

Interview: Schiller Institute President



'With the Western alliance at stake, everything and everybody is political'

On Aug. 28, EIR interviewed John Sigerson, President of the Schiller Institute, Inc.

EIR: At the founding conference of the Schiller Institute last July 4 in Arlington, Virginia, its founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche said that it was "five minutes to midnight" for the Western Alliance. What time is it now?

Sigerson: Midnight struck sometime during late July or early August. All our information indicates that the "New Yalta" deal between Moscow and the Kissinger-Carrington grouping is now in effect. According to that deal, it is now only a question of time whether a Mondale administration will hand Western Europe over to Moscow on a silver platter, or Reagan's administration will be guided into the same result.

EIR: And things have gotten even worse since then?

Sigerson: Considerably worse. On the one hand, the Soviet Union has intensified its efforts to prepare its armed forces and its population for war. Their propaganda about an alleged "neo-Nazi," "revanchist" revival in the West has become so monstrous that I can only marvel at the American media's ability to black it out. On the other hand, the level of deception and self-consoling fantasy in White House circles is nothing short of breathtaking. President Reagan is by and large acting according to profile. He is buying his re-election at the price of a suicidal compromise with Henry Kissinger and his pro-Moscow, Pugwash-allied circles.

EIR: The Kissinger circles have quite a lot of power. Does a brand-new institution like the Schiller Institute have any chance of standing up to them?

Sigerson: I can only report to you what numerous people in leading positions, both in the United States and in Western Europe, have been telling the Institute's founder, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, and her associates. In their estimation, the Schiller Institute and its policies represent the only chance the Western Alliance has to pull through this crisis. They have advised us to build the Institute into a powerful institution as fast as possible, and to apply that power as effectively as we know how.

We have proceeded accordingly, creating a nationwide debate on the question of defending Europe and the cultural tradition it represents. We have launched a campaign to reach the leaderships of every patriotic, civic, military, political, and ethnic organization in the country and have them endorse resolutions to save the Western Alliance, get rid of Kissinger's crowd around the administration, and immediately build and deploy defensive beam-weapon devices both here and in Europe. At the moment, we have about 2,000 such endorsements. Over the past two weeks, we have held over a dozen public events in cities across the country, which in turn will mobilize many thousands to shift the course of events.

We are building a delegation of at least 100 Americans to attend the Second International Conference of the Schiller Institute in Wiesbaden, West Germany. Many, many eyes in both Western and Eastern Europe are watching to see if at least that many Americans will make such a commitment.

We have also taken our international Advisory Board, which numbers about 300, and have formed "steering committees" in the four areas of work outlined at the July 4 founding conference, namely: military-strategic, cultural, economic and political, and scientific. Given the pressing nature of the immediate crisis, the work of these committees will overlap, but in some areas—advanced scientific research and agricultural policy—we already have some detailed work under way.

EIR: It sounds like the Schiller Institute is really a political campaign, not a cultural foundation.

Sigerson: Nothing makes me more tired than when someone we talk to says something like, "I can't work with you, because you're political; my organization can't get involved in politics." Here we are, in the midst of probably the greatest crisis in the history of mankind. The decisions facing humanity at this moment will determine whether the cherished accomplishments of 2,500 years of heroic human endeavor will be passed on to future generations, or will be erased in a replay of the bestial Roman Empire—or worse. And someone comes up to me and says, "I'm not political"—that's a highly political statement! Everybody and everything is "po-

litical” right now; the only question is, are they political cowards or will they rise to their responsibilities as citizens?

EIR: Aren’t you bucking a tide of isolationism in the U.S.A., with your call to defend Western Europe?

Sigerson: Most Americans are not “isolationist”—outside of the kooks, that is. Most Americans have some sort of vague sense that what happens here will determine what happens in the rest of the world. They, or their parents, fought a world war to get rid of the hideous Nazi regime, and (except for the kooks) they don’t regret that.

