

# Leonore

Art, Science, and Statecraft

Summer 2026

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The International  
SCHILLER INSTITUTE



## On the Cover:

*Benjamin Franklin Drawing Electricity from the Sky* by Benjamin West, 1816.

Scientist, inventor, philosopher, organizer, and republican revolutionary. Benjamin Franklin was not a stodgy aristocrat whose signature happened to make it onto the Declaration of Independence. He was at the center of the fight over what the nature of the new nation was to be, and pushed to imbue it with the most forward-looking ideas known to mankind.

Here, Franklin is portrayed conducting his famous kite experiment, which demonstrated the coherence between lightning and the new substance his electrical experiments were revealing. West's painting captures the other spark as well, the divine spark of reason which lay at the heart of the new American republic.

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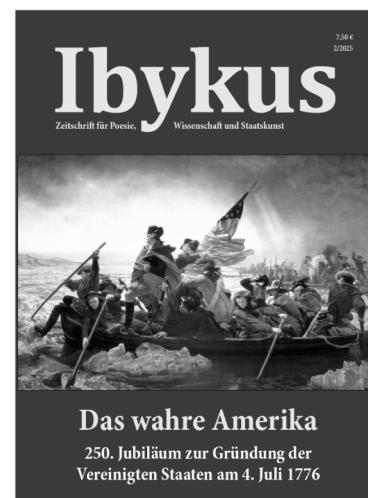
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# Leonore

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In the background:  
*The Charter Oak*, by  
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depicts the famous  
Connecticut tree where  
colonists hid the  
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successfully preventing the  
British from revoking it.

# Humanity's Pursuit of True Happiness

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, 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. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*

Friends, when you read these profound words from the United States Declaration of Independence, what concepts come to mind? Every person desires to live and walk the path that he or she wishes to take, not merely as a vassal of a King or Emperor, as many unfortunately have lived before us. So, therefore, the concepts of Life and Liberty are straightforward. But what is "Happiness" and why would a national declaration make this a founding principle to rally its people?

Is it the elated feeling that those who watched the June 14 caged Ultimate Fighting Championship on the White House lawn experienced, while cheering on the bloody mess of mixed martial artists' attempts to beat one another to death? They may as well have thrown in a Christian to the lions with such starved vampiric blood lust from the audience. An unfortunate expression disgracing what should be the sacred land of our forefathers, especially so near the 250th anniversary of our founding.

On April 1, 2026, the NASA Artemis II mission launched. Millions of people, children glued to every television, watching with bated breath, viewing for the first time the far side of the moon with their very own eyes. Every

child's face expressed the wonder and grandeur of how infinitesimally small, yet how wonderfully all-encompassing the human mind is. The sparks of genius inspired by this single act of human ingenuity will bear new fruits that this author may never see in her lifetime.

That spark, which has the potential to be expressed in every person, is a sacred divine treasure, unique only to our species. A just government will not only cherish that spark, but will defend and cultivate it as a natural right and a national blessing. This is true human happiness, which sees no skin color, class privileges, or prejudice. This year marks the 250th anniversary of the creation of the first republic in human history, and the world must remember the great ideas and minds that worked to create it.

Reader, I invite you to celebrate the true American History, one that was over 2,500 years in the making after Plato's Republic was introduced to human thought. At the very end of this Special issue of Leonore, read in full the 1776 Declaration of Independence and think on all the incredible contributions that were made toward it, and what contributions you, the intellectual inheritors of these ideas, can make now.

— Anastasia Battle  
Editor-in-chief

# The Renaissance Roots of the American Revolution

By Christopher Sare and Robert M. Wesser

*Indeed the very existence of the United States has been a consequence of an injunction of a policy by Cusa: a directive to cross the great oceans, to create new nations to escape the degeneration which the resurgence of the Venetian system of usury had brought down destructively upon the momentary achievements of the Great Ecumenical Council of Florence, the Council in which all of the timely greatness of European culture was then expressed.*

*The process of social evolution for the good, as expressed by the role of Cusa and his associates*

*in that great Council and its scientific expressions, was at the root of what was to become those developments in the Massachusetts of the Winthrops and Mathers, the developments which supplied the essential, distinguishing foundations of the United States of America, and which have provoked its greatest achievements to the advantage of all mankind since that time.*

—Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., “Reflections On a Work by Nicholas of Cusa: The Strategic Situation Now,” November 29, 2011

This year, we are celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Unfortunately, most Americans have little or no idea where those ideas actually came from within the overall development of human civilization and the millennia-long battle to secure the “unalienable rights” of all people so often cited from that document.

Lyndon LaRouche often insisted that one must have 2500 years of human civilization in one’s mind to understand current history. Thus, LaRouche had

“friends” like Plato, St. Augustine, Nicholas of Cusa, Gottfried Leibniz, and many, many others whom he considered his peers, even though they did not live contemporaneously. He read their writings. He studied their history. He studied what they did to move mankind forward. And so they were his *friends*, because that was his intention as well: moving mankind forward. It is from this standpoint that we can begin to delve into the actual roots of the American Revolution.



