

THE SIRIUS FESTIVAL 2019

15 AUG 29

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Buon Ferragosto, Tutti!

(Happy August 15th, Everyone!) Today marks the classic summer holiday period in Italy. Everyone and their dog (literally) goes on vacation in August and the great majority of businesses grind to a halt. Late July and August typically signify the arrival of the ‘dog days of summer’ in the northern hemisphere, as well as the start of the sign Leo on July 23. But the 15th of August is special for other reasons, besides being the date of the full moon this year. It is also a sacred Catholic and Orthodox holiday as well – the Feast of the Assumption. It is a holiday that is celebrated mainly in South America and Europe. In Eastern Europe (Orthodox countries) it is called the ‘Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God’, which carries a most interesting symbolism. August is the time of the Sun (the Son) each year, which precedes the harvest months. The vines have fruited, Mother has given birth, the verdure begins to die. Nature (the Great Mother, or Blessed Virgin) begins its gradual withdrawal and its assumption into the depths of the earth. Then the fruit of her labor goes on to feed the bodies and souls of humanity and the ‘lower’ kingdoms for the months ahead.

The dog days of summer also signify the heliacal rising of the alter Ego of our solar system¹ – the grand star system Sirius. The star we call Sirius is actually now theorized by some astronomers to be a triple system, with possibly a third member, [Sirius C](#), postulated due to perturbations in the orbits of Sirius B, but never having actually been observed. Sirius is the brightest star in the night sky, in the constellation of Canis Major (the Greater Dog) and is analogous esoterically to the ‘soul’ of our solar system. Hence, with the advent of the dog days of summer, the rising of Sirius in the northern hemisphere and the sign Leo coming into prominence, the emphasis for us is on connecting with the higher aspects of our nature in a more pronounced fashion.

Leo is ruled by the Sun, both in the orthodox and the esoteric traditions. The Sun has been associated with leadership and rulers for long ages. Thus also, has been Leo. The Leo individual, or Leo type, with either the Sun or rising sign in Leo, is normally found in a position of leadership in some circle, either in the family

unit or internationally. This is due to the rays (fundamental qualities of consciousness) that it transmits to our solar system, which are rays one (will/power) and five (science/concrete knowledge).² Leo thus gives both the benevolent executive or the dictator, the one leading by example, having achieved their place in the sun by individual effort and exemplary achievement, or by force of will and exertion of power over others in the case of a dictator. For examples in US presidents, Lyndon Johnson, 'W' Bush and Trump all have/had Leo rising, whereas Herbert Hoover, Bill Clinton and Obama all have/had Leo Sun. The reader will have varying opinions on the leadership styles of those presidents.

Leos are often born into difficult circumstances, of the ones I know who have Leo sun or rising. This has the effect of forcing them back on themselves. And if not born into those circumstances, will have to face such at some key moment in their lives, wherein there is no one else upon which to rely. If the person responds properly, from a spiritual perspective, this provokes a period of intensive self-examination, wherein the root of their isolation is seen for what it is – self-provoked, or otherwise they will have to find their way out of it. This usually entails some path of self-development. Self-absorption is typical in this phase of a Leo's life

With that combination of rays one and five, however, an interesting facet of Leo development comes to our attention, and that relates more to the fifth ray. This combination of factors produces:

“...the will-to-illumine, which constitutes the driving urge towards self-knowledge, self-perception and intellectual positivity, [fifth ray] and also the will-to-rule and to dominate, [first ray] which is of such a controlling nature in this sign and such a subtle potency in the Leo type. It is this will-to-rule which leads a person born in this sign eventually to achieve self-mastery and the control of the personality (for either a good motive or a selfish one), and it is also the same tendency which leads one finally to the control by the personality, ruled by Leo, of groups and large or small bodies of people.”³

The important note here is the “intellectual positivity” mentioned above. And if properly handled by the person, the “will-to-rule and to dominate” remains primarily within the self and is not imposed on others. This produces a great sensitivity, both to impressions from one's higher nature, and to the struggles of others. Leo is one of the signs that produces initiation (spiritually) and personal achievement, and in such a case the outlook on life will be positive, forward looking, and with a clear set of goals to be achieved. The life thus oriented will be to all accounts, *exemplary*. This will be the mark of a Leo on the Path, whatever their chosen field of service.

In this era of the individual and of identity politics, where we see the emphasis placed so strongly on individuals, we see the action of Leo clearly, as a background influence. Leo is the polar opposite of Aquarius, and those ideas of self-development, the importance of certain groups by extension (or their self-perceived importance) in the mass consciousness shows the influence of those two signs quite clearly. It is said that we are in ‘the antechamber of the Age of Aquarius’,⁴ and as such the energies of those two signs will be playing upon us for a long while yet as the Aquarian age becomes ever more clearly defined. That brings us to a rather interesting consideration.

Something to consider: We talk about the Sun being the ruler of Leo, and the predetermining factor of a person's character being their Sun sign, along with the rising sign. One thing we rarely, if ever consider is that our Sun sign is actually based upon an illusion, or better described, a projection. The ecliptic is defined as the path of the Sun through the heavens. But in reality, the Sun makes no such movement. It has its own path through the local universe, yes, but that path is not the ecliptic. The ecliptic is actually *our* path – the Earth's path – around the Sun. The Sun is simply a representative of that as we transit around the Sun, seeing the sign in which the Sun *appears* as the one which we adopt at the moment of our birth. So, our character, as outlined by the Sun sign, is in reality an *appearance*, a mask that we (as souls) adopt at each incarnation. The actual sign in which our Earth is posited is one that, in a way, is *behind* our present state of affairs, i.e., our present life. ‘Behind’ in this sense is used as in ‘behind the scenes’. The rising sign, too, is also likewise determined. Now, that is something to think about – really, to deeply ponder. And it raises some very interesting possibilities and questions. We will have to save those questions for another time, as it is outside the scope of this letter. However, as to the possibilities, there are some preliminary remarks we could examine.

