'Man Measures His Intellect Through the Power of His Works'

How Nicolaus of Cusa's revolution in the Platonic Christian concept of natural law laid the basis for the Renaissance invention of the modern nation-state

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Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna

"Abraham's Sacrifice."

In his essay entitled "The Truth About Temporal Eternity" (*Fidelio,* Vol. III, No. 2, Summer 1994), Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. identifies what he describes as the "subjective" quality which sparked the Fifteenth-Century Golden Renaissance beginning with the 1439-40 ecumenical Council of Florence:

> The central feature of the growth unleashed so uniquely by the Golden Renaissance's influence, has been the establishment of a new kind of political institutions, the institutions of a system of sovereign nation-state republics, each based upon a literate form of a popular language, and all dedicated, in their internal affairs and relations with other states, to a form of *natural law* which is traced historically through St. Augustine's writings, and reaffirmed by Gottfried Leibniz. The Renaissance's rich comprehension of such natural law also defined the notion of science in a new way.
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> This new form of political institution, wherever it emerged, was committed, inclusively, to fostering those beneficial changes in individual and national practice which are made available to mankind through fundamental scientific progress. It was this coincidence of natural law with both the new notion of a sovereign nation-state republic, and a consistent notion of physical science, which has caused the increase of the total human population from the several hundred millions maximum of times prior to A.D. 1400, to over five billions today, and potentially to a technologically-determined, and rising level of more than twenty-five billions.

Biblical scenes by Rembrandt highlight transformations in man's understanding of natural law.

In a more recent essay, "How Bertrand Russell Became an Evil Man" (*Fidelio,* Vol. III, No. 3, Fall 1994), LaRouche further identifies the three institutional features interdependently characteristic of the Renaissance, which Venice and its oligarchical allies have attempted to suppress:

> (1) the Renaissance's replacement of a system of nested covenants and fealties (the imperial form of society) by a form of sovereign nation-state republic based upon a Platonic Christian notion of intelligibility of natural law; (2) the principle of the new state's function of fostering generalized scientific and related progress in knowledge and improved practice; (3) the notion of intelligibility of the laws of the universe to persons, through the development of that divine spark of reason which is the aspect of man in the image of God: both *imago Dei* and *capax Dei.*

The purpose of this study is to show the importance of re-establishing natural law principles for humanity's ability to survive the current global crisis. I will demonstrate how the Fifteenth-Century cardinal and scientist Nicolaus of Cusa (1401-64) developed the concept of national sovereignty and representative government based upon a revolution in the traditional notion of natural law inherited from St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, a revolution effected by Cusanus' emphasis upon creative reason as the unique and distinguishing characteristic according to which man is the "living image of God" (*imago viva Dei*) and has the capacity to be a "human god" and a "second creator" (*capax Dei*).

Whereas St. Thomas Aquinas, in his elaboration of the Augustinian concept of natural law, had emphasized the deduction of moral precepts from the Decalogue, Nicolaus of Cusa developed and emphasized the intelligible implications of man's capacity for creativity, the intellectual activity that coheres with the loving emotion of *agapē*. It was from this very starting point that Nicolaus of Cusa was to found modern physical science in his mathematical and philosophical works, laying the basis in the Golden Renaissance for mankind's progress over the next 550 years.

This concept of natural law is coherent with Lyndon LaRouche's physical scientific notion of not-entropy, which contains the necessity of scientific and technological progress—a necessity expressed in the Biblical injunction to "be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth," itself an expression of the commandments to love God and one's fellow man.

For the purpose of this study I intend to focus, first, on the concept of natural law as it was first developed by St. Augustine and elaborated by St. Thomas Aquinas. This school of natural law can best be described as Platonic Christian, because, following Plato, it derives natural law from eternal law, based on the idea that since man is created in the image of God, through the right use of reason he can bring his practice into harmony with God's eternal law. The discussion will then be broadened by reference to the writings of Cusanus and of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), the universal genius of the Seventeenth Century.

The Platonic Christian concept of natural law, as developed by Augustine, Aquinas, Cusanus, and Leibniz, is in stark contrast to the Aristotelian concept of natural law espoused by such Venetian-allied Enlightenment writers on questions of human society, government, national sovereignty, and international law as John Locke (1632-1704) and Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) of England, Samuel Pufendorf (1632-94) of Germany, and Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) of the Netherlands. Although often falsely credited as the initiators of the republican principles upon which the American Revolution was carried out, this school put forward theories of government whose axioms defined man as an animal, and man's natural state as that of warfare of each against all—precisely the oligarchic principles rejected by the American Founding Fathers when they established the first representative self-government ever put into practice in man's history.

St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, And the Concept of Natural Law

As St. Thomas Aquinas acknowledges in his "Treatise on Law," the Christian concept of natural law was first developed by St. Augustine in his dialogue *On the Free Choice of the Will.* In this dialogue, Augustine, who was a student of Plato, followed the latter in distinguishing between the eternal law of God, which is changeless, and man-made laws, which are changeable, but which are nonetheless subject to the eternal law. Thus Augustine writes: "It is from this eternal law that men have derived whatever is just and lawful in the temporal law."

In a work entitled "Eighty-three Different Questions," Augustine writes: "Ideas are the primary forms or the permanent and immutable reasons of real things and they are not themselves formed; so they are, as a consequence, eternal and ever the same in themselves, and they are contained in the divine intelligence." In the *Summa Theologica,* Aquinas concurs: "Ideas are types existing in the divine mind, as is clear from Augustine."

Since man is created in the image of God and all of creation derives its existence from participation in the eternal ideas of the Creator, man himself is able to create tempo-

ral, i.e., man-made laws in harmony with eternal law, through the exercise of the eternal law impressed upon his own mind.

As Augustine says in *On the Free Choice of the Will,* the eternal law "is impressed upon our nature." Thus, "... when reason, or mind, or spirit, rules over the irrational movements of the soul, then that is in control in man which ought to be, by virtue of that law which we found to be eternal." Hence, what Augustine means by natural law is the eternal law impressed upon our nature as creatures endowed with reason. Man is acting in harmony with natural law if he loves eternal things rather than temporal things. Natural law is thus derived from eternal law and is discerned through the right use of reason.

The love of temporal things, i.e., of the creature rather than the Creator, contrary to the right use of reason, is a violation of natural law and therefore leads necessarily to unhappiness, both for the individual and for the society which is so ordered. For if all men loved only eternal things based on the right use of reason, there would be no need for temporal (man-made) law—that is, the laws governing the daily life of society—as this is required only to restrain the actions of those men who, contrary to the right use of reason, love temporal things. And thus, temporal law

> imposes restraint through fear and accomplishes its purpose by constantly harassing the souls of unhappy men for whose government it has been designed. As long as they fear to lose these goods, they practice a kind of moderation in their use capable of holding together a society that can be formed from men of this stamp. The law does not punish the sin committed by loving these things, but the crime of taking them from others unjustly.

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"Adam and Eve."

This Augustinian concept of law is elaborated by St. Thomas Aquinas in his "Treatise on Law" in the *Summa Theologica*. Like Augustine, Aquinas argues that eternal law is the type of the Divine Wisdom." Aquinas continues:

> Since all things subject to Divine Providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law . . ., it is evident that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, insofar as, namely, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends. Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine Providence in the most excellent way, insofar as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others. Therefore, it has a share of the Eternal Reason, by which it has a natural inclination to its due act and end; and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law.