Piero di Cosimo, *The Myth of Prometheus*, 1510, *Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg*. *The great questions of civilization regarding Man and his relationship to God's creation completely absorbed Renaissance artists. Here we see Prometheus creating man, stealing fire (reason) from Zeus to give to man, and being punished by Zeus for that noble act. Leaders of the Renaissance revived the ideas of the Greek Classicists, such as Aeschylus.*

## Prometheus

First, LaRouche frequently emphasized the importance of the great Classical dramatist Aeschylus and his *Prometheia* trilogy, in which a ruling evil god, the Olympian Zeus, sought to squelch Prometheus's gift of fire to Mankind. In other words, the arbitrary and tyrannical Zeus *sought to forbid human creativity*.

As the story goes, after fashioning man out of clay, Prometheus watched Athena impart reason to his creation. Prometheus then went into Zeus's lair and stole fire from Zeus, with the intention of giving it as a gift to mankind. For this, Zeus severely and cruelly punished Prometheus and chained him to a rock, where an eagle devoured his liver every day, only for it to grow back and be eaten, repeatedly. Hercules eventually unbound Prometheus.

Far from being a simple mythology, the Prometheus story, especially as recounted by Aeschylus, is a very important idea, because it presents us with a fundamental question facing

mankind: the irreconcilable conflict between the capricious "oligarchical" Zeus and Prometheus, who represents the concept of man with reason and the power to use that reason by unleashing scientific and technological progress.

## Plato vs. Aristotle

Another critical pre-Christian conflict was that of Plato versus Aristotle. Raphael's *School of Athens* fresco in the Vatican gives us insight into this important battle, presenting a foretaste of the effect that this philosophical battle would have on the later Renaissance in Europe, of which Raphael was an important part.

In the fresco, we see Plato on the left-hand side pointing up to the heavens. On the right side is Aristotle, holding his hand to the earth. As the architect of later medieval Scholasticism, he holds a book that is blocking his motion forward. Plato points upward while walking forward. Aristotle is holding his hand out to the realm of sense certainty while holding himself back from advancing forward. This was his

view of human beings and is why, throughout history, the oligarchy always loved and promoted Aristotle while despising and slandering Plato. In fact, as we know, Plato's dialogues are based principally on the activity of Socrates, who was put to death by the corrupt Athenian state for shattering the axioms and beliefs of empiricism and other oligarchical falsehoods.

Let us look at what Aristotle says on the question of slavery in Book I, Chapter V of his *Politics*<sup>1</sup>:

We may then, as we affirm, perceive in an animal the first principles of herile and political government; for the soul governs the body as the master governs his slave; the mind governs the appetite with a political or a kingly power, which shows that it is both natural and advantageous that the body should be governed by the soul, and the pathetic part by the mind, and that part which is possessed of reason; but to have no ruling power, or an improper one, is hurtful to all; and this holds true not only of man, but of other animals also, for tame animals are naturally better than wild ones, and it is advantageous that both should be under subjection to man; for this is productive of their common safety: so is it naturally with the male and the female; the one is superior, the other inferior; the one governs, the other is governed; and the same rule must necessarily hold good with respect to all mankind. Those men therefore who are as much inferior to others as the body is to the soul, are to be thus disposed of, as the proper use of them is their bodies, in which their excellence consists; and if what I have said be true, they are slaves by nature, and it is advantageous to them to be always under government. He then is by nature formed a slave who is qualified to become the chattel of another person, and on that account is so, and who has just reason enough to know that there is such a faculty, without being indued with the use of it; For other animals have no perception of reason, but are entirely guided by appetite, and indeed they vary very little in their use from each other; for the advantage which we receive, both from slaves and tame animals, arises from their bodily strength administer-



Raphael Sanzio's *School of Athens* is an example of LaRouche's concept of the simultaneity of eternity, in which we see a battle of ideas represented by individuals who did not all live contemporaneously. Central to this was the fundamental difference between Plato and Aristotle. Among others, Pope Julius II commissioned this fresco. It was painted over during the years 1509-1511. It is one of several which comprise the Stanza della Segnatura in the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican Museum.



ing to our necessities; for it is the intention of nature to make the bodies of slaves and freemen different from each other, that the one should be robust for their necessary purposes, the others erect, useless indeed for what slaves are employed in, but fit for civil life, which is divided into the duties of war and peace; though these rules do not always take place, for slaves have sometimes the bodies of freemen, sometimes the souls; if then it is evident that if some bodies are as much more excellent than others as the statues of the gods excel the human form, every one will allow that the inferior ought to be slaves to the superior; and if this is true with respect to the body, it is still juster to determine in the same manner, when we consider the soul; though it is not so easy to perceive the beauty of [1255a] the soul as it is of the body. Since then some men are slaves by na-

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle. *Politics*. I.5 (1254b13-1255a2), William Ellis's 1776 translation

ture, and others are freemen, it is clear that where slavery is advantageous to any one, then it is just to make him a slave.

