

Bush Presidencies Are The Failure of a Culture

by Gerald Rose

April 5—In a discussion with his collaborators on March 31, Lyndon LaRouche elaborated the Shakespeare revolution in this way:

“Take the case of the work of Shakespeare. . . . Why was he so great? What was his power? He wasn’t an ordinary scientist. No, he understood how to use experience, to create a credible understanding of principles and causes, of successful human behavior; and of successful failures of humanity. . . . So the important thing is for us to recognize that what we call culture, what we call history, what we call physical science, is to a large degree pure crap. But you can learn from the example of Shakespeare—from his dramas—you can learn the principles by which mankind is able to foresee the future of mankind itself. and that’s what the function is; the function of mankind is to be able to create the future, and to create it as a valid form of expression. . . . What Shakespeare did was create the reality of an effect; and therefore to understand the effects which are plausible and have reason to be considered as effects, as efficient effects, with all of his writings, Shakespeare’s. That’s the principle.”

LaRouche’s insight into Shakespeare as one of the greatest scientists in history flies in the face of the idea that history is unknowable as truth. There are fundamental principles which human history demonstrates if, like Shakespeare, you know what you are looking at. Shakespeare demonstrates and creates a true picture of a failed culture, his own. This is the essence of human science. We study history not so we would not repeat it—we indeed cannot repeat it, for all

sorts of epistemological reasons. We study history to get insight into principles of human development and degeneration, not as an abstraction or as mere formulas, but as insights into the real people who made it.

In the hands of a poet like Shakespeare, these unforgettable real kings and barons give the deepest, most profound demonstration into how real history is made. The insanity of Richard III, who hates humans and uses them as playthings to amuse himself, brings about full force the destruction of England. The petulance and self-absorption of Richard II, opening the door for what leads to Richard III, is brilliantly and ironically demonstrated by the deep, almost superhuman insight of Shakespeare. These are the lawful effects that LaRouche is talking about. These are the lawful effects of a failed culture which tears England apart.



Richard II as played by David Garrick, painting by William Hogarth (1745).

As you read this issue of *EIR*, think of how a Shakespeare would portray the Bush family. Then you are beginning to get what is really happening to our country.

In his historical dramas, Shakespeare depicted the effects of the succession of English monarchs on the English people, as LaRouche has frequently reviewed the effects on the American nation of successions of British-agent or incapable Presidents, and the extraordinary effects of the rare geniuses like Abraham Lincoln or the overlooked John Quincy Adams. Under Shakespeare's dramatic eye lay two dynastic lineages, the perpetually war-obsessed Plantagenet family and the very complex, brilliant Tudors. In the English culture of Shakespeare's audiences, a heroic aura surrounded some Plantagenet warrior kings of centuries earlier, particularly Henry V. And there had been the case of Henry VIII Tudor who, after invading France in 1510, actually began to consider himself a reincarnation of Henry V Plantagenet—as Barack Obama has emerged before the anguished eyes of his former supporters as a degenerated continuation of the Bush dynasty he replaced.

Shakespeare took on these national beliefs of popular culture through these dramas, as he did the myths of warlike nobility in the ancient and “honorable Romans,” and as he created such auras of diseased popular cultures to the same effect in his mythical dramas such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, to induce his spectators to rise above such moral diseases. Think of his use of brief dialogues at the opening of one of his first dramas, *Henry VI*, to sketch the ruin of civil war which the “hero king” Henry V had left England upon his death. Or the ironic contrast of the speeches of Chorus at the opening and closing of his later play *Henry V* itself.

History: Prescience of the Future

A drama is the work of the imagination. This is identified in Shakespeare's use of “Chorus” in the lead-in to *Henry V*:

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention,
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire
Crouch for employment. But pardon, and gentles all,
The flat unraised spirits that have dared



The “warrior King” Henry V.

On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object: can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
Attest in little place a million;
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
On your imaginary forces work.
Suppose within the girdle of these walls
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
Into a thousand parts divide on man,
And make imaginary puissance;
Think when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,
Admit me Chorus to this history;
Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

Yet it is by no means imaginary. It is precisely the epic quality of Shakespeare's first works which distinguishes him as a great scientist. His works are anything but soap operas. Like Homer before him, Shakespeare's first effort was to delve into the disaster that took over England and brought a monster like Richard III to the throne. England was embroiled non-stop in an internal war for over 60 years which was called "The War of the Roses." This war ended in the decimation of the Plantagenet dynasty, both the House of Lancaster and the House of York, which ruled England for over 400 years. The barbarity with which Richard III conducted the final purge of his own House of York in order to become king is breathtaking. His reason is, he just wanted to.

It was his "humor" to do so, as he was to say.

What was the culture that brought a monster like that to the throne? The same question must be asked today. What brought a "W" Bush and Obama to the Presidency?