On this basis, Aquinas argues that the light of natural reason is "an imprint on us of the Divine Light" and that "natural law is nothing else than the rational creature's participation of the eternal law."

Thus, for both Augustine and Aquinas, the concept of natural law derives from the fact that man is *imago Dei,* the image of God, by virtue of his mind or reason. According to Aquinas, "Man is united to God by his reason, or mind, in which is God's image." Moreover, natural law, which is instilled in man's mind by God so as to be known by him naturally, is derived from participation in eternal law which is the type or the Word of Divine Wisdom. The fact that Aquinas defines natural law in this way proves that his concept of natural law, like Augustine's, is based on the method of Plato rather than that of Aristotle, who rejected the Platonic

eternal ideas and the Platonic concept of the participation of created nature in those ideas.

Aquinas does admit the existence of other precepts of natural law besides reason, however. Man has natural inclinations, in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances and with other animals. Every substance seeks the preservation of its own being and all animals are naturally inclined to sexual intercourse, the education of offspring, etc. But since the rational soul is the proper form of man, these natural inclinations are subordinated in man to his rational inclination to know the truth about God and to live in society:

> All the inclinations of any parts whatsoever of human nature, for example, of the concupiscible and irascible parts, insofar as they are ruled by reason, belong to the natural law, and are reduced to one first precept . . ., so that the precepts of the natural law are many in themselves, but are based on one common foundation.

Like Augustine, Aquinas also distinguishes between eternal law, which is changeless, and temporal or human laws, which are subject to change. According to Aquinas, "No one can know the eternal law as it is in itself, except God Himself and the blessed who see God in His Essence. But every rational creature knows it in its reflection, greater or less." That is, again, temporal or human laws are derived from eternal law by means of natural reason. However, since the eternal law is not known by man as it is in itself, human laws cannot be altogether unerring. "The human reason cannot have a full participation of the dictate of the Divine Reason, but according to its own mode, and imperfectly."

Ultimately, this distinction between Eternal Law and Divine Reason on the one side and temporal law and human reason on the other reflects the Platonic distinction between God, Who is Absolute Being or the Good *per se,* and created nature in the realm of Becoming, whose nature it is to become increasingly more God-like, without ever being able to achieve absolute perfection.

Nonetheless, since all forms of law derive from eternal law, temporal law must also be subject to the dictates of Divine Reason. As Augustine wrote in *On the Free Choice of the Will:* "In temporal law there is nothing just and lawful but what man has drawn from the eternal law." Or Aquinas: "Human law has the nature of law insofar as it partakes of right reason; and it is clear that, in this respect, it is derived from the eternal law. But insofar as it deviates from reason, it is called an unjust law, and has the nature not of law but of violence." Furthermore, just as Augustine wrote in *On the Free Choice of the Will,* "For an unjust law, it seems to me, is no law," so Aquinas, "A tyrannical law, since it is not in accordance with reason, is not a law, absolutely speaking, but rather a perversion of law . . . ."

Aquinas writes further:

> The force of a law depends on the extent of its justice. Now in human affairs a thing is said to be just from being right according to the rule of reason. But the first rule of reason is the law of nature . . . . Consequently every human law has just so much of the character of law as it is derived from the law of nature. But if in any point it differs from the law of nature, it is no longer a law but a corruption of law.

Thus, even when Aquinas accepts that certain secondary precepts of natural law can be blotted out insofar as reason is hindered by vicious customs and corrupt habits, he nevertheless maintains that "natural law, in its universal character, can in no way be blotted out from men's hearts." In fact, as I develop more fully in Appendix I, Aquinas goes so far as to argue that the moral precepts of the Decalogue are valid only because and insofar as they belong to natural law.

The historical limitation reflected in Aquinas' notion of natural law, however, is that he conceived the issue of natural law to lie primarily in the deduction of moral precepts from the Supreme Reason of God; i.e, the emphasis, as derived from the form of the Decalogue, is primarily upon what one should not do in order to achieve harmony with the Good. (Appendix II provides examples of this method for deriving moral precepts from natural law.) However, where Aquinas fails—and this is where Cusanus brings about a revolution—is to emphasize the positive implications of the law of love. For, in order to accomplish good, as opposed to merely to avoid doing evil, one must go beyond the effort to derive moral precepts based upon Eternal Reason, to directly imitating the Mind of God as Creator: one must express love toward one's fellow man by creating the conditions under which he too can exercise his creative capacity to do good.

Both Augustine and Aquinas were aware of the distinction Plato makes between deductive logic and creative intellect. In his discussion of the Incarnation Aquinas argues that the human intellect alone has a capacity for receiving God *capax Dei:*

> The Son of God is said to have assumed flesh through the medium of the soul, both on account of the order of dignity, and the fittingness of the assumption. Now both these may be applied to the intellect, which is called the spirit, if we compare it with the other parts of the soul. For the soul

is assumed fittingly only through the fact that it has a capacity for God, being in His likeness, which is in respect of the mind, which is called the sprit, according to Eph. 4:23: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

But although Aquinas recognizes that it is the intellect, as opposed to other parts of the human soul, which has a capacity for God, he does not fully and rigorously develop the difference between inferior "rationality," or deductive reason, on the one hand, and superior "intellect," or the capacity for creative reason, on the other.

Cusanus recognized that what makes man the living image of God (*imago viva Dei*), is alone man's creative intellect. From this starting point, we will see how he was able to attain the higher level of hypotheses required to resolve the political problem of the interactive relationship between the form of government and law, and the capacities of the populace. But it is useful to first see how this problem posed itself to St. Augustine, as presented in Book I of the dialogue *On the Free Choice of the Will.*

According to Augustine, it is right to enact a law permitting a people who esteem their private interest of less importance than the public good, to set up for themselves magistrates to provide for the public welfare. However, if these same people, after having grown corrupt, should prefer the individual to the common good, should offer their vote for sale, and should entrust the government to wicked men, it would also be right for some honest man to strip these people of the power to elect public officials and to subject them to the rule of a few good men or even to that of one man.

According to Augustine, these two man-made laws may appear to be contradictory, but they are not; because temporal laws may be justly changed in the course of time, despite the fact that temporal law necessarily derives its justice from a changeless and eternal law called supreme reason. Thus, "if those people elect officials at one time and at another time do not, each motivated by justice, this alteration of the temporal law derives its character of justice from that eternal law whereby it is always just for responsible people to elect their officials, but not for irresponsible people."

But if temporal self-government is to be deemed just only if the people are responsible, the issue is: How can we guarantee a responsible people? That is, how can we guarantee that the people will turn their love to eternal things through the use of reason? This question, so frequently discussed in the Platonic dialogues, was addressed and answered by Nicolaus of Cusa in a way that led to the creation of the new political institution of the nation-state in the Europe of the Golden Renaissance.

