

# The Birth of the Sovereign Nation-State

## From the Council of Florence To the Discovery of America

How the Platonic-Christian revolution of  
the Fifteenth century created the modern world

by William F. Wertz, Jr.

The philosophical divide which separates an imperial system and that of sovereign nation-state republics is best expressed by the conflict between Plato and Aristotle, as reflected in Raphael's 'The School of Athens.'

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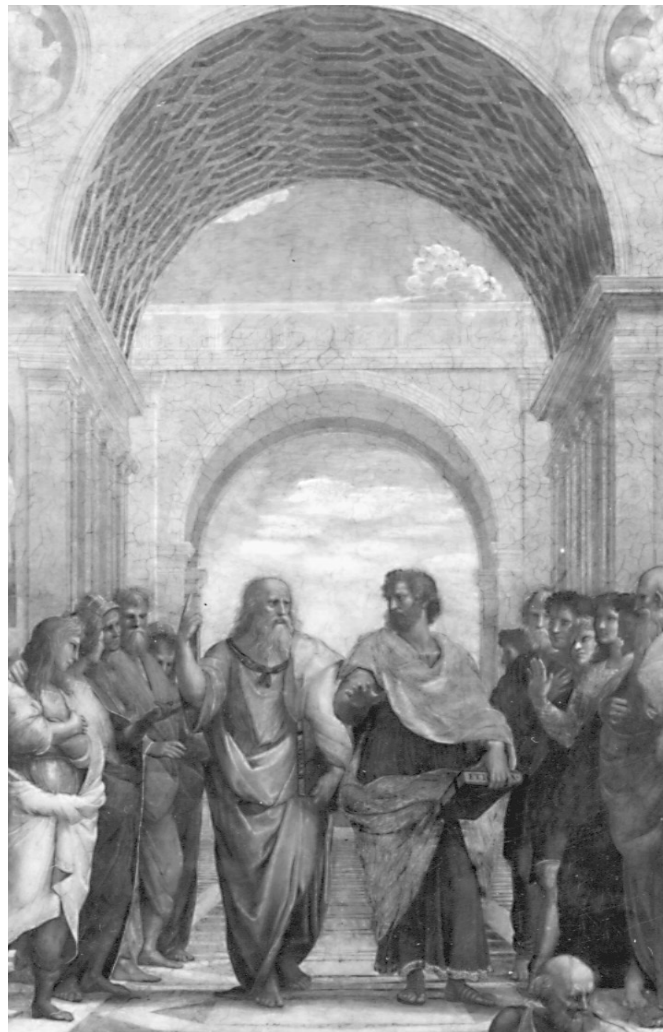


Photo Vatican Museums

*Raphael Sanzio,  
"The School of Athens,"  
1510-12, Stanza della  
Segnatura, Vatican  
Palace. Center detail  
showing Plato and  
Aristotle.*

The U.S.A., contrary to the romanticist pseudo-theories of Frederick Jackson Turner, is not the product of the “frontier.” Rather, it is the highest expression thus far of the development of the modern sovereign nation-state republic, which originated from Europe between the time of the Council of Florence in 1438-39 and the establishment of the first modern nation-states: Louis XI’s France and Henry VII’s England, during the later Fifteenth century. In fact, the idea for the colonization of the Americas, as a way of out-flanking the enemies of the Fifteenth-century Golden Renaissance, was first developed as a global strategy by the circles of Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa during the Council of Florence.

The development of the sovereign nation-state in the Fifteenth century represented a sudden phase-space shift in human history. However, it was the result of a long process, beginning with the constitutions of the Ionian Greek city-states, the reforms at Athens under Solon, and the emergence of Classical Greek culture centered on the work of Plato. The crucial point of departure was the ministry of Jesus Christ and the spread of Christianity by the Apostles, especially John and Paul. The Apostles utilized Plato’s language and ideas, as the philosophical medium through which Christianity was spread. In this way the political principle, which derives from the Christian presentation of the Mosaic doctrine that each man and woman is made in the image of the Creator, and that man should exert dominion over the physical universe, and multiply, was embedded in the foundations of European civilization.

Unfortunately, these principles of political equality and of natural law did not find institutional expression in any region of European political society, or for that matter in any other culture, until the Fifteenth century. What predominated up till then was an imperial model of society ruled by an oligarchical elite, in which ninety-five percent of the population were treated not as men and women created in the image of the Creator, but rather as virtual cattle, as mere beasts of burden.

The feudal world order was a fixed, primarily agrarian order, based originally on the decrees of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (r. 284-305 A.D.). In the year 301, Diocletian issued an edict, fixing the maximum prices of commodities and wages throughout the empire. His accompanying system of tax collection, making civil officials

responsible for payment of fixed sums, laid the basis for serfdom, by tying peasants to the land to meet their tax burden. Diocletian’s reforms were followed by the reforms of the Emperor Theodosius (r. 379-395), which legally bound the Roman subject to his occupation for life.