The Actual History: Richard II

According to the researched sequence of the writing and performance of his history plays, Shakespeare jumps from *Henry VI* and *Richard III* to, of all kingly dramas, *Richard II*. It jumps out at you. Richard II, grandson of Edward III (the Norman butcher Plantagenet who invaded France and turned it into a graveyard in the 13th Century), had been deposed and assassinated nearly 200 years earlier. The latter play was written to get at the axiomatic core of the tragedy. It is the ousting of Richard II by unlawful means that sets the tragedy of a tragic system in motion.

Shakespeare defines the deposing of King Richard II with total precision. Richard is a petulant King who unlawfully strips his rival Bolingbrook (Hereford) of his lands because he considered that since he was King, he was not bound by any law. He pays dearly for it. His petulant lawlessness galvanizes the nobles of the realm under Bolingbrook to depose him. Then Shakespeare



Richard III as played by Edward Kean, painting by John James Halls (1814).

does something remarkable: As he is being deposed and stripped of his power, Richard II realizes that he too is human, subject to the laws like others. He has an insane reaction to it, going back and forth between the recognition that he is not the King, and the recognition that like all, he is mortal.

My gay apparel for an
almsman's gown,
What must the king do now?
must he submit?
The king shall do it: must he be
deposed?
The king shall be contented:
must he lose
The name of king? o' God's
name, let it go:
I'll give my jewels for a set of
beads,
My gorgeous palace for a
hermitage,

My figured goblets for a dish of wood,
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff,
My subjects for a pair of carved saints
And my large kingdom for a little grave,
A little little grave, an obscure grave;
Or I'll be buried in the king's highway. . . .

Yet another irony emerges. Bolingbroke has no real claim to the throne under English law. He is the son of one of the younger sons of Edward III, but indeed he has no real claim to the throne. In claiming it, he overthrew the "divine right of kings"! In a prophesy at the deposing of Richard II, the Bishop of Carlyle says:

Marry. God forbid!
Worst in this royal presence may I speak,
Yet best beseeching me to speak the truth.
Would God that any in this noble presence
Were enough noble to be upright judge
Of noble Richard! then true noblesse would

1. Under the humanist tradition of kingship, defined by Charlemagne and France's Louis XI, the "divine right" meant the obligation of the ruler to God and his subjects, to provide for the general welfare of his country. This contrasts with the "divine right" claimed by tyrants, who, in the image of Zeus, claim it in order to assert their capricious power.

Learn him forbearance from so foul a wrong.
 What subject can give sentence on his king?
 And who sits here that is not Richard's subject?
 Thieves are not judged but they are by to hear,
 Although apparent guilt be seen in them;
 And shall the figure of God's majesty,
 His captain, steward, deputy-elect,
 Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
 Be judged by subject and inferior breath,
 And he himself not present? O, forbend it, God,
 That in a Christian climate souls refined
 Should show so heinous, black, obscene a deed!
 I speak to subjects, and a subject speaks,
 Stirr'd up by God, thus boldly for his king:
 My Lord of Hereford here, whom you call king,
 Is a foul traitor to proud Hereford's king:
 And if you crown him, let me prophesy:
 The blood of English shall manure the ground,
 And future ages groan for this foul act;
 Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,
 And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars
 Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound;
 Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny
 Shall here inhabit, and this land be call'd
 The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.
 O, if you raise this house against this house,
 It will the woofullest division prove
 That ever fell upon this cursed earth.
 Prevent it, resist it, let it not be so,
 Lest child, child's children, cry against you woe!

Richard indeed is killed, and for the next 14 years Henry IV is at war with the allies of Richard and his own original allies. Henry IV's very last words to his son before his death, expressed with great drama, were that he should get England in a war with France, and thus make his rule safe.

It was to be Henry V who indeed does that, and in fact conquers all of France and bequeaths the thrones of both France and England to his nine-month old son after his own premature and "warlike" death.

It is here we get a real glimpse into Shakespeare's genius and insight into tragedy. The majority of his audience in England at the time would consider Henry V one of England's greatest kings. Also Shakespeare, in some of the most powerful speeches he was ever to write, gave Henry V incredible depth as a wartime leader of England. Yet he inescapably created the vivid character of Prince Hal, the delinquent comrade of Falstaff and his Eastcheap gang in the plays of *Henry IV*, as a disaffected

young man who is bitterly aware that his father's—Henry IV's—claim to the throne is illegitimate, as his will be as Henry V. And Shakespeare launched the action of the heroic play of Henry V—following immediately and ironically the exuberant opening Chorus quoted above—with a sinister scene in which the young King Henry V is duped by greedy churchmen into believing he has, instead, a lawful and legitimate claim—to the kingdom of France. And enforced? It must be by war. The destruction of the Plantagenets is metaphorically unveiled again in that scene. The Hollywood production of this play totally misses the irony. It is the character of Chorus, closing Henry V, who makes the point:

Thus far, with rough and all-unable pen
 Our bending author hath pursued the story;
 In little room confining mighty men,
 Mangling by starts the full course of their glory....
 Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crowned king
 Of France and England, did this king succeed;
 Whose state so many had the managing
 That they lost France and made his England bleed....

