

→ COMMENTARY ←

‘Seize the High Ground of Independent Power’

Lyndon LaRouche replies to a question concerning ‘justice vs. revenge’

On May 10, 2002, Lyndon LaRouche responded to the following question concerning “justice vs. revenge,” which had been e-mailed to his 2004 Presidential campaign website, larouchein2004.com.

* * *

Question: This is a question that others may be asking themselves: Why should we, the have-nots, spend five minutes working to save a system that has done nothing but exploit us for our entire lives? If we bring a Roosevelt-style reform to the U.S.A. and the world, then all bets are off, and then we save the *status quo*, and go back to our slaveocracy? Sometimes you must take the victories where you can get them, for example with reparations, as opposed to the big pie-in-the-sky of justice for all, once the white man at the top saves his own bacon.

Isn't the battle that is winnable, preferable to the unwinnable—even if the principle isn't 100 percent correct?

Reply: Your message is brief, but extremely pregnant. Many issues, and sub-issues, are each and all peeking out from among the cracks in your formulations. The issue you pose is an important one, although multi-faceted. Therefore I takes pains to make clear both the issues posed, and the nature of their solutions.

From the start, there are three distinct, but intertwined, categorical mistakes in your argument. First, you express the pessimism of “since we are continually betrayed, we will always be betrayed.” This is not a good way to march to battle. Second, you are simply reacting against certain actualities in a linear way, as if there were only one system operating behind them. Third, you are drawing back from seeing the pathway to victory, which closes the cycle with the reenforced pessimism of saying, “You see; we were always betrayed;



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“Lincoln’s elimination of the British puppet known as the Confederacy from the territory of the United States, made a revolution which accomplished nothing not implicitly prescribed by the highest authority within our Constitution, its Preamble.”

Above: President Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address.

therefore, we will be betrayed.”

The good news, is that you wrote to me; which means you have not given up hope that perhaps a solution might be found, somewhere. If that was your intention, you were right.

On the first mistake: Pessimism is the inevitable effect of the second assumption, that there is only one power at work in the overall actuality; your pessimistic reaction is to the sense of being trapped in the second assumption; what traps you in the pessimism of the second assumption, is writing off the possibility of other systems operating in the situation. Then, the resulting pessimism so induced, traps you into reacting to the second assumption. Except, you have not absolutely excluded the possibility of a way out of that trap, which is the good news.

Take the case of the commitment to seeking “reparations,” which is asking to be “bought off,” instead of securing a system of freedom and justice. If “reparations” were made as a concession, which is immensely to be doubted, the result

would be a strengthening of the invisible, but powerful shackles of one’s own embrace of slavery. On the subject of “reparations”: The enemy often uses similar bait to hook fish. “Take a sweet taste of my bait,” as the prostitutes used to say, and, as it was said in the days before antibiotics, “One hour with Venus and a lifetime with Mercury.” One free dinner, and they own you for life.

Slavery in the Americas

There is a crucial lesson to be learned from exposing the fraudulent nature of today’s commonplace academic argument on the subject of the view of slavery among the authors of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, of the Constitution, and, later, the often fraudulent gossip to the effect that Abraham Lincoln was not morally an opponent of slavery.*

* On this, see the review of *Lincoln’s Virtues, An Ethical Biography*, p. 103, this issue.—Ed.

The actuality of these cases provides an important lesson in the realities of winning the cause of freedom. This example exposes more clearly the problem of method expressed in your message.

Look at the history of slavery in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century U.S. North America as a paradigm for the general problem we face still inside the U.S.A. today. The traffic of captured African slaves into the Americas was the successive and combined practice of the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and English/British monarchies. At the close of the Eighteenth century, the British East India Company decided that the slave-traffic was less profitable than the opium trade, so they effectively sub-contracted the slave-trade to Portuguese and Spanish traders, with French participation from the Caribbean side. From about the 1820's, there was a vast expansion of slavery in the U.S.A., with an accompanying reopening of the scope of the slave-trade under the Democratic Party of Andrew Jackson, Martin van Buren, Polk, Pierce, and Buchanan. During this period, the British pretended to be anti-slave-trade, while the British monarchy simply sub-contracted the British-protected transport of captured African

slaves, as a business concession awarded to the Spanish monarchy, which eagerly accepted the arrangement.

Come the middle of the Eighteenth century. Slavery existed in the American colonies, and had a strong base of political support in two of these colonies, South Carolina and Georgia. In Virginia, there was a strong impulse on all leading American patriots, to use victory in the struggle for independence, as the occasion for a generalized manumission of slaves. This division is reflected in Constitutional provisions fought out during 1787-1789.

What was the Constitutional problem, prior to approximately 1820? How does this compare with the kindred problem faced by President Abraham Lincoln during 1861-1863? How did the 1877 compromise lead to the introduction of "Jim Crow" by means of later two Presidencies, of Democratic candidate Grover Cleveland, and to the revival of the Ku Klux Klan by sitting U.S. President Woodrow Wilson? This is a crucial lesson in the principles of real-life history, a lesson which is rarely understood even among academic specialists today. It is a lesson which all of the opponents, and most among the leading successors of the Rev. Martin Luther King, either never learned, or

did not comprehend its meaning for practice.

