Venice: The Methodology of Evil -- Part III



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BUILD A WEBSITE OF YOUR OWN ON TRIPOD

This article is the final installment of this series. Parts 1 and 2, written by LaRouche associate and political prisoner Donald Phau, appeared in the American Almanac *editions of May 9 and May 16, 1994 (Vol. VIII, No. 17 and No. 18).*

In 1527, Henry VIII of England resolved to divorce his wife. His concern was predominantly dynastic. The Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon, his queen of 18 years, had failed to produce a male heir, after suffering several miscarriages and losing two sons in the early stages of infancy. The single surviving Tudor child, Princess Mary, was not considered by her father or his advisers to be a suitable candidate to rule England after Henry's death.

The divorce and remarriage of a Catholic king was infrequent, but not unheard of. Annulments of royal marriages for dynastic and political reasons were even more common. Around 1450, the pope even granted Henry VI of Castile a dispensation to marry a second wife, while still married to his first wife, who had borne no royal heir. At the outset of his negotiations with the Vatican, Henry had every reason to expect that, in time, his request would be granted.

Instead, the case of Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII of England was to become the most famous divorce in history. Before the curtain fell on this historical drama, the nation of England had been transformed. Henry VIII had pulled England out of the Catholic Church, establishing the Church of England under the authority of the monarchy; he had beheaded Sir Thomas More, one of the greatest thinkers of the Renaissance, for not supporting his break with Rome; and he had steered his country off the path leading to industrial-capitalist economic development and republican government.

Henry VIII had also thrown open the door for the cultural, political, and financial takeover of England by agents of the city-state of Venice. By the middle of the 1530s, Henry's government was in the hands of Venetian agents, and being shaped into a model of police-state political terror. By the end of Henry's reign, Venetian bankers were in control of a burgeoning English foreign debt, and dictating terms to the English throne. Within slightly over a century following Henry's death, England had been transformed into the usurious, slave-trading, imperial power of Great Britain, under the dictatorship of a Venetian party, which had been transplanted directly from the lagoons of Venice.

Cui Bono?

Who benefitted?

The manipulation of Henry's divorce was a foreign policy matter of some importance to the ruling oligarchy of Venice. As Donald Phau has documented in the first two parts of this series, the tiny Italian city-state established and maintained its vast influence over the economies, trade, and governments of Europe by the artful application of ``divide and conquer"

trickery, applied with the help of the largest and most sophisticated diplomatic corps in all the known world. Though successful during the first decades of Henry's reign in provoking two expensive and bloody wars between England and France--the most populous country in Europe--Venetian diplomacy had failed to do serious damage to cooperative relations between England and Spain, the homeland of Henry's queen.

Together, England and Spain controlled the Straits of Gibraltar, Atlantic entry-point to the Mediterranean; the English Channel, entry-point to the North and Baltic seas, as well as the location of rich Low Countries (what today are Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) port cities; and, in the case of Spain, half of the New World. As recently as the 1480s, Henry VII had overturned the privileges of Venetian merchants in English ports, awarding this carrying trade to ships of his own citizens; in 1494, the first Tudor king successfully challenged Venetian monopolies in trading of French wines and Spanish sherry. Together, Henry VII and King Ferdinand of Spain had played a forceful role in encouraging reforms from within the Catholic Church.

This alliance was to come to an abrupt end over the matter of Henry and Catherine's divorce.

The Venetian oligarchs, who hated the Christian view that all men are created in the image of God, (particularly as it was reflected in the Church's disapproval of slavery and prohibition of usury) were also interested in cutting down the influence of the Catholic Church. Venice spawned, nurtured, and sponsored both the leadership and footsoldiers of the Protestant Reformation. The theological apologetics for the schismatic movement within the Church were manufactured in the Camaldolese monastery of Santa Giustina, and in the salons of Lucca and other Italian cities, satellites of Venice, from whence they were injected into the academic institutions and courts of Europe. It was not until Henry VIII's break with Rome, however, that the Venetian efforts resulted in the establishment of a Protestant state church.

No wonder the Venetian gamemasters pounced on the opportunity to use Henry's dissatisfaction with Catherine to their own ends. And, they succeeded in doing just that by 1535, with the death of Thomas More, Henry's break with the Church, and the destruction of the English-Spanish alliance.