## Plato vs. Aristotle

The philosophical divide which separates an imperial system and that of sovereign nation-state republics is best expressed by the conflict between Plato and Aristotle, as reflected in Raphael’s “The School of Athens.” For Plato, as for Christianity, man in the image of the Creator, means that what distinguishes man from the beast is his capacity for cognitive reason and his agapic love of truth and justice. Plato’s discussion of this in Book II of the *Republic* is totally coherent with St. Paul’s treatment of agapic love of truth in *I Corinthians* 13.

In Book II, Plato rejects the irrational imperial view of Thrasymachus, that justice is the advantage of the stronger, and that injustice is advantageous and profitable to oneself. Using Socrates’ dialectic, he challenges the false axiomatic assumption underlying this view, namely, the primacy of the erotic self-interest of individuals at war with one another. In opposition to this imperial view, Plato hypothesizes a higher hypothesis, that what is profitable or good is the universal good or general welfare of an entire city or state, which requires not only an extensive internal division of labor, but also relations with other cities or states.

In contrast, in his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle denies the very existence of ideas, and reduces man to a mere animal capable only of sense perception and logical deduction. In his *Ethics*, he rejects Plato’s idea of the Good and Plato’s view that all individual goods derive from participation in the Good itself, which Plato identifies with God. (This concept of Plato’s is the basis for the notion of the general welfare, or the common good, so central to the sovereign nation-state.) Finally, in his *Politics*, Aristotle argues that slavery is natural.

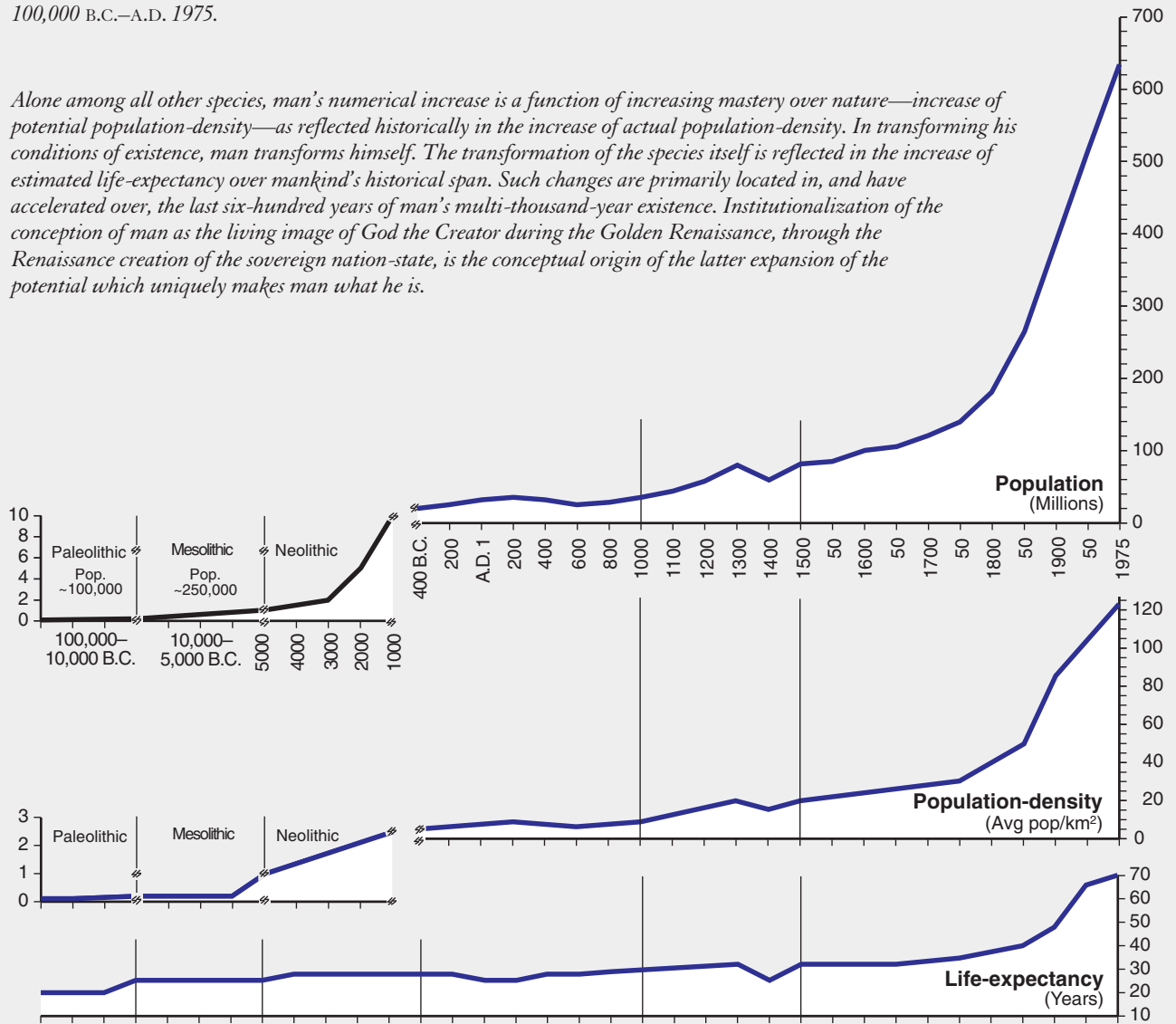
The effect of these two conflicting notions of man, in respect to how society is organized, is reflected in Figure 1. After the Council of Florence and the birth of the sovereign nation-state based upon Platonic-Christian principles, the growth of human population and the increase in human longevity was exponential, in total contrast to the stagnation and entropy which characterize the feudal, Roman, and other earlier periods. Look especially at the phase-space shift from the period 1239-1350 leading into Europe’s Dark Age during the Hundred Years War in France (1337-1453), to the period after the 1438-39 Council of Florence.