Since he refused to rule England in peace and succumbed to the Norman perpetual-war scenario of the conquering of France, even from the time of Edward III, the very act of conquering France leads to England's destruction.

Now we have come to the very first scene in *Henry VI*. A messenger comes in at the funeral of Henry V and announces:

My honourable lords, health to you all!
 Sad tidings bring I to you out of France,
 Of loss, of slaughter, and discomfiture....

The nobles of the realm explode in rage at each other. The words of Chorus come back to haunt the stage.

Now the different claims to the kingship are unleashed, since Henry VI is inept and indeed has no real claim to the throne, and a Hell breaks loose called the "War of the Roses."

Could This Be Bush?

In his later play about one of the earliest Plantagenets, *King John*, Shakespeare creates a character, the commander, "the Bastard," and a war "strategy" which stun today's reader who has lived through British and Bush/Cheney Mideast wars:

Bastard:

Your royal presences be ruled by me:—
 Be friends awhile, and both conjointly bend
 Your sharpest deeds of malice on this town:
 By east and west let France and England mount
 Their battering cannon charged to the mouths,
 Till their soul-fearing clamors have brawled down
 The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city:
 I'd play incessantly upon these jades,
 Even till unfenced desolation
 Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.
 That done, dissever your united strengths,
 And part your mingled colors once again:
 Turn face to face, and bloody point to point. . . .
 How like you this wild counsel, mighty states?
 Smacks it not something of the policy

King John:

Now, by the sky that hangs above our heads,
 I like it well.—France, shall we knit our powers,
 And lay this Angiers even with the ground;
 Then, after, fight who shall be king of it?

By the play's end—the English King John's death in 1216—a French army and two mutually opposed English armies are all scattered, and both “mighty states” are considerably less mighty. King John has lost his authority to the barons and to Rome. At the drama's end, the spectators understand why.

The Plantagenet kings, as Shakespeare exposed them in his tragedies, remained invader-kings for 400 years after their Norman invasions of France and then England: courageous leaders in battle, but indolent and devious in governing; always ready to bombard, invade, and torture France rather than to govern England, and to make their thrones depend upon factions of barons whom they flattered with great territories and powers. With particular insight, Shakespeare showed that the apparent exception—the energetic and well-loved Henry V—proved the rule.

The subsequent trilogy of *Henry VI* is Shakespeare's most brutal portrait of the English oligarchy at war with itself and against the power of the King—a “war of all against all.” The English barons are featured in all their anarchic obsession with the power and honor of their families. They are determined, in the chaos after Henry V's sudden death, to take back all they wrested from King John 200 years earlier, and more. Vaingloriously,

they attempt to crown eight-year-old Henry VI as King of France, against the war of liberation inspired by Joan of Arc.

The famous scene in the garden of a London court, where barons choose sides for civil war by picking white and red roses from the bushes, was an invention of Shakespeare's. He placed it in Henry VI's early boyhood in the 1420s—30 years before historians say the Wars of the Roses actually began. Thus he made dramatically clear that baronial anarchy, which took over England immediately after Henry V's French invasions.

Overturning the Flaw

Shakespeare brilliantly develops the true flaw in the culture of England under the Plantagenets. Remember that *Henry VI* was written well before *Henry V*. It was not that all these kings were outright criminals like Richard III. They all submitted to the failed culture of power which came from the insane Norman commitment to perpetual war. It is only when Richmond defeats Richard III that the Plantagenet Dynasty is finally destroyed.

Richmond, who became Henry VII Tudor after the defeat of Richard, establishes a new basis to rule. He establishes the second Commonwealth in history, the first being Louis XI's France (see last week's *EIR*). It should be no surprise that it was Louis' court that protected Richmond in his early escape from Richard III, and gave money and helped him to land in England to recruit his army, which defeated Richard III at Bosworth Field.

It would have been impossible to defeat Richard from inside the Plantagenet culture of England, as was abundantly proved by Shakespeare in his brilliant study of that culture from *Richard II* to *Richard III*. It was only outside the Plantagenet culture, that the culture of the commonwealth—imported from Louis XI's court—reorganizes England under the Tudor house of Henry VII, for 24 years of peace and prosperity.

It is the same today. The Bush Dynasty's domination of American political culture makes it impossible from inside the United States alone to end the genocidal insanity. It is a failed culture that dominates us.

It is that outside culture of the profound ontological dialogue of Nicholas of Cusa and Confucius that will be the outside principle that will re-establish on a higher basis, the commonwealth of all mankind. Every other approach will end in tragedy.