In other words, there is no difference between man and beast. This is why oligarchs love Aristotle—he justifies their bestial view of mankind. And, of course, this same argument is made by tyrants and oligarchies throughout history and up to this day.

On the other hand, what is Plato's view of slavery? In the *Meno* dialogue, Socrates calls upon a slave boy who has no education whatsoever to solve the problem of doubling the area of a square of one. In the dialogue, Socrates works through the problem with the boy, who makes a couple of mistakes but then finally figures out the solution. Although he has no formal education in geometry, has not gone to the finest academies, and is not from the best families, he's capable of figuring out a rather complex geometric problem!

This Platonic view, in direct contrast to Aristotle's, shows that the mind of a slave is as great as the mind of any other person.

What is Plato's view on kings and rulers? Let's take the view of Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic*. Thrasymachus, a sophist in Athens, argues that "might makes right" and that justice favors the advantage of the stronger. It's essentially the same argument as the infallibility of a king. A king can do no wrong because anything the king does is, due to his infallibility, always right. So, if a king burns you at the stake, it is right because the king decided to burn you at the stake! The king is infallible because he has *the power to do it*. In the ensuing dialogue, Socrates proves Thrasymachus wrong by demonstrating in multiple ways that truth and justice in the service of the good are far more powerful than "might makes right."



*Sandro Botticelli's St. Augustine in His Study, 1480, found in the beautiful Florentine Chapel, Chiesa di Ognissanti, we see the artist of the Renaissance occupied with the thinking of like-minded conspirators 1,000 years prior. On the right, Botticelli's self-portrait in his famous Adoration of the Magi, 1425.*

Later, in the 4th century A.D., St. Augustine of Hippo (354-420) considered that, of all the pre-Christian philosophers, Plato was the closest to Christianity in his philosophy, because he sought for universals and was committed to discovering the good. The fundamental idea of man's ability to participate in ongoing creation would also become conceptualized by St. Augustine of Hippo as *capax Dei*, or the capacity of God.

## From Dark Ages to Renaissance

Although there are interesting and important aspects of this battle for the liberation of mankind throughout the Middle Ages, for centuries, life for the vast majority of human beings, was as Hobbes would write later, "nasty, brutish and short," with the European population barely doubling over 1,000 years.

By the 1300s, two things occurred, not unrelated, which were absolutely catastrophic for Europe: The Hundred Years' War and the bubonic plague. In 1337, Edward III of England's House of Plantagenet decided to launch endless wars against France. The combination of the devastation of these wars with



In Giorgio Vasari's Portrait of Six Tuscan Poets (1544), we find Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Dante in the center. They led the fight for Platonism over Aristotelianism in the Italian vernacular.

the speculation and usury of the Venetian banks plunged Europe into an economic collapse, leading to the bubonic plague. As the plague overwhelmed the people, somewhere between a quarter and a third of the population of Europe was wiped out.

During the plague, the European population plunged into barbarism and chaos. For example, Jews were burned alive in the belief that they had brought the plague into Europe. Flagellants roamed the countryside whipping themselves in the belief that this punishment would somehow bring an end to the plague.

Out of this horrific tragedy came the beginning of a rebirth of civilization initiated by the great Italian thinkers Dante Alighieri, Giovanni Boccaccio, and Francesco di Petracco (i.e., Petrarch).

All three wrote in a beautiful, vernacular Italian language (as opposed to the Latin of the Aristotelian Scholastics), thus allowing profound ideas to be accessible to the population at large. This new Italian prose and poetry was literally created by Dante in his famous *Commedia*, in which he took the reader from the Inferno through Purgatory, and then into a Paradise of reason, all aimed at demonstrating the perfectability of Mankind. Dante's Italian was then

later employed by Boccaccio in his *Decameron* and in Petrarch's famous Italian poetry. The work of these three and others lay the basis for lifting Europe out of barbarism and toward the Renaissance in Italy.

At the same time, in the North, a Catholic deacon named Geert Groote founded the Sisters of the Common Life in the Netherlands in 1379, opening up his house to a few poor women, whom he then educated. Subsequently, he set up the Brethren of the Common Life in 1384, which again was committed to the idea of the education of the poor. Groote's idea that the poor could be enabled to develop their minds, was virtually unheard of at a time when more than 95% of the population in Europe was living in an illiterate, bestialized condition, predestined to be servants of the oligarchs and aristocrats in power.

It is important for the reader to consider immersing oneself in the beautiful architecture, art, and poetry of the Renaissance. Even though most Americans do not think of the Italian, Dutch, or English Renaissance as being part of America, in fact, they *absolutely are*. They are the source of our best traditions.