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FIGURE 1. *Growth of European population, population-density, and life-expectancy at birth, estimated for 100,000 B.C.—A.D. 1975.*

*Alone among all other species, man's numerical increase is a function of increasing mastery over nature—increase of potential population-density—as reflected historically in the increase of actual population-density. In transforming his conditions of existence, man transforms himself. The transformation of the species itself is reflected in the increase of estimated life-expectancy over mankind's historical span. Such changes are primarily located in, and have accelerated over, the last six-hundred years of man's multi-thousand-year existence. Institutionalization of the conception of man as the living image of God the Creator during the Golden Renaissance, through the Renaissance creation of the sovereign nation-state, is the conceptual origin of the latter expansion of the potential which uniquely makes man what he is.*



All charts are based on standard estimates compiled by existing schools of demography. None claim any more precision than the indicative; however, the scaling flattens out what might otherwise be locally, or even temporally, significant variation, reducing all thereby to the set of changes which is significant, independent of the quality of estimates and scaling of the graphs. Sources: For population and population-density, Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones, *Atlas of World Population History*; for life-expectancy, various studies in historical demography.

Note breaks and changes in scales.

## Feudal Warfare

Contrary to the false propaganda of today's globalists, the nation-state is not the cause of war. Rather, virtually all wars fought within Europe were launched by feudalist factions to prevent the development of sovereign nation-states, and through geopolitical manipulation to prevent their collaboration to achieve peace based on the mutual development of their peoples.

This can be seen most clearly in the century leading into Europe's Fourteenth-century Dark Age.

As Professor Friedrich von der Heydte documents in his book *The Hour of Birth of the Sovereign State*, in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth centuries, there were already four kingdoms which had developed an identity distinct from the Holy Roman Empire: England under Henry II (1154-1189), France under Louis IX (1226-1270), Sicily under Frederick II Hohenstaufen (1212-1250), and Spain under Ferdinand (1217-1252) and his successor Alfonso the Wise (1252-1258). The development of at least the first three of these states was prepared in the Tenth and Eleventh centuries

by the Norman occupation.

In each of these cases, legal reforms were initiated to regain rights for the crown which had been lost in the feudal period. All special privileges of the barons were to be abolished according to one proposal made to Louis IX. Frederick issued the first scientifically codified system of laws since Justinian. It deprived the nobles of legislative, judicial, and minting powers, centering these in the state.

Legal reform went hand-in-hand with a centralized financial organization. In the case of Frederick, the national economy was carefully regulated. A “just price” was established for various services and goods. The state nationalized production of salt, iron, steel, hemp, tar, dyed fabrics and silks; it operated textile factories; owned and operated slaughterhouses; created model farms; fostered the cultivation of cotton and sugar cane; built roads and bridges; and sank wells to augment the water supply. Internal traffic tolls were reduced to a minimum, but tariffs on exports and imports were imposed. Foreign trade was largely managed by the state, and was carried in vessels owned by the government.

In England and Sicily, feudal military service to the lord was replaced by a tax; the right of the nobility to bear arms in England was changed into the right of all free men to bear arms.

It was to prevent these initial moves towards sovereign states that in 1239, a Venice-controlled faction known as the Guelph League, set in motion a cycle of wars throughout Europe aimed at consolidating an ultra-feudalist, usurious world order. This was part of a sweeping change in the correlation of forces in Europe, following the Venetian oligarchy’s successful exploitation of its control over the Fourth Crusade in 1202-04. This process was accelerated after the death of Frederick II in December 1250. After the killing

of both Manfred and Conradin Hohenstaufen in 1268, the Guelph unleashed chaos, economic ruin, and the rising power of a group of Venice-sponsored bankers throughout Europe typified by the Florentine banking houses of the Bardi and Peruzzi.

Through feudal wars and free-trade-linked financial speculation, Europe’s culture and economy collapsed, and death rates skyrocketed. The blowout of the resulting debt bubble, and ensuing bankruptcy of the Peruzzi and Bardi family banks in 1343-44, unleashed the final stage of that decay.

## The Triumph of Death

I want to give you a brief idea of the Fourteenth-century Dark Age, the model for what today’s globalists will plunge us into once again, if we do not succeed in rooting out the financial oligarchy once and for all.