Nicolaus of Cusa's Revolution In Natural Law

The key to understanding the revolution effected by Nicolaus of Cusa in the traditional notion of natural law which he inherited from St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas is, first, the emphasis he places upon creativity as the distinguishing characteristic of *imago Dei* and *capax Dei,* and secondly, the emphasis he places upon man's moral relationship, as microcosm, to the universe, or macrocosm, which he describes in effect as not-entropic.

For Nicolaus of Cusa, for man to be *imago Dei* does not merely mean that man has a rational soul capable of deducing through the right use of reason moral precepts as to what he should not do, as in the case of the Decalogue and its corollaries. Rather, Nicolaus of Cusa expressly introduces the idea that for man to become an adopted son of God he must ascend in his mind above mere sense perception and formal-logical rationality to the level of creative intellect. As microcosm, he must then act on the basis of his creative intellect, to further develop the potential of the macrocosm, out of love of God and his fellow man.

In *On Beryllus,* Cusanus writes:

> For just as God is the Creator of real entities and of natural forms, man is the creator of rational entities and artificial forms. These are nothing other than similitudes of his intellect, just as the creatures of God are similitudes of the divine Intellect. Therefore, man has intellect, which is a similitude of the divine Intellect, in creating. Therefore, he creates similitudes of the similitudes of the divine Intellect, so the extrinsic artificial figures are similitudes of intrinsic natural forms. Hence he measures his intellect through the power of his works and from this he measures the divine Intellect, as the truth is measured through its image.

In *On Conjectures,* Cusanus makes a similar statement:

> Conjectures must go forth from our minds as the real world does from infinite divine Reason. For, since the human mind, the lofty similitude of God, participates, as far as it can, in the fecundity of the creatrix nature, it exserts the rational from itself, as the image of omnipotent form, in the similitude of real entities.

In these two passages, Cusanus develops the idea that what makes man *imago Dei* is that he is a creator. It is his very nature to create "rational entities" or "conjectures" or what Lyndon LaRouche has called "thought-objects" or hypotheses. In creating "rational entities" or "conjectures," man, according to Cusanus, is capable of inventing something new.

In *The Game of Spheres,* Cusanus writes that "the power of the soul is to reason and therefore the power to reason is the soul . . . . For this reason the soul is the inventive power of the arts and of new sciences." In inventing something new, man first creates a "rational entity" and then decides to create extrinsically that which he has created in his mind by transforming his thought-object into an "artificial form," or a new technology, whether in the arts or the sciences. The capacity to do this is what distinguishes man from a beast because, as Cusanus states, no beast has such inventive power.

What is more, in saying that man "measures his intellect through the power of his works," Cusanus is arguing, as Lyndon LaRouche has since shown, that the truth of a thought-object is measured by the demonstrated increase it effects in the power of man's labor over nature.

In numerous of his writings, Cusanus makes absolutely clear that this labor power derives not from the deductive or syllogistical power of the rational soul, but rather from the creative intellect, which is that part of the soul which possesses *capax Dei.*

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"Joseph Telling His Dreams."

Directly connected to this concept of man as creator is the view merely implicit in St. Augustine, but developed expressly by Cusanus, that the universe itself is by nature not-entropic. As I have developed more extensively in an article entitled "Nicolaus of Cusa's 'On the Vision of God' and the Concept of Negentropy," (*Fidelio,* Vol. II, No. 4, Winter 1993), Cusanus considered the physical universe to be capable of further development by man's creative power. Although not co-eternal with God, because it is created by God out of nothing, the universe is nonetheless perpetual. As he writes in *On Learned Ignorance,* "the world-machine cannot perish."

In *On Learned Ignorance,* Nicolaus of Cusa writes that "God is the enfolding and the unfolding of all things." Insofar as man imitates Christ, who as Maximal Reason is the creator of the world, by himself exercising his creative intellect, man is capable of being the instrument of the further unfolding of all things enfolded in God.

In *On Learned Ignorance,* Cusanus further stipulates that the "unfolding" of the universe is

> like a number series which progresses sequentially . . . . [W]hether we number upwards or downwards we take our beginning from Absolute Oneness (which is God)—i.e., from the Beginning of all things. Hence, species are as numbers that come together from two opposite directions—[numbers] that proceed from a minimum which is maximum and from a maximum to which a minimum is not opposed.

In a later work, "On the Quadrature of the Circle," Cusanus demonstrates, by proving that the circle is ontologically a higher species than a polygon, that this number series is characterized by successively higher levels of power or cardinality. Cusanus' discovery that the relationship of the circle to the polygon is not merely irrational, as the Greeks had thought, but rather transcendental, set into motion the development of modern science, including the science of physical economy.

In *On Conjectures,* Cusanus elaborates on the implications of this discovery for man:

> Man is indeed god, but not absolutely, since he is man; he is therefore a human god. Man is also the world, but not everything contractedly, since he is man. Man is therefore a microcosm or a human world. The region of humanity therefore embraces God and the whole world in its human potentiality.

From this view of man as microcosm emerges a more advanced expression of natural law. According to natural law as developed by Cusanus, man must organize human society not merely to adhere to certain moral precepts. Humanity as a whole must become increasingly more Christ-like, which is to say must increase its power over nature by inventing new arts and sciences capable of transforming the macrocosm so as to advance its own human potentiality.

The failure to do this, to organize human society so as to realize the "intellectual growth" of humanity as mediated through the transformation of nature, is itself a violation of natural law. And although the universe as a whole cannot perish, the failure of human society to assume its creative responsibilities in respect to the macrocosm will necessarily result in humanity's descent into hell and a concomitant reversal of not-entropy in that portion of the physical universe most immediately affected by man's refusal to realize his *capax Dei*.

It was from the starting point of natural law necessitating the "intellectual growth" of humanity that Nicolaus of Cusa was to fashion a concept of man's self-government in his political treatise *On Catholic Concordance*.

The Concept of the Nation-State

The concept of the nation-state, which began to emerge with Dante Alighieri's *On World Government* (1310-13) and was more fully elaborated in Nicolaus of Cusa's *On Catholic Concordance* (1433), was devised as the most appropriate vehicle by which man could organize himself so as to realize his divine potential, as created in the image of God the Creator, for what Dante referred to as "intellectual growth."

The first such nation-state was France under Louis XI (1423-83), and it was in the France of Jean Baptiste Colbert (1619-83) after the Thirty Years War that the world experienced the development of the modern form of national political economy. The U.S. form of government, as expressed in the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and the American System of political economy developed under U.S. Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, derive indirectly from the revolution in natural law effected successively by Dante and Nicolaus of Cusa and implemented initially in the France of Louis XI.

Because the U.S. Declaration of Independence represents perhaps the most succinct historical expression of the natural law basis of the principle of national sovereignty, we may introduce the axiomatic principles involved by an examination of its initial four paragraphs.

A. The Laws of Nature and of Nature's God

The first thing that strikes a modern reader of the Declaration of Independence is that in it, the Founding Fathers declared that they were entitled to assume "separate and equal station" among the powers of the earth based upon the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God." Thus, in the first sentence of the Declaration of Independence, they derive the right of "a people" to "dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another" and to establish themselves as a sovereign nation, having "equal station" among other sovereign nation-states, directly from God, the Creator, and the natural law which rules His creation.