Slavery was not merely a legal form of property under the British monarchy. The spread of the pro-"slavery-as-property" ideology of English philosophical liberal John Locke, during the 1688-1689 transition of the English throne to the East India Company tyranny of William of Orange, produced a wave of moral decadence in the North American colonies. Under the galloping decadence of the new, British monarchy, beginning 1714, Britain of the famous liberal "Age of Walpole" was swept by waves of moral degeneracy, from the top down. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, are allegorical portraits of the decadence of Britain then. Hogarth's drawings depict that Liberalism, variously in action, or stupefied into a state of inaction. Cotton Mather depicts the spill-over of this into English-speaking North America.

For comparison, see slavery and related practices in the Ibero-American colonies of Spain and Brazil. In Mexico, for example, Spanish authorities created vast estates, virtual empires, reducing much of the large indigenous Mexican population to serfdom.

Thus, at every point in the history of the Americas, the precondition for freeing the serfs and slaves of the Americas, was a revolutionary break with the so-called "mother country," expelling reactionary dogmas, such as Locke's "Life, Liberty, and Property," from the status of laws embedded in recognized property-right (i.e., "shareholder value"). This meant that the possibility of freeing serfs and slaves, required, in every case, a "revolutionary" overthrow of the existing legal system of government. This must be done, either by the government's institution of a constitutional reform of the standards for definition of law, or an overturn of the government which refused to make such constitutional reforms.

To accomplish the result, a reform, such as generalized manumission, were not a true solution. There must be the force of law. This meant, that the slaves in English-speaking North America would never be free, unless either the



"The untimely death of Franklin Roosevelt, enabled Roosevelt foes organized around the Churchill gang to begin reversing the New Deal from almost the moment the news of Roosevelt's death reached Washington."

Above: *President Roosevelt presents "The Four Freedoms."*

British monarchy nullified retroactively the existence of a property-right in slaves, or the Spanish monarchy, for example, nullified those claims to property-right which defined the economic and related conditions of a serfdom-like system.

What kind of a system of law were required to accomplish this? What kind of government did that imply?

Sovereignty As a System of Law

Despite the accomplishments of the Classical Greece of Pythagoras, Thales, Solon, and Plato, there is no credible evidence of the existence of anything like a modern nation-state existing prior to the Fifteenth-century Renaissance. All known earlier forms of society had been premised on the assumption of either preying upon those to be hunted down as beast-like human cattle, or exploited as herded human cattle. Despite the commitment to the principle of the general welfare (called “*agapē*” in Greek) by Plato and his current in ancient Classical society, and despite the insistence on *agapē* as the higher principle of law in 1 Corinthians 13 and other Apostolic texts, no nation based on a commitment to promote the general welfare of all of the people and their posterity existed prior to Fifteenth-century developments to this effect. There is no possibility of a secure form of justice for any people, in any society, unless that principle is the highest authority, reigning over all other law.

Therefore, to accomplish any good for all of the people, there must first be an empowered, sovereign nation-state republic which is efficiently committed to act according to that principle of the general welfare, both in matters within the nation, and in relations with other nations. With the circles of Benjamin Franklin, the creation of the sovereign United States created an instrument with the characteristics and potential authority needed to, as it is said, “do the job required.” Similarly, Lincoln’s elimination of the British puppet known as the Confederacy from the territory of the United States, made a revolution which accomplished nothing not implicitly prescribed by the highest authority within our Constitution, its Preamble.

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‘The retirement of Eisenhower and assassination of two Kennedys and Martin Luther King, brought the Civil Rights movement’s progress to a halt, and cleared the way for the Nixon and Carter administrations.’ Above: President John F. Kennedy, with his brother Attorney General Robert Kennedy.

Contrast that Preamble with the pro-racist, Lockean Preamble of the Confederate Constitution, to see the point more clearly. Also, Lincoln’s use of the defeat of the Confederacy as the basis for kicking the French military forces supporting the fascist dictator of Mexico, Maximilian, out of the Hemisphere, eliminated two Anglo-French-Spanish-supported fascist gangs, the quasi-Napoleonic Confederacy and Maximilian’s essentially Carlist regime, from the territory of North America.

Unfortunately, Lincoln’s assassination by a network of British agents and their accomplices, directed from London and Habsburg Rome, enabled the New York gang of Lincoln’s financier adversaries to undermine and begin to reverse his successful revolution. So, the untimely death of Franklin Roosevelt, enabled Roosevelt foes organized around the “Churchill gang,” to begin reversing “the New Deal” from almost the moment the news of Roosevelt’s death reached Washington. Similarly, the retirement of Eisenhower and assassination of two Kennedys and Martin Luther King, brought the Civil Rights movement’s progress to a halt, and cleared the way for the Nixon and Carter administrations.

Against that historical backdrop,

the lesson to be learned, is that organizing the struggle primarily around a populist-style of collection of so-called “issues,” is a course of action which, left to itself, ensures the easy defeat of the entire cause. What will prove to be decisive, is the commitment and capacity of leaders to implant a comprehension of the central issues of political power which subsume the other issues. To do good, in spite of a system which opposes such actions, one must seize the high ground of independent power to overcome the opposition. What change in the composition of power must be effected, to accomplish the kind of just result required, even in face of an existing stubborn opposition to that result?

Unfortunately, if the nature of that task is not clear, not controlling in the mind of the would-be leader, and of the movement, the result will be a well-meaning disaster.

I think I understand these matters as well as, or better than any other political leader alive today. My most important remaining chore, therefore, is to impart a feeling for that kind of knowledge to those who may be able to contribute to forming a broad-based effort in support of that intention.

—Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.