## Jeanne d'Arc and the Roots of the Nation State

Coming out of the dark age, we also see the emergence of a Renaissance pope, Pius II (Piccolomini), about whom we will discuss more below. Commenting on the state of France after the Hundred Years' War and the black death, Piccolomini writes:

France, wasted by such disasters, presented the appearance of a vast desert rather than a kingdom. Cities lay in ruin and stripped of their inhabitants. Farms were in ashes. The country everywhere was laid waste. Nowhere could a small party travel in safety. If a man escaped brigands, he fell among wild beasts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "[Joan of Arc's victory at Orleans \(1429\), according to the Commentaries of Pius II.](#)" This translation is from *Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II*, translated by Florence A. Gragg (London, 1960).

That was the situation in Europe at the time. Remember that there were no nations at this point—neither France, England, nor Italy—only kings, the nobility, and other aristocracy, who ran ever-changing regions of dominion, often more brutal tyrants than the king. For example, there is much talk today about the Magna Carta (1210), because it limited the power of the king. But the Magna Carta essentially empowered the aristocracy over the king—they feared that the king might limit their power if he began to rule on behalf of the general welfare of the people!

Thus, before the nation states or republics, one would often be better off living under a king committed to the general welfare of the people than under greedy, power-hungry nobles. But of course, the problem remained that this depended on chance, and there was no guarantee that a king would be committed to the general welfare of the realm and its people.

In 1415, the House of Plantagenet's King Henry V won the Battle of Agincourt in France as part of the senseless series of military escapades of the Hundred Years' War. Instead of building up a nation of England, Henry V sought an invasion of France. In 1420, Henry moved on to conquer Paris, defeating France's Charles VI. The subsequent Treaty of Troyes made Henry V and his English progeny the present and future kings of France. When Henry died in 1422, France's Charles VII (the father of Louis XI) disputed the English claim to the throne, asserting himself to be the legitimate king of France.

While all of this is going on, Thomas à Kempis, a product of Groote's Brethren of the Common Life, began in 1418 to write his *Imitation of Christ*, in which he took up the question of the ability of the mind of the average person to be uplifted and elevated to "imitate" Jesus Christ.

The military conflicts came to a head six years later when a young maiden from Orleans named Jeanne d'Arc entered the scene. By then, the Burgundians (i.e., Northern France) and England were allied together against France's Charles VII, and Orleans was under siege by the British in their advance

south to completely conquer France for the Plantagenet Empire.<sup>3</sup>

Whether Orleans was to be broken or not would determine the outcome of this attempted conquest. Seventeen-year-old Jeanne, who was heavily influenced by the monasteries associated with the Sisters of the Common Life and the Brotherhood of the Common Life, saw that Charles VII was prostrate and had little or no interest in fighting back to save France. She decided that *she* must lead the drive to defeat the British at Orleans.<sup>4</sup>

On April 29, 1429, Jeanne entered Orleans, and on May 4th began the assault on the British troops, breaking the siege after three bloody days.

Pope Pius II wrote in his *Commentaries (Commentarii rerum memorabilium)*<sup>5</sup>:

The approach to Orleans by land was very difficult. All the roads were blocked by the English and at each of the three gates they had a camp fortified with a moat and a rampart. The Maid, knowing that the river Loire flows by the walls of the city, loaded ships with grain in a secluded place and embarked with her troops, sending word to the besieged that she had started. By rowing quickly and taking advantage of the swift current she appeared in sight of the city before the enemy knew she was coming. Armed English troops rushed up and, putting out in small boats, tried in vain to prevent her landing. They were forced to retreat with many wounds.

The Maid entered the city, where she was received with great rejoicing by the people, and brought supplies of all kinds to a populace near starvation. The next day at dawn she furiously attacked the camp of the enemy that was besieging the main gate. Filling the moats and shattering the mound and rampart, she routed the English in confusion, captured their fortifications, and set fire to the towers and bulwarks which they had built. Having thus heartened the townsmen, she made sallies through the other gates and

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<sup>3</sup> Megan Beets, "[Joan of Arc](#)," *EIR*, April 3, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Megan Dobrodt, "[The Mission of Joan of Arc](#)," *Leonore*, Winter 2025.

<sup>5</sup> "[Joan of Arc's victory at Orleans \(1429\), according to the Commentaries of Pius II](#)"

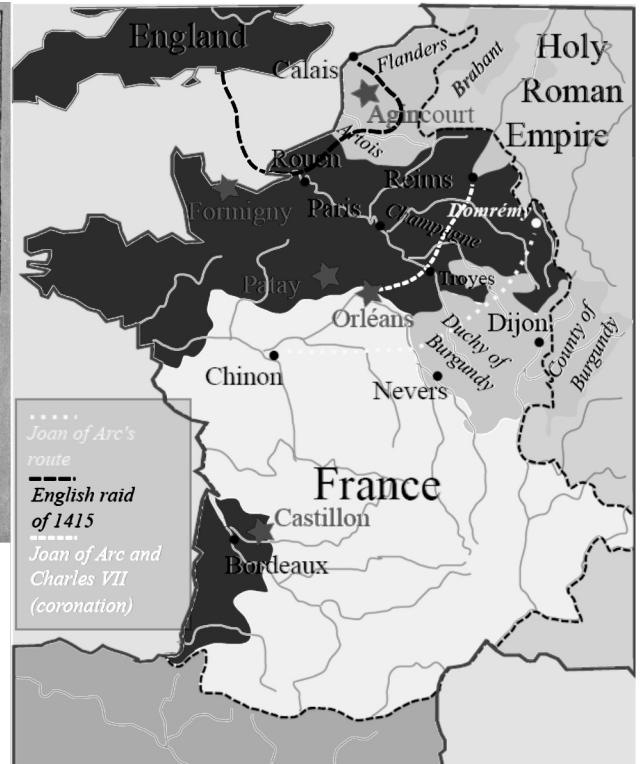
did the same in other camps.

