

From the desk of Pierre Beaudry



LAFAYETTE:

THE TRAGEDY OF A GREAT MOMENT MEETING A LITTLE PEOPLE



by Pierre Beaudry 10/3/2008

During his historical October 1st 2008 Webcast, *Now More than Ever; The Big Four*, Lyndon LaRouche warned of the danger of a French Revolution type of militarized action against the people of the United States. If the Congress were to vote against the bailout of the current British controlled American banking system, it were possible for the United States to become a victim of a Bastille style coup on the part of the current Bush administration. LaRouche reminded American citizens that we have entered into a moment of history very similar to that of July 14, 1789, when the British-led Finance Minister of France, Jacques Necker and the Duke of Orleans, Philippe “Egalité,” launched the Bastille Coup against the French population. LaRouche reminded Congressmen that their fears were very real, but that they had to find the courage to respond favorably to the rage of the population who were resisting the threat to the nation posed by the proposed bailout of the banking system.

LaRouche noted that Marquis de Lafayette exemplified such a tragic historical moment, not as an expression of his personal character as an individual person, but as an expression of a failed tragic culture of his society more generally. LaRouche stated:

“{ Ideas are the opposite of opinions, because true ideas are conceptions, like physical discoveries. Ideas put into circulation, can crystalize, particularly under a proper leadership. The Marquis de Lafayette is an example of someone who took leadership, but failed, because he could not break from the culture –in his case, the French monarchy of Louis XVI. He organized the Tennis Court

Oath, but he failed, at crucial moments, because he was soft on the culture built around the degenerate monarchy.

“We must recognize this cultural mess, and exploit two things:

“First, look for genuine reasons for optimism. This is crucial.

“Second, be prepared when crises arise, to exploit the opportunities they present, immediately. The key is ideas based on reality. We know people are stupid, corrupt and cowardly. So we have to be right all the time.” (<Footnote1> Lyndon H. LaRouche, {*The Way to Get Ahead is to Grow One*}, Morning Briefing, Tuesday, September 30, 2008.)

The following is the historical account of this French tragedy and the role that Marquis de Lafayette wittingly played in it.



1- THE FIGHT TO PUT AN END TO THE HEREDITARY PRINCIPLE

During the last days of July 1830, Marquis de Lafayette had a unique chance to replace the {*hereditary principle*} of the French government by an American Constitutional Republic. He chose not to do it. Why? The political circumstances surrounding that decision have not yet been made entirely clear, and may never be completely known. However, the fallacy of composition with respect to the {*hereditary principle*} involved in his decision has been clearly identified by the Republican historian, Gabriel Hanotaux. From the French side of the equation, Hanotaux explained quite accurately this period of history, from 1830 to 1848, as a series of deliberate misunderstandings. In fact, he has quite appropriately identified the reign of Louis-Philippe as the “{*reign of misunderstandings*}.”

The political and social crisis of France during the 18 year period between the beginning and the end of the Louis-Philippe regime (1830-1848), was symptomatic of a paradigm shift in which the French people attempted to replace the {*hereditary principle*} by a constitutional republican government, but failed to establish what would have been the first European Constitutional Republic modeled on that of the United States. The three oligarchical factions who were opposed to this Constitutional Republic were the Legitimist Bourbons, the Orleanists, and the Bonapartists. Up until 1848, each of those three factions of the French oligarchy had their chance at governing, but all three had failed miserably, as any reasonable political analyst could have forecast.

2- THE MATTER OF TWO FALSE FRENCH POLITICAL PRINCIPLES

In July 1830, France witnessed the most significant crisis with respect to the *{hereditary principle}* in its entire history. This principle was upheld by the so-called Bourbons legacy of Charles X, who called himself the legitimate authority and power in the nation of France. This was the historical turning point that Hanotaux identified as the “*{crisis of the royal system}*” for the whole of Europe. Never had the situation been clearer: either there was going to be a return to a bestial French monarchy or there was going to be an American style republic established in Europe for the first time. But the situation got skewed.

