the sterility of the Eighteenth-century Enlightenment. This made possible the science of Gauss, Riemann, and others. Look at key figures such as AEG industrialists Emil and Walter Rathenau.

Even the German General Staff's existence was greatly indebted to the Moses Mendelssohn, who advised Count Wilhelm Schaumburg-Lippe on the design of educational program which produced the great Gerhard Scharnhorst. It was the counsel of Mendelssohn which led to the development of the policy of *Auftragstaktik*, which supplied the German military its man-for-man superiority continued through World War II. Yes, the German military of that period failed to stop Hitler while they still could, during the crucial period of 1932-1933, but in that they failed to meet the standard set by Scharnhorst and the other great reformers of the 1806-1813 period, who acted according to precisely that moral standard which the German military leaders of 1932-1933 failed to meet.

Look similarly to the legacy of the Yiddish Renaissance in Eastern Europe.

We can not allow 2,000 years of Jewish survival in Europe to be buried under the faceless stone epitaph which speaks only of a bare 12-odd years of Hitler's Holocaust. Shall we remember the honorable living, or shall we think only of the ogre who tormented and murdered them, instead? What sort of justice for martyrs, is that?

Indeed, when all leading factors are taken into account, a free and unified Germany could never have been brought into being but for the crucial role of those German Jews who followed in the footsteps of Moses Mendelssohn.

In the case of our ally Germany today, we see that Germany can never be truly freed from the legacy of Hitler's crimes, until the contributions of German Jews, in particular, are celebrated as an integral part of the honorable history of Germany. Otherwise, how could a Germany claim its own true identity in history? Is it not time that Germany be allowed to do just that? How long shall we, in the U.S.A., pretend that the European Jews of Germany and elsewhere, did not actually exist as anything but the virtually nameless, faceless victims of an Adolf Hitler?

Yes, Hitler killed millions of Jews (among his numerous other victims), but how many today, in the name of the Holocaust, subject those victims to a second holocaust, by implicitly effacing the faces of the victims even from their

own tombstones? The only remedy for that orgy of hatred, is to supplant it with loving regard for the honorable preciousness of those victims' lives for the nation of which they had been a part, and which they had served so well. To give justice, is to give justice to the victim, to honor the victim of injustice for his or her contributions to society, to mankind, and even to honor what they might have accomplished had they not been ground into ashes by injustice. Unless we remove the fishbone of blind hatred from our gullets, and celebrate the honor of the victims instead, the possibility of justice anywhere on this planet remains in jeopardy.

For example, with the establishment of a new Ehud Barak government in Israel, we have again the possibility of a just solution for the prolonged Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East. Prime Minister Barak carries the legacy of Moses Mendelssohn from Europe to the Middle East. His enterprise is threatened both from within the region, and by diabolical meddlers from outside it. His effort is besieged by the apostles of hatred within Israel, and by the fires of hatred stoked among Palestinians and other Arabs over the entirety of the existence of modern Israel, and even earlier.

In this situation, nothing is more specifically appropriate to the Middle East situation than the memory of the wisdom of the great Moses Mendelssohn, who remained always an Orthodox Jew, but whose ecumenical doctrine of reason, is the only formula for securing a durable peace among those who have been embittered combatants for these many decades.

The danger is, that looking back to the period from the Versailles Treaty to Hitler's accession to power, we must recognize that, today, once again, we have come into a period of such widespread, almost global cultural pessimism as we have not seen since that epidemic of cultural pessimism which produced the Hitler movement. Today, looking at each of the nations around the world, we find, in most cases, that each population has lately descended to a moral condition worse than at any time since the close of World War II.

There can be no remedy for such a state of affairs, but to bury a sea of hatred under an ocean of love. The place from which such a needed initiative must come, is the United States, especially from the President of these United States which were created to provide the spark for a community of principle among all mankind.

The Summer 1999 issue of Fidelio features an extensive report on the life and work of the German-Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn.

EDITORIAL