The Leibnizian Roots of Eurasian Integration

by Jason Ross[1]

Since 1996, the LaRouche movement has been organizing for the realization of continental development of Eurasia and beyond, under the programs of, first, the Eurasian Land-Bridge, and now the New Silk Road and World Land-Bridge.[2] This economic approach was championed three centuries earlier by the prolific polymath and economist, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), who worked to open up the potential for exchange of goods and ideas with China, and to modernize Russia, economically and scientifically. Leibniz encapsulated his outlook in the preface to his *News from China*:

> I consider it a singular plan of the fates that human cultivation and refinement should today be concentrated, as it were, in the two extremes of our continent, in Europe and in China, which adorns the Orient as Europe does the opposite edge of the Earth. Perhaps Supreme Providence has ordained such an arrangement, so that as the most cultivated and distant peoples stretch out their arms to each other, those in between may gradually be brought to a better way of life. I do not think it an accident that the Russians, whose vast realm connects Europe with China and who hold sway over the deep barbarian lands of the North by the shore of the frozen ocean, should be led to the emulation of our ways through the strenuous efforts of their present ruler [Peter I].[3]

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), the beautifully optimistic polymath who, three hundred years ago, set the conceptual groundwork for the programs of international cooperation and development being realized today, thanks to the efforts of the LaRouche movement.

Leibniz saw the goal of society as advancing the knowledge of the world to contribute to the public good, and to glorify God by better understanding His wisdom in His having acted as He has:

> To contribute to the public good and to the glory of God is the same thing. It seems that the aim of all humankind should chiefly be nothing other

1. The author is presenting a series of video discussions on the life and work of Gottfried Leibniz, available at: http://lpac.co/leibniz-2016
2. See *EIR*'s 2014 special report, *The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge,* at worldlandbridge.com
3. G.W. Leibniz, Preface to the *Novissima Sinica* (*News from China*), translated by Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont, Jr., in *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Writings on China*, Open Court, 1998, pp. 45–46.

than the knowledge and development of the wonders of God and that it is for this reason that God has given to humankind dominion over this globe.[4]

China: the Work of the Missionaries

What were the relations of Europe with China in Leibniz's time? From Roman times, nearly a millennium passed without significant direct contact between Europe and China, until the trip of Marco Polo, preceded by his father and uncle. His *Travels of Marco Polo,* circa 1300, was the first major European chronicle of the East. In the 1510s, Europeans made their first sea voyages to China.

In 1549, Francis Xavier, who was one of the founders of the Society of Jesus—the Jesuit order—arrived in Asia to begin a *commerce of light*, as Leibniz called it, with the cultures there, where he planned to evangelize, and also to learn from the Chinese and others. As the missions worked to develop an understanding of Chinese language and culture, Father Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) arrived in 1582. Before departing on his voyage, Ricci had worked on science, language, geometry, astronomy, and music, being instructed by the famous mathematician and astronomer Christopher Clavius. Ricci came to China prepared to really offer something to the Chinese.

Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), the Jesuit missionary and scientist whose approach to the Chinese—one of accommodation and mutual learning—was referred back to by both Leibniz and the Kangxi Emperor as a model for cultural exchange.

Clearly, as a Jesuit, his primary focus was to evangelize, and teach Christianity, but that was not his sole mission. The situation in China was nothing like the kind of work that missionaries had been involved in, in other parts of the world, such as parts of Africa, or in the New World. The Chinese culture had a conscious knowledge of its own history that dated back to before the Biblical Flood, without any record of it.[5] This was an *old* culture.

In his studies, Ricci found that some of the ideas about how China worked that were considered common knowledge in Europe, were actually incorrect. One of them was the idea of the "three religions": that Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism had merged into one outlook, or that the three, considered as a hodgepodge combination, together constituted Chinese thought. By actually studying those belief systems, Ricci found that this was not true, that these were different systems of thought.

There wasn't simply an "Eastern," or a "Chinese" philosophy, just as there is no single "Western" philosophy. It is not only in the West that there are thinkers with different viewpoints. Although Plato and Aristotle might be near each other in the bookstore, that doesn't mean that their thoughts are aligned; they are not! The same thing is true in China; there is a long history of different outlooks, of different types of thought.