- The Roman Church, which had been the one unifying institution in Europe, began to disintegrate during the Fourteenth century, owing to its insistence upon a theocratic, supranational concept of its authority over the emerging nation-states. As a result, the Church became a tool of France during its captivity at Avignon from 1305-1378. When the Pope returned to Rome in 1378, the French elected an “anti-Pope,” leading to a schism which lasted forty years.

**The Fourteenth-century Dark Age is a model for what today’s globalists will plunge us into once again, if we do not succeed in rooting out the financial oligarchy once and for all. This Hell on Earth was depicted by the painter Bruegel in ‘The Triumph of Death.’**



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, “The Triumph of Death,” 1562-64 (detail).

Today, Prince Philip's "world religion project"—with which Vice President Al Gore is associated—intends to bring about a similar destruction of Christianity.

- Beginning 1339, Edward III of England invaded France, thereby triggering the Hundred Years War, in which both sides were manipulated by the Venetian-controlled Guelph banking families. Today, we are witnessing the unleashing of wars in Africa, Iraq, the Balkans, Colombia, and elsewhere, which threaten to become a protracted, worldwide war.
- When Edward could not repay the usurious loans he borrowed from the Peruzzi bank in Florence to finance the war, the bank failed in 1343; the Bardi bank failed a year later. Although triggered by Edward's default, the collapse was the result of a huge international bubble of currency speculation created by the Venetians between 1275 and 1350. The banks, which operated free of any national regulation, progressively looted the real economy to feed the speculative debt bubble.
- The Bardi and Peruzzi bankruptcies were quickly followed in 1347 by the first outbreak of bubonic plague. The estimate of modern demographers is that for the area extending from India to Iceland, about one-third of the population died. This would have meant about 20 million deaths in Europe, whose population was reduced by about 40% by the year 1380, and by nearly 50% by the end of the century, as the plague returned again and again. Under similar conditions of total economic collapse today, the already devastating spread of AIDS and other epidemic diseases would accelerate to even greater proportions.
- Because of the lack of emphasis on scientific method in the culture, this devastation gave rise to irrational religious fundamentalist movements like the Flagellants. One sees the same thing today in such movements as the Promise Keepers, and the followers of Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell.
- The ruling feudal oligarchies responded to workers' demands for higher pay and shorter hours with fierce repression. In England, the Statute of Laborers (the basis for today's anti-union conspiracy laws) was passed, freezing wages and penalizing workers for seeking other jobs at higher pay. Fugitive workers were declared outlaws and branded on the forehead with an "F," for fugitive. Today's anti-union laws, combined with prison, welfare, and NAFTA slave labor reflect the same feudal mentality.
- Mercenary private armies, called Free Companies, composed of discharged soldiers, exiles, outlaws, and

landless or bankrupt adventurers, exacted tribute from travellers, raided the countryside, imposed ransoms on prosperous villages, and burned poor ones.

It was to eliminate this Hell on Earth—which the painter Bruegel depicted in "The Triumph of Death"—and to realize the principles of Platonic Christianity, that the sovereign nation-state was created. And, it is to prevent a return to an even greater Hell, that our defense and use of the sovereign powers of the nation-state are needed today.

As Lyndon LaRouche has pointed out, the revolution which occurred in the Fifteenth century was prepared by an intellectually powerful minority within society as a whole in a centuries-long process. The influence of St. Augustine, as echoed in the emergence of a civilized order around Charlemagne, the influence of Abelard of Paris, of the cathedral-builders of Chartres, of Bonaventura, Thomas Aquinas, Dante Alighieri, and the Brothers of the Common Life, are among the notable benchmarks.

In his book, von der Heydte traces the philosophical evolution of the notion of the sovereign nation-state during the period 1250-1350.

As he emphasizes, the positive ideas underlying the Holy Roman Empire and the role of the emperor, such as Charlemagne, are that the people are the "children of God," that this is what unifies the empire, and that the empire's mission is to achieve peace for the benefit of all the children of God.

The idea of the state, and of the community of states, evolved from the state taking the power of the empire unto itself. The state took the same rights for its limited area as those which applied to the Holy Roman Empire for the world. The state was to take unto itself the power and freedom of political actions which had previously belonged to the empire exclusively, including the right of war and the right over life and death of people. The king claims in his kingdom the power which accords to the Emperor in the empire; for his subjects in his territorial area of authority, he becomes Emperor.

The kings then claimed the principle of sovereignty, i.e., that they recognized no authority other than God and conscience higher than themselves. They thus placed a spatial limit on the authority of the Emperor. From these ideas evolved the idea of sovereign equality, and, implicitly, the idea of a multiplicity of equal states under law. Eventually, the Empire, which was based in Germany, would become another state alongside other states.

With the emergence of the sovereign state and the political world structure on the basis of equality, the position in law, not only of the Empire, but also of the papacy, would change. The Holy Roman Empire would become a state alongside other states, but the Pope would maintain a spe-

cial position: The Pope would be sovereign, but not at the same level as the other states; he is neither above nor alongside these other states; he is between them, and so, he becomes the natural mediator.