The royal system was a disaster. It was encapsulated in the expression of King Charles X, which said it all: “*{I prefer riding on horseback rather than sitting in a cart.}*” This was fifteen years after Waterloo, eight years after the Bonaparte beast-man on horseback had died at Sainte Helene. The nation of France had started to slowly begin to prosper during that period of peace, and Charles X, an aging King of 76 years of age, was actually convinced that his popularity was due to the restoration of his so-called “legitimate monarchy.” Was it really? Hanotaux summed up the situation as follows:

“{Once this popularity was established and this authority recovered, the time had come to use it with measure and with firmness. Was not everyone agreed to deplore the mistake committed by Louis XVIII, on the council of Talleyrand and of Fouché, in accepting the Charter, drawn up at Saint Denis, and dictated by the Revolution? One had to keep in check the democratic ambition that these astute men had introduced like a worm inside of that restoration, which had been the fruit of so much work. How terrible it was to have spoiled the return of the Count of Artois (Charles X) in Paris! The son of kings who had built France will always know, better than a divided Parliament, what the nation needs. Fourteen years of peace and of prosperity have erased all doubts about the benevolent monarchy. What has to be done now to heal this satanic evil is to rid the country of these false principles, which lead it astray. Indeed, the question is always the fight between the two principles: the hereditary principle and the revolutionary principle. It is the dispute of the two Frances, the quarrel of the two flags which lingers on, and which renders impotent all government system, unless it is stopped once and for all. (And this the same quarrel, in fact, which the Count of Chambord will revive, forty years later, and which will lose him the throne.)}” (<Footnote 3> Gabriel Hanotaux, *{Histoire de la nation française}*, Tome V, Histoire Politique, Troisième Volume (de 1804 a 1926), Paris, Librairie Plon, 1929, p.309)

Hanotaux has precisely identified the two false principles: “*{hereditary}*” and “*{revolutionary}*,” inequality and equality, Oligarchism versus Jacobinism, right versus left, etc, ad nauseam. Both of these two options were romantic political fallacies of composition that had put France historically off course ever since the terrorist event of

Bastille Day on July 14, 1789, and had rendered the nation ungovernable until Charles de Gaulle created the Fifth Republic in 1958.

In 1830, what the government of Charles X was attempting to measure was the return of the romantic power of the Bourbon monarchy *{la grandeur}*, which had been fostered by the counter-revolutionaries such as Louis de Bonald, Beast-Man Joseph de Maistre, and Hugues de Lamennais, the Synarchist neo-cons of the ancient regime and of the restoration. These included both the conservative and the liberal monarchical tendencies and the *{National}* newspaper of the Orleans faction in opposition to republican forces of Lafayette. [<Footnote>4 On July 27, 1830, the *{National}* newspaper was promoting the agitation against the regime of Charles X. Its main spokesmen were backing up the house of Orleans, the junior branch of the same Bourbons and the current Duke of Orleans, the son of Philippe Egalité, Louis-Philippe. The agitation led to street violence. The three founders of the *{National}* were two Provençal newspapermen, Adolphe Thiers and François Mignet, and a Saint-Simonien, Armand Carrel. All three became the official opposition to the Bourbons legitimists and favored the liberal monarchy of the Duke of Orleans, working in the shadows with British agent Talleyrand. This period also coincided with the beginning of the colonial adventures in Algeria.]

The group of the *{National}* newspaper was organizing against the so-called constitution known as the *{Charter}*, which was the British system monarchical charter of the first restoration put forward by Louis XVIII, in 1814. This Charter had firmly reestablished the *{hereditary principle}*, confiscated “national properties,” replaced labor rights by corporatist franchises, and restored serfdom. Every time the *{National}* wrote *{La Charte! La Charte!}*, it meant *{Down with Charles X!}*, *{Down with the legitimist regime}*, calling for a regime change. But, this was not a real regime change. It was a Mutt and Jeff routine within the same Bourbon family: the hard cop was Charles X and the soft cop was the cousin, Louis-Philippe.

For example, Charles X would be sent to the Assembly of Parliament to make outrageous statements before the Assembly of the Deputies. The King would be told to declare pompously: “*{The Charter put public liberties under the safeguard of the rights of my crown. These rights are sacred. My duty vis-à-vis the people is to transmit them intact to my successors.}*” These words professed to emphasize the *{hereditary principle}* were, in fact, nothing but pure provocations. Sometimes, in the best of circumstance, some Orleanist patrician would attempt to attenuate the outrageous statements of the King by suggesting a correction that said something like: “*{The rights of the Crown, Sir, are no less dear to your people than their liberties.}*” (<Footnote>5 Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p. 315.)