So Ricci's view was to bring science, and the fruits of science, to China, both for evangelization purposes, and because this is simply something that all people should know. All peoples should be able to benefit from the breakthroughs of the Renaissance, whose science should be brought out to the world. Such was Ricci's outlook. Ricci taught geometry. He translated what he

4. Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 233.

5. This was a bit of a mystery to the missionaries.

considered to be great works into Chinese. He taught music. He presented the court of the emperor with a harpsichord. He wrote music for the Chinese court, including songs for multiple voices. For Ricci, as for Leibniz, science and religion did not in any way stand counterposed to each other.

As an example of this unified approach of religion and science, consider Leibniz's discussion, in his *Discourse on Metaphysics,* on the reason for God's actions being praiseworthy.[6] Were these actions good by virtue of God having done them (an expression only of God's power), or did he act as he did *because doing so was good* (an expression of God's wisdom and goodness).[7] Leibniz knew that the latter was true. While some philosophers saw the supposed limitation on His power as contradicting His omnipotence, Leibniz considered the basis of leadership of a great prince to be similar: One justifies one's rule by doing good. There is no contradiction between reason (as in science) and religion, in his view.

Regarding a potential stumbling block, Ricci wrote that Confucianism wasn't a religion. It was an ethical system, based on the existence of natural law. He wrote that Confucius was not worshipped as a god, but was praised "for the good teachings that he left in his books … without, however, reciting any prayers nor asking for any favor."[8] People did not pray to Confucius to intercede in worldly affairs. This is respect for an honored thinker. Ricci found that this also applied to the honoring of ancestors, or the great thinkers of the past—the ancient masters.

Ricci wrote that, as for the veneration of ancient masters and one's ancestors, these rites were to "display the gratitude of the living as they cherish the rewards of Heaven, and to excite men to perform actions which render them worthy of the recognition of posterity."[9]

This is a beautiful description of an efficient sense of immortality: By recognizing—venerating—the good deeds of the past, one demonstrates that posterity's *future judgment* is something that exists efficiently *in the present*. Culturally, there is a profound value in this outlook, which could be strengthened by rites and social practices that reinforce the concept.

Ricci differentiated Confucianism from Buddhism and Daoism, which he did see as religions. If Chinese were not Buddhists or Daoists, he said, then they "could certainly become Christians, since the essence of their doctrine contains nothing contrary to the essence of the Catholic faith, nor would the Catholic faith hinder them in any way, but would indeed aid in that attainment of the quiet and peace of the republic which their books claim as their goal."[10]

The work of Ricci and his allies met with great success. His differentiation among the different currents of religious and philosophical thought in China allowed him to understand the culture, and to intervene in it—to bring new thoughts to it—in a refined and specific way. In 1644, the Qing dynasty came to power, replacing the Ming dynasty. Throughout the changes, the missionaries stayed and continued their work. The first of the new Qing emperors made the Jesuits his son's tutors. And that son became the Kangxi Emperor, a remarkable ruler. He was the first to compile the characters of the Chinese language, in the Kangxi dictionary. He promoted science and upgraded the Beijing Observatory with the assistance of the Jesuit scientist Ferdinand Verbiest. His interest in music led him to learn to play the keyboard. An advocate of learning, he maintained the meritocratic examination system even during difficult times, and issued an edict requiring, in every town, the posting and reading of a set of Confucian maxims that he wrote.

The success of the missionaries was manifest in a decision by the emperor in 1692, the Edict of Toleration, granting Christians the right to go throughout the Chinese Empire to teach, preach, and visit, and to have their churches protected, as long as they did not undermine Confucian principles and the ceremonies and rites that were required of civil servants. The Kangxi Emperor saw no contradiction between Christianity and the Confucian principles that were the foundation of Chinese society.

Opposition to the 'Commerce of Light'

In Europe, the progress in cultural and economic exchange with China was not entirely met with approval. The oligarchical outlook in Europe opposed this exchange for two reasons. First, the spreading of science and economic progress is generally opposed by an oli-

6. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, various translations, Articles 2-3.

7. See also Leibniz's arguments in the *Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*.

8. As quoted in Michael Billington, "Christians Must Know what Confucius Said," *EIR*, Volume 18 Number 19, May 17, 1991, p. 50.