One of the key individuals identified by von der Heydte in developing the basis for the emergence of the sovereign nation-state, is Thomas Aquinas, the son of a southern Italian count, who was a judicial officer under Frederick II.

Building upon Augustine, Aquinas developed the notion of natural law as the principle of reason which ultimately defines sovereignty. For both Augustine and Aquinas, “natural law is nothing else than the rational creature’s participation in the eternal law.” In other words, the sovereign king is not above natural law. The king and the state are denied any form of purely arbitrary authority. The authority of the state depends upon the universality of a principle of reason. Thus, the state is not ruled by the ruler, but rather by the principle of natural law.

For example, Aquinas reiterates the just war doctrine developed by Augustine. Only a sovereign can wage war, but it cannot be done irrationally or arbitrarily. War can only be waged on the basis of agapic love of truth and justice, both for one’s own people, and for the people of the offending nation.

According to von der Heydte, Aquinas opened the way for the theory of the sovereign state with his notion of the *civitas perfecta*, the self-sufficient community, or implicitly, the perfectly sovereign nation-state, whose leadership recognizes no one over it, other than natural law. This notion of the *civitas perfecta* ultimately derives from Augustine’s *City of God* and from Plato’s *Republic*. According to Augustine, the God-given goal of all people is peace, without regard to differences of blood, morals, customs, culture, or faith. Peace is the goal of rule, which gives sovereignty its moral justification and characterizes the duty of the sovereign as service to the people.

This latter concept is in direct contrast to the ideology of the Crusades, or to today’s false concept of a “clash of civilizations.” According to natural law, all men and women, created in the image of the Creator, regardless of their faith, are children of God. Thus, Aquinas, for example, rejected the view that any treaty with heathens was a sin.

Aquinas was undoubtedly influenced in his opposition to the ideology of the Crusades by the example of Freder-



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**Top to bottom: Thomas Aquinas, Chartres Cathedral, Peter Abelard.**

ick II, who was urged to lead a Crusade to Jerusalem in 1225. After some delay, he led 40,000 crusaders in 1227. However, when the plague broke out in his army, and he himself was infected, he returned to seek a cure. Pope Gregory would not hear his explanations and excommunicated him. Seven months later, still excommunicated, he set sail again. The Saracen commander, al-Kamil, astonished to find a European ruler who understood Arabic and appreciated Arabic literature, science, and philosophy, made a favorable peace with Frederick, who then entered Jerusalem as a bloodless conqueror. Frederick reportedly spoke nine languages and wrote seven. He corresponded in Arabic with al-Kamil, whom he called his most dear friend after his own sons.

After Aquinas, the most important contributions to the revolutionary developments in the Fifteenth century were made by Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), the Brothers of the Common Life, founded by Gerhard Groote (1340-84), Joan of Arc (1412-31), and Nicolaus of Cusa (1401-64).



Alinari/Art Resource, NY

Domenico di Michelino, "Dante Alighieri Reading His Poem," 1465 (detail). The Cathedral of Florence appears to Dante's left.

Dante, an opponent of the Black Guelph, who was exiled from his native Florence, wrote in *De Monarchia* (1310-13) that "the proper work of mankind taken as a whole is to exercise continually its entire capacity for intellectual growth." In *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, he argued that the creation of a literate form of vernacular language, common to an entire nation, is a necessary precondition for the intellectual growth of a people, and for the development of its capacity to exercise self-government.

The significance of the Brothers of the Common Life is, that at the very end of the Fourteenth century, they began an educational movement which realized Dante's program. The Brothers earned their living either by teaching poor children, primarily orphans, or by two occupations not controlled by the guilds, copying manuscripts and cooking. Through this effort, the Brothers contributed significantly to educating the 95% majority of the population, who were otherwise oppressed as mere feudal serfs.

What Gerhard Groote and Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471), the author of the *Imitation of Christ*, emphasized in their educational work, was the use of primary sources, which the students copied out by hand—the only means of reproducing books in that period. Thereby the student reproduced in his own mind, the intellectual experiences of great scientific discoveries of the past. This approach was in direct opposition to the Aristotelian method preva-

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lent in the universities of the time, which was based upon rote learning and merely formal knowledge. This project laid the basis for the later development of the nation-state and the principle of self-government, as developed by Nicolaus of Cusa. From this standpoint, as à Kempis elaborates in a short work entitled "The Beggar and No Beggar; or, Every Man a King if He Will," even a Beggar who develops his mind is verily a King.

Joan of Arc was the living refutation of the feudal order. She was a woman of the commoners' class who engaged in political-military action, contrary to the rules of chivalry, in order to lead the French people in rescuing her nation, as a nation, from foreign tyrants. Her courage and inspiration, even in martyrdom, led ineluctably to the creation of the French nation-state beginning in 1461 with the reign of Louis XI.

