

Our analysis of Prager's approach is grounded in Otto Friedman's set of operations in their logical sequence: Orientation, Diagnosis and Evaluating, Estimating Scope and Constraints on rational action in unique time-and-space-specific socio-political situations during times of fundamental institutional change.

The immediate purpose of this analysis is to work out the various prior activities before reaching his suggested plan of action: reinstating the "American Trinity" of *e pluribus unum*, *liberty*, and *In God We Trust*. What is the underlying logic of his approach?

These stages are isomorphic with those last four specialties laid out by Lonergan.

Orientation = Foundations

Evaluation = Doctrines

Diagnosis = Systematics

Scope & Constraints = Communications

Any successful plan of action or policy statement must pass through all these four linked stages.

If the diagnosis is wrong, then the actions taken to "fix" the problem will be at best useless or at worse catastrophic. A mis-evaluation of the situation, i.e., a mis-identification of the symptoms, will lead the diagnostician along the wrong path. Finally, a flawed orientation usually means a mis-identification of symptoms, a subsequent mis-diagnosis of the root cause of the symptoms, and finally totally inadequate and/or inappropriate remedial actions.

There are opportunity costs involved in any plan or policy, especially if these proposals fail to achieve their expected outcomes. These costs are compounded by the mis-allocation of resources that could have been put to better use. Such waste not only makes the situation worse but can have a

JULY 4, 2018 COSMOPOLIS MEETING
Dennis Prager video analysis day 4
Foundations are upstream from Doctrines

sapping effect on morale and mutual trust.

Our primary focus over the last half-year or so has been with working out a set of indicators or markers that would enable us to create a evaluative history proper to the specialty of Dialectic. Such a history is essential when it comes to evaluating any unique time-and-space-specific situation: what constitutes progress, decline, or reversal? Are we being deceived? How would we know? It is the latter question that brings us to the "upstream" discipline of foundations. It is in our discernment at the level of deciding and reflection that sets the way in which we live in the world—or more precisely, the world mediated by meaning that stands between our interests and the universe.

To identify markers that promote progress is similar to the task of a proper recognition of symptoms in the sense that a marker highlights symptoms without necessarily identifying root causes. It is these causes of progress and decline that form the key operators when it comes to choosing a proper list of markers. Or rather, it is our knowledge of foundations that provide the basis for distinguishing between positions and counter-positions, between progress and decline.

Foundations are upstream from doctrines; foundations are a function of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. Since positions are well-grounded in converted subjects they can be developed; since counter-positions are generated by the non-converted,

the flaws in their plans and policies admit no reversal, only collapse. Both socialism and communism contain fundamental flaws that cannot be corrected, for the flaws lie at the center of their respective theories of society. Millions have died and further millions have had their lives disrupted from the misguided attempt to actualize counter-positions.

What then are some of the key features of the study of foundations? (Method)

- Foundations are intentional not axiomatic; there is no set of fundamental beliefs from which an entire system of thought may be derived. Instead it is an ongoing developing process.
- Foundations involve the total surrender of the subject to the demands of the human experience (be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible) and to core values (honesty, courage, and charity). Doing this requires intellectual, moral, and religious conversion—in short, a basic goodness made manifest in the world.
- Foundations have nothing to do with an act of the will and all to do with reflection and deciding. You cannot stand outside yourself.
- Most people do not avert to a multiplicity of horizons; nor do they seek to exercise their vertical liberty to move to a better horizon.
- Essential to this is a subject with a fully developed differentiated consciousness at home in the core realms of common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendental as well as scholarship and art. (Truncated or alienated subjects fail in this regard.)
- It comes down to a question of whom do you trust, and to whom do you give your allegiance?