9. Ibid.

10. As quoted in Michael Billington, "Matteo Ricci, the Grand Design, and the Disaster of the 'Rites Controversy,'" *EIR*, Volume 28 Number 43, Nov. 9, 2001, p. 41.

The Kangxi Emperor (1654-1722), during whose reign Leibniz intervened into relations between Europe and China. The Emperor was a great supporter of learning, and welcomed the participation of missionaries in China with the 1692 Edict of Toleration.

garchical leadership, hoping to keep people in a general state of ignorance and poverty. Secondly, the natural theology of the Chinese—whereby, without divine revelation, human beings are able to come to meaningful conclusions about immortality and the nature of the universe—threatens the status of authority in matters of thought.

Consider the prototypical oligarch, the Zeus of the Promethean tale, who forbade the use of fire by human beings, reserving such knowledge and power to himself. For a ruler of Zeusian outlook, the promotion of science in China is a very bad idea, as its economic effects would also serve to make it more difficult to maintain control over society. Similarly, the idea that individuals can arrive at truth through reason, undermines the notion of authority as the arbiter of what is right and wrong.

For these two reasons (among others), there was an attempt—unfortunately one that would prove to be ultimately successful—to end this *commerce of light*, this exchange between Europe and China.

Enter Leibniz

It was in this setting that Leibniz's involvement began. Let's start with Leibniz's view of the ruler of China at the time, the Kangxi Emperor. Leibniz wrote of him that he is a monarch "who almost exceeds human heights of greatness, being a god-like mortal, ruling by a nod of his head, who, however, is educated to virtue and wisdom … thereby earning the right to rule."[11] In writing of his having "earned the right to rule," Leibniz expresses his view of real leadership, based not (solely) on power, but on goodness and wisdom, reflecting his view of God and the universe.

Despite the congruent conceptions of natural law in China and Europe, a controversy around the Confucian rites was used to kill off the cultural exchange with China. Some missionaries and factions in the Catholic Church said that it was not possible to be both Confucian and Christian, and each individual would have to decide one way or the other. The attitude was that those venerating their ancestors or Confucius were engaging in heathen, inherently un-Christian behavior. One of these missionaries, Antonio de St. Marie, said, "We have come here to announce the Holy Gospel, and not to be apostles of Confucius."[12] That's the heavy-handed approach that they had.

And again, they could ask of themselves, how could it be that in China, "an empire so vast, so enlightened, established so solidly, and so flourishing … in number of inhabitants and in invention of almost all the arts, the Divinity has never been acknowledged?"[13] What does it mean, that a society can flourish in that way, on a set of principles other than those that these missionaries had come to expect from their history in Europe? Leibniz says that this shows that there is a sense of reason that is impressed in all people of the world, that can lead them to the right kinds of conclusions—that there is a universality in humanity.

So, what did Leibniz do? He wrote a series of papers

11. Billington, Ibid., p. 39.
12. Ibid., p. 40.
13. Ibid.

and reports in which he weighs in on these matters. They are available in English translation.[14] In his Preface to his *News from China*, Leibniz writes:[15]

> But if this process [this exchange of thought] should be continued I fear that we may soon become inferior to the Chinese in all branches of knowledge. I do not say this because I grudge them new light; rather I rejoice. But it is desirable that they in turn teach us those things which are especially in our interest: the greatest use of practical philosophy and a more perfect manner of living, to say nothing now of their other arts. Certainly the condition of our affairs [in Europe], slipping as we are into ever greater corruption, seems to be such that we need missionaries from the Chinese who might teach us the use and practice of natural religion, just as we have sent them teachers of revealed theology. And so I believe that if someone expert, not in the beauty of goddesses, but in the excellence of peoples, were selected as judge, the golden apple would be awarded to the Chinese unless we should win by virtue of one great but superhuman thing, namely, the divine gift of the Christian religion.[16]

Leibniz believes that in terms of *natural* theology, of thoughts that did not derive from the revealed theology of Christianity, the Chinese are ahead.