## The Cultural Paradigm Shift

The entropic devolution of the Fourteenth-century Dark Age was the result of the Venetian defeat of the incipient nation-states of the early Thirteenth century. But over the ensuing two hundred years as we have seen, an intellectual minority prepared the way for a revolutionary change. Ironically, the very success of the Venetians in suppressing the nation-state and imposing an entropic feudal paradigm on European society, led necessarily to the devolution of the Fourteenth-century Dark Age. This devolution led inexorably not only to a self-weakening and discrediting of that society, but also to the potential for a reverse cultural paradigm shift, back to an anti-entropic universe. The devolution itself posed an ontological paradox, which could only be resolved through *cognition*, that is, through the generation of a new, higher-order, anti-entropic hypothesis.

This is precisely what occurred in the Fifteenth century, beginning with the Council of Florence (1438-39), which was organized by the great Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa. The critical development at the Council of Florence was the ecumenical reaffirmation of the “*filioque*” clause of the Nicene Creed. “*Filioque*” literally means “and the son.” By stating that the “Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*,” the Nicene Creed affirms the principle that, since the Son—Christ—is not only God, but also man, all men and women, who are created in the image of God—*imago Dei*—are capable of agapic reason. (In the Christian Trinity, the Holy Spirit is *agapē* or love, and the Son is the *Logos*, or Reason.) Thus, the “*Filioque*” principle uniquely emphasizes the cognitive capacity of each man and woman made in the image of the Creator—in opposition to the Roman Empire’s Code of Diocletian, for example, which explicitly denied this.

The significance of Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa, who himself was a product of the Brothers of the Common Life, was that he contributed directly both to the development of the sovereign nation-state, through his works *On Catholic Concordance* (1433) and *The Peace of Faith* (1453) and to the founding of modern science, through his *On Learned Ignorance* (1440). These contributions flowed directly from Cusanus’s belief in the primacy of man’s cognitive capacity, reflected in the *Filioque* doctrine.

What Nicolaus of Cusa contributed in his *On Catholic Concordance* was the revolutionary concept of government by the consent of the governed, which he derived 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*).

Anticipating the language of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, Cusanus writes:

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

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reason of man. . . . 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. . . . 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.

In the *Peace of Faith*, written immediately after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, Cusanus establishes natural law as also the basis for foreign policy among diverse peoples and nations. Cusanus argues in dialogue format, using a character based on the Apostle Paul, that despite different religions having received their commandments through the hands of various prophets, the divine commandments are known uni-



*Equestrian statue of Joan of Arc, St. Augustine Church, Paris.*

EIRNS/Christopher Lewis



**The radiated impact of the affirmation of the Platonic principle of natural law by Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa, in the context of the Council of Florence, laid the basis for the introduction of a new form of state by France's Louis XI. The modern nation-state would promote the general welfare, by developing the cognitive capacity of the people, so as to increase mankind's power over nature through scientific and economic development.**



**Left:** Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa. **Below:** Cathedral of Florence. The dome, designed by Filippo Brunelleschi, was completed just before the 1439 Council.

EIRNS/Nora Hamerman

versally, because they are innate in the human intellect. In each of us, reason, or the Word, who is God, says to love Him and do nothing to another except that which we wish done to us. Adherence in one's actions to the law of love is thus the unique basis for establishing concord, or a community of principle, among the sovereign nation-states of the world.

Moreover, it was this latter emphasis on the human intellect and cognition, which led Cusanus to become the founder of modern science. In total opposition to the Aristotelian view of the universe as essentially fixed, which dominated the Fourteenth century, Cusanus argued in such locations as *On Learned Ignorance* (1440), that man as a microcosm has the capacity to act on the basis of his creative intellect to further develop the potential of the macrocosm. In *The Game of Spheres*, he 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." For Cusanus, insofar as man imitates Christ, who as Maximal Reason is the creator of the world, he is capable of being the instrument of the further unfolding of all things enfolded in God.

## The First Sovereign Nation-States

The radiated impact of the affirmation of this Platonic principle of natural law by Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa, in the context of the Council of Florence, laid the basis for the introduction in practice, by France's Louis XI, of the new form of state, the sovereign nation-state republic. As you will see, with the creation of the first modern sovereign nation-states in France and England, an institution was created and wielded that would promote the general welfare by dirigistically developing the cognitive capacity



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of all the people, so as to increase mankind's power over nature through scientific and economic development.

Louis XI was born on July 3, 1423. From the age of two, until he was ten, his parents hid him for safety in the Loches castle. Joan of Arc came to Loches after her first great victory in 1429 at Orleans. Louis was six. In that year he began his formal education based upon a program of instruction designed by Jean Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, who was otherwise known for his defense of the Brothers of the Common Life against charges of heresy at the Council of Constance. Louis was fifteen years old at the time of the Council of Florence.