The bigger problem is ignorance, and what Friedrich Schiller called moral “littleness.” Take the example of what happened at the just-ended national convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Chicago. Over 1,100 veterans at the convention signed the Schiller Institute’s petition, which attacked Henry Kissinger by name for his proposals to “decouple” the United States from Western Europe. One of our activists spotted the intrepid Gen. William Westmoreland on the floor, went up to him and outlined the serious threat to the security of Western Europe, asking the general to set an example by endorsing the resolution. And what did our hero say? “I can’t do that; I’m not here in a political capacity.” Our activist then turned to the crowd that had gathered, saying, “So, he doesn’t have any guts. How about you?” And more veterans began to sign.

Now, I ask you: Who would follow a general like that into battle? And this came only a few days after the head of NATO, Gen. Bernard Rogers, for his own reasons had publicly attacked Henry Kissinger in the pages of the West German weekly *Stern*. You don’t even have to read the works of Friedrich Schiller himself to understand the problem here. Just go to the opera and hear Mozart’s *Magic Flute*, and think hard about the difference in moral quality between the hero, Tamino, and his cowardly sidekick Papageno, who looks somewhat human, except for all the feathers sticking out of him. Unfortunately, our leading military echelons are so full of Papagenos that I get an allergic attack just thinking about it.

EIR: So it looks like you will have a hard time shifting the situation by the November election.

Sigerson: It must be shifted, and we have to accomplish this by no later than mid-October. Unless we raise the alarm now, the “palace guard” now surrounding President Reagan will become impenetrable. Already Kissinger’s crony James Baker III is being mooted for a top cabinet post in a new Reagan administration, and Moscow is still urging dirty Henry onto the President. And if that occurs, the Strategic Defense Initiative will go nowhere, while the Soviets watch the terrified West Germans enter into some sort of separate agreement with East Germany. In other words, the “New Yalta” between Moscow and the Pugwash crew will be all but irreversible.

EIR: So far, all you’ve talked about is political work. What about your other work, such as culture?

Sigerson: What I am talking about *is* culture. Think about the moral cowardice and deadness I described above. A population with such an attitude is constitutionally unable to be receptive to true beauty. In his aesthetic writings, Schiller repeatedly makes the point that, although beauty is not morality *per se*, it is only the moral act—something we do because we know it is universally necessary—which makes beauty possible. Otherwise, everything is arbitrariness, and hence not beautiful. The same message is conveyed in all Schiller’s dramatic works, which all deal with the question of whether an individual person is able to rise to the tasks history sets before him. The manner in which that person rises to that task, defines his “culture.”

EIR: What are the medium- and long-range goals of the Schiller Institute?

Sigerson: First, immediately, we are issuing our second book, titled *Rescue the Western Alliance!* which contains the proceedings of our founding conference. By about two months from now, we must have politically destroyed the influence of Henry Kissinger, along with the pernicious cultural influences of the Eastern Establishment, such as the hideous Gnosticism we see cropping up, especially in Ibero-America.

We are planning a true celebration of the 225th anniversary of Friedrich Schiller’s birth this Nov. 10. This will be important in order to counteract East Germany’s idiotic claim to represent the Schiller tradition, just because Weimar is on their side of the border. By then, we should have another film out on Schiller.

In addition, we have begun a grand project to produce beautifully poetic translations of Schiller’s major works into English, Spanish, Italian, French, and Danish, to start with. We will produce these translations in popular editions as soon as possible, because—in the United States at least—right now you cannot walk into any bookstore and expect to find a single work by Schiller.

EIR: Isn’t that because he is part of the German classical tradition, as opposed to the English tradition of Shakespeare?

Sigerson: Partially. You can’t forget the fact that, starting with the turn of this century, the Anglo-American families waged a rabid campaign to eliminate the influence of German classical culture from the United States. But our aim is not to revive “German” culture in America. We must revive culture itself, as I indicated before; we must start a classical renaissance in America. And if you look at how such periods started in the past, you always find that they began by translating the most advanced conceptions from a *foreign* tongue into the vernacular. Indeed, one of the most powerful influences on the creation of the German Classical upswing was the translation into German and performance of the works of Shakespeare!