



How the Classics Were Lost

A personal reminiscence

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

Soon, unless William Kunstler's cronies carry out their threat to assassinate me, I shall be fifty-nine, and then sixty. My maternal grandfather was born in 1862, and one of my great-grandfathers, whom I knew slightly back in the 1920s, was born about 1830. My great-grandfather's father was a legend, whose principal doings were first-hand gossip, fresh as yesterday, at the dinner-table of his grandchildren. He was a contemporary in age of Abraham Lincoln. There are certain compensations for approaching sixty years of age.

I have been most privileged. My junior, the notorious Henry A. Kissinger, has traveled more than I, but he has had to suffer the misfortune of his own company. There are few things I can imagine more wretched than to be condemned to be Henry Kissinger. How unutterably miserable that poor creature must be. When I think of Henry Kissinger, I appreciate how wonderfully privileged I have been.

Let us think of more pleasant subjects than that unhappy *nebish* Henry Kissinger. Let us think back to my schoolmates: for example, those of public school days, back in Lynn, Massachusetts, or university acquaintances—such as Wash-

ington Star editor Murray Gart. Let us think back to my companions, returning from the China-Burma-India theater, at the end of the War. How bright were the convictions, the shiny, homeward-turning determination to do something for the *world-historical good* once we all returned to civilized life; we had learned our lesson, not to let the world sneak up on us the way it had caught us unawares with the Great Depression and then the War. *What damned fools!*

If Henry were not such an obnoxious, traveling social disease, I could simply pity the poor creature that he is, like the bums who used to stab desperately for my windshield with a foul rag whenever I was trapped for a moment by that red light at the end of the Bowery. I would rather not have to think about poor creatures like Henry. Poor Henry; he had no choice but to be born and we must suppose some circumstance made him what he became. *Damned circumstances*, that transform newborn *shmaggies* like Henry into things such as Henry become. Fritz Kraemer, the man who claims to have "invented Henry Kissinger," was a *circumstance*; so was the Frankfurt BHF bank, linked to the fascist P-2 lodge which the head of the Paris Grand Orient Freema-

sonic Lodge insisted, and documented to be a Rockefeller Trilateral operation. The Netherlands end of the Bilderbergers—the mother of the Trilateral—is crawling with certified war-time Nazis. One wonders about the circumstance of Henry mixing with all those former Italian and Dutch Nazis. I once said, "To the Devil with Kissinger," but the Devil called me up, rebuking me for that. The Devil said, "Do you really hate me that much?" *Let us force ourselves to forget Henry.*

Back to less unpleasant memories.

What galls me today, remembering the school chums? Take Murray Gart, for one. Bright, but shallow; he chose the right career in journalism, where his brightness could carry him to the top, and in which professional *shallowness* is at a premium. Likeable, but not to be taken seriously.

Did you ever drink a sip from a bottle of cheap, fizzed-out, warm orange soda—as cheap as they used to make the stuff back during the days of the Great Depression? (*Maybe Nelson Rockefeller mistook Henry for a pre-Columbian relic? That might explain something.*) It is really bad-tasting stuff. (*I mean the soda.*)

That's what I resent in mem-

ory of school chums and those lying fellow veterans who promised to take life seriously. What name do we put to that cathexis of bad-tasting, warm, fizzed-out, cheap orange soda? One word will do: *Littleness*. What breaks my heart when I remember most of them is that awful sense of their *spiritual littleness*. *Get your kicks. Fake it. Become a success. Be popular. Be a "regular guy."*

You younger folks might not remember the 1930s connotations of "be popular" or "regular guy." The connotations are disgusting, especially when you look back to the days-before and just after the War. I don't know any who, to my knowledge, turned out as badly as Henry did, but they all disappointed me badly.

The 1930s and 1940s were "awful times" in their own fashion. I pretended to have ambitions, because one was expected to express such sentiments among my set in those days. I never really did have *ambitions* in the usual sense of that term. "Ambitions" must be italicized, if one is to put across the real, deeper meaning of the business. What I wanted most was that my school chums would become more likeable, by becoming less tastelessly *Popular*. I wished, above all, that they would cease boring me with their *popularity*. I tell you no secret: that is still my true ambition.