While it is true that the Founding Fathers were opposed to the creation of a theocracy under a particular established religious denomination, it does not follow that the concept of God can be divorced from the foundation of the American republic, as was maintained by former Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, (himself a lifelong Ku Klux Klan member and 33rd-degree Scottish Rite Freemason), and argued today by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Anti-Defamation League.

But what did the Founding Fathers mean by the Laws of Nature?

Historically, there are two contrary concepts of natural law. First, the Platonic Christian concept of natural law, presented above, that is based upon the idea that man is created in the image of God (*imago Dei*), and, through the right use of his natural reason, man is capable of bringing his moral practice into harmony with the lawful ordering of the universe created by God.

The contrary, Aristotelian concept of natural law sees man not in the image of God, but rather as a depraved animal whose mind is a *tabula rasa* or blank slate. Reduced to such an animal-like state of nature, society is characterized by continuous warfare of each against all. Thus, according to this concept, man forms governments by agreeing to subordinate himself to an arbitrary dictatorship, in order to protect himself from other men. This was the view advocated, for example, by such Seventeenth-Century Enlightenment spokesmen as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Samuel Pufendorf, and Hugo Grotius, and is often identified theologically with the extreme radical Protestant view that negates man's likeness to God subsequent to the Fall.

Now, it is absolutely clear from the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence that the concept of natural law upon which the nation is founded is the Platonic Christian concept.

B. *Imago Dei*

According to the Declaration of Independence, it is self-evidently true "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Because man is created in the image of God the Creator, and therefore, like the Creator, is endowed with reason, it is self-evident to him through the use of that reason that all men are created equal and are thus sovereign individuals under natural law. It follows, therefore—contrary to the arguments of today's advocates of multiculturalism—that there is only one human race. Moreover, because all human beings are created equal and are equally in the image of God, they all have certain inalienable rights. In other words, natural reason dictates that all human beings, since they are all equally created in the image of God, are endowed with certain irreducible rights as sovereign individuals, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

As Lyndon LaRouche has pointed out, the latter principle of the right to "life, liberty, and *the pursuit of happiness*" most clearly associates the U.S. Declaration of Independence with the Christian Platonism of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, in direct opposition to the Aristotelian dogma of John Locke's "life, liberty, and *property.*"

C. Consent of the Governed

In the third paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, we read that "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." This concept, which, as we shall see, was first put forward by Nicolaus of Cusa, presupposes that, since God is free, all men who are created in His image, are free by nature. Therefore, governments, to be true to the Laws of Nature, derive their power from the consent of the people. This concept of the necessary "consent of the governed" is not, however, contrary to the notion that the authority of government ultimately derives from God. For, since God's law is infused in all men, the authority of government is from God by way of man, namely, by the consent of man, himself governed by natural reason. Moreover, the powers of government are only "just" to the extent that they derive from the consent of the governed acting in harmony with God's law infused in their minds.

On this basis, in the fourth paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, the Founding Fathers declare that whenever any government or any law enacted by a government contradicts natural law and becomes destructive to the inalienable rights of man, "it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." Although governments should not be changed for "light and transient causes," if a government "evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

On Catholic Concordance

There is no known documentation that any of the Founding Fathers was directly influenced by reading the political writings of the Fifteenth-Century cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa. Nonetheless, it is well documented that many of the Founding Fathers were influenced by the philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, whose own writings were the primary means by which the philosophy of Cusanus was introduced into the American colonies.

The book which, more than any other, paved the way philosophically for the Declaration of Independence, was *On Catholic Concordance,* written by Nicolaus of Cusa in the year 1433. The reader who is unfamiliar with Nicolaus of Cusa will be shocked to see the extent to which the principles in the Declaration of Independence, written in 1776, are clearly stated almost 350 years earlier by Cusanus.

In the following excerpts from *On Catholic Concordance,* Cusanus outlines the principles which later came to be expressed in the Declaration of Independence:

> . . . from the beginning men have been endowed with reason which distingishes them from animals. They know because of the exercise of their reason that association and sharing are most useful—indeed necessary for their self-preservation and to achieve the purpose of human existence. Therefore by natural instinct they have joined together and built villages and cities in which to live together. And if men had not established rules to preserve peace, the corrupt desires of many would have prevented this union from improving human life. For this reason cities arose in which the citizens united and adopted laws with the common assent of all to preserve unity and harmony, and they established guardians of all these laws with the power necessary to provide for the public good. It was clear that by a marvelous and beneficent divine law infused in all men, they knew that associating together would be most beneficial to them and that social life would be maintained by laws adopted with the common consent of all—or at least with the consent of the wise and illustrious and the agreement of the others.
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> All legislation is based on natural law and any law which contradicts it cannot be valid. Hence since natural law is

naturally based on reason, all law is rooted by nature in the reason of man. The wiser and more outstanding men are chosen as rulers by the others to draw up just laws by the clear reason, wisdom, and prudence given them by nature and to rule the others by these laws and to decide controversies by the maintenance of peace. From this we conclude that those better endowed with reason are the natural lords and masters of the others, but not by any coercive law or judgment imposed on someone against his will. For since all are by nature free, every governance, whether it consists in a written law or is living law in the person of a prince—by which subjects are compelled to abstain from evil deeds and their freedom directed towards the good through fear of punishment—can only come from the agreement and consent of the subjects. For if by nature men are equal in power and equally free, the true properly ordered authority of one common ruler who is their equal in power cannot be naturally established except by the election and consent of the others and law is also established by consent.

All legitimate authority arises from elective concordance and free submission. There is in the people a divine seed by virtue of their common equal birth and the equal natural rights of all men so that all authority—which comes from God as does man himself—is recognized as divine when it arises from the common consent of the subjects.

Free election based on natural and divine law does not originate from positive law nor from any man upon whose will the validity of the election depends.

It is the common opinion of all the experts on the subject that the Roman people can take the power to make laws away from the emperor because he derives his power from the people. . . . When they order something contrary to a divine commandment it is evident that the command does not share in the divine rulership, and so one should not obey it. . . . No one is obliged to observe an unjust law, and no living person is exempt from a just one.

As can be seen from the above excerpts, Cusanus derives the concept of government by the consent of the governed from the self-evident fact that all men are created equal and have equal natural rights insofar as they are created in the image of God and are thus endowed with the capacity for creative reason (*capax Dei*). Thus government derives its just power from God as mediated through the consent of the people. That Cusanus is not advocating pure democracy, which, because it is not based upon reason, tends to devolve towards mob rule, but rather a democratic-republican or representative form of government, is evident by the fact that those who govern must do so in accordance with Divine Reason and those who are governed must give their consent based on the same reason infused in all men and women by nature.

Supranational Government vs. A Community of Sovereign Nations

In *On Catholic Concordance,* Cusanus develops the notion of national sovereignty, as did Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) before him in his *On World Government.* But, since the nation-state did not yet exist, both Dante and Cusanus were forced to develop it within the context of the existing Holy Roman Empire. From their standpoint, the conception of national sovereignty did not exclude the idea of a higher form of government, as long as that government was in harmony with the principles of natural law. It was thus the hope of Dante, Cusanus, and even Leibniz, that the Holy Roman Empire could be so reformed as to perform the role of a world government of last resort, which, because it was above the individual nation-states, could adjudicate between them and guarantee the peace based upon its greater adherence to natural law.