However, Hanotaux emphasized that the time to play with the “bon mot” and “balanced phrases” had passed. Lafayette had been chosen to play a decisive role and was chosen to give the coup de grace to Charles X, as he later did at the City Hall, under an extraordinary circumstance that I will report with Hanotaux just below. In response to the envoys of Charles X who had come pleading for his assistance, Lafayette replied with a

note that represented no less than the verdict of death for the legitimist party: “*{It is too late! There is no possible reconciliation. The royal family has ceased its reign!}*”

3- LAFAYETTE AND “THE BEST OF REPUBLICS.”

The question raised by Hanotaux about the Reign of Louis-Philippe was based on a misunderstanding: “Who made Louis-Philippe King?” Hanotaux asked, and his answer was: “Indubitably, it was the Parisian population, it was City Hall, it was the famous embrace of Lafayette; the substitute royalty had become the daughter of a popular movement.”

However, this first misunderstanding was immediately coupled by another misunderstanding. Hanotaux wrote: “Two ideas formed the basis of the new royal conception: the authority of descendency and the authority of the acquired situation. Heredity and property, these were the two great social forces that needed to be managed and saved. [...] The Civil Code is imminently “hereditary” and “proprietary”. [...] By proclaiming with such insistence its quasi-legitimacy, the dynasty of July (1830) was defending, by instinct, one of those two principles, the hereditary. And it was in this same spirit, as we shall see, that it will break up its relationship with Lafayette in order to maintain, in the Chambers of the Peers, the recruitment by descendency, that is to say, by heredity.” (<Footnote6> Gabriel Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p. 341)

In the France of 1835, an election was restricted to an electoral oligarchy, which had instituted a legal nation based on 10, 896,000 property owners. Those were the only voters. Out of a population of 32,569,000 inhabitants, 21,673,000 lived outside of the legal electoral process. This is the reason why, according to the moderate Republican Party, “The people had been deceived during the days of 1830; it was the people that made the revolution; power belonged to them, but the dynasty stole it from them. The people were with Lafayette at City Hall when the general proclaimed the true Republic, but against him when, on the balcony, he embraced the ‘best of all republics.’” (<Footnote 7> Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p.364.)

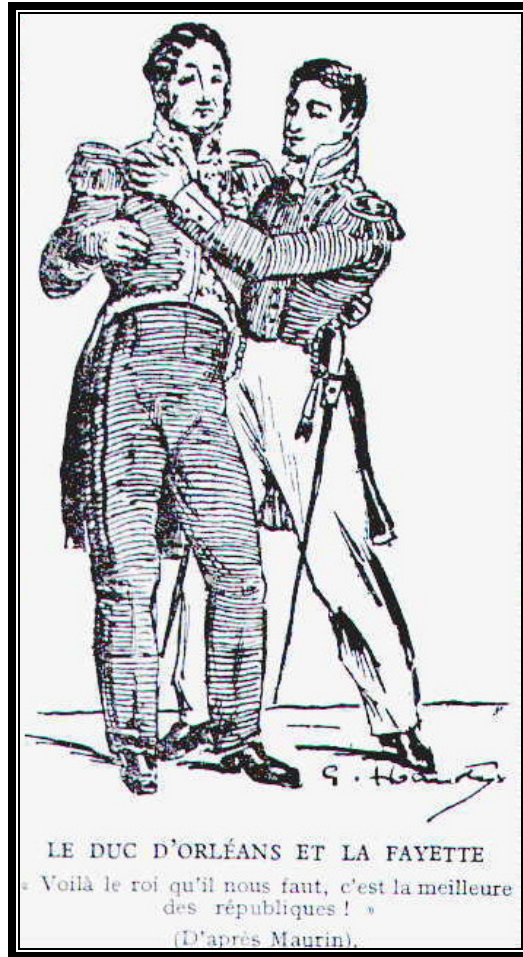


Figure 1. [Drawing of Lafayette embracing Orleans, reproduced by G. Hanotaux.]

The two major reforms demanded by the republicans were to reorganize the voting laws for a universal voting right, the {*universal suffrage*}, and the other was for the suppression of the hereditary peerage. Both were postponed to the Greek calends.