[The Earth is rarely, if ever considered in astrology](#), unless one uses the sidereal zodiac. Even then, the rising sign does not change. But when we really look at the rising sign in the same sense that we view the Sun sign,

why not consider it in the same way? The rising sign is the one appearing – there is that word again – on the horizon at birth. Again, we view a projection. What we end up with is not a point, but *an axis of realization*. In fact, in the future there will be meditations on the zodiac which employ the signs opposite the sun signs. These have been [briefly touched upon by DK](#) through Alice Bailey, but not elaborated. It is this sort of realization that lies behind the aforementioned Leo-Aquarius polarity, and why the sign opposite should always be considered when looking at a person's, nation's or group's overall development.

Points of crisis: With the preceding in mind, every Leo type could do periodically with a good crisis in life. It resets the mind, changes the point of view and gives a good excuse for exploring the means for self-development. This might be tongue-in-cheek, and it is also true. Leos need their times of isolation. It can be the isolation of a musician holing away in a practice room, the painter or writer practicing their craft – solitary lines of work for certain – or going away on a spiritual retreat. Alone. In fact, meditation is the premier way of progress for the Leo. It cuts through ordinary appearances, reveals the truth behind phenomena (another way of saying the same thing) and focuses the mind through an act of will. That invariably produces crises in one's life. Artists and practised meditators know this sort of thing well. It is true in any area of life where intense mental focus is required. That point of crisis is the mental block that precedes a real breakthrough. Both Alice Bailey and Helena Blavatsky were Leo types. Speaking of points of crisis, Alice once had this to say at one of her meetings at the Arcane School:

“I think so often these things have a time factor. We hold on, we get desperate, our tension mounts and we get more and more disturbed. Then something breaks and we go over the dam, and immediately there is a rush of light and life and water. Not only do our own wheels function, but those of others also. I had a letter from somebody this week who had been in total darkness for a long time. He finally made up his mind to stand steady no matter what happened. At the end of the week the whole thing [his situation] straightened out. We have to be patient and watch for the moment. It takes times for the tension to mount to the point where it really is a recognizable tension in your life.”⁵

The point here is to persist in in the face of obstacles. This is the unique power of Leo, of the 5th and 1st rays working in tandem – the point of sustained mental focus necessary for a breakthrough. Like him or not, Vladimir Putin, speaking of Russia with its Leo rising in its national chart and Leo personality esoterically, has spoken of the need for breakthroughs in Russian industry and society. An interesting choice of words. Russia has certainly gone through its share of points of crisis. This sort of attitude can be described as ‘consciousness hovering on the borderline of revelation’.

Both Alice Bailey and Blavatsky were disciples, both were practised meditators. They both went through great trials in their lives, and both of them achieved certain initiations, or as Buddhists would call them, realizations. Alice Bailey's *Unfinished Autobiography* is really worth reading if one wants to observe how a strong Leo type handles times of crisis in one's life. And she gives those experiences quite a human face. Both of those women went on to lead large groups of people toward a higher way of living, both through word and example. There have been many other Leos who have done likewise, or not so much. Regardless, they were leaders in their fields. Just to name a few: Orville Wright, Henry Ford, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Fidel Castro, Claude Debussy, Alexander Fleming, Steve Martin, Helen Mirren, ‘Il Duce’, and Alexis Tsipras, to name a few of hundreds with Sun in Leo. Then with Leo rising: Paul Gauguin, M.C. Escher, Richard Branson, Aleister Crowley, Ann Frank, Alex Haley, Dylan Thomas, Stephen Fry, Elton John, Ennio Morricone, Indira Gandhi, and Meryl Streep to name a few of hundreds. It's hard not to love a Leo, and that is Leo's ultimate expression via the Sun in the best of the type. Love them or loathe them, they will always be noticed, and usually at the top of the heap. With that we move on to current events and the full moon.

The full moon takes place on 15 Aug 19 at 12:29 UT (10:29 Pm AEST). There is a Sun/Venus/Mars conjunction in the figure, and that is the defining feature of the chart. That triple conjunction is trine [Eris](#), indicating constructive use of conflicting opinions – i.e., strong debates that produce useful insights for the collective. That is further aided by a trine between Mars and [Ixion](#). The period leading up to the full moon has been very restive, with mass shootings in the US, increasing tensions in the Persian Gulf, and the recent [scrapping of Art. 370](#) by the Indian congress. I will be doing a piece on that after this letter goes out, as their action has the capacity to be quite disruptive of world peace. On the surface, it appears to be a backward

step, taken in the interest of domestic politics within India. Conversely, it has been a gift to the hardliners in Pakistan.

