

Mankind Survives, By The Sublime

Asked what to do about the economic crash, following his presentation to a Nov. 5 Berlin seminar, EIR Founding Editor Lyndon LaRouche replied by reference to a Classical tragedy on the stage—of history.

Then, how does man survive, if most institutions, and most populations, stink? are morally depraved? How is man able to survive over 2 million years, to survive all man's successive follies? What is there about man, that—despite these follies, which inhere in all cultures to date—man survives, and even prospers? How? Why? It's because of the Sublime.

The Sublime is first brought into Classical culture, explicitly in a sense by Solon, in his famous poem, warning the Athenians of how they had drifted toward peril in their moral degenerations as he founded the reform of Athens. The question is next raised in the most important way by Plato in the dialogues, where Plato attacks the Classical tragedians, as moral failures. Why did they fail? Because they omitted the Sublime.

Now, look at Plato's dialogues as the Sublime. Each dialogue is a case of the Sublime. All the dialogues taken together are the Sublime; why? Because there is an error, a popular error, which is shared by all of the people in the play, but then in the course of the drama, the question of the error is posed. A paradox is understood. A debate of the paradox occurs, and in this, as in the case of the *Meno* dialogue, for example, where the so-called slave-boy makes a scientific discovery, or re-enacts one, the result is the Sublime: that the goodness of the human being contains this quality of insight, which is what we associate with great scientific discoveries of principle. Every person is born with this capability, and in most of us, it's destroyed. It's often destroyed by a zeal to get an education, where you learn so much, you never stop to know anything. But in the case of the scientific discovery, as in the *Meno*, the consideration of a paradox says, "Stop. Stop repeating what you learned. You don't know what you're talking about. What is

the problem? Think about the problem. Think about a solution."

Now, what happens is, in the case of great tragedy, particularly in the case of Jeanne d'Arc, as Schiller portrays the actually historic Jeanne d'Arc, with one dramatic change, but the essential story is the same. All great tragedy portrays this, implicitly or explicitly. That's why it's great Classical tragedy. It shows that a society which is not morally fit to survive, may survive. In tragedy, it's implicit to the audience watching the drama, that it is the people on stage who have destroyed themselves, and their own society. But the people in the audience are now led to see *how* the society destroyed itself. We say, now they are enriched and strengthened, because they recognize how the society destroyed itself; therefore they can see the error, and this knowledge of the error, can protect them in future. Therefore, as Schiller said, the purpose of the Classical drama, is to cause the audience to leave the theater, better people than they entered it, for this reason.

Jeanne d'Arc as a historic figure, has the same character that Schiller attributes to her as Johanna. And that is, in a moment in the 15th Century, she, a peasant girl, went to a king and said, "You stink, but God told me to tell you to become a real king, because France needs to be a nation." This was what happened. And it worked. She, in the process, was killed by the Inquisition. . . .

So that in the bowels of horror, people come forth, as individuals, who are able to grasp the situation, intervene in the situation, and, by the method described by Plato, to transform themselves, and thus, gain from that, the ability to rise above the situation, to save a people that is not worth saving, but to lead them to safety.

That's the essence of politics. That's the essence of true politics. Don't say, we depend upon the consent of the average. The fools of this society are those who say, "You can't change popular opinion." You can, if you use the right method, the method of the Sublime.