Since the English forces were stationed in several different places and one camp could not come to the help of another, the siege of Orleans was weakened by these tactics and then utterly broken. All the enemy who had fought against the Maid fell; there was hardly anyone left to carry news of the disaster. The glory of this exploit was credited to the Maid alone, though very brave and experienced soldiers who had often commanded troops took part in it.

Such a massacre of his men and such humiliation was unbearable to Talbot, the most celebrated of the English commanders, and with 4,000 horsemen picked from the entire army he marched against Orleans to fight the Maid if she dared meet him, never doubting that when she came through the gate he could either capture or kill her. But the event proved otherwise. The Maid led out her troops, and as soon as she saw the enemy, with loud shouts and terrific force she charged the English lines. Not a man dared to stand fast or show his face; panic and horror seized them. Despite their superior numbers, they had supposed they would be fewer and thought countless forces were fighting for the Maid. Some even thought angels were fighting on the opposite side and had no hope of victory if they found themselves battling against God. Their drawn swords fell from their hands; everyone threw away shield and helmet to be unencumbered for flight. Talbot's shouts of encouragement went unheard and his threats unheeded. The rout was most shameful. The soldiers presented only their backs to the Maid, who followed up the fugitives and took or killed every man except a few — including the commander, who when he saw



*A drawing of Jeanne d'Arc. To the right, a map of France during the English invasion, with some of the routes of Jeanne's army to recapture the country. Credit: Aliesin*



that his men could not be rallied, made his escape on a swift horse.

From there, Jeanne opened a pathway north to Rheims, where something even more miraculous occurred. Pope Pius II continued:

When the army had come to about forty stades from Reims, panic seized the city. There seemed no safety for the English; The nobles were wavering; the populace were attracted by the prospect of a change of government. Some among the English advised removing elsewhere the sacred oil with which the king is anointed, so that even if the city were lost, the enemy could not be properly crowned. The French believe that once upon a time a white dove sent from Heaven brought to St. Remi, Bishop of Rheims, the sacred oil for the anointing of kings, and they guard it with the greatest reverence and think that it never grows less, though Clovis to our day a long line of sovereigns has used it. They say that he who is not anointed with this oil is no true king. Though the English had for this reason repeatedly discussed removing it, it is thought their plan was frustrated by the Divine Will.

The Dauphin [French king in waiting], on approaching the city dispatched heralds to demand its surrender and to announce his coronation to the people of Rheims. The city sent eminent citizens to request time for consideration, but the Maid gave orders that the envoys should receive no answer; there must be no delay; everything must be done at the time God had appointed. The Dauphin obeyed the Maid. He detained the envoys and sending ahead some companies of cavalry advanced swiftly on the city. Then an extraordinary thing happened which after-generation will not believe.



*Jeanne d'Arc interrogated by The Cardinal of Winchester in her prison, 1431. Paul Delaroche, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen*

Not a single armed man was to be found at the gate or in the city. The citizens in civil dress met them outside the walls, The Dauphin with out conditions, without terms, without the least opposition, passed through wide-open gates. No one protested, on one showed any sign of resentment. Everyone admits that it was a miracle of Heaven...

Whether her career was a miracle of heaven or a device of men, I should find it hard to say. Some think that when the English cause was prospering and the French nobles at variance among themselves thought no one fit to be commander, one shrewder than the rest evolved the cunning scheme of declaring of the maid that she had been sent by heaven and that giving her the command she asked for [was correct] since there was no man alive who would refuse to have God for his leader. Thus it came about the conduct of the war and the high command were entrusted to a girl... This at any rate is beyond question: that it was the maid under whose command the siege of Orleans was raised; by whose arms all the countries between

Bourges and Paris were subdued; by whose advice Reims was recovered and the coronation celebrated there; by whose charge Talbot was routed and his army cut to pieces; by whose daring the gate of Paris was fixed; by whose quick wit the untiring effort the French cause was saved. It is a phenomenon that deserves to be recorded, although after ages are like to regard it with more wonder than credulity.

Due to Jeanne's miraculous work, Charles VII was crowned the king of France at Reims in 1429. In the ensuing battles, Jeanne was captured by the Burgundians and betrayed by Charles, who did nothing to defend her. She was subsequently

brought in front of the Inquisition on charges of witchcraft and sentenced to be burned to death at the stake.