The nations and Leo: This brings us to the practical applications of Leo and what we see emerging internationally. The nations with Leo prominent illustrate what has been described with Leo quite well. The nations and regions I have been working with recently who have Leo strongly placed (Sun or rising) in their national charts are as follows: South Korea (Sun), Gaza Strip (Sun), India (Sun), Iran (rising), Russia (rising), the EU (rising) and Austria (rising) from the mundane perspective, based on the foundation date of those states. Certainly, there are others, but these are the ones who have been most in the news recently. From an esoteric, synthetic perspective they are as follows:

Personality: Russia, France, Berlin and Rome (maybe Geneva)

Soul: Brazil, Italy, Romania, London (maybe Geneva)

The year and finances: So, before we go further, and since this [Year of the Monastic Pig](#) is especially connected with big shifts in finances, there is a wider theme it would be helpful to keep in mind as we go along. When we look behind the curtain at the unfolding events in the world there is a particular undercurrent that is behind those changes, and that is the crisis that is facing us in the field of capital and labor, as Alice Bailey stated the matter. We currently call it the 'battle' between financial capitalism (neo-liberal economics) and socialism/communism. I have done [a compilation of all the quotes](#) regarding the two from her books, which may help to put things in perspective subjectively.

Discussions and postings I have seen on these matters, especially in the United States, show that we have reached another crisis point in the world's financial affairs and that resistance to that change is quite strong. All the while the media tells us everything is fine, the economy is great, there is jobs growth, etc. People simply are not buying it any longer. Most of us know there are fundamental flaws in the current system, except for the very wealthy. We also know that change is needed, and now, alas few of us know what to do about it. In that regard, [there is a video](#), as a prelude, that may be of help. There is [also an article](#) that describes how we got to this place and what needs to be done as a first step to get there – the return of Glass-Steagall. Nothing was fixed in 2008 at that collapse. China is the only nation presently that separates their commercial and speculative banks, which is essentially a Glass-Steagall fundamental.

Capital and Labor: The primary reason we see our world stresses currently are that power is shifting. Capitalism has been the controlling regime for the world for the past few centuries, and that control has been centered in the West. However, if we step back and take an even larger view, we are seeing a millennial shift, not simply a change of a few decades of policy. The rise of the West and decline of the East started in the 11th century, with three events – the [Great Schism](#) in 1054, separating Eastern and Western Europe; the [Papal Dictation](#) in 1075, establishing the primacy of Papal power; and the [First Crusade](#) in 1094. These established the political power of the Roman Catholic Church and imperialism in the West, the Church being the driving political force in Europe for many centuries – really, up until the 18th century in most European nation states. It still wields political influence today. Within that geopolitical set, [capitalism was later born](#) and flourished. Of interest is that capitalism as we know it started around the time the 6th ray (idealism/fanaticism/devotion) was beginning its withdrawal, and the 7th ray (order and ritual) began to wax.⁶ [Communism as we know it](#) was a late development, [with Socialism later still](#). What do we have today, then?

The world today is largely capitalist, with many variations. The US, Australia, many other Commonwealth nations and UK are essentially laissez-faire capitalist nations with lingering socialist tendencies. That will quite possibly change very soon. If the capitalists have their way – and they very nearly have – social progress in those nations will be set back for decades, possibly. The power to change that course lies in the hands of the people. The politicians will not change it. It is to their advantage not to. Russia, once socialist, is now capitalist with socialist characteristics. It is remaking itself, and rapidly. Iran, once capitalist, is now socialist with capitalist characteristics and is likewise remaking itself. South America for the largest part is now controlled by American capitalists, with the exception of Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia. China is communist with capitalist characteristics. Western Europe is democratic socialist (capitalist with socialist characteristics), but they have been gripped by the laissez-faire bug and have seen their fortunes wane, at least for the public. Cuba, Vietnam, Laos and North Korea are the only communist nations remaining. And so it goes.

What we have seen since the last Monastic Pig Year (1959) is a gradual shifting and experimentation with various blends of capitalism and socialism, with both sides seeking dominance. If people are given a choice, by and large they favor mixed economies – essential industries and resources controlled by the state (the people, hopefully), with regulated capitalism and a strong state-owned central bank, and with the individual then left to explore things for themselves. It is a system which tends to lift people out of poverty and which is quite stable so long as there is no war. Wars bankrupt nations and destroy social progress. Until the US ends its endless wars, for instance, there is no hope for any sort of democratic socialism in the US. Trump will not [MAGA](#) until US aggression abroad is stopped, Glass-Steagall is reinstated and the Pentagon budget is slashed. With these points in mind, then, we look at the nations with Leo. And some quite salient points about the struggles between labor and capital emerge as we go along. We start with London.

London and Brexit: Eyes are increasingly on London the next month and a half. Will Brexit take place? Will it be revoked? Will there be a general election? And so forth. One thing that is definitely starting to emerge from the drama there – and Leos do love their drama sometimes! – is that the UK as it is currently constituted may not survive if a no-deal Brexit goes through. There is increasing talk of [yet another referendum on Scottish independence](#), and also talk – [serious talk](#) – of [Irish unification if a no-deal Brexit takes place](#). We might say it is all talk, but the Scots and the Irish have seen the British elites and parliamentarians for what they are, and they do not like what they see. Irish unification would pull Ireland out of the UK. If those two states leave, the ‘UK’ would consist only of England and Wales. London is the seat of the Brexit movement, and it is also the place where it will be resolved finally, London having a Leo soul. There are a few things we may want to keep in mind as the Halloween date approaches.

We never hear it mentioned, but there is a rather interesting triangle that exists between London, Switzerland (including Geneva) and New York. That triangle, or troika if you want, has been the seat of the banking system that has run the world behind the scenes for many decades now. It is not really a Leo triangle, although London and Geneva constitute two Leo points. It is quite a materialistic triangle on the one hand, yet can be quite spiritual when functioning properly – i.e., for the common good. Moreover, it is also a triangle of banking interests that holds the EU in a chokehold, if you will, and which was behind the less ethical founding forces behind that body. In a way, Brexit is a start at addressing that. A little explanation is in order.