Consider what he writes here about the emperor, and the concept of what it means to be the ruler. Contrast Leibniz's outlook with that of Thomas Hobbes, or the Thrasymachus of Plato's *Republic*. Leibniz writes:

> Nor is it easy to find anything worthier of note than the fact that this greatest of kings, who possesses such complete authority in his own day, anxiously fears posterity and is in greater dread of the judgment of history, than other kings are of representatives of estates and parliaments. Therefore he carefully seeks to avoid actions which might cast a reflection upon his reputation when recorded by the chroniclers of his reign and placed in files and secret archives.[17]

This is the value of respecting the past, as a way of thinking of one's own life, as the future's past. The emperor, although temporally (and temporarily) powerful, fears the judgment of posterity, more than a European king might fear the power of the Parliament. In Leibniz's view, this shows the value of natural law in Chinese culture.

Leibniz weighs in on what he called "The Civil Cult of Confucius," discussing the rites used to revere Confucius's life:

> When I wrote the Preface to my *News from China*, I was inclined to believe that when the Chinese literati render honors to Confucius, they consider it a civil ceremony rather than a religious cult. Since then, an opposing statement has come into my hands, published by people, who though deemed well-intentioned, have not at all persuaded me [of their view].[18]

The "opposing statement" Leibniz refers to is the growing anti-Chinese faction in the church. Leibniz continues:

> A religious cult, is one where we attribute to he whom we honor, a superhuman power, capable of granting us rewards or inflicting punishments on us.[19]

This is clearly not something that people think about Confucius! Leibniz goes on:

> For example, when they call the place where the image of the deceased is displayed and to whom gifts are offered a "throne" or a "seat" of the soul or spirit, this can be easily understood in an anthropomorphic or poetic fashion, as describing the glory attributed to immortality, and not as if they think the soul actually returns to this place and rejoices in the offerings.[20]

14. G.W. Leibniz, *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Writings on China*, translated by Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont, Jr., Open Court, 1998.
15. The *Novissima Sinica* (*News from China*) was a collection of letters and reports from Leibniz's correspondents, with a Preface written by Leibniz himself, published in 1697 and 1699.
16. *Writings on China*, pp. 50-51.
17. Ibid., p. 48.
18. Leibniz, "On the Civil Cult of Confucius," 1700/1701, *Writings on China*, p. 61.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 62.

The value of these ceremonies lies in inculcating a sense of the present as what will be the future's past, not in the benefits to departed souls being worshipped in that way.

In fact, Leibniz points out something very similar in the Bible. He remarks that honoring ancestors is hardly unique to China, and he cites the Fifth Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land, which the Lord your God has given you." Leibniz says that it is not directly by honoring one's parents that one lives longer, but that the kind of thought that goes along with it, is something that God rewards for other reasons.

In describing the Confucian view of one of the words you might say is "heaven," Leibniz writes, in a powerful statement on the value of the natural theology of the Chinese:

> They sacrifice to this visible Heaven (or rather to its King) and revere in profound silence that *Li*[21] which they do not name, because of the ignorance, or the vulgarity of the people, who would not understand the nature of the *Li.* What we call the light of reason in man, they call commandment and law of heaven. What we call the inner satisfaction of obeying justice and our fear of acting contrary to it, all this is called by the Chinese (and by us as well) inspirations sent by the *Xangti*[22] (that is, by the true God). To offend heaven is to act against reason, to ask pardon of heaven is to reform oneself and to make a sincere return in word and deed in submission one owes to this very law of reason. For me I find all this quite excellent, and quite in accord with *natural theology.* Far from finding any distorted understanding here, I believe that it is only by strained interpretations and by interpolations that one could find anything to criticize on this point. It is pure Christianity, insofar as it renews the natural law inscribed in our hearts—except for what revelation and grace add to it to improve our nature.[23]

The Kangxi Emperor updated the Beijing Observatory with the help of such missionary scientists as Father Ferdinand Verbiest.

Leibniz takes the time to go through these issues in detail, because it was essential to defuse the attempt to prevent the relationship with China from developing and continuing.

A Reversal

Regrettably, Leibniz's work did not succeed, at least not in his time.