However, in order to allow the development of sovereign nation-states, both Cusanus and Dante insisted upon a strict separation of church and state within a transformed Holy Roman Empire. In Book III of his *On World Government,* Dante attacked the so-called "Donation of Constantine," a spurious Roman Empire document purporting to grant imperial political power to the Church. According to Dante, the authority for temporal world government must come directly, without intermediary, from God—and not from the Papacy or Church institutions. Similarly, in Book III of *On Catholic Concordance,* Nicolaus of Cusa argues that the Holy Roman Empire itself comes from God, as mediated through the consent of the Romans; he also correctly argued, based upon historical sources, that the "Donation of Constantine" was a fraudulent, fictitious document.

By establishing that temporal government does not derive its authority from the Church, but rather from God as mediated through the consent of the governed, Cusanus laid the basis for the later emergence of the sovereign nation-state and the idea of a family of nation-states subordinate to the principles of natural law.

Although today we would not agree that it were possible for a world government to reflect adequately the principles of natural law—certainly, the United Nations does not reflect such principles today—nonetheless, the efforts of Dante, Cusanus, and Leibniz to reform the Holy Roman Empire so as to allow for the development of national sovereignty are reflective of the underlying ideas expressed by Lyndon LaRouche

in *The Science of Christian Economy,* that

> sovereign nation-state republics are *almost* perfectly sovereign. This sovereignty is to be subordinated to nothing but the universal role of what Christian humanists, such as St. Augustine, Nicolaus of Cusa, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, have defined as that natural law fully intelligible to all who share a developed commitment to the faculty of creative reason.

In *On World Government,* Dante argues that "the proper work of mankind taken as a whole is to exercise continually its entire capacity for intellectual growth, first, in theoretical matters, and, secondarily, as an extension of theory, in practice." Dante argues that a world government is necessary to establish the universal peace required to accomplish this purpose. "World-government . . . must be understood in the sense that it governs mankind on the basis of what all have in common and that by a common law it leads all toward peace." However, Dante recognized that "not every little regulation . . . could come directly from the world-government." Therefore, he writes that "nations . . . have their own internal concerns which require special laws."

In *De Vulgari Eloquentia,* a book aimed at developing the vernacular Italian language, Dante argues that, since man as distinct from animals is endowed with reason and communicates through speech, and that since the vernacular is a more natural form of communication, whereas the proliferation of local dialects is an obstacle to such communication, the creation of a literate form of vernacular language common to an entire nation-state (such as Italy) is a necessary precondition for the intellectual growth of a people and for the development of its capacity to exercise self-government increasingly more intelligently. As Lyndon LaRouche emphasizes in *The Science of Christian Economy,* the development of a literate form of popular language common to an entire nation-state is the necessary precondition for the participation of a citizenry in policy deliberations based on natural law.

In *On Catholic Concordance,* Nicolaus of Cusa puts greater emphasis than does Dante on the sovereignty of the provinces within the Church or the nations within the Empire. In arguing on behalf of sovereignty, Cusanus cites the decrees of the Nicene Council:

> . . . the Nicene decrees clearly committed the lower clergy and the bishops to their metropolitans, for they saw it as most prudent and just that matters should be settled in the areas where they had arisen. . . . The Nicene Council decided that the synod of the province is to decide the things that concern each province. The same definition by the Nicene Council declares that it is to govern and administer everything. . . . Whatever arises within the province should be heard and finally decided by fellow members of the province.

As Lyndon LaRouche concludes in *The Science of Christian Economy,*

> What we must establish soon upon this planet, is not a utopia, but a *Concordantia Catholica,* a family of sovereign nation-state republics, each and all tolerating only one supranational authority, *natural law,* as the classical Christian humanists recognized it. Yet, it is not sufficient that each, as a sovereign republic, be subject passively to natural law. A right reading of that natural law reveals our obligation to co-sponsor certain regional and global cooperative ventures, in addition to our national affairs.

There are several important points that need to be made based upon the above discussion. First, even though we would not today advocate the equivalent of the Holy Roman Empire or a world government, the nation-state cannot be conceived of as absolutely sovereign, since its sovereignty derives from natural law which, as the ordering principle of all of God's creation, is supranational.

A corresponding concept of world government which is more appropriate to today's world, is that all nations should be governed by natural law as a supranational principle. The concept which flows from this is that of a family of sovereign nation-states which share a community of principle based on natural law. Such a community of sovereign nation-states subordinated to common principles of natural law will necessarily be at peace with one another.

One consequence of such a community, is that any government which violates the supranational authority of natural law and "evinces a design" to reduce its own people or those of another nation under absolute despotism, may lawfully be abolished. Insofar as it systematically abuses the laws of nature, it has abandoned the very basis for its own claim to sovereignty.

Does this mean that the doctrine of "limited sovereignty," cited as the basis for United Nations interventions today throughout the world, is valid? No, not at all. In the case that a government systematically abuses the inalienable rights of its citizenry or those of its neighbor, as in the cases of the Pol Pot government in Cambodia which committed genocide against its own population, the Hitler government of Nazi Germany, or the current fascist government of Serbia, that government's sovereignty is indeed limited for the very reason that it has violated the supranational authority of natural law.

But, the doctrine of limited sovereignty currently being put forward to justify United Nations interventions, in violation of the principle of national sovereign-

ty, is a different matter, however, *because the policies of the United Nations are themselves in violation of natural law.*

As long as the United Nations acts as the enforcement arm for the usurious, "free trade," genocidal population-reduction and technological-apartheid policies of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, it has no right to "limit" the sovereignty of any of its member states. What is more, in carrying out such policies, it itself has become a form of government destructive of the ends of man and therefore should be either altered or abolished according to the principles of natural law expressed in the American Declaration of Independence.

Furthermore, as LaRouche emphasizes, it is not sufficient to conceive of national sovereignty only negatively, as passive adherence to natural law. The Golden Rule can be expressed both negatively and positively. Negatively, we should do nothing to another, except that which we wish done to us. Positively, we should do unto others, as we would have them do unto us. From the Christian standpoint, the latter, positive expression of the Golden Rule has precedence. It is not enough merely to forbear from violence against others. Natural law requires active benevolence.

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"The Return of the Prodigal Son."

Thus, national sovereignty is not autarchical or isolationist. It is not based upon self-love narrowly defined. Rather, every nation has a responsibility to participate in and co-sponsor regional and global cooperative efforts with other nations to the mutual benefit of the human species as a whole.

Certainly no nation should become involved in "entangling foreign alliances" in violation of natural law. However, every nation is obligated to participate with other anti-oligarchical, sovereign nation-state republics in those projects which defend, maintain, and improve civilization as a whole. Thus, such endeavors as the economic development of Eurasia or the economic integration of the Ibero-American continent, for example, if they are accomplished in a manner coherent with natural law, are not only not antagonistic to national sovereignty, but can contribute to fulfilling the purpose of the nation-state, both in respect to the development of its own people and in respect to its contribution to the development of its neighbors.

On the other hand, regional or global programs premised upon usurious so-called free trade in violation of natural law, are antagonistic to national sovereignty and are the kind of "entangling foreign alliances" which George Washington advised us to eschew.