Cultural Warfare

Thus far, however, we have examined only Venice's *tactical* considerations vis-a-vis the King's Great Matter. The oligarchs of the lagoons had far more important, *strategic* goals in mind. These longer-term projects centered on questions of culture, especially Venice's hatred of the conceptions of man and nature which were the foundations of Western Judeo-Christian culture, in particular as it was being spread throughout Europe and the New World in the decades following the Golden Renaissance in Italy.

The Venetian deployment into England around Henry's divorce reveals the nature of the cultural warfare directed from Venice against the influence of the Golden Renaissance. From every nook and cranny popped out-and-out Venetian agents, ready to assist Henry. Right behind--in a classic display of the Venetian maneuver known as ``playing both sides against the middle"--followed Venice's candidates to enter the lists on the side of Queen Catherine.

And with them came everything bad Venice wished to impose on humanity: Aristotelianism, occultism, gnosticism, and other forms of mysticism and irrationalism. In short order, this invading force was to deal a mortal blow to English humanist circles led by Thomas More and Erasmus, which had struggled to build institutions to uplift society to the level befitting each individual human being's identity as man made in the image of God. England, a strong outpost of the Renaissance Christian cultural tradition in Europe, was to be turned into a new Venice of the north. < p>

Cromwell Comes First

First with his foot in the door was the Venetian-trained bureaucrat Thomas Cromwell, who rose to power on the corpse of Thomas More. Cromwell lay in wait as a court underling during the latter 1520s. He assumed the chancellorship upon More's resignation in 1532, after he had--according to More's son-in-law and biographer William Roper--presented the King with a theory of government based on the idea ``that his will and pleasure [be] regarded as law."

Cromwell surrounded himself with a coterie of radical Protestants, similarly trained in Venice or at the University of

Padua. These included Thomas Starkey and Richard Morison, both of whom entered Cromwell's service in the early 1530s. Morison and particularly Starkey served as the pamphleteer-propagandists during Cromwell's reorganization of the English church and government. Cromwell's thoroughgoing reforms--accompanied by a reign of terror and hundreds of political conspiracy trials and executions--transformed England from a polity based on the rule of law, toward the ideal of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, in which the rule of men--in this case the suggestible and unstable Henry VIII--was concealed behind the appearance of the rule of law.

One historian of the period summarizes Cromwell's outlook thus:

> ``Cromwell wished to free statutes from that older limitation which wished to test it by reference to some external law--the law of nature, the law of Christendom (Thomas More's test). He held that [the positive law of a nation or state] was omnicompetent, and must be obeyed."

It was this lawless regime which framed up and murdered Thomas More.

To fortify Henry's case for divorce from Catherine, Cromwell compiled reports from more than a dozen royal emissaries, including John Stokesley, Richard Croke, and Thomas Cranmer (later to be named the first Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury) who had been sent to comb Europe's universities and religious institutions for scholars and divines who would buttress the King's position. This dragnet produced, among others, one Marco Raphael, a Venetian Jew converted to Christianity, and the reputed inventor of a new invisible ink. Though he held the high position of chief cipherist for the diplomatic service of Venice, Raphael traveled to England to assist the King.

Also materializing at the English court, one might imagine in a puff of grey and aromatic smoke, was Francesco Giorgi, nicknamed the ``Cabalist Friar of Venice," by the Warburg Institute's late occult-specialist, Frances Yates. Giorgi was there to help Henry VIII, and brought with him armfuls of manuscripts, letters, and other documents supporting Henry's arguments for the divorce. Giorgi remained in England for more than five years, gaining the king's ear and entry into the inner court circle.

Meanwhile, partisans of Catherine's cause were busy trying to recruit another leading occultist--Henry Cornelius Agrippa--on her behalf.

Black Magicians

Giorgi and Agrippa were two sides of the same coin. They were both political-intelligence agents, deployed at the instruction of their oligarchist masters. They were also agents of cultural warfare, carrying and propagating the Venetian currency of antiscientific irrationalism. Their occultist poison was--and remains--Venice's most powerful weapon to prevent the development of an educated and rational population, equipped to dispense with aristocrats and govern itself.

Let us take a longer look at the necromancer and black magician, Henry Cornelius Agrippa, keeping in mind that Agrippa's outlook, and even his main writings, were virtually identical in essential content to those of Henry VIII's adviser and confidante, Francesco Giorgi.