Following the defeat of Germany in WWII, London and Washington, the two main Western allies during the war, sought to set up a union of Western European states to stop the spread of communism into Europe. London wanted a controlling stake in that new order. There were [many machinations behind the scenes](#). These were going on along with more altruistic intents for a united Europe, as is often the case in such matters, the latter referenced in [an earlier article](#). The materialist factions moved very swiftly to shore up control in the emerging order after the war. There were plans within plans and various factions vying for control. And as is most often the case when such efforts are being made, the materialists initially won out. Then, over time people started to catch on to what was taking place. To ensure that their project took a firm hold, Washington and London, after much to and fro, decided that the best course of action was the formation of the NATO, which in the beginning was primarily a Western European alliance. Rule by fear. The yearly Bilderberg meetings followed upon that, with some of the key people who helped set up the NATO, ensuring that Atlanticist (NATO) agendas were kept in place. This is making a long story very short.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact from 1989 – 1991, the main adversary of the NATO was gone. Shortly thereafter, in 1993, the EU came into being, with London being dragged in finally. So what happened between the end of WWII and 1993 that has caused factions within London to want a divorce from the EU? It has to do with banking and taxation.

After the war, the British Empire was rapidly collapsing. In an effort to keep control over its old territories and shore up its international influence, [the secret British financial empire](#) was established in the 1950s. There is a very close association between Wall Street and that 2nd British financial empire. In fact, the Wall Street banks currently practise the same style of banking as do the British – laissez faire, with the use of secrecy locations. That enables tax evasion. That was enshrined as practice in the US in 1999 with the removal of the [Glass-Steagall](#) regulations that had been put in place by Roosevelt. The British had removed such controls the decade before. Since the end of the 1990s, when Glass-Steagall was repealed, the banking sectors of Wall Street and London have increasingly cooperated and controlled the largest part of the world's

wealth. Around that time, too, the Clinton-Blair '[Third Way economics](#)' was introduced, yet another version of neo-liberal economics in line with globalization. It quickly lost favor, but it reached a peak of interest worldwide around the time Glass-Steagall was repealed, the latter arguably going on to create the 2008 financial crisis and Great Recession. What has all this to do with Brexit, then?

If we look at the timeline of events that led to the economics of the West in this century, we see the EU with its everyday regulations, which many people love to trash, British and US financiers and politicians both on their quest for untrammelled laissez-faire capitalism, China challenging that system with its 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics' and also Russia along with many nations now joining in the fray seeking to bypass the Western-based SWIFT system. To make the point clear, there are factions in UK politics – notably the Conservatives – who want to be free of any sort of financial regulation, and who wish to be 'allied' with the banking interests in Wall Street, thus hopefully (in their minds) allowing them to do away with any hint of social democratic economics. This is the truth behind what they call, "Taking back control." That would mean privatizing everything and allowing them to control totally the British economy. It would leave the door wide open to American corporations, put the British firmly in the orbit of the US, and it would be to the detriment of the British people. This, also in truth, is what is behind Brexit. The British public should beware.

No-Deal Brexit?: What would emerge from a no-deal Brexit, and really Brexit in general, is unrestrained capitalism in Britain. It exists to a lesser extent in the EU. In the UK, the factions behind Brexit are, in effect, financial imperialists, which is what we also see currently in the US. It is one of the reasons behind the virulent anti-Russian propaganda we see coming out of Washington and London, and more recently against China as well. The recent Bilderberg meeting this year had a particular focus on capitalism, Russia and China. Russia and China both pose a threat to the Western control of the world's economics, and by extension, the world's resources. Iran does as well.

Can a no-deal Brexit be stopped? Does it need to be? It can, but it will take political will. The Conservatives who stirred up Brexit sentiment in the nation know they have little time if they are to avoid EU tax scrutiny. [They have 20 trillion reasons](#) to want to see Brexit go through. They are focused, they have the financial backing and they have the United States behind them. The [Irish could actually stop Brexit if they wanted to](#). It would be a long shot, but much of the wrangling over the Brexit deal revolved around the Irish backstop. Then, there is talk now, which we have seen for the first time in a mainstream outlet, of [revoking Art. 50](#), which would stop Brexit dead and cause a new referendum to be cast. Trump has held out the carrot of a free trade deal with the UK if they can pull off a no-deal Brexit. He has also [threatened to call off such a deal](#) if things do not go the way he thinks they should, especially if the UK fails to scrap a tax on US tech companies due to come into force this fall. Now we know why, and it comes down to US corporations, tax shelters and transparency.

The special relationship?: However, the British people should also be aware that [all is not well with the 'special relationship'](#) between the US and UK. And the economic situation in the US, despite what we hear in the media, is not well either. In fact, it is quite shaky, with a grossly overvalued stock market and so forth. If the British tie themselves to the US ship of finance, both will go down together if they stay the present course. We have looked at these things before. On a final note before we go on, [Boris Johnson](#) was chosen by the Conservatives to push through Brexit. He was not chosen by the British people. He may seem to be a bumbling clown to many people, however [the cabinet behind him are anything but](#), especially Dominic Cummings, his chief advisor. The latter is not one to be underestimated. It is he who will decide the strategy leading up to the supposed exit date, and he has more than a few tricks up his sleeve to get the UK there. Boris will simply be the figurehead, and when all is said and done, either the hero or the fall guy. With that, we move on to Berlin.