In 1704, Pope Clement XI issued a decree, and then a papal bull in 1715, saying that anyone who wanted to be considered a Christian would have to renounce the Chinese rites: no ceremonies for Confucius, no reverence of ancestors. The Kangxi Emperor, who had been taught in his youth by Jesuits, and had in 1692 given the Christian missionaries free rein throughout the kingdom, could not abandon these Confucian rites, and could not accept the papal bull, without overturning the

21. The *Li* Leibniz is referring to is likely 理, meaning "reason," "order," or "principle."
22. Leibniz's spelling of Shàngdì (上帝).
23. Leibniz, "Discourse on the Natural Philosophy of the Chinese," 1716, *Writings on China*, p. 105. Leibniz's emphasis.

This world map, dating from the early 1600s and labelled in Chinese, was prepared by the Jesuit missionary and scholar Giulio Alenio. The "commerce of light," as Leibniz called the exchange with China, had the potential to expand the knowledge both of the Chinese and Europeans.

basis of Chinese society. Under the Chinese meritocratic system, civil servants were all required to take examinations, a significant aspect of which included a grounding in the ancient philosophy of Confucius and others. To abandon this would be to overthrow the Chinese Constitution, not in a paper or written sense, but in the intellectual sense of overthrowing the principles on which the nation operated.

The Kangxi Emperor explained this to the representatives from the Vatican who came to speak to him. He clarified that his philosophy agreed with the existence of one omnipotent deity who created and who rules the world, and that the rites regarding ancestors and Confucius were signs of veneration, but were not religious. He was clear that the Chinese were not asking for their ancestors or Confucius to intercede into the world.

The emperor's explanations were unsuccessful. When the papal representatives returned to him with the announcement that the Vatican was taking a position that would have the effect of ending the cultural exchange, the emperor responded:

> You have corrupted your teachings, and you have disrupted the efforts of the former Westerners. This is definitely not the will of your God, for He leads men to good deeds. I have often heard from you Westerners that the devil leads men astray—this must be it.[24]

The emperor further remarked that most of the missionaries who came and made judgments about China's theology, had never even learned Chinese, in contrast to Matteo Ricci, who had translated Chinese works. Leibniz himself strongly promoted a large-scale translation project, to really understand the different philosophies in China, as a real exchange, writing: "I only wish that we had more complete accounts and greater quantity of extracts of the Chinese classics accurately translated which talk about first principles. Indeed, it would even be desirable that all the classics be translated together."[25]

Leibniz tried to intervene through the end of his life. When he passed away in 1716, he was still working on his "Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese," unable to finish it as he labored away on the history of the Guelf family for King George. After Leib-

24. Billington, "Matteo Ricci, the Grand Design, and the Disaster of the 'Rites Controversy,'" p. 41.
25. "Discourse on the Natural Philosophy of the Chinese," in *Writings on China*, p. 78.

niz's death, another papal bull issued by Pope Benedict XIV in 1742 reaffirmed the earlier bull and forbade any discussion of the policy. Missionaries would have to swear an oath that they would not even discuss the justification of the church's position. If they wanted to go to China, they were not allowed to even discuss the idea that Confucianism was coherent with Christianity.

The exchange was effectively ended. The toleration of the practice of Christianity and of missionary work, allowed under the emperor's 1692 edict, was ended. Most Westerners left, losing the opportunity to benefit from China's history and culture, and China was cut off from the science, technology, and culture that the exchange could have brought, something that was certainly in Britain's favor later in the opium wars of the 19th Century.

This outcome did not result from religious zealotry or firmly sticking to theological principles on the part of some missionaries. The theological debate was used to prevent the political and economic results that would arise from a closer cooperation with China, and through an exchange of thought—in economic science and other fields. The papal bulls were only overturned in 1939, when Pope Pius XII finally acknowledged that it was possible to be both a Confucian, including observing rites of respect, and a Christian, as was, for example, Sun Yat-sen.

Consider again Leibniz's view of the great potential of exchange with China, and compare it with the smallmindedness of those who got pulled into the religious debate, and the evil intent of those who promoted it from the top:

> I judge that this mission is the greatest affair of our time, as much for the glory of God and the propagation of the Christian religion as for the general good of men and the growth of the arts and sciences, among us as well as among the Chinese. For this is a commerce of light, which could give to us at once their work of thousands of years and render ours to them, and double, so to speak, our true wealth for one and the other. This is something greater than one imagines.[26]

This is indeed greater than one could imagine. What might the world be like today, had that exchange continued, had those attempts to prevent the exchange with China not succeeded?