Agrippa, who learned astrology at his mother's knee, was perhaps the leading occultist of early sixteenth-century Europe, rivaling Johannes Reuchlin for that title by dint of his energetic travels across the continent and back again, to build the sixteenth century occultist movement. He was born about 1486, in Nettesheim, Germany, and educated at the University of Cologne. How he was started on the road toward black magic and the occult is not known. But he spent a significant portion of his younger years in Italy, studying the mystical and occultist works of Pico della Mirandola, and in Paris, in the circles of occultists who were very active there. In Italy, France, and later Germany, Agrippa organized and recruited for a secret society reminiscent of the later freemasons.

This secret society was unabashedly gnostic. Its brotherhood was committed to the study of an ancient knowledge [*Gnosis* is the Greek word for knowledge] which it believed must be limited to an elite, kept secret as it had the power to be dangerous to the inferior masses of humanity. This secret knowledge could secure eternal salvation for initiates, while the common man was excluded from knowledge of God and eternal life. Agrippa wrote in his 1516 *The Three Ways of Knowing God (De triplici ratione cognoscendi Deum)*, ``even the Gospel, like the Mosaic law, has one meaning on the surface for the more simple, another in its core, which has been separately revealed to the perfect ... nothing could be

more absurd" than the law, if taken literally.

Agrippa's tome, *De occulta philosophia* (1510) catalogued the elements of this secret knowledge, and became the virtual bible of the occultist movement. It was the handbook of John Dee around the turn of the fifteenth century in England, and later of Robert Fludd, the founder of the Rosicrucian cult which prefigured freemasonry.

The Cabala

What superstitious nonsense did Agrippa peddle in *De occulta philosophia*? Among other things, the conjuring of demons, magic rituals, astrological formulae, numerological combinations, and songs, poems and spells for controlling the actions of angels, demons, other human beings, and the physical universe. This passage from Book III discusses a spell for changing the weather:

> ``I have seen and known a certain man inscribing the name and sign of a certain spirit on virgin paper in the hour of the moon. When afterwards he had given this to a river frog to devour, and had murmured a certain song, having replaced the frog in the water, soon showers and storms rose up."

De occulta philosophia delved at length into the so-called Jewish Cabala, the secret knowledge believers asserted had been handed to Moses by God when he declared the 10 Commandments. Cabalists like Agrippa asserted that God revealed his law in a literal form for the masses, but in an elaborated form for the inner elite. To this was added the study of other ancient secret knowledge, passed from the Egyptians, through the Greece of Plato and transmitted to the West during the middle of the fourteenth century with the Greek texts brought to Florence by Gemisthos Plethon. Among these texts were those attributed to Hermes Trigmegistus, the probably fictional Egyptian high priest whose writings are known as hermeticism.

Christian cabalists like Pico, Giorgi, and Agrippa sought to syncretize this ancient secret knowledge with the tenets of Christianity. In his *Three Ways of Knowing God,* Agrippa described three paths to knowledge of the Almighty: the natural world, which reveals only a reflection of God in His creations; the cabala--the ancient, secret knowledge; and, after the coming of Christ, the divinely inspired Holy Gospels. But, specifies Agrippa, the New Testament, like the Old Testament, is divided into an open revelation available to all who read it, and a secret revelation, available only those who possess the secret knowledge.

At their irrational extremes, Giorgi and Agrippa studied the numerological significance of the Hebrew letters in the name of Jesus Christ, which they believed proved that Jesus was the Messiah. Both Giorgi and Agrippa also asserted that the universe is divided into three realms--the natural world, the celestial world, and the supercelestial world, Heaven--all under the control of angels and demons upon whom a magician may call for special aid. Giorgi's elaboration of this three-fold system appears in his 1525 textbook of the occult, *De harmonia mundi (The Harmony of the World)*.

Also on the occult fringe were astrology, alchemy, and magical music and poetry, such as the so-called Orphic hymns which fascinated Pico. These date back to Attic Greece in the centuries before Christianity. The Orphic hymns were part of violent orgiastic rituals, in which maddened women, known as Maenads, drugged or otherwise intoxicated, roamed through the forests at night, tearing animals from limb to limb; the same fate befell any man who was unfortunate enough to cross the path of one of these rampaging bands.