Berlin and Deutsche Bank: Since we have been looking at London and Wall Street, there is another Leo center that bears examination in terms of finance now, and by extension, the future of the EU, and that is Berlin, having a Leo personality. The centerpiece of [the current financial woes for Germany centers around Deutsche Bank](#) and the Euro as the fiat currency of the EU. There is quite an interesting development with Germany's largest bank, though. It is cutting one-fifth of its work force worldwide – in London and New York. This has more than a little symbolic significance.

It is speculation at this point, but with the withdrawal of Deutsche Bank from London and New York, it sends a clear message to both of those financial centers, and it would appear that the Germans see the writing on the wall about the financial dealings of those two centers. Germany is under considerable internal pressure, with a large sector of the populace unable to subsist on their current wages, with high-quality jobs disappearing and low-wage jobs ever increasing. If that sounds familiar, it should. That sort of thing is going on throughout the Western world. Deutsche Bank is a barometer for Europe. If the EU goes under, then the Germans are looking to protect themselves from the fallout. The same is true of London and New York in the eyes of Germany, if those two should fall. And where is Deutsche bank leaving its offices open? – in Asian nations – the ‘emerging economies’. China’s Belt and Road economies. This is a story to be watched. Deutsche Bank’s big troubles began when they started dealing in derivatives and getting involved with London and Wall Street. Now, they are taking another look and restructuring.

Washington is threatening to draw down the number of US troops in Germany. Many [Germans are applauding](#) (machine translate). There are presently 35,000 US troops there. any Germans question the necessity for it and want the Americans to leave. They know they face no real existential threat. If there were to be a threat it would be from a spillover of violence from the Ukraine, for instance, as in a refugee crisis. The Poles would be the hardest hit in that case. The truth is Germany presently faces no military threat. They seek cooperation with Russia, not tensions. But the ‘Russian threat’ is why the Americans are there. And there are also the threats of American sanctions against German companies involved in the Nordstream II pipeline project. Germany is beginning to distance itself from Atlanticist control, however slowly and cautiously. Berlin is yet another instance of Leo resistance to being controlled by someone else. Then, there is Italy, with its constant change of governments.

Italy and Salvini: The Italians may have to go to the polls yet again. It is the way of things here. Salvini has threatened to bring down the government. In reality, [he is fighting for his political survival](#). Italy was one of the [PIIGS nations](#), a term we never hear now. But Italy has suffered under the Euro financial regime and especially since the 2008 financial crisis. Salvini and Di Maio had plans to pull Italy out of the recessionary climate and put Italy back on track as a major industrial center. Di Maio turned out to be weak and his support base has crumbled since being in office. Salvini, however, is on a direct course of confrontation with the elites in Italy and the EU, who are still very much in favor of the so-called liberal cosmopolitan order and globalism. Of interest to note is that Italy’s ex-PM, Matteo Renzi, was an attendee at the last Bilderberg meeting, and is since seeking to make a comeback in Italian politics. Since that meeting I have watched the attacks on the government here grow in number and strength, now to the point where the government is fracturing. Italians have had enough of globalism. They voted in Salvini and the present government to effect changes and to pull Italy out of its stagnation.

Italy is one of the other nations that would vote to leave the EU if given a choice. But Italy also has a Leo soul, is closely linked with Russia in business and is seeking to lead at least a part of Europe away from its ultimately destructive financial course. [Salvini is on track to win the elections](#) if the government falls. So far he has not made noises about leaving the EU. But he is determined to push through the measures that will shake the EU into change. President Sergei Mattarella, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and Finance Minister Giovanni Tria are the real problem with the Italians, and it is they who are preventing the measures proposed by Salvini and Di Maio from going through. The reason Salvini’s popularity has swelled is because people see him standing up to the EU. Salvini is a Piscean, Scorpio rising, Taurus Moon. His Leo Midheaven ties in with Italy’s Leo soul and Rome’s Leo personality. He has the will to see this through. There are many who do not like his approach or his policies, and he is attacked quite a bit in the press. It is people like him who need to be watched because of the attacks by the press, because they are often the ones who hold the keys to changing the system, if they actually deliver on the platforms on which they were elected.

France and protests: Then, there is France, with its Leo personality. If there is a way forward for Europe, it will likely be demonstrated in [the revolutionary character of the French people](#). The yellow vests movement ([still ongoing, oui](#)) is an example of that. Yet, we hear little about it these days. And their numbers have dwindled over the summer. That does not mean the movement is dead. But the brutality of the French police and the recalcitrance of the government have been stark reminders of what faces a populace when power and wealth are entrenched in government. Macron is the face of neo-liberalism in Europe and a major proponent of austerity for the public as economic policy. Macron’s popularity may have plummeted, hovering between

20 – 30%, but he refuses to step down. He finds support among the French elite. And it is telling that the media in other nations have moved the yellow vest coverage to the back of their news pages, if they cover it at all. Even many independent internet sites that used to have regular coverage of them have stopped. Why would Macron step down, then?

There is only one site I know of that has had [real investigative reporting from within the protests](#) from day 1, and that person struggles to continue. And as in the US and other nations, the policies of neo-liberalism continue while we are distracted by other matters, really of little importance when it comes to addressing societal problems. Privatization continues. Wealth disparity increases. The average person finds it harder and harder to make ends meet. And so it goes. There is no effective opposition. Unless that opposition can be rallied, nothing will change. This is not to advocate violent revolution, however people in the West appear to be too apathetic (except in France). Perhaps we have not seen enough privation yet to rouse us from sleep.