The positive basis in natural law for the harmonious relationship among many sovereign nation-states, is the same as that for the harmonious relationship of many sovereign individual citizens in a single sovereign nation—the Christian expression of the solution to Plato's *Parmenides* paradox of the One and the Many. Contrary to the Enlightenment view of Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf, the solution to this paradox is not the suppression of the Many by the One.

In his *On Catholic Concordance,* Nicolaus of Cusa addresses this problem directly. Cusanus argues that, since man is created in the image of God the Creator, that which distinguishes man from an animal is creative reason. Every single human being has this capacity to be in the likeness of his or her Creator (*capax Dei*). Discord among men and among nations occurs if men or nations sin by acting in opposition to the divine laws of reason imprinted upon their minds. Concordance among men

and nations, on the other hand, occurs to the extent that the many are in "rational harmony with the Word" or *Logos*. Such rational harmony with the Word gives rise to "a concordance of all rational creatures." This concordance, because it is based on the very nature of man, does not do violence to him, but rather is the sole means by which his sovereign individuality can be preserved and his end achieved. As Cusanus writes: "And this is our fundamental premise—that the Word is the wisdom of the Father, and wisdom is life." (Proverbs 8)

Such a concept of natural law, of course, runs totally contrary to the geopolitical notions of "balance of power" and "divide and conquer." Neither individuals nor nations are, from the standpoint of natural law, inherently antagonistic to one another. Any attempt to achieve "peace" by manipulating one individual or nation against another will result not in peace, but inevitably in discord and war.

Instead, the concept of natural law leads directly to the issue of the economic development of nations, as the means by which the capacity shared by all human beings to be *capax Dei* may be fostered. Hence, in the Declaration of Independence, among the grievances cited by the Founding Fathers to justify their separation from Great Britain were that King George III had violated the laws of nature by endeavoring "to prevent the population of these States," "cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world," and "imposing Taxes on us without our Consent." Although it is not explicitly cited in the Declaration of Independence, it is also well known that the colonies were forbidden by law from developing manufactures and were thus restricted to being raw-materials exporters.

Thus, when the Declaration of Independence argues that it is "the Right of the People to . . . institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness . . . and to provide new Guards for their future security," we must conclude that the Founding Fathers were asserting the right of a people to organize its powers in such a way as to develop the economy of the nation and to expand its population. Only if such powers are invested in the sovereign nation-state can the government facilitate the "intellectual growth" of its citizenry.

In *The Science of Christian Economy,* Lyndon LaRouche identifies this crucial feature of the principle of national sovereignty as follows:

> The essence of good modern statecraft is the fostering of societies, such as sovereign nation-state republics, the which, in turn, ensure the increase of the potential population-densities *per capita* of present and future generations of mankind as a whole, and which societies promote this result by the included indispensable, inseparable means of emphasis upon promoting the development and fruitful self-expression of that *divine spark* which is the sovereign individual's power of creative reason.

As LaRouche has demonstrated, for a society to continue to survive, it must increase its potential population-density. This necessitates the creation of national governmental agencies, including a national bank, capable of fostering economic development as mediated through scientific and technological progress.

The necessity of fostering such progress is a law of nature, and any government which attempts to suppress the economic development of a people is in violation of natural law and must either alter its course of policy or be abolished.

This concept of natural law, implicit in the Declaration of Independence, is enunciated in the Book of Genesis. After creating man in His own image, God said: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

If we look at the policies which are being imposed by the International Monetary Fund both on the nations of the Third World and the newly liberated former communist nations of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, it is immediately apparent that they are in violation of these "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God." According to the Declaration of Independence, every nation has the right to "organize its powers," including its powers to promote its own economic development, "in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The efforts by the I.M.F. to force nations to dismantle their public-sector industries, to subject their national budgets to I.M.F. austerity conditions, to dismantle their militaries, to impose forced sterilization programs in order to reduce their populations, and to refuse them high technology necessary to the development of their peoples are thus, by the standards of our own Declaration of Independence, a violation of the principles of natural law so grave that if we as a people were true to our founding principles, we would not only *not* support, but would help to abolish them as tyrannical.

Leibniz vs. Pufendorf on Natural Law

Those who have wanted to subvert the commitment of the U.S. population and its government to natural-law principles, as those are reflected in the Declaration of

Independence, have spared no effort in rewriting U.S. history. So just as we are now falsely told that the American Revolution was based upon the economic theories of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations,* we are also told that the concept of natural law upon which the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution are based is the Enlightenment viewpoint of such Venetian Party spokesmen as John Locke, Samuel Pufendorf, Hugo Grotius, and Thomas Hobbes. Although these four differ from one another in regard to secondary matters, they share the same general assumptions about man. For purposes of efficiency, it is necessary to present only the argument of Samuel Pufendorf, as refuted by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and certain crucial features of the argument of Hugo Grotius, to firmly establish why this concept of natural law is *not* that upon which our nation was founded. This approach is facilitated by the fact that Pufendorf explicitly locates his theory in the context of the writings of the other three.

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"Christ and the Woman of Samaria, among Ruins."

In his *On the Duty of Man and Citizen* (1673), Pufendorf begins by divorcing his conception of natural law from moral theology. Having thus separated the laws of nature from nature's God, Pufendorf adopts an atheistic concept of natural law which defines man as not in the image of God. Rather, he takes man as he is after the Fall, "as one whose nature has been corrupted and thus as an animal seething with evil desires." He explicitly argues that "it would be inappropriate to try to deduce natural law from the uncorrupted nature of man." Thus, Pufendorf reduces man to the condition of an animal dominated by two passions—self-love and self-preservation—ignoring man's truer, elevated nature *in the image of God.* He writes:

> In common with all living things which have a sense of themselves, man holds nothing more dear than himself, he studies in every way to preserve himself, he strives to acquire what seems good to him and to repel what seems bad to him. This passion is usually so strong that all other passions give way before it. And if anyone attempts to attack a man's safety, he canot fail to repel him, and to repel him so vigorously that hatred and desire for revenge usually last long after he has beaten off the attack.

Therefore, according to Pufendorf, man concludes that "in order to be safe, it is necessary for him to be sociable," that is, to escape the state of nature in which each is constantly at war with all, man must subordinate his liberty to the will of a superior. "In becoming a citizen, a man loses his natural liberty and subjects himself to an authority whose powers include the right of life and death."

Pufendorf continues: "In a state all have subjected their own will to the will of those in power in matters affecting the state's security, so that they are willing to do whatever the rulers wish."

In the chapter, "On the Characteristics of Civil Authority," he elaborates on his concept of sovereignty:

> Every authority by which a state in its entirety is ruled, whatever the form of government, has the characteristic of supremacy. That is, its exercise is not dependent on a superior; it acts by its own will and judgment; its actions may not be nullified by anyone on the ground of superiority. Hence it is that authority in this sense is unaccountable . . . . Conformably with this, the sovereign authority is superior to human and civil laws as such, and thus not directly bound by them.