On July 31, 1830, after three days of rioting in the streets of Paris, the population took over City Hall, and a government of sorts was being prepared on its premises, between the orleanists of Louis-Philippe and the republicans of Lafayette. This was the historical moment when King Charles X, representing the senior branch of the Bourbon family, was literally horsetraded for the Duke Louis-Philippe, who represented the junior branch, namely the Orleans wing of the Bourbon family. Thus, Charles X was forced to abdicate his throne in favor of his cousin. Lafayette was caught in the middle of those power intrigues, and the fate of France was on his shoulders, since he had taken the responsibility to move his nation toward an American Republican nation state. But, he had also been used as the representative of the same principle of tragedy that triggered the advent of Louis-Philippe. But, let's hear the record speak for itself. Here are the 6

relevant historically documented facts that historian and statesman, Gabriel Hanotaux, deposited before the court of history in 1929.

Fact 1: The Orleanist, Charles Remusat, asked Lafayette at City Hall: “General, if we decide on the Monarchy, the Duke of Orleans will be King; however, if we decide on a republic, you will be President. Are you willing to take responsibility for the Republic?” Lafayette replied in an enigmatic fashion by saying that he required “some guarantees.” (<Footnote8> Gabriel Hanotaux, *Histoire de la Nation Française*, Tome V, Troisième volume, (de 1804 a 1926), Librairie Plon, Paris, 1929, p. 328.)

Fact 2: A deputation representing the King, including the Duke of Mortemart and Casimir Perrier attempted to get the support of Lafayette who told them: “It is too late.” Giving them a note to be delivered to King Charles X, which was nothing short of a death sentence to the Bourbon dynasty, Lafayette told them: “Any reconciliation is impossible; the royal family has ended its reign.” (<Footnote9> Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p. 325)

Fact 3: Charles X abdicated and asked the Duke of Orleans, Louis Philippe, to accept the Regency during the minority of his legitimate heir, the Duke of Bordeaux. Louis-Philippe accepted and took the function of the Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom.

Fact 4: July 30, 1830, preparations were being made to establish the July Monarchy. Most of the deputies were present at City Hall. The Duke of Orleans had accepted the constitutional monarchy “Charter” which included the words: “He will wear the crown received from the people.” At the last minute, those words were changed to read: “The Duke will not pronounce himself, He awaits your wishes,” addressing the deputies. (<Footnote10> Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p. 327)

Fact 5: July 31, 1830, Louis-Philippe arrived at City Hall and addressed a proclamation to the people of Paris: “The deputies of France (that is, Charles X) , at this moment in Paris, have expressed their desire that I come to the capital in order to take up the functions of Lieutenant General of the Kingdom,...The Chambers shall get together and advise as to the means of assuring the rule of law and the upholding of the nation’s rights. (No question of Constituent Assembly or appeal to the people). From now on, the Charter will be enforced.” (<Footnote11> Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p. 328.)

Fact 6: July 31, 1830, the Duke of Orleans and Lafayette met semi-privately at City Hall. The government archives stated the following: “This dress rehearsal (at City Hall) was not sufficient for the General: he wanted to know what he could count on. Surrounded by a fired-up youth movement, *by a republican party of his own personal inclinations*, and feeling that he was responsible for the fate of the nation, Lafayette did not wait long to pay a visit to the Duke of Orleans. He had apparently no reason to be unhappy about the promises of the prince:

- “You know,” said to him Lafayette, “that I am a republican and that I consider the Constitution of the United States as the most perfect that ever existed.”
- “I think as you do,” replied the Duke of Orleans, “ It is impossible to have lived two years in the United States and not be of that opinion; but, do you believe that, in the situation that France is in, and following public opinion, it would be right to adopt it?”
- “No,” replied Lafayette, “what the French people need today, is a popular monarchy, surrounded by republican institutions, completely republican .”
- That is precisely what I intend to do,” said the prince.” (<Footnote 12> Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p. 329.)

After that brief exchange, both monarchist and republican leaders appeared together on the balcony of City Hall, where Lafayette had all but crowned Louis-Philippe as the new King of France by stating: “*Here is the King we needed; this is the best of republics.*” This statement was made to express the “necessity” of the moment and to quiet down the clamoring of the crowd below, among which the young American activist Samuel Gridley Howe had been shouting enthusiastically: “No more Bourbons! Vive la République! Vive Lafayette!”