Louis was not to become King of France until 1461 at age 38. However, in 1447 at age 24 he assumed control of the state of Dauphine and began to implement policies there that foreshadowed the measures he would later take to create the first modern sovereign nation-state. He abolished a hodge-podge of administrative subdivisions and reorganized the province. He established a Parliament, sped up the process of litigation, established an official

register of documents, and set up a government postal service, the first in Europe. (This is something Benjamin Franklin would do in the United States before independence.) He founded a university at Valence with faculties of theology, civil and canon law, medicine, and liberal arts. He curbed the power of the feudal lords and stimulated the growth of towns. He encouraged agriculture by putting a tax on wheat coming into Dauphine. He offered financial inducements to enterprising merchants, ennobled them, took their sons into his service, and encouraged skilled foreign artisans to settle in Dauphine.

Louis abolished private warfare, a privilege enjoyed by the nobles, demanded that all nobles do homage to him, required them to furnish military service at their own expense. He succeeded in establishing his authority over prelates as well as nobles.

He transformed his backward province into a state, gave it a cohesion it had never known, and organized an administration that was probably more efficient than any other in Europe. He enacted in all more than a thousand decrees, ranging from broad reforms to minute regulations for the welfare of individuals and towns.

However, his father King Charles VII, who had abandoned Joan of Arc to be burned at the stake, and for whom Louis had no respect, was threatened by his efforts. When the King sent an army to dislodge him in 1456, Louis, at age 33, was compelled to flee to Burgundy, where the Duke his uncle provided him a residence in exile, until Charles died in 1461 and Louis became king.

Over the course of his reign from 1461-1483, Louis XI succeeded against great domestic and foreign opposition in unifying France as a sovereign nation-state by effecting the same kinds of reforms in France as he earlier implemented in Dauphine. As Lyndon LaRouche has written:

Although he sought peace and compromise with the feudal nobility of his reconstructed kingdom, he shifted the center of power toward an urban intelligentsia of the quality produced by educational institutions such as the Brothers of the Common Life. Louis XI's emphasis upon the role of such an intelligentsia drawn from the ranks of plebeians and the poor, and his emphasis upon the general welfare of France as a whole as the standard of reason in law-making, are leading among the qualities which define his France as a sovereign nation-state republic, even though relics of the former feudal social order are participants in the republic.

As King, Louis implemented those nation-building policies he had pioneered in Dauphine: He instituted tax reforms, and took into service men of no rank but promising talents. He ennobled his principal townsmen, and permitted enterprising nobles to engage in trade without losing the privileges of nobility. He planted a silk

industry. He took the new craft of printing under his protection. He shook up the mining industry by establishing a "master general of mines"; by requiring all owners of ore-bearing property either to exploit their resources or for a percentage of the profits, to lease out the holdings; by exempting masters and workers from taxes; and by encouraging foreign miners to settle in France. In 1481, he planned the creation of a great port in Marseilles to facilitate expanded trade.

In 1483, the last year of his life, Louis composed the *Rosebush of War* to instruct his son and heir Charles. In this book, Louis summarizes the responsibility of the King to ensure the common good or the commonweal of his nation: "The prince must provide for maintenance of the public works and edifices, and make improvements and repairs on the roads, the bridges, the ports, the walls, the moats, and the other things in his towns and castles which are necessary."

But all of these economic development plans were only brought to fruition to the extent that he succeeded over nearly two decades in bringing the Church of France under his domination (he had no use whatever for the Holy Inquisition), in breaking the power of feudalism, and in bringing the princely fiefdoms and duchies into submission to the French nation-state. He accomplished this not primarily by military means, although he used such as necessary, but rather by a willingness to pardon his enemies in order to win them over to serving his higher mission to create a French nation-state. He did this, even at great risk to his own physical safety, as in 1468, when he dismissed his guard and rode off to meet his mightiest enemy at the time, the Duke of Burgundy, with a retinue of 50 lords and attendants, who on his orders wore no armor and bore no weapons.

The second example Lyndon LaRouche gives of a modern sovereign nation-state is that of Tudor England under Henry VII. As LaRouche points out, the revolutions effected by both Louis XI and Henry VII are to be contrasted with the fraud of the English Magna Carta (1215). The latter is not a true case of the establishment of a sovereign nation, but just the opposite, a victory for feudal baronies. Instead of subordinating the feudal baronies to the sovereign nation-state as Louis XI and Henry VII did, in the case of the Magna Carta, King John I was compelled by the barons to relinquish his sovereignty. As LaRouche writes, "the Magna Carta was the root-cause for many evils, including the consequent horror-show, centuries later, called England's Wars of the Roses."

Henry VII (1457-1509) became King of England in 1485 after a long exile in Brittany, Northern France, beginning in 1471 while Louis XI was King of France. After Richard III, whose evil is well known to readers of

**In the *Rosebush of War*, France's Louis XI summarized the responsibility of the King to ensure the common good of his nation: 'The prince must provide for maintenance of the public works and edifices, and make improvements and repairs on the roads, the bridges, the ports, the walls, the moats, and the other things in his towns and castles which are necessary.'**

Shakespeare, assumed power in England through a coup d'etat in 1483, a conspiracy evolved to end the Wars of the Roses (1455-85) and depose Richard III by crowning Henry VII.