That brings me to the point, or at least the outer edge of the main thought leading me to the typewriter on this occasion. I will now reveal to you the term which I hated most during all that time: "Popular classic." I hated that term with deep-down, teeth-grinding hatred. I hated sentiments, popular prejudices, I hated very much being obliged to do something because that was "what everyone does," or expressing a

sentiment because that is "what everyone knows." Simply because one is two-legged is no excuse to degrade oneself to the level of a mere parrot of popular aphorisms. I hated all those obnoxious, degrading things, but not half as much as I hated the feeling of *cheapness* which seeped all over me, like-clammy gunk, whenever I heard that despicable war-cry of moral self-degradation: "Popular classic."

Popular classic, to those among you too young to remember the awful sound of those terms, is *banality*, *asininity*, and *the morning after a night's cheap drunk*, all rolled into one. It is worse: it is *littleness*.

"Let's go into town and pick up a couple of Babes," the GI said—millions and millions of

times. (*It was another oft-repeated utterance I learned to hate at first sight.*) I met some of my fellow-GIs in towns here and there. Often they had found their "Babes." The "Babe" would exhibit "class" by picking "popular classics."

"Popular classic" meant juke-box culture. It meant the rhythms of the chimpanzee gone psychotic in the small cage at the local zoo. It meant something one could whistle over and over again, without stretching one's concentration-span much more than five or six bars. Even off-key, nothing essential was impaired: even as it blended into entropic confusion with a half-dozen cacophonies of the same general breed, it was regarded by all "regular guys" as



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"catchy." It was what today's *pot-headed* types (they have no human heads) have been overheard to call the "in thing." *Hangnails, impacted wisdom-teeth, a dirty needle up the vein, sex with children,* and the Great Depression's *popular classics*, belong, one and all, to the Chomskyan, Cartesian-linguistics "set of in things."

Some say it wasn't so bad then. In those days it was not yet fashionable for an oedipal child to murder its father to punish its mother for not putting up the cash for a fix. That was before the judge would put the father into prison for resisting the attempted assassination. In those respects, it was admittedly much better then. Some say, looking at Henry Kissinger's face and other signs of these evil times: "I think I must have died and gone to Hell." America has certainly "gone to Hell" these past twenty years.

There were these two monkeys sitting in a tree by the airport in Barbados as the Carter family emerged from the plane. One monkey turned to the other, and said, "There goes the neighborhood." Imagine: that was once President of the United States. American has gone to Hell over the past two decades.

Put it this way. We've come off the chute and will probably go *kerplunk* into the dirtiest, most evil mess ever imagined. Think back: *How did we get here? Think back to the "Popular Classic."*

In my day, "Carter" was a pair of overalls. Did we actually select a dirty old pair of dung-smeared overalls to become President? That wasn't dung, the fellow said; that was Henry. In Washington, there are three sexes: men, women, and Trilaterals. Is Roy M. Cohn a closet Trilateral?

It used to be said: "Dad, don't worry about the kids," mother counseled; "they're just having fun."

They weren't really having fun. They were desperately bored. Their boredom frightened them. Many it actually terrified. They felt worthless, despised. Nothing would help but becoming "Popular." A girl *had to be* "popular." To be "popular," she had to conspire with mother to squeeze "popular styles" out of father's purse, go to "popular places," discuss "popular subjects," know the "popular movies," be up-to-date with the popular gossip about the popular stars, and appreciate "Popular Classics." Nowadays, the pot-heads say "Keep cool." *Don't show your panic.* They were so afraid of being alone, so frightened by the company of their own mind, that they simply could not get through the day without being *popular*.

Partly, it was the Depression. Later, it was running as far from anything resembling the Depression as possible, at any price. A nation had lost belief in itself, and communicated that self-degradation to its children. "My father was important before the Depression." If all the certified millionaires of the Twenties of whom I had first-hand report during the 1930s or in military service were laid end to end, where did the millions of resplendent mansions in the slums of West Lynn and similar parts vanish to before I moved to Lynn in June of 1932? There was no sense of inner worth, nor a sense that it could be achieved by self-development.

Somewhere *before the 1930s* the United States lost its way. The 1920s I knew only in terms of visits to Ohio and Massachusetts out of half-rural Rochester, New Hampshire. I had only a smell of the Roaring Twenties, but I knew it had gone sour before then, otherwise the Roaring Twenties, Coolidge and Hoover could not have happened as they did. So, I do not

even imply that the "Popular Classic" is the cause of America's slide to Hell. It is simply an earlier phase of the process of decay.