Simply from the content and the tone of this archive document, it becomes evident that Lafayette never had any intention of becoming President of France and that he was still following the script that had been agreed upon between Jean Sylvain Bailly, Benjamin Franklin, and himself in June of 1789 at the Tennis Court Oath. This script, however, may have been right in 1789 but not in 1830. The paradox of a “Republican Monarchy” had been instituted in France as the best of all possible republics. This was not merely a personal choice on the part of Lafayette, but was the axiomatic expression of the tragic historical and cultural flaw of oligarcvhism across the entire European continent. It was for that precise reason that the American Revolution could not have happened on European soil, but only in America.

Two weeks after the tragic event occurred, on August 15, 1830, James Fenimore Cooper reported the significance of that historical moment in a letter to his wife, Sue, when he wrote to her in Frankfort Germany: “All is quiet in France, and promises to remain so. Lafayette has yielded to necessity, and the Bourbonites have done the same thing. Charles X is nearly forgotten, and Philip Ist seems to be moderate and wise. ..The new Charta, as they call a constitution, is partly republican and if they destroy the descent of the peers, which they talk of, it will be still more so.” (<Footnote13> *Correspondence of James Fenimore Cooper*, edited by his grandson James Fenimore Cooper, Volume one, New Haven, Yale Unversity Press, 1922, p. 184.)

Those were the historical circumstances under which James Fenimore Cooper, Samuel Finlay Breese Morse, Horatio Greenough, Edgar Allen Poe, Samuel Gridley Howe, Albert Brisbane, and others helped and advised Lafayette on securing American republican institutions for the benefit of the French nation. It was, therefore, under these

very ambiguous and paradoxical circumstances, as the very notion of a “constitutional monarchy” reveals, that Lafayette found himself torn between being what he described himself to be, an “*American revolutionary at heart and a French royalist by reason.*”

4- THE TRAGIC OLIGARCHICAL HOLD ON LAFAYETTE.

It is essential at this point to identify for the reader the flaw of character of Lafayette in order to both do justice to him historically, and to eliminate, at the same time, any form of romantic residue that might be attached to his personality as an American patriot.

During the American Revolutionary War, Lafayette was a great patriot, but this was not the case in France during, or after the French Revolution. The personality of Lafayette represents an interesting, but terrible, dilemma: he was an American revolutionary at heart but a French royalist “by reason.” After the American Revolution, he actually shaped his own character as a flawed figure that exemplified the impossible reconciliation between oligarchism and republicanism; he was torn by the fact that he could not be an elitist, and have love of mankind in his heart at the same time. Lafayette chose to become a tragic figure.

The problem that Lazare Carnot had with Lafayette, in France, was that, even though he was an American revolutionary patriot and had made useful contributions in the cause of the revolution in France, his commitment to the King, and to the aristocracy more generally, made him untrustworthy. Lafayette's commitment to the aristocracy was quite telling, as exemplified by this letter to Mme de Simiane, one of the ladies in waiting of Marie-Antoinette. Mme de Simiane was a Lafayette "confidante" and "correspondante" who was trying to convert him away from the Revolution and toward her brand of "conservative royalism." In one of his many letters, Lafayette replied to her in the following manner: "I cannot tell you how much sorrow your letter has caused me. This Revolution that I had long wished for, that my efforts have, in part, provoked, that I defend with all my might, is making all those I love unhappy. I will be devoted to it until my dying day, but all the charms it had for me have been poisoned by the effect it has on the people dearest to my heart." This tells how romantically he considered the French Revolution, and how much he was attached to the "beautiful people."

When Carnot was brought in at the Committee of Public Safety, a series of political delegations were sent to the field generals of the armies for them to take the "new oath". Lafayette, commander of the Metz army at the time, refused to sign, and the delegation placed him under close arrest until the moment he went over to the enemy on August 19th, 1792, the day that Brunswick crossed the French border at Longwy. As he passed over to the Austrian authorities in Belgium, Lafayette was arrested.

This does not mean that "Lafayette was the head of the nobles who were allied with the tyrants of Europe," as it was claimed by Danton. That is a historical lie. What Lafayette wanted was a constitutional monarchy, and had hoped, in collaboration with

Jean Sylvain Bailly, to transform Louis XVI into the "protector of liberties", which, of course, the king refused to be.

Two months before Lafayette was to leave France, on June 10, 1792, George Washington wrote to him: "I have not been a little anxious for your personal safety; and I have yet no grounds for removing that anxiety; but I have the consolation of believing that, if you should fail, it will be in defense of that cause which your heart tells you is just." Washington wrote to his old friend as if he already knew of the inevitable outcome; hoping against hope that he might resolve his paradox. Washington knew that Lafayette had to resolve the conflict between his *{revolutionary heart}* and his *{oligarchical reason}*.