(Agrippa--perhaps under the influence of an Orphic hymn--argued vociferously that women are superior to men. In his *De nobilitate et pracellantia foeminei sexus* of 1509, Agrippa advanced a number of occultist and feminist arguments that women are more perfect than men.)

The influence of the stars on the human personality traits (which Agrippa called ``humours") is put forth in the following passage from *De occulta philosophia*:

> ``The *humor melancholicus,* when it takes fire and glows, generates the frenzy (furor) which leads us to wisdom and revelation, especially when it is combined with a heavenly influence, above all with that of Saturn.... Therefore, Aristotle says in the *Problematica* that through melancholy some men have become divine beings, foretelling the future like Sybils ... while others have become poets ... and he says further that all men who have been distinguished in any branch of knowledge have generally been

``Moreover, the *humor melancholis* has such power that they say it attracts certain demons into our bodies, those whose presence and activity men fall into ecstacies and pronounce many wonderful things.... This occurs in three different forms, imagination ... the rational ... and the mental... [When] the soul is fully concentrated in the imagination, it immediately becomes a habitation for lower demons, from whom it often receives wonderful instruction in the lower arts.... But when the soul is fully concentrated in the reason, it becomes the home of the middle demons; thereby it attains knowledge of natural and human things;... But when the soul soars completely to the *intellect,* it becomes the home of the higher demons, from whom it learns the secrets of divine matters...."

Witchcraft

Though Giorgi, Agrippa, and other occultists of the day moved in the intellectual circles of the university and the church, their ideas radiated with some intensity into society around them. By the 1530s, *De occulta philosphia* was the handbook for sorcerers, witches, and wizards all over Europe. Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi* was translated into French in 1578, and spurred the witchcraft movement in France.

Jean Bodin, the leader of France's *politiques* faction, which sought to promote religous toleration, took very seriously the extent of Giorgi's influence, and fiercely attacked him as a chief architect of the witchcraft movement plaguing Europe. In 1580, Bodin published a his *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, a treatise on the philosophical foundations of satanism, with suggestions for dealing with witchcraft.

In Elizabethan England, where the ideas of Agrippa and Giorgi were at work in the occult movement that was to become freemasonry, dramatist Christopher Marlowe attacked black magic head on. In his *Tragical History of the Life and Death of Dr. Faustus,* Marlowe presents the cynical, devil-conjuring Dr. Faustus as a student of Agrippa. When Faustus conjures up Mephistopheles using cabalist numerology and anagrams, Faust tells the devil that he is too ugly to appear as himself: ``Go and returne an old Franciscan Frier, That holy shape becomes a devill best." < p>

Dark Age in England

Under the influence of Venetian agent Thomas Cromwell's Aristotelian ``might makes right" philosophy of government, and the occultism spewed by such as Giogi and Agrippa, it is no wonder that Henrican England descended toward a new dark age, both culturally and economically, after Thomas More's death in 1535. The country which, on the occasion of Henry VIII's coronation in 1509, Erasmus had hailed as a new opportunity to develop a society based on the dignity of man, was set on the downward path toward slave-trading, drug-dealing, and imperialist conquest. So today, those who love the United States must fight to reverse our nation's takeover by the very same ideology of bestialism.

Captions and Displays

St. Mark's Cathedral, adorned by the four bronze horses looted from Constantinople in 1201, overlooks the Grand Canal of Venice.

lead display:
``The Venetian deployment around Henry's divorce reveals the nature of the cultural warfare directed from Venice against the influence of the Golden Renaissance. From every nook and cranny popped out-and-out Venetian agents...."

Display:

``Giorgi and Agrippa were two sides of the same coin. They were both political-intelligence agents.... They were also agents of cultural warfare, propagating the Venetian currency of antiscientific irrationalism."

``Their occultist poison was--and remains--Venice's most powerful weapon to prevent the development of an educated and rational population, equipped to dispense with aristocrats and govern itself."

The title page of Francesco Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi.*

From *De harmonia mundi,* Giorgi's illustration of the relationships among the physical, celestial, and spiritual realms.

This passage from Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi* discusses the manipulation of the letters in the Hebrew name of Jesus, to prove that He was the Messiah.

The Cave of the Illuminati from the writings of seventeenth-century occultist H. Khunrath.

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