Hong Kong and China: Speaking of protests, mention needs to be made of Hong Kong. The protests in Hong Kong are [yet another installment of similar protests](#) that have broken out periodically since the city was handed back to the Chinese in 1997. These, too, will eventually dissipate. Every one of them has been funded by foreign interests. Hong Kong was set up at handover to be a Western outpost on China's doorstep. The current attempt coincides with Washington's trade war with China. [The trade war will very likely ultimately fail](#). Washington cannot take down China and absorb it into the IMF the way it did with Japan and the Tiger economies of Asia. China is large. It has cooperation agreements with Russia, from whom it can get all of its needed resources, and right next door. It is not occupied by the US as was Japan (the latter still is, really) and remembers well its century of shame at the hands of Western powers. It also has a powerful military, which Japan did not have. China is very resistant to any pressure by the US, and just has upped the stakes in the war, hoping to see Trump gone at the next election by targeting his voter base, replaced by a more amenable president. That may or may not happen, but China has the wherewithal to see this through to the bitter end, which it probably would be.

The ultimate purpose of the protests behind the scenes is to provoke the PLA (China's mainland army) to intervene, thus casting a stain on China's progress toward greater integration, and thereby discouraging investment in China, which China increasingly needs. So far the PLA has been quite patient, as the CCP (the Chinese leadership) is very aware of what is taking place. The clashes we see are not between the PLA and protesters, but instead between Hong Kong police and protesters, the police being administered by Hong Kong, and not the mainland. We can say, "Yes, but..." all we like. The fact is Hong Kong will eventually return to mainland rule. China has actually tried to integrate Hong Kong into its initiatives, which the West consistently tries to derail. And in effect, what the protests are doing instead is to discourage business from going to Hong Kong. The CCP could easily crush the protests. But [why do so when the protesters will do worse to themselves?](#)

Romania: Then, there is Romania, with NATO missile bases now on its soil. Romania has a Leo soul, with Aries personality. It is a crossroads nation, between Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe. What in the world would possess them to want to make themselves a target of Russian retaliation? – not that such a thing would ever happen. Basically, it is down to economics, Romania is seeking to encourage Western investment, and to be a vested member of the EU. Supposedly what has been placed in Romania is an ICBM shield system. Russia complains that such a system can be easily retrofitted as an offensive installation, which is very close to major Russian centers in southwest Russia. [All this has done is to increase tensions between the West and Russia](#) and really, threatens Europe far more than the US. [Romania's acceptance of the system](#) was based upon a complicated set of factors, however. [For the most part, Romania leans toward the West](#). However, if the EU splinters, if the NATO eventually dissolves, what then for Romania?

Romania is one of those nations that is undergoing [considerable growing pains](#). Its politics do not help, as its policies are ever-changing, which dampens investor confidence. At one time it had large reserves of oil, gas and coal, making it a prime strategic target in WWII. Since then it is a net importer of those products. [Its main resource](#) now is agricultural and industrial. In terms of Leo, those growing pains should lead to a unique expression in the future, given the nation's Aries personality. With its geographic position and a coastline on the Black Sea it could conceivably be a major trading partner with the emerging Eastern economic bloc. These next years will be quite telling for Romania as tensions come to a head in the EU and in the Ukraine. Being listed as one of the nations in Alice Bailey's *Destiny of the Nations*, it has a significant

part to play in the emerging world order, and its destiny lies with the Slavic peoples and Eastern Europe, as it is a crossroads nation. That part apparently lies into the future and will have to wait for at least a few more years yet. However, soon after its entry into the EU, it was known as the “Tiger of Eastern Europe” due to its economic practices. It is a nation to be watched into the future, as it also has a part to play in the settling of tensions with the Ukraine over time.

The Ukraine: Due to tensions there and recent elections, a little consideration of the Ukraine is in order. The Ukraine has neither a Leo Sun nor Ascendant. However, its Virgo Sun is in mutual reception with Mercury, the latter in Leo and in a close stellium in Leo with Venus, the Vertex and Jupiter. We will cover that nation more in the next letter. The reason it is mentioned here is its connection with the EU and Russia, the latter both expressing Leo through their Ascendants. It also has to do with privation and what can emerge from it. What is happening in the Ukraine since independence is the same thing that happened in Russia after the dissolution of the USSR. It is being plundered, essentially, by oligarchs within the nation and by Western interests outside.

I had written a piece on [the fractious state of the Ukraine](#) some months ago. The Ukraine is in a very precarious position now. The security situation there at present is so bad that there has been a sharp spike in [desertions from the Ukrainian military](#). The western half of the nation is largely pro-European, meaning leaning toward Western Europe. Of particular interest is that the westernmost region of the Ukraine was previously a part of Poland, and not a part of the Ukraine until just before WWII. That includes the city of Lviv. The Ukraine itself (‘ukraine’ means ‘borderlands’) was not listed as a separate region from Russia until 1920. Even then, its independence lasted only a few short years, where after it was incorporated as a district of the USSR. The nation’s full independence finally came in 1991, when the USSR collapsed. That brings us to now.

The western half of the Ukraine is largely pro-Europe. The eastern half is mostly ethnic Russian. During WWII some of the worst atrocities of the war took place in the Ukraine, mostly at the hands of Nazi sympathizers, and mostly in the west. That stain has really never left, and it has been given voice anew since after the 2014 Maidan coup. To greatly oversimplify the matter, the Western powers, especially Washington and London, support the eastern Ukrainians, with all of the neo-Nazi groups. This is why we see the ongoing conflict in the Donbass, which is strongly pro-Russian. The Western-leaning groups in the Ukraine refuse to adhere to the [Minsk II accord](#). The situation is complicated, and more so by the fact that the Ukraine has centuries-long connections with Russia, and has been called the birthplace of Russia. Whether true or not, the southeastern rim of the Ukraine had been heavily settled by Russians since the reign of Catherine the Great, when ‘Novorossiia’ was won from the Ottoman Empire.