The Austrian governor of the Netherlands Duke Albrecht von Sachsen-Teschen wrote to General d'Harnoncourt: "M. de la Fayette cannot deny having been until now our declared enemy, he made war, he comes to our country not as an émigré, but still imbued with his old principles, he would have continued to be our enemy if he didn't now risk being massacred by the same populace he has led against his King; further, they came upon our advanced posts without any warning and without having received any permission to do so, therefore, according to all the rules of war, he is our prisoner." (Olivier Bernier, *{Lafayette hero of two worlds}*, E.P. Dutton, N.Y., 1983.)

The trap that Lafayette had set for himself, and for the Duke was self made and preplanned: he was to become the most important Revolutionary hero of his time in all of Europe (which he feared could never have happened in his own country), and the Duke of Albrecht was to become famous for taking this most extraordinary prisoner alive, and without any resistance. That's what Lafayette wanted.

From this standpoint, it is useful to compare the commitment of Carnot and the commitment of Lafayette, because it gives us a direct insight into the crucial difference between republicanism and oligarchism, between the sublime and the tragic. The conflict of Lafayette resided in the moral commitment of his leadership. The following statement that Carnot wrote during his exile in Magdeburg helps us situate the problem of Lafayette.

“{Morality consists in the recognition and the accomplishment of our duties...The word “duty” seems to be opposed to that of “pleasure”, and the latter is always the principle object of our wishes. One is tempted to believe at first that morality is nothing but a long sermon, a continual exhortation to repress our desires, to resist nature, to impose on ourselves every form of privation...But the true morality does not have this austerity of principle; it is, on the contrary, founded upon the personal interest, and the end that it serves is to reconcile this personal interest with the general interest, to identify them, to make all of the individual inclinations and passions contribute to the happiness of society in general, without depriving anyone of his rightful pleasures.}” [<Footnote14> Lazare Carnot, *Reflexions from “Solitary promenades”*, in Archives de la famille Carnot.]

The reader should ask: does that reconciliation between personal interest and general interest have the same meaning for Carnot and Lafayette? There is no doubt that Lafayette was committed to the safety of the nation, but he did not have the quality of the sublime that Carnot and Bailly had with respect to ordinary people. We know that Carnot's commitment to save the nation was total and even at the price of giving his life under the guillotine. We know that he did this for the love of mankind, {*agape*}, and not in the shortsighted view of blind patriotism and for the ephemeral glory of a few. However, the case of Lafayette is different. He was divided within himself between the people and the oligarchy.

To come to the very bare bones about it, Lafayette knew he was going to be guillotined as a "useless royalist" if he had stayed in France after refusing to comply with the new oath. That is true. He knew, as well, that by fleeing to Belgium, he was going to be arrested by the Austrian authorities, and be imprisoned as a revolutionary. That was his choice: either a dead royalist or a living revolutionary prisoner?

After his arrest and incarceration, Lafayette wrote to his wife Adrienne, on August 21, 1792, "You know that my heart would have been republican if my reason had not given me a nuance of royalism, and if my fidelity to my oaths and to the nation's will had not made me the defender of the King's constitutional rights; but the less others dared to resist, the louder I spoke, and I became the object of all the attacks. The mathematical demonstration that I could no longer usefully resist crime and that I was about to be the victim of yet another crime has forced me to remove myself from a struggle in which it was obvious that I would perish fruitlessly..." [<Footnote15> Olivier Bernier, {*Lafayette hero of two worlds*}, E.P. Dutton, N.Y., 1983, p.245.]

That is exactly the point: Lafayette preferred to be a live revolutionary martyr, rather than a dead royalist hero. So, he played this paradoxical personage for all it was worth, and to the very end. The crime he had committed deserved neither the death he feared, nor the imprisonment he suffered, because the life he had chosen for himself reflected neither blame nor glory, but only the fruits of a tragic attachment to fixed rules of conduct that the history of oligarchism had implanted in his character.