Importantly, one of the first people to defend Jeanne was Jean Gerson, a Catholic and French Platonic scholar at the University of Paris. It was Gerson who went on to create a Guide of Study for the future King Louis XI, who at the time was living in southern France and distraught by the cowardice of his father, Charles VII.

## Nicholas of Cusa and the Council of Florence

In 1434, German Catholic Bishop Nicholas of Cusa wrote the *Concordantia Catholica*, in which he laid out revolutionary ideas that, 400 years later, would be echoed in the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

Cusa writes:

Natural laws precede all human considerations, and provide the principle for them all. First, nature intends every kind of animal to



*Florence's Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral, whose magnificent dome was scientifically designed by Cusa's friend Filippo Brunelleschi, still stands as the world's largest masonry dome ever built to this day. Completed in 1436, it offered a glimpse into a different future when it became the location for the 1439 Council of Florence.*

preserve its physical existence and its life, to avoid what could be harmful, and to secure what is necessary to it. For the first requirement of essence is that it exist...

But from the beginning, men have been endowed with reason, which distinguishes them from animals. They know because of the existence 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.* [emphasis added]

Servitude can be by choice—it is less worthy if by compulsion and better if freely chosen, since good is more meritorious when performed freely than out of necessity.... For nature does not make a slave, but ignorance, nor does manumission make one free, but learning.

For those who live by the law are free. But true law is righteousness. True law is not carved on tablets nor cut in bronze but stamped on the mind and imprinted on the senses.

All legitimate power 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 the authority—which comes from God, as does

man himself—is recognized as divine, when it arises from the common consent of the subjects. One, who is established in authority as representative of the will of all, may be called a public or common person, the father of all, ruling without haughtiness, or pride, in a lawful and legitimately established government. While recognizing himself as a creature...of all his subjects as a collectivity, let him act as their father as individuals.

It is sufficient to know that 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. This is particularly true of the election of a king or emperor whose existence and power do not depend on any one man. Thus the electors...derive their basic authority fundamentally from the common consent of all those who could by natural law have created the Emperor and not the Roman Pontiff who has no authority to give any region in the world a king or emperor without its consent.

For this purpose [the public welfare], the ruler should have the best qualified of his subjects chosen from all parts of his realm, to participate in a daily council with him. These counselors ought to represent all the inhabitants of the realm. ... These counselors ought

constantly to defend the good of the public which they represent, giving advice and serving as the appropriate means through which the king can govern and influence his subjects, and the subjects on proper occasion can influence him in return. The great strength of the kingdom comes from this daily council. The counselors should be appointed to this task by agreement in a general meeting of the kingdom, and they should be publicly bound legally by oath to speak out openly for the public good.<sup>6</sup>

In 1439, Cusa and a number of his friends, such as Niccolò Albergati, organized representatives from the Byzantine Empire to be brought into the Council of Florence. Note that three years before this glorious Council, Filippo Brunelleschi had completed the beautiful dome atop the Florence Cathedral, lifting up the citizens of Florence to the heavens.

Byzantine Emperor John VIII brought with him to the Council Greek scholar Gemistos Plethon, who had with him the complete works of Plato, which were not entirely available in Western Europe at the time. Also, what Cusa and his allies engineered was the bringing together of the Eastern and Western churches under the principle of the *filioque*— the idea that God proceeds to Mankind through the Son via the Holy Spirit, creating a direct link between God and Mankind through Jesus Christ. Previously, the *filioque* had been rejected by the Byzantine Church, but it now embraced it, thus uniting the two churches around this concept as well as allowing a rebirth of the ideas of Plato in the West.

Importantly, also at the Council of Florence, scientific seminars were held among cosmographers, geographers, and experts in the science of navigation, where Cusa's friend and ally Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli presented his controversial map promot-



France's King Louis XI

ing the idea of the exploration and colonization of North America.<sup>7</sup>

The spread of these ideas was promoted and financed by the Medici banking family of Florence (specifically by Cosimo de' Medici), who helped to create the Platonic Academy in Florence, and financed poets and artists. The Medici also created the first public library in Florence at San Marco, which became a center for the Renaissance movement.

Cosimo de Medici attended lectures by Gemistos Plethon and helped finance Marsilio Ficino, who created the first Latin translations of the complete works of Plato, as well as founding the Florentine Platonic Academy.

## Louis XI and the Modern Nation State

Meanwhile, back in France, Louis XI was in exile in 1447, and, as heir apparent to the throne, was ruling the French state of Dauphiné, which borders Italy. So, not surprisingly, there developed a direct, powerful influence on the exiled Louis XI from Cusa, the Council of Florence, and the Florentine Platonic Academy.

Louis XI moved north into Burgundy, which at this point included the Netherlands and the Flemish area. In 1456, Jeanne d'Arc was completely exonerated, creating a massive optimism in the French population. A series of battles were then fought to free France from the British, which included assistance by the friends of Cusa in the form of the Congress of Aras, allowing the Burgundians to break from the English to join with France.