What we have in the Ukraine, then, is a threat to European security. But the threat is not from Russia. Russia has refrained from invading the regions that were once Novorossiia. They would like to see a peaceful resolution of the conflict. They see the Ukraine as a complete mess now, remembering what Western influence brought Russia in the decade of the ‘90s, and want no part of the radicalized groups in the east of the Ukraine. The Russian position is that the Minsk accords must be upheld and the people of the Donbass regions be granted their rights as Ukrainian citizens and not be persecuted because they are pro-Russian.

I know several Ukrainians personally who have left the Ukraine because of the situation there. The stories they tell are of a third world country. The people of the Ukraine want peace. That is why they elected Zelensky over Poroshenko in their recent elections, much to the displeasure of the West. It was a protest vote. However, Zelensky has his hands tied by corruption and by the groups in power who want no rapprochement with Russia. Meanwhile the people suffer. Zelensky wants closer relations with Russia. He wants to end the conflict in Donbass. After his election and stating his policies, there is already talk of ‘red lines’ by a vocal minority in the Ukraine, and even talk of a third color revolution, or ‘[3rd Maidan](#)’. It is quite possible that in the future the Ukraine will split along ethnic lines, possibly along the Dnieper River, which runs through Kiev. The situation could even be much lessened if the ex-Polish part of the nation were returned to Poland. That is not likely to happen. The Ukraine will be a plaything of the NATO and the oligarchs there for some years to come – unless the people say they have had enough and rise up. We’ll see.

Russia and the EU: Here is a point worth considering as to why the Ukraine has been mentioned: Therein lies a key to the relaxing of tensions and freeing enterprise between Russia and the EU, two Leo expressions.

There are two nations at present who have sanctions against them, who have had to endure a period of isolation, yet in a typically Leo manner have benefitted from them, both materially and with their standing in the world community, who are now showing leadership. We will get to how presently. Those nations are Russia and Iran. And then there are Leo nations who are going through the pain of self-chosen austerity – or so it would appear on the surface (the people didn't vote for it) – Italy, Romania and France. What effects has this had?

For the two nations mentioned, they have had to go inwards and improvise, to strengthen their resolve and investigative skills and produce defenses, infrastructure and even wealth in spite of what they endure. That might be coming for the EU. Of those, Iran has suffered the worst. Yet, its resilience in the face of what it confronts is remarkable. As to Russia, when sanctions were imposed after 2014 they have seen remarkable progress in certain areas. Their agriculture is second-to-none now. As a result of the sanctions they banned European food products, forcing their own farmers and producers to up their game. They are [now the biggest grain exporter in the world](#), surpassing even their defense exports, which before was their biggest earner. They call it their '2nd oil'. (For more on the effects of sanctions on Russia, see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).)

There is another side to the sanctions placed on Russia, though, and that will affect another Leo region in the near future – the EU. The EU relies on Russian energy supplies, as in gas and oil. It receives [36% of its oil](#) from Russia and 35% of its gas, even after the 2014 sanctions. Washington is playing a losing game with its sanctions regime on Russia, and the newest more severe set of sanctions will drive a further wedge between Washington and the EU. The reason? Washington wants to sell more oil and gas to the EU due to the fracking boom in the US. The problem for Washington is if it cannot sell oil and gas to the EU, that gets stockpiled in the US and drives the price down, creating the glut we see today and driving fracking companies out of business. This is the real reason Washington is sanctioning Russia. It is all about energy. In reality, they could care less about Crimea. This is why they seek sanctions against European companies doing business with the Nordstream II pipeline, due to be in service by the end of this year. Further, the sanctions are not hurting Russia. Russia is expanding into Asia, having just supplanted Saudi Arabia as China's main source of oil. That is only set to increase.

The reality for Europe is, and many European states are stating thus, that the sanctions Washington seeks only hurt EU businesses. There is another side to it as well, though. Washington is actively seeking to weaken the EU ([here](#), [here](#), [here](#)) or even break it up. It relates again to energy supplies, and also to economics, since the euro became one of the world's reserve currencies in addition to the dollar and the pound. Washington and London in the early days of European unification counted on the European states remaining under the control of the NATO and pliant. But when the EU started talking about tax supervision and became one of the world's major trading blocs – rivalling the US – attitudes in the US and London changed. If the EU is to survive, it is likely to undergo a period of unrest as it sorts itself out, and needs to become independent of Washington to a degree.

Iran and the sanctions: Then, there is Iran and the sanctions. When Obama was in office, 2012, and he placed the most punishing sanctions on Iran to that date, journalist Sharmine Narwani traveled to Iran and interviewed people there across a large cross section of Iranian society about their thoughts on the sanctions. She said they universally would smile and say, "The sanctions is [sic] what made us." They have managed to live through 40 years of US sanctions, diversify their economy, industry and agriculture, strengthen themselves defensively and so forth. On top of that, their influence has spread throughout the region – as a peaceful influence. ([video](#), start at 14:00 or watch the whole video.) The reason they are so vilified is because they refuse to bow to Western pressures, they have huge reserves of natural resources and they have helped to call a halt to Western and Israeli adventurism in the region. And, [they continue to sell most of their oil](#), largely to China. Even [Australia is circumventing the US-imposed sanctions on Iran](#). Sanctions against Iran simply are not working as a strategic measure, nor will they induce regime change.