Russia

Recall Leibniz's thought that it almost seemed to be God's intention to have Europe and China on opposite ends of the Continent, each to reach towards the other with its own outlook, science, and civilization. Now, consider what he saw as Russia's role:

> I do not think it an accident that the Russians, whose vast realm connects Europe with China and who hold sway over the deep barbarian lands of the North by the shore of the frozen ocean, should be led to the emulation of our ways through the strenuous efforts of their present ruler [Peter I].

That "present ruler" of Russia, Tsar Peter I (Peter the Great), was someone with whom Leibniz met personally on more than one occasion. Beyond the desire to reach China by land, rather than by sea, Leibniz saw a great deal of promise for Russia itself. Peter the Great wanted to develop his nation, to move it forward economically and culturally. He wanted to bring in science. He wanted to modernize.

He was also personally very excited about getting a hands-on sense of industries and the technical arts. In 1697 he came to Europe in a personal rather than official capacity[27] to study shipbuilding and other sorts of industry, with a particular goal of touring the shipyards of Holland. He was assisted in setting up this trip by the daughter of the previous Duke of Hanover, Sophie Charlotte, who was a student of Leibniz, and who had married the Elector of Brandenburg. Sophie Charlotte helped bring Peter the Great into Europe. And on his way to Holland, Peter the Great stopped in Hanover, where he was hosted by Sophie Charlotte's mother, the Electress Sophie, another supporter of Leibniz, and who was to become next in line to inherit the throne of England, thanks in part to Leibniz's work on the 1701 Act of Settlement.

For his industrial tour of Europe in 1697, Peter the Great was thus brought in by an ally of Leibniz, and hosted at the home of another ally of Leibniz. During

26. Letter to the Jesuit missionary Antoine Verjus, Dec. 2, 1697, as quoted by Maria Rosa Antognazza in her *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography*, p. 359, from the translation by Franklin Perkins in "Leibniz's Exchange with the Jesuits in China," in Paul Lodge (ed.), *Leibniz and his Correspondents*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

27. To avoid publicity, he travelled under an assumed name.

this trip, Leibniz attempted to meet with the Tsar, which he was unable to do, having to content himself with meeting members of his court. One of their topics of discussion was the history of the Russian language, about which Leibniz had some insights.

The big break really came in the 1710s. Another one of Leibniz's employer-patrons, Duke Anton Ulrich, a relative of the Hanoverians who were Leibniz's main employers, was to celebrate the marriage of one of his granddaughters to the Tsar's oldest son.[28] When the Tsar came to Germany for the wedding, the Duke asked Leibniz if he would like to come to the wedding, which, naturally, Leibniz was very happy to do.

And so in October 1711, Leibniz was able to personally meet with the Tsar. To this meeting he brought reports on mapping Russia, on studying its mineral resources, on its linguistic history, on how to approach a study of its history, and proposals for setting up societies for the advancement of science and technology and modernizing the economy. Leibniz came prepared! In a follow-up letter after their meeting, Leibniz wrote to the Tsar in 1712:

> Although I have very frequently been employed in public affairs and also in the judiciary system and am consulted on such matters by great princes on an ongoing basis, I nevertheless regard the arts and the sciences as a higher calling, since through them the glory of God and the best interests of the whole human race are continuously promoted. For in the sciences and the knowledge of nature and art, the wonders of God, his power, wisdom, and goodness are especially manifest; and the arts and sciences are also the true treasury of the human race, through which art masters nature and civilized peoples are distinguished from barbarian ones. For these reasons I have loved and pursued science since my youth.... The one thing I have been lacking is a leading prince who adequately embraced this cause.... I am not a man devoted solely to his native country, or to one particular nation: On the contrary, I pursue the interests of the whole human race because I regard heaven as my fatherland and all well-meaning people as its fellow citizens.... To this aim, for a long time I have been conducting a voluminous correspondence in Europe, and even as far as China; and for many years I have not only been a fellow of the French and English Royal Societies but also direct, as president, the Royal Prussian Society of Sciences.[29]

Tsar Peter the Great (1672-1725) developed Russia economically, scientifically, and culturally. His meetings with Leibniz in the 1710s bore fruit in such institutions as the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences.