While Louis XI was up in the Burgundy area, he also met with Wessel Gansfort, a personal friend of Thomas à Kempis, author of the humanist work *The Imitation of Christ*, who had also been educated by

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas of Cusa, *Concordantia Catholica*, Book III, Sections 268-378.

<sup>7</sup> Ricardo Olvera, "[Columbus and Toscanelli](#)," *Fidelio*, Spring 1992.

the Brotherhood of Common Life in the Netherlands. Gansfort had been involved in the Florentine-based movement to seek out and translate the original Greek texts of both the New Testament and classical Greek masters, most notably of Plato.

Finally, Charles VII died in 1461, making Louis XI the king of France—a France that became a liberated unified nation.

It is worth noting that in this very same year, Jasper Tudor, the uncle of the future king of England, Henry VII, became inspired by Louis XI, fled England to France, where Louis made him a member of his household. That same Jasper Tudor would later bring his uncle, the young King Henry VII, to France a decade later, where he learned firsthand the nation-building process of King Louis XI.

Louis XI proceeded to take the model city-state institutions that he pioneered in Dauphiné and applied them to the entire nation of France. Most notably, he created a system of postal roads, promoted the creation of all types of industries and trade, and broke the control of the petit nobility over the many squabbling principalities and fiefdoms. All of this served to unify the nation, with Louis XI its first true king.

Louis also brought in experts from Florence and industrialists from what would later become Germany, all while rebuffing an alliance with oligarchical Venice, cutting short the Venetians' visit to France, and sending them back to the lagoons.<sup>8</sup> Again, we turn to Piccolomini, who just three years earlier, in 1458, had become Pope Pius II, for insight on this matter:

As among brute beasts, aquatic creatures have the least intelligence. So among human beings, the Venetians are the least just and the least capable of humanity. They please only themselves, and while they talk, they listen to and admire themselves. When they speak, they think themselves sirens. They wish to appear Christian before the world, but in reality, they never think of God. And except for the state which they regard as a deity, they hold nothing sacred. The Vene-

tians aim at the domination of Italy and all but dare aspire to mastery of the world.<sup>9</sup>

Louis XI also enacted labor laws that protected the rights of foreign workers, set standards of production, and encouraged the immigration of engineers, printers, musicians, farmers, armor manufacturers, artillery specialists, iron foundry workers, and copper workers. He promoted all kinds of internal improvements, resulting in the massive development of France.

In 1483, King Louis XI wrote *The Rose Bush of War* as an instruction to his son, the future King Charles VIII, on how a king ought to govern his people.<sup>10</sup>

The greatest care a wise man must have in this transitory world is for his soul, which is perpetual and which bears the charge for the activities of the body, which shall rot upon death, which spares neither the great nor insignificant, noble nor villain, strong nor weak, rich man nor poor, old nor young—all are equal before it, and so it gives no more time or better forewarning to one than to the other; for which reason each should seek to have a good soul, and not put his heart too much in the world or its goods which he must leave finally behind.

Death is a light thing to him who is certain that after him good will come of it: for who lives a good life, will die a good death.

None should fear death, having defended the common good, for therein is merit. As well we are bound to fight for our country.

Who wishes to die a good death, must seek to have a good soul...

Since everything, including our creation, comes from God, we must desire that our souls return to Him, by doing such good works that the memory of them will be in perpetual benediction. It is a good and charitable thing to risk one's life to defend the common good which concerns all estates: that is, the commonweal of the Realm...

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<sup>8</sup> Stephanie Ezrol, "[The Commonwealth of France's Louis XI: Fruit of the European Renaissance](#)," *Fidelio*, Vol. IV, No. 3, Fall 1995.

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<sup>9</sup> This translation is from, *Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II*, translated by Florence A. Gragg (London, 1960).

<sup>10</sup> Louis XI of France translation of *The Rosebush of War*, (c. 1483) *Fidelio*, Vol. IV, No. 3, Fall 1995.

When the just King sits on his throne, no evil can befall him.

He must protect the churches, the houses of God, widowed women, and orphans, in right and in justice. However much all men—great, small, and in-between—be under his care, among all of them always widows and orphans have great need of succor.

He must defend the common property, to give and have given to each man that which is his and provide with his power that there be no hate nor discord among his subjects; and if there is, provide that he not favor more the demands of one side or the other, nor otherwise give credence to all lightly made reports.

**Death is a light thing to him who is certain that after him good will come of it: for who lives a good life, will die a good death.**

## The Tudors and English Renaissance

In 1485, two years after Louis XI's death, his friend and collaborator Henry Tudor became King Henry VII, finally ending the torturous reign of the House of Plantagenet over England after the demise of the notorious Richard III. Not surprisingly, Henry VII picked up key elements of the nation-building project which Louis XI began in France. Thus, we see the English Renaissance led by the likes of Sir Thomas More, Erasmus of Rotterdam, and the English scholar John Colet, all advisors of Henry VII. All of these thinkers were Platonists, with Erasmus coming directly out of the Brethren of the Common Life in the Netherlands.