Moreover, according to Pufendorf, the people do not have the right to rebel:

> Sovereign authority, finally, has also its own particular sanctity. It is therefore morally wrong to the citizens to resist its legitimate commands. But beyond this even its severity must be patiently borne by citizens. . . . And even when it has threatened them with the most atrocious injuries, individuals will protect themselves by flight or endure any injury or damage rather than draw their swords against one who remains the father of their country, however harsh he may be.

In respect to foreign policy, since the states are in the state of nature with each other, they are thereby constrained to act defensively, not benevolently, on the expectation that friendly states may become enemies, and that peace may become war. This argument leads necessarily to geopolitical balance of power policies and to a perpetual state of warfare.

Pufendorf derives his notion of "sociality" as the source of natural law from Grotius. Grotius argues in *The Law of War and Peace* that "the source of all law" is the "care to preserve society." Grotius explicitly identifies this trait with what the Stoics call "friendliness."

Grotius then argues that "what we have just said would have validity, even if we granted what cannot be granted without great wickedness, that there is no God, or that he has no care for human affairs." Even though Grotius states that "the opposite belief has been instilled in us, partly by our reason, partly by an unbroken tradition, confirmed by many proofs and miracles attested through every age," in making this statement, he has nonetheless argued that it is not necessary to presuppose the existence of God as the basis for natural law.

In fact, Grotius does not define the first general principles of natural law as love of God and of our fellow man, but rather, following the Stoics, he argues that the first general principles are self-preservation and the desire for society. As a result, he expressly distinguishes between the New Testament law of love, and the law of nature. This leads him to the view that in joining society, men "submitted themselves to some other man or men," and promised to "conform to any decision taken . . . by those to whom authority had been committed."

Having effectively divorced natural law from moral theology, Grotius then reduces natural law to a form of customary law. For he writes that whenever many men

> at different times and in different places declare the same thing to be true, their unanimity must be ascribed to a universal cause, which, as we inquire into it, can be nothing else than a correct inference from the principles of nature, or some general consensus. The former means a law of nature, the latter a law of nations.

The effect of inferring natural law inductively, primarily from examples from Greek and Roman history, is to separate natural law from moral theology. Moreover, deriving the law of nations by consensus denies the supranational authority of natural law.

On the question of sovereignty, Grotius, like Pufendorf, argues that the ruler's acts are "not subject to the legal control of anyone else, and cannot be rescinded at the pleasure of another human will." Moreover, he explicitly rejects "the opinion of those who maintain that everywhere and without exception, sovereignty lies in the people" and argues that "it is not universally true that all government was created for the benefit of the governed."

Leibniz, in his *Opinion on the Principles of Pufendorf,* after first criticizing Pufendorf for divorcing natural law from moral theology, further criticizes him for locating natural law not "in the nature of things and in the precepts of right reason which conform to it, which emanate from the divine understanding, but . . . in the command of a superior."

This issue, which Leibniz has identified, most uniquely differentiates the true concept of natural law upon which our nation was founded from the one which has subverted our institutions, to the extent it has been accepted as valid.

To better examine the implications of Pufendorf's location of natural law in the command of a superior, Leibniz asks whether natural law is based upon the arbitrary will of God or derives from the divine idea of justice which informs God's will? If the former is true, then God would be a tyrant and his creation would have no necessary lawful order discoverable by the mind of man. But this is absurd.

As Nicolaus of Cusa argues in respect to the Gospel of John, God the Father was never without his consubstantial Son, the Word or Reason, through which all things are created: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through Him, and without Him nothing came to be."

Leibniz concludes by summarizing his own view of natural law in opposition to that of Pufendorf:

> The end of natural law is the good of those who observe it; its object, all that which concerns others and is in our power; finally, its efficient cause in us is the light of eternal reason, kindled in our minds by the divinity.

Conclusion

Ironically, as Lyndon LaRouche has stressed, the advances that man has achieved in the last five-and-a-half centuries, and his potential to advance further in the

next century, derive from the Platonic Christian notion of natural law as that was developed by Nicolaus of Cusa and reaffirmed by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, especially as that notion found expression in the founding of the United States of America. However, unfortunately, this concept of natural law, although still the motor force of all progress made by mankind, is no longer hegemonic culturally. Rather, the opposing fraudulent Aristotelian concept of the Venetian Party's Enlightenment has become culturally dominant.

As LaRouche wrote at the conclusion of his essay, "How Bertrand Russell Became an Evil Man,"

> Five-and-a-half centuries after the Council of Florence, Venice and its outgrowth, the "Venetian Party," has come to dominate not only the financial institutions of the world, and most of the political ones, but also dominates the institutions of science, arts, and education generally. Under this reign, the world has been brought to the verge of a general collapse of an apocalyptic quality like that of the Fourteenth Century, but much worse. Time is running out rapidly.

The unprecedented task for mankind at this moment of world history is to effect a renaissance, such as that of the Fifteenth Century, without having to go through a Dark Age like that of the Fourteenth. Lyndon LaRouche has referred to this task as "building a bridge from Hell to Purgatory." If we are to build such a bridge in the face of the current ongoing collapse, it will require that we effect a "reverse paradigm shift" in the immediate period ahead, through a revival of the concept of natural law as the Golden Renaissance and the founding of the American Republic have bequeathed it to us.

APPENDIX I

Natural Law and Scripture

As opposed to Aristotelian religious fundamentalists, who interpret Scripture literally, as if isolated judicial precepts contained within it were eternally binding, and who counterpose arbitrary scriptural authority to science, the Platonic Christian tradition of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Nicolaus of Cusa, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz regards Scripture as a necessary, divinely inspired aid to human reason, which must, however, be interpreted from the standpoint of the reason God has imprinted upon our minds.

Thus, for example, Aquinas insists that the precepts of the Old Testament (Old Law) are only valid insofar as they reflect natural reason and the law of love. As Aquinas wrote: "The Old Law showed forth the precepts of the natural law, and added certain precepts of its own. Accordingly, as to those precepts of the natural law contained in the Old Law all were bound to observe the Old Law; not because they belonged to the Old Law, but because they belonged to the natural law."

In making this statement, Aquinas points to the fact that the Apostle Paul (Rom. 2:14) argues that "the Gentiles, who have not the Law, do by nature those things that are of the Law." In other words, the moral principles contained in the Decalogue of the Old Law belong to the law of nature as instilled in the mind of man. Therefore, since morality is in accordance with the right use of reason, even though the Old Law was not revealed to the Gentiles, through the exercise of reason all men are capable of discovering those universally valid moral precepts revealed in the Divine Law.

In the New Testament of the Bible, when Christ is asked, "Which commandment in the law is the greatest?" he answers, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." (Matt. 22:37-40) (*Cf.* Dt 6:5 and Lv 19:18)

What Thomas Aquinas argues in his "Treatise on Law" is that, although these two principles are not explicitly contained in the Decalogue, they are "the first general principles of the natural law, and are self-evident to human reason, either through nature or through faith. Therefore all the precepts of the Decalogue are referred to these as conclusions to general principles."

This same conception is put forth by Nicolaus of Cusa in his dialogue *On the Peace of Faith* as the very basis for establishing peace among all nations. What Cusanus has the Apostle Paul say in the dialogue is the following:

> The divine commandments are very brief and are all well known and common in every nation, for the light that reveals them to us is created along with the rational soul. For within us God says to love Him, from whom we received being, and to do nothing to another, except that which we wish done to us. Love is therefore the fulfillment of the law of God and all laws are reduced to this.

