

Dominican university in Rome hears Helga Zepp-LaRouche on Cusanus

by our Rome Correspondent

“For more than 12 years I have been deeply convinced that our civilization can be saved only by bringing about a more just world economic order, based on the philosophical principles enumerated by Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa.” With these words the founder of the Schiller Institute, Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche, opened a seminar in Rome on Dec. 16, 1988, on the figure of the great German-born humanist thinker Nicolaus of Cusa, who became an Italian by adoption, and who crafted the historic watershed known as the 1439 Council of Florence.

In a ground-floor conference room off the lovely 16th-century courtyard of the Dominican university, Pontifical Angelicum Atheneum, before a packed audience of scholars, professors, diplomats, and members of the Schiller Institute, representing nine countries—from Africa, to Poland, to Spain, to Czechoslovakia—the work and philosophy of Nicolaus of Cusa, called Cusanus, was discussed. The first publisher of the Renaissance, Vespasiano da Bisticci, described Cusanus (1401-64) as follows:

“A most worthy man, a very great philosopher and theologian, a great Platonist. He led a most holy life completely given over to letters and was learned in Greek.

“He traveled throughout France and Germany and collected a great number of books on every subject. He composed innumerable highly authoritative books on theology. He was a very sharp debater: He proceeded in his treatises by means of very subtle arguments. His works were very highly reputed.

“He had little use for pomp nor earthly things. He was a very poor cardinal and cared nothing about possessions. He gave the finest example in all of his works.”

A modern version of Cusanus's thinking

“I asked myself,” Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche began her speech on the timeliness of Cusanus's thought, which was translated from German into Italian by Liliana Celani of the Schiller Institute, “what it would make sense to say to an audience for whom philosophical and ontological questions are a vocation.”

“In a certain sense,” she continued, “a modern version of

the thought of Cusanus, for whom peace among peoples, or concordance, is only attainable through the development of all nations and all peoples, is the encyclicals *Populorum Progressio* and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. In the former are contained all the essential programmatic lines; while in the more recent one by Pope John Paul II are mentioned the causes working against the realization of the progress of peoples, that is, the ‘structures of sin’ which are the result of many individual sins. And thus ‘the injustice that cries out for vengeance in the sight of God,’ as Paul VI wrote, has grown disproportionately in the last 21 years.

“The bestiality which dominates the world is such as to surpass even the capacity of human comprehension. How is it possible that the citizens of Western Europe, the United States, and Japan tolerate the fact that the entire Black African continent is dying before their eyes? Their hearts have become so withered, that they manage to stand by unmoved by the agony of billions of human beings, of mothers, fathers, and children who died of hunger and epidemics. The indifference of the masses to genocide, and the policy of the elites, go hand in hand.”

After listing the evils present in today's world, from the drug traffic, to pornography, to the misery of Third World countries, Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche added: “Even though I have traced completely different phenomena whose historical causes are different, they have in common the disdain for human dignity, and they are inspired in a certain sense by an image of man ‘from below.’ Modern anthropology is based on such a conception of man, according to which man is defined by a bestial origin, and by hedonistic and irrational impulses which are even praised by modern anthropologists.

“In this world outlook, there is no truth knowable by man, everything is pure opinion, everything is allowed, and the tyranny of democracy prevails.” Here is where the importance and urgency of Cusanus's thought can be located: “In this incapacity to respond positively to the question: What is the sense of human life? Or rather in the loss of the values that we ought to be defending, lies the existential threat that places the human race in danger. Therefore it is all the more urgent to reestablish a high ideal of man such as that ex-

pressed by Nicolaus of Cusa, and to face the truth that derives from his human conception.

“Nicolaus of Cusa sees man from above. His dignity lies in the fact that he is made in the image and semblance of God, *imago via Dei*, and thanks to Christ who became man he is *Capax Dei*. His soul, that which is spiritual in him, is the image of the triune God, Whom he will resemble more and more as he develops what characterizes God as creator, His creative capacity, or the *vis creativa*. Since the world was created by God, it is a divine world in itself, a finite infinite. It is an image of God, a *coincidentia oppositorum* which is found in a finite contraction, that is, a dynamic process which is self-limiting.

“In his book, *De Ludo Globi*, Cusanus describes this process as one which aims at higher degrees of order: ‘The force of elementary complexity is already hidden in chaos, in the vegetative life is already hidden the life of reason.’

“There are ‘progressions’ in the universe from confusion and darkness to more defined formations and the *ascensio* from less perfect to more perfect formations.

“Both the historical evolution of the universe and the history of humanity have for Nicolaus a dynamic which tends from chaos toward consciousness.

“For nature this consciousness is obscure, it is knowable only to man, as the perfection of the cosmic process of self-perfection from the realm of inorganic matter, to plants and to animals, insofar as man is capable of understanding the laws of the universe.

“Nicolaus of Cusa was in fact the first thinker to recognize what from the modern standpoint could be called the ‘biogenetic principle.’ He explicitly examines the passage from one species to the immediately higher one. For him what is most important is the point at which a species reaches its highest degree of realization, which he calls the *terminus speciei*. This discussion is of interest for the modern theory of evolution. The great scholar of Cusanus, Professor Haubst, called the elaboration of this maximum boundary point (*höchster Grenzpunkt*) which divides one species from the other, the principle of maximity.”

Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche developed the scientific theory of Cusanus on evolution, then went on to illustrate the man-world-God relationship in Cusanus: “It is the capacity of reason of man, the *intellectus*, which causes him to participate in God. His force of intellectual comprehension in this process possesses a capacity for indefinite progress.” Precisely because the human spirit is a living image of “eternal wisdom and of the infinity of God,” it “can always know more, in an endless process.” From this derives too the unique role fulfilled by man in creation, since: “No other nature can improve thanks to itself, but is what it is by force of necessity; only the spiritual nature possesses the principles (intellect and free will) through which it can improve and thus become more like God.”

Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche developed the contribution given



Philip Ulanowsky

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Today it is urgent to reestablish a high ideal of the dignity of man, such as that expressed by Nicolaus of Cusa.

by Cusanus to the development of natural law: “Cusanus links his Christian natural law to moral theology and to the doctrine of natural law of Thomas Aquinas, and from that develops the necessity for national sovereignty, of the republican representative system, and of the rights of peoples. According to Cusanus, from natural law there can derive forms of government worthy of men, because this is the law given by God, universally valid and indestructible.”

Returning to the present, Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche said, “Hence the decisive question is: how to define concretely, basing ourselves on the principles of natural law, what is Good and what is good for society? This according to Cusanus, ought to be the purpose of politics.

“The right definition of natural rights consists in determining and demonstrating empirically what policy could have beneficial effects in the course of many generations, and what policy instead would lead to disaster.

“The obvious test of this investigation lies in universal history. The decisive historical question is how to assure human existence. The measuring rod is the concept expressed by Lyndon LaRouche of ‘relative potential population density.’ If natural law guarantees the right to life of every individual, then we have to investigate what potential population density will have to be reached to sustain a growing, productive population.”

Father Abelardo Lobato, dean of the philosophy faculty of the Dominican University and secretary of the International Thomas Aquinas Society, which held the conference, had introduced the session with an address on the “Dignity of Man in Cusanus.” With his profound knowledge and ex-

pressive clarity, Father Lobato underlined the modernity of Cusanus's thought by expressing his faith that "this memory of Cusanus will have have repercussions and will awaken imitators."

"The being and the dignity of man," Father Lobato said, "must be deduced from awareness of the relationship which pertains between man and the world and man and God. In fact he is the link between the two, the *copula mundi*. Cusanus develops this relationship in different relations in three fields: in being, in knowing, and in the exercise of freedom. Man has his place at the center of reality, and he is in truth the measure of all."

The Dominican professor beautifully expounded on the theme of man *secundus Deus*: "The power of man becomes creative power, and makes of man a 'second God': The first domain of this infinite power is the order of knowing, in *noiein*, the second is in the domain of doing, in *poiein*, and the third is in the domain of acting, in *prattein*. God the absolute creator with infinite power makes real things, man with his relative infinity cannot create real things, but he has a power to recreate a new world all his own, in the three abovementioned modes." He wrapped up: "What is typical of Cusanus is the accent placed on the participatory capacity of the creative potential of God."

The last speaker, Maria Cristina Fiocchi of the Schiller Institute in Italy, stressed the great ecumenical project of Cusanus of reunification between the Eastern Church and the Western Church, which was brought to fruition in the Council of Florence in 1439. Fiocchi took the opportunity to begin: "A little known chapter in the history of mankind was the Council of Florence, a religious event of far-reaching importance, and also a fundamental stage in the Italian Renaissance. It was in fact during this extraordinary event that the overcoming of the medieval philosophical heritage and of paganizing platonic dualism, was sealed in the most complete way. The Renaissance conception of man was incorporated into the Christian spiritual heritage, opening the way to the glorious European civilization, to scientific discoveries and to technological development."

She added, "Such a meeting is intended to be located among the celebrations for the 550th anniversary of the 'Decree of Union' unanimously signed at the Council of Florence. Mrs. Fiocchi concluded her speech with an appeal: "Let us take up the writings of Cusanus again, which have been forgotten for too long, and let us use them as the fertile inspiration for ideas that will allow us to emerge from the present dark ages."

The wealth of ideas and the depth of the subjects addressed, sparked off a lively discussion at the end of the seminar, which went on for nearly two hours. Those present were visibly struck and almost transformed by the cultural optimism communicated by the speakers, and enthusiastically accepted the idea that similar initiatives should take place in the future.

Wiesenthal: Soviet the biggest Jewish

The following passages are translated by EIR's Wiesbaden bureau staff from an article which appeared in the West German daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and which is based on an interview with Simon Wiesenthal. The article was published on Dec. 17 under the headline: "We Were in Love with This Century."

Simon Wiesenthal directs the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna, Austria and is the most famous "Nazi hunter" in the world today. He is among those Jewish leaders who protested the savage operation unleashed against Philipp Jenninger, the former Speaker of the West German lower house of parliament, the Bundestag, in early November 1988, following Jenninger's speech on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Hitler's Kristallnacht pogroms against the Jews. An orchestrated reaction to Jenninger's speech, totally misrepresenting it as a justification of the Nazis' crimes, was carried out by the Social Democrats, the terrorist-linked Green Party and other Soviet assets in the West German parliament, backed up by a Big Lie campaign in the international media.

This led to Jenninger's forced resignation, and tightened Moscow's increasing blackmail grip over the political process in West Germany.

The article quoted below fits into the context of resistance, within the Federal Republic of Germany, against such manipulations by the Soviets and their assets among the Jewish community in the West—assets led by Seagram's magnate Edgar Bronfman, who is covering up for Soviet anti-Semitism in his zeal to promote "New Yalta" arrangements with the Kremlin.

Cyla Wiesenthal has been saying for years to her husband Simon: "Look, you have done enough against Nazism, let's live the few years we still have without threatening letters and without policemen in front of the door. Let us go to Israel or somewhere else." And he has answered her for years: "I understand what you mean. But I would feel like a traitor. Would you like to live with a traitor?"

"I have become the mouth of those who cannot speak any more," declares Simon Wiesenthal. Eighty-nine relatives, except his wife Cyla, were killed in concentration camps. "I found my wife several months after the war. We had a child