In 1516, Thomas More wrote *Utopia*, developing the idea that government must promote the general welfare of all its citizens, a common theme that we see throughout the Renaissance. More asserts that to achieve these goals requires all citizens of a nation to be schooled in becoming Platonic philosopher kings, for "it is impossible that all should be well unless all men are good."

More wrote *Utopia* as a form of dialogue between himself and a fictional character named Raphael, who had sailed, both geographically and intellectually, as Ulysses and Plato had done. Raphael was

presented as a student of philosophy, learning Greek "since the Romans left us nothing that is valuable except Seneca and Cicero." Raphael describes to More the imaginary land of Utopia, which had achieved a far higher level of civilization than that of Europe at the time.

Although Henry VII dedicated his efforts to steep his son Henry VIII in Platonic thinking with these amazing scholars, ultimately this ended in tragedy as Henry VIII was seduced (literally) by the Venetians, laying the basis of the transformation of England from a nation state into the wicked empire that it would become in the 18th Century.<sup>11</sup> After re-

fusing to recognize Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Church of England, as well as Henry VIII's multiple marriages resulting in divorce and beheading, Thomas More was sent to the chopping block in 1536.

## 'The City on the Hill'

A century later, the notion of Utopia became directly relevant to America when William Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*, after which English explorer John Smith traveled to Virginia in 1607 in quest of establishing something equivalent in North America.

The Thirty Years' War in Europe, starting in 1618, only fueled the desire of those of the Platonic/Cusa tradition to seek out a "Utopia" outside of the confines of the oligarchy-dominated Europe. As England became increasingly corrupt, John Smith's idea of a colony in North America free of nobility and aristocratic riff-raff was pursued by like-minded "pilgrims" throughout Europe. The most notable of these projects was initiated in 1628 by John Winthrop, founder of the Massachusetts Bay Colony:

All other churches of Europe are brought to desolation, and our sins for which the Lord

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<sup>11</sup> Gerald Rose, "[The Venetian takeover of England: A 200-Year Project](#)," *EIR*, Volume 21, Number 16, April 15, 1994.



Thomas More and John Colet

begins already to frown upon us, do threaten us fearfully, and who knows but that God hath provided this place to be a refuge for many whom He means to save out of the general calamity, and seeing the Church hath no place left to fly into but the wilderness, what better work can there be then to go and provide tabernacles and food for her against [the time] she comes thither:

This land [England] grows weary of her Inhabitants, so as man, who is the most precious of all creatures, is here more vile and base then the earth we tread upon, and of less price among us then a horse or a sheep, masters are forced by authority to entertain servants, parents to maintain their own children, all towns complain of the burden of their poor though we have taken up many unnecessary, yea unlawful trades to maintain them. And we use the authority of the law to hinder the increase of people as by urging the Statute against cottages and inmates, & thus it is come to pass that children, servants & neighbors (especially if they be poor) are counted the greatest burden which, if things were right, would be the chiefest earthly blessing.<sup>12</sup>

Winthrop's famous 1630 sermon "A Model of Christian Charity" underscores the conscious idea of this revolutionary community in the New World

<sup>12</sup> H. Graham Lowry, *How the Nation Was Won* (Washington, D.C.: *Executive Intelligence Review*, 1988), 5-6.

as being "as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us."

Ultimately, the best of the Platonic and Renaissance traditions remaining in Europe would help create the conditions for the establishment of the first true nation state in human history, concretized by the July 4, 1776 Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Federal Constitution of 1787. These were typified by Cardinal Mazarin, architect of the Treaty of Westphalia which ended the 30 Years' War through "win win" economic development,<sup>13</sup> Mazarin's protege Jean-Baptist Colbert, founder of the French Academy of

Sciences and pioneer of state directed economic dirigism and, finally, the great statesman and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who played a direct role in the North American colonial experiment and honed the idea of the "pursuit of Happiness" as a philosophical concept.<sup>14</sup>

The American System of Political Economy established by our first United States Treasury Secretary, Alexander Hamilton, looked back to the Mercantilist system of Elizabethan England, a furtherance of the policies of Henry VII, and to Colbert's France, which was the legacy of Louis XI.<sup>15</sup>

Americans would do well to fight as fiercely today to defend those principles which took centuries upon centuries to finally be realized in the establishment of our Republic, 250 years ago. That is the legacy which humanity has gifted us with today, and the responsibility which we must fight to protect and further. As the great American Benjamin Franklin said, we have been given "a republic, if you can keep it."

<sup>13</sup> Pierre Beaudry, "The Economic Policy that Made the Peace of Westphalia," *EIR*, March 11, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Trout, "Life, Liberty, and The Pursuit of Happiness How the Natural Law Concept of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Inspired America's Founding Fathers," *Fidelio*, Vol. VI No.1, Spring, 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Anton Chaitkin, "Colbert's Bequest to the Founding Fathers," *EIR*, January 3, 1992.