Leibniz was making himself available as an adviser to the Tsar, and made the point that the pursuit and promotion of science and technology, to understand the wonders of nature and to better the life of human beings, requires government support. Leibniz is asking whether the Tsar will step up and provide that kind of support.

In 1712, Leibniz had a series of follow-up meetings with the Tsar, during the Tsar's visit to Germany. Leib-

28. The granddaughter, Charlotte Christine, had an elder sister, Elizabeth Christine, who had married Charles VI, the Holy Roman Emperor, providing another connection between Leibniz and the imperial court of Vienna.

29. As quoted in Antognazza, *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography*, pp. 470-471.

niz traveled with him to several cities as part of his entourage, allowing them to continue their discussions.

As a result of his meetings, Leibniz was appointed a member of the Russian government, becoming a Russian privy councilor of justice. He became the adviser to the Tsar on mathematics and science, and was given the task of reforming the judicial system of Russia, which Leibniz said made him feel like Solon of Athens. Although Leibniz was to pass away only a few years later, without the opportunity to fully realize his plans during this lifetime, his influence was significant. Consider some of the achievements:

In 1725, the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg was set up in that new city named after Tsar Peter I. A new advisory body, a Senate, was set up for the government. Leibniz's proposals to reorganize the government resulted in the consolidation of the then 35 government departments into nine.[30] The number of iron foundries during the reign of Peter quadrupled. By 1725, a dozen years after Leibniz's meetings with the Tsar, Russia had matched England's iron output. By 1785, Russia was producing more iron than all the rest of Europe combined. This was a very successful and quite rapid industrialization. Before Peter's reforms, Russia had been relatively backward in comparison with the cultural centers of Europe.

During the American War of Independence, it was a member of that Leibniz-created Academy of Sciences who drafted the agreement of the League of Armed Neutrality, the anti-British agreement to prevent interference with international trade, prominently including trade with America during the war.

Conclusion

Leibniz's universal outlook led him to extend his interests and influence around the world. He sought to develop ties to China—for extending trade, skills, and knowledge—believing that Europe could learn from Chinese philosophy. He wanted to extend the fruits of what had been learned in Europe to other cultures, so those discoveries could be implemented to improve people's lives, and be developed further by thinkers in other parts of the world. He saw Russia both as a link with China and as an important developing and potentially very powerful nation. He thought it could actually be a benefit that Russia was entering the world of modern science as late as it was, since many bad ideas could perhaps be avoided entirely in Russia, where new scientific academies could be set up, unburdened by unfruitful outlooks.

His relationships with these two countries represented Leibniz's optimistic drive to improve the world, based on what is universal to all nations. Again, Leibniz:

> I judge that this mission is the greatest affair of our time, as much for the glory of God and the propagation of the Christian religion as for the general good of men and the growth of the arts and sciences, among us as well as among the Chinese. For this is a commerce of light, which could give to us at once their work of thousands of years and render ours to them, and double, so to speak, our true wealth for one and the other. This is something greater than one imagines.[31]

Considering the potential today, with the New Silk Road proposals—the Chinese One Belt One Road program, the World Land-Bridge developed by Lyndon and Helga LaRouche and their collaborators, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the BRICS process, and the Chinese space program—it is undeniable that there is a great potential, a commerce of light that the entire world must be allowed to join. This requires eliminating the power of that greatest of impediments standing in the way: the trans-Atlantic financial outlook that stands opposed to such development—that Wall Street, London, banking, oligarchical, anti-development, anti-technology, anti-cooperation outlook.

The people of the United States stand in a position of great responsibility, to ensure that our nation, through its actions under its current President—who must be removed—does not prevent this kind of development from occurring; indeed, we should be participating in today's "commerce of light." As a nation, the United States can do much to advance these kinds of proposals in the context of a national mission for development. We have a great deal of work to do.

Leibniz's approach to the relations among nations, the purpose of an individual nation, and the purpose of relations between them, between different cultures, provides a very valuable framework, a historical anchor point for how to relate to each other today. Leibniz made progress, but it is up to us today to realize his program for continental development and collaboration.

30. Apparently, Russian bureaucracy is nothing new.

31. Antognazza, p. 359.