Aquinas also writes, "the precepts of the Decalogue can be reduced to the precepts of charity."

Now, according to Aquinas,

> Since the Decalogue is from God, its moral precepts as to the notion of justice which they contain, are unchangeable; but as to any determination by application to individual actions, for instance that this or that be murder, theft, or adultery, or not—in this point they admit of change; sometimes by Divine authority alone; sometimes also by human

> authority, namely, in such matters as are subject to human jurisdiction . . . .

However, such change must be based not upon the arbitrary will of either Divine or human authority, but rather upon reason.

For example, argues Aquinas, citing Augustine's *On the Free Choice of the Will,*

> The slaying of a man is forbidden in the Decalogue insofar as it bears the character of something undue, for in this sense the precept contains the very essence of justice. Human law cannot make it lawful for a man to be slain unduly. But it is not undue for evil-doers or foes of the commonwealth to be slain . . . .

For, to argue otherwise would be to say that God Himself violated the moral precepts of the Decalogue and commanded man to violate the same. The apparent contradiction between the moral precept of the Decalogue commanding "Thou shalt not kill," and the slaying of a murderer by the state or of an enemy in warfare, can only be resolved in the way suggested by Augustine and Aquinas, i.e., by reference to the notion of justice.

That does not mean, however, that the punishments specified in the Old Law, such as the death penalty, must be applied today as a fundamentalist, literal interpretation of the Bible would suggest. The determination of justice must take into consideration the moral development or perfection of man as a process over time; and justice must be tempered by love.

Hence, according to Aquinas, the moral precepts of the Decalogue are unchangeable and belong to natural law, but judicial precepts of the Old Law which are not derived from natural reason, lose their binding force: "The obligation of observing justice is indeed perpetual. But the determination of those things that are just according to human or Divine institution must be different, according to the different states of mankind." Thus, the responsibility for interpreting the revealed (Divine) Law, rests within man's exercise of the reason which makes him *imago Dei.*

APPENDIX II

Moral Precepts: Natural Law and The Sermon on the Mount

From a Christian standpoint, natural law is expressed most perfectly in the counsels of Christ in his Sermon on the Mount, for the reason that natural law is the participation of human reason in eternal law, which is the type of Divine Wisdom. Christ himself, who is the Word-become-flesh, is the highest expression of such participation. In *On Learned Ignorance,* Nicolaus of Cusa writes that "Christ is the center and the circumference of intellectual nature" and that "Christ, the head and source of every rational creature, is Maximal Reason, from which all reason derives."

Despite the fact that many of Christ's counsels would seem to run against what is commonly defined as human nature, man is true to his real nature, as in the living image of God, only to the extent that he subordinates his will to the Supreme Reason of God. Natural reason, aided by Divine Law, tells us that we should love our Creator and love our neighbor as ourselves, and that therefore we should do good to our enemies and forgive those who injure us.

Since reason tells us that we should hate the sin and not the sinner, and since we are all sinners and Christ came to save sinners, not the righteous, it should be clear that from the standpoint of natural law, it were morally preferable to correct evil in such a way as to not shed the blood of another human being.

However, under extreme necessity, it is not contrary to love of God and love of one's neighbor to use force against evil, if it is done for the common good and for the good of even those with whom one must fight. Under those conditions, force is employed not out of hatred, but rather out of love for one's enemy, not for the sake of vengeance, but to defend the public good and to liberate even one's enemy from a condition that violates the image of God within him.

In his commentary *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount,* Augustine argues that

> A punishment that is designed for the purpose of correction is not hereby forbidden; for that very punishment is an exercise of mercy, and is not incompatible with the firm resolve by which we are ready to suffer even further injuries from a man whose amendment we desire. But no one is fit for the task of inflicting such punishment unless—by the greatness of his love—he has overcome the hate by which those who seek to avenge themselves are usually enraged . . . . The moral is that, when a man inflicts a penalty, his intention ought to be to make the offender happy by a correction, rather than unhappy by a punishment; and that if necessity demands it—whether he possesses or lacks the authority to restrain the offender—he ought to be ready at all events to tolerate calmly even further injuries done to him by a man whose correction he is seeking to bring about.

This was the case in the American Revolution and in the U.S. Civil War, both of which were fought as a last resort against tyranny and the institution of slavery. Nonetheless, as necessary as such wars may have become,

the best way to avoid them before the fact, and to ensure that the conclusion of one war does not sow the seeds for another, is to heed Christ's counsel in the Sermon on the Mount and strive to be perfect just as our heavenly Father is perfect.

- Thus, we must oppose imposition of the death penalty as being in violation of the principle of charity, which underlies the concept of natural law. Even though both Augustine and Aquinas accept capital punishment, clearly, in most of the world today, imprisonment is an alternative which guarantees the public safety and therefore the death penalty cannot be justified as a last resort. This argument is bolstered by application of the concept of natural law developed by Augustine and Aquinas, according to which, since no one can know the eternal law as it is in itself, human laws cannot be altogether unerring (although they can and must be brought into increasingly less imperfect harmony with the Good itself through the use of the natural reason impressed upon us).

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"Christ at Emmaus."

- As the ongoing Serbian military aggression against Bosnia presents the case, a defensive war to prevent genocide clearly meets the requirements of a just war from the standpoint of natural law. However, we should not forget that the underlying cause of war in the world today is the lust on the part of the Venetian oligarchy for a Malthusian one-world order, and that therefore the most effective way to eliminate the potential for war is to mobilize to replace those Malthusian economic policies with a policy of economic development which reflects love of God and love of one's neighbor.
- As the U.S. Declaration of Independence emphasizes, the right to rebel against tyranny is consistent with natural law. Where possible, however—as was the case in the peaceful revolutions of 1989 in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, whatever other limitations those revolutions had insofar as they were incomplete—it is preferable that tyrannical governments be overthrown without resort to violence. But, as we see in the case of these peaceful revolutions, the task now is to bring the economies of the nations liberated from communism into harmony with natural law, rather than subjecting them to the violence of the liberal capitalism of the I.M.F. and international financial institutions. For the liberal capitalism of the Venetian oligarchy is nothing but the modern form of usury, as Lyndon LaRouche has argued most recently in his essay, "The Truth About Temporal Eternity":

> No Christian, nor any other follower of Moses, can tolerate the philosophy of John Locke or the 'free trade' dogma of the slave-trading, opium-trading British East India Company's hired apologist, Adam Smith. To promote the practice of 'free trade' is to break every part of the Decalogue into little pieces, and, having done that, to spit in the Face of God. This is no mere opinion, nor is it exaggerated; it is provably a scientific certitude more relentless than the laws of planetary motion of our solar system. It is long past the time someone ought to have said that straight out, loud and clear.

For the core of Adam Smith's dogma is a radical Aristotelian rejection of the law of love and its replacement by the law of animal lust for temporal gain. Nor is this merely a matter of personal immorality; as LaRouche has stressed, a monetary system based upon usury is one in which sooner or later the economic host will be devoured by the usurious parasite, resulting in a homicidal collapse of society as a whole.