The decline of Western influence: To understand what has taken place and why the war drums beat so loudly now against Iran, it has to do precisely with the decline of Western influence in the region, and thus marking a decline in the control of the energy reserves there. So, let's recapitulate very briefly what has taken place since 2011, primarily:

- Overall, the American plan known as [PNAC](#) has been defeated
- The Syrian war, supported by a host of factions and nations against Assad, has failed. The mercenary army there at one time was comprised of over 200,000 troops, arrayed against Assad's forces. That failure has halted Israeli expansionist aims, has strengthened Hezbollah, has expanded Iranian influence and has brought Russian and Chinese influence into the region. [Israel no longer has the military option](#) as a measure of foreign influence.
- The ultimate aim of the 2014 NATO Maidan coup in Ukraine failed. The plan was to seize the Russian port at Sevastopol, end Russian access to the Black and Azov seas and thus the Mediterranean Sea. The Syrian war, for one, was aimed at seizing the Russian naval base at Tartus and denying Russia a Mediterranean port at all. Success in Ukraine would also have meant NATO missiles on Russia's borders.
- The war in Yemen has failed, which was meant to give Western/Saudi control over the Red Sea and enable a bypass of the Strait of Hormuz for the transport of Gulf oil, thus removing the one strategic lever Iran has in the region. The Houthis have started fighting back against the Saudis and have made gains, and have the capability now to destroy the east/west oil transport line, and the UAE is in the process of withdrawal. Both the [Saudis and the UAE are engaging in talks with Tehran](#). The Saudis are under serious immediate threat unless they make peace with the Houthis. The supposed alliance between the US, Israel and Gulf states is splintering, leaving the US and Israel isolated. Western powers will not be further drawn into the conflict.
- There is a clear crack in the Turkish/NATO alliance, with Turkey seeking independence somewhat from the NATO. The US ensured that with the failed coup attempt there in 2016 and taking on the Kurds as allies, the latter seen as terrorists by the Turks.
- The changes overall in the Middle East have greatly accelerated the process of alternative payment systems worldwide, bypassing the ability of Washington and London to completely control global financial transactions. It is not simply about de-dollarization, but about ending the overarching control by the West over the world's finances.

The US has found itself unable to decisively militarily control an area or even a mid-sized state. Without air cover the US will not launch a ground invasion. That possibility is now past in the Middle East. It is the primary reason Turkey went ahead with the purchase of the Russian S-400 missile system. Both the Iranians and the Russians, and to a lesser extent Syria and Hezbollah, can prevent a Western or Israeli-applied no-fly zone. It has even gone to the point where [Iran and Russia have agreed to military cooperation to an extent](#), another reason why a war against Iran is increasingly unlikely. These are all reasons why we are not likely to see a war in the region of any consequence. What we will probably see instead is a continuing attempt at destabilization of the region by Israel and the West, but little else. And who has ended the plans aforementioned and asserted their rights under international law? – the Leo rising nations of Iran and Russia, whether we agree with their methods or not – two of the most heavily sanctioned nations on Earth. That brings us to another region, the Korean peninsula.

South Korea is starting to assert some independence from Washington. [Seoul is seeking a reassessment of the alliance](#). It wants rapprochement with the North. The annual war games and the American troops in the South are wearing thin. The South wants a peace treaty between Washington and the North, and at least easing of sanctions on the North. They also want to be able to control their own military, which is currently under US command. There are rising differences of view between Seoul and Washington as the older generations pass on. There are fundamental differences of view on the North. Washington wants denuclearization of the North first, which the North will not do, whereas the South wants a peace treaty first. The South also see themselves as a middle power now, able to control their own affairs. And currently there is a [trade dispute between the South and Japan](#), which began with accusations over chemicals Japan thought that the South was supplying to the North. Those go toward the production of screens for smart phones and computers, whereas Japan thinks they can be used to manufacture bombs. Actually it is probably more about relations between the South and the North and China, parts of which Japan disapproves. The latter sees China as a competitor and thinks the sanctions on the North need to be kept strongly.

Concluding remarks: We see from all this that Leo has been very active in the emerging world order, and will continue to do so into the future. The nations with Leo prominent are each playing their part, learning their lessons and developing their capabilities, often in the face of extreme difficulties. It has been said that

pride cometh before the fall. For empires, it is hubris that precedes their fall. It makes no difference if the empire is financial or military. The best leaders lead by example and through their magnetism, not by force. If we look around in the world today, who is standing above the rest in terms of real leadership, and who is seeking to lead through force? The answer is not hard to see. The emerging order will take time. It will not come easily. The resistance to those changes will be immense by the reactionary forces who have enjoyed their place in the sun for so long. Aquarius along with associated incoming forces, and with the new generations coming in will ensure that eventually a more just world order will emerge. We need to take the long view and practice patience, all the while we hold the point of focus that will produce the needed crises, bringing revelation. And in the midst of the chaotic and swirling forces of change, we stand. Together, humanity will prevail.

Leo Blessings,

Malvin.

13 Aug 19

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These letters are sent as a service. If you wish to be added to or deleted from the mailing list, let me know. Feel free to pass these on, but do so without charge or alteration.

¹ Bailey, Alice A, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, Lucis Publishing, p. 347

² Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 87

³ Ibid, p. 290

⁴ Ibid, p. 286

⁵ One of Alice Baileys talks at the Arcane School in New York, from 5 Nov 1943

⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology I*, p. 27