As Schiller said in regards to the Marquis of Posa, in his letters on "Don Carlos," "Through practical laws, not through artificial offspring of theoretical reason should man be guided in his moral actions." As LaRouche indicated, Lafayette fell short of becoming a true Republican because he could not break from his attachment to the Monarchy of Louis XVI. Ever since the Oath of the Tennis court of June 20, 1789, pronounced by Jean Sylvain Bailly and himself, Lafayette could not break with the paradox of a Republican Monarchy.

HOW SAMUEL F. B. MORSE CAPTURED THE LAFAYETTE PARADOX.

Samuel F B Morse's 1825 portrait of Lafayette standing, is probably the greatest American portrait of all times, because, to my knowledge, it represents the highest level ever achieved in an American portrait of the sublime quality of classical artistic composition.

First of all, the portrait was not painted in France, but in America, when Lafayette travelled to the United States in 1825. Morse emphasized this towering quality of the subject, by putting the observation level of the spectator slightly below Lafayette's knees, giving the subject additional elevation and dignity above the horizon, thus, increasing his stature with respect to the heavens in the background. From the vantage point of that special effect, Morse had given recognition to Lafayette as the "Hero of the Two Worlds," in accordance with the consecrated American expression of the time.

Furthermore, Morse was also very much knowledgeable of the differences between those two worlds, and of the unresolved political situation in France at that very specific period of time, prior to the July Revolution of 1830. So, Morse was consciously addressing the state of political perplexity that had to be conveyed to the universal spectator as he is looking over Lafayette's shoulder and discovering the dark cloud moving forward as if to overshadow him. What is the significance of this lurking darkness in the background?

As he seems to be arriving at the top of an invisible flight of stairs leading to an open terrace and scrutinizing the horizon over his right shoulder, Lafayette appears to be in a state of ambiguity. Is he moving forward or is he standing still? His right hand, resting on the third pedestal, which suggests that it might be his own, next to the busts of Washington and Franklin, shows that he is standing still, yet, his right shoulder and his left hand holding back his cape, show that he is in a forward motion. As they say in the military, he cannot stand at attention and be moving his left foot forward at the same time. Every military man knows that.



Samuel F. B. Morse, *Marquis de Lafayette*, 1825.

However, if I may be permitted to use the French political metaphor of right and left, as Lafayette and the French revolutionaries instituted it in the room of their first National Assembly in 1789, one might say that Lafayette's right is still while his left is in motion! If that were to be the appropriate metaphor, then Morse might have captured in the body language of Lafayette, a most fascinating political paradox, that is, the opposition of two tendencies which exists in every society between the aristocratic hereditary principle, and the republican democratic principle: one is static, the other is moving forward, and both can only be judged properly by an American. The point to be made here is that only an American artist could have made this portrait.

Biographer William Kloss noted a similar ambiguity in his caption for the same portrait of Lafayette in his book, *Samuel F. B. Morse*. He said it was Frederick Schiller who best described such ambivalence of character in his 1795 appreciation of the Apollo Belvedere, when he wrote: "Celestial mixture of accessibility and severity, benevolence and gravity, majesty and mildness." (<Footnote 16> William Kloss, *Samuel F. B. Morse*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1988, p. 94.) Such ambivalent pairs of intertwined attitudes are, indeed, remarkably similar to the paradoxical character of Marquis de Lafayette, but what of their significance, what do they imply?

Here, it is necessary to open a parenthesis and call upon Universal History in order to identify the historical specificity of this ambiguity as it later showed up in the political events that became the most crucial moments in Lafayette's life, his moments of truth, so to speak, in the political intrigues of the Duke of Orleans July Revolution. Consider, also, that Morse has captured this moment in the simultaneity of eternity. This so-called second French Revolution is also sometimes referred to as "Les Trois Glorieuses," that is, the three "glorious days" of rioting in the streets of Paris, July 27, 28, 29, just before the Orleans Monarchy replaced the Bourbon Monarchy in 1830. However, the glory this revolution celebrated was the cunning of Louis Philippe d'Orleans and reflected the principle of tragedy of French society as a whole.

This is the paradox that Morse was uniquely able to capture in his classical artistic composition of Lafayette. However, as in all classical tragedies, the flaw does not lie in the character of the hero, but in the society that he comes out of. The cultural flaw is not personal but social and it represents a characteristic of all of the people. Similarly, what may appear to reflect, in one glance, the individual character of Lafayette is, in reality, the universal mirror expression of the axiomatic difference between republicanism and oligarchism, the chasm between American society and European society taken together as a whole. Pierre Beaudry

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