That point situated, what is the significance of the "Popular Classic" of my youth?

A "popular classic" is a sexually promiscuous virgin, a nuclear submarine thickly covered with bright-blue vulture feathers, an amoeba the size of the Atlantic Ocean in Henry Kissinger's bathtub. It is a contradiction in terms.

Shakespeare, Milton, Schiller, and Dante Alighieri before them, all were greatly popular, and they represented classics in the true sense of the term. Not the fox-trot tune that lank Robert and plump Gertrude rubbed bellies to on the night they became engaged. (*Robert had a thing for sweaty palms.*)

The point of the "Popular Classic" lay exactly in the fact that it was a gibberish-term, a term which dragged the word *classic* down into the cesspool of depraved *littleness*. By repeating the word *classic* over and over again in the formulation "popular classic," the idea of the classic was destroyed, wiped from the capacity for recognition of almost all my poor school-chums. That was what helped to turn their later lives into dead stuff, and their children largely into marijuana-reeking ashes.

I met a lawyer from a country not the United States. We spoke of truth, and he said that the truth was irrelevant if it contradicted the opinion of lying news media. What a curious profession of law? Without truth, where is justice? Without the rigors of forensic battle according to rules of evidence, what are judges, courts, and lawyers but sheer confidence-men, one and all?

It is good because it is popular. Prove that it is good. Let me show you



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the ratings; let me show you the latest poll.

I happen to know, on the basis of conclusive evidence, that not only was Jimmy Carter the worst President the United States ever suffered, but that he was a totally immoral hypocrite, a virtual traitor, a compulsive liar, and in effect as big or greater a mass-murderer than Adolf Hitler. *Show respect; he's the President. Would you respect Adolf Hitler if he were President? He wasn't elected; Jimmy was. Besides, the opinion polls say you're wrong.*

There is no doubt about it; Jimmy Carter was a sure-enough Popular Classic. Pneumonic plague, you see, was popular in Europe during the middle of the fourteenth century. Half the population was doing it.

You have to consider the sensitivities of the environmentalists; they have a big following. Adolf Hitler had a bigger percentage of the vote in the plebiscite.

Where is truth, the kind of truth that is truth if only a handful recognize it as such. *The truth which, rejected, condemns whole nations, even civilizations, to extinction*

as the price for untruthful, popular opinions.

A classic is a classic if it embodies such truth. Not just any truth. It must be the kind of truth which spans generations. It can not be the false truth of traditional sentiment. It must be more than a statement of truth. *It must state truth by proving it.*

A classic is the embodiment of a rigorous experiencing of a principle of discovery of truth. It is not a mere assertion—this or that is ever so. It must be a drama of Shakespeare, the prose-drama of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, which operates as a Platonic dialogue does, to lead the audience through the experience of developing an idea which is a valid principle of discovering truth.

For example, the theorems of Euclid's geometry are not true classics. Firstly, they are not truth even in the simple sense. In truth, two points do not determine a line: rather the existence of a line is defined by the intersection of two surfaces, and a point can be defined to exist only by the intersection of no fewer than two lines.

Secondly, theorems of that sort, even if they are valid—as Euclid's postulations are invalid *simply because they are postulates*—are not statements of the kinds of truth defining a classic. Truth of the form expressed by a classic is *transfinite* with respect to ordinary, particular forms of knowledge. Classical truth is a principle of discovery of knowledge, applicable to a wide variety of situations in many ages.

The function of the classic is not merely to communicate principles of discovery, although that requirement is included. It must not only enlarge the powers of the mind, but must awaken the person to a sense of the existence of such powers. It must do still more. It must impart to the person the sense that his or her identity is the concluding development of such powers for good.

Consequently, a calamity, such as the Great Depression is no excuse for the brushing aside of the classics. It is in precisely such periods of cultural self-doubt of a people that those people need the classics more than at any other time. It is then that they must be aroused to a sense of their developing powers to accomplish a general good, to find themselves something more than a terribly little person, obsessed with petty gratifications of hungers for such worthless trash as "popularity."

I am not angry at my old school chums. I am angry on their behalf. I must be angry for their sake, since among the things of which they were foully cheated was the power to recognize what they had lost.

Murray Gart should think about that. He might come up with a useful article for the *Washington Star*. I hope he has some sense of how he was cheated in life because of the "Popular Classics."