When Louis XI died in 1483, his son Charles was only thirteen. Anne Beaujeu, Louis' eldest daughter, governed France during his minority. In 1484, Henry fled Brittany for the French court, which provided him with support for a successful invasion in 1485. Having spent thirteen years in France during the time when Louis XI completed his mission of creating the first modern sovereign nation-state, Henry VII proceeded to follow in his footsteps. Sir Walter Raleigh takes note of this in his *History of the World*:

This cruel King (Richard III), Henry VII cut off; and was therein (no doubt) the immediate instrument of God's justice. A politic Prince he was, if ever there were any, and who, by the engine of his wisdom, beat down and overturned as many strong oppositions, both before and after he wore the crown, as ever any King of England did. . . . He had well observed the proceedings of Louis XI, whom he followed in all that was royal or royal-like. . . .

A number of laws enacted and enforced by Henry VII parallel those of Louis XI: For example, Henry imposed a heavy duty upon wool shipped to Europe, in order to prevent the raw material being carried out of the country, and to encourage the home manufacture of cloth. He enacted an early form of capital controls with a law that no money, nor gold or silver plate, could be carried out of England without being subject to a very heavy penalty.

Also, of importance in respect to the question of justice for all, Henry VII issued a proclamation commanding justice for "all manner of men, as well the poor as the rich (which be to him all one in due ministration of Justice)," and if he have no remedy, then he who is grieved shall "come to the King's highness, or to his Chancellor."

Like the government of Louis XI, that of Henry was also influenced by the Brothers of the Common Life. Henry chose as his chancellor, Bishop John Morton, who



France's King Louis XI (reigned 1461-1485).

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had been one of the chief architects of the victory over Richard III. Morton remained in office until his death in 1500. Sir Thomas More, a friend of Erasmus of Rotterdam, who was educated by the Brothers of the Common Life, was a young associate of Morton's. Henry's mother, Margaret Beaufort, had also sponsored a translation of the first three books of *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis.

## The Battle Today

Although Louis XI and Henry VII represent instances of the introduction of genuine principles of the sovereign nation-state republic, the failures of their heirs demonstrate the fragility of a republic established in a monarchical form.

The failure of the League of Cambrai to militarily defeat Venice in 1510, has meant that since the revolution of the Fifteenth century, the nation-state has existed in a symbiotic relationship with its oligarchical enemy, which has functioned as a parasite on its nation-state host.

Our own constitutional republic was a product of the revolution of the Fifteenth century. First, the Americas were discovered and colonized as a direct result of the Council of Florence. Christopher Columbus's 1492 voyage resulted from the collaboration of two of Nicolaus of Cusa's closest collaborators, the Italian scientist Paolo



*England's King Henry VII (reigned 1485-1509).*

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Toscanelli, and Ferdinand Martin, the Canon of Lisbon, Portugal. Both of these individuals appear as participants in dialogues written by Cusanus; Toscanelli is Cusanus's interlocutor in "The Dialogue on the Quadrature of the Circle," and Martin is one of several participants identified in "On the Not-Other." Both were witnesses to Cusanus's last will and testament.

When Columbus was in Portugal, he learned that Toscanelli had written letters to Ferdinand Martin about a westward voyage to the Orient. With Martin as intermediary, Columbus then engaged in a direct correspondence with Toscanelli. In 1480, Columbus received a letter from Toscanelli which included a map and the scientific information required for such a voyage. Columbus is known to have carried this navigational map with him during his successful voyage in 1492.

Second, when the oligarchy proved too strong politically in Europe for the completion of the Fifteenth century revolution there, the United States of America was created as the highest and most complete expression of that revolution. This was expressed in the Declaration of Independence with its emphasis on "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" and the Preamble to the Constitution, with its emphasis on promoting the General Welfare.

Unfortunately, however, even our great nation has been subverted by the financial oligarchy, as evidenced by the compromise, which permitted slavery at the founding of our Republic; by the British-engineered Confederate

secession; and the ongoing efforts today by the British Commonwealth-centered, Wall Street-allied financier oligarchy to destroy our Presidency and with it our sovereignty as a nation.

One should not be lulled into complacency by the recent defeat of the impeachment of the President. We have won a battle, but we have not yet won the war. We must *not* act like General Meade, who refused to pursue and defeat General Lee and thus win the war after the victory at Gettysburg. We must act like Sherman and Grant under Lincoln's command.

The moment in history has come when the Venetian-style financial oligarchy, now centered in Britain and its Commonwealth, like the Guelph of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth centuries, has determined to destroy the nation-state and maintain its political power even at the expense of a New Dark Age. The symbiotic relationship of the last 550 years between the nation-state and the financial oligarchy is over. Mankind will only survive to the extent that we destroy the financial oligarchy and its irrationalist imperial form of government once and for all and fulfill our obligation to our ancestors, who gave us the sovereign nation-state, by creating finally a worldwide family of nation-states for the benefit of all humanity and our posterity.

As Abraham Lincoln said in his Gettysburg address:

It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work, which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.