

LaRouche movement meets: 'New epoch requires challenging axiomatics'

by EIR Staff

The semi-annual conference of the International Caucus of Labor Committees and the Schiller Institute convened in Reston, Virginia Feb. 17-19. Approximately 900 people, including many international guests, participated in the deliberations on the theme, "How Hobbesian Mathematics Misshaped Modern History: New Epoch Requires Challenging Axiomatics."

Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., the founder of the ICLC, defined the tasks facing the conference in his keynote speech (published in full as this week's *Feature*). "We now have a civilization," he said, "a worldwide civilization, which is doomed, in its present form. Over the next months or years, this civilization which people talk about—their opinions, their culture, their prejudices, their way of life, their traditions—are all gone! Nothing can save it. And it's like clinging to a stateroom on the *Titanic*: If you cling to those traditions, you'll go down and drown with it. We have to get the people *off* the *Titanic*, off traditions, into the lifeboats, so they may be saved."

The theme of all the presentations at the conference was that put forward by LaRouche in an article in the Spring 1996 issue of *Fidelio* magazine, titled "How Hobbes' Mathematics Misshaped Modern History." LaRouche demonstrated that the empiricist axiomatics of Thomas Hobbes's (1588-1679) mathematics have distorted every branch of culture taught in universities today, and that this same axiomatic impotence of the academic mind has trickled down to permeate the mind of virtually all of today's citizens.

LaRouche and the other conference speakers emphasized that the problem is *not* bad policies sneakily imposed upon innocent people by their leaders. The people themselves are guilty: They have allowed their pleasure-seeking to turn them away from the pleasures of creative discovery, into adoption of the axioms of Hobbes, John Locke, Bernard de Mandeville, Adam Smith, and such degenerates. It is this corruption which prompts the people to select the leaders they do. Unless the people give up their soap operas and their populism, there is no possibility that this civilization will survive.

This is the principle of great tragedy, including Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. A society which adheres blindly to tradition,

out of fear of the unknown, LaRouche said, will be doomed by the fatal flaw which is inherent in any traditional set of formal rules of behavior. That fear of "strange ideas," which is related to the fear of death, is the fault which causes a people to doom itself to the catastrophe which is characteristic of those axioms underlying any fixed set of formal rules of behavior.

Challenging the participants to look inside themselves first of all, and to overturn the axioms that are crippling their own mental processes, LaRouche underlined that, in any crisis such as that facing the planet today, the possibility of survival lies with a few egregious persons, even a single such person, who has the capacity to introduce the new axioms overturning all of the fatal, but generally accepted beliefs which fatally pollute both the academic and popular will.

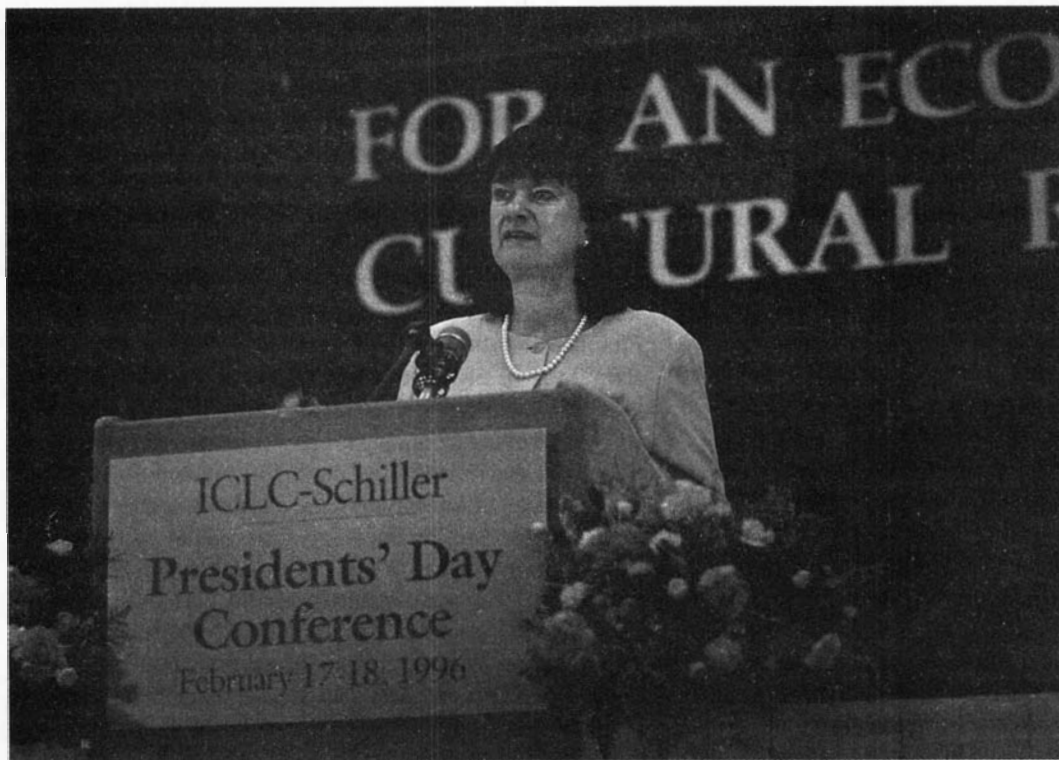
Socratic confrontation

The conference determined that two primary issues will be the focus of organizing efforts in the United States in the coming period. First, is the demonstration that Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and his cohorts are *Nazis*, according to the strict standards of the Nuremberg Tribunal. Second, is the issue of Ritalin, the dangerous stimulant which is being given, by prescription, to over 2.5 million Americans, including 1 in every 30 school children. The belief that these children suffer from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and require Ritalin to "calm them down," is a cover for the fact that our schools are not providing quality education. If the drug laws are interpreted equitably, the teacher who administers Ritalin should earn five years in prison for each dose he or she doles out.

Mobilizing the American people to understand these issues, through a method of Socratic confrontation, will sharply challenge the axioms that are leading to the nation's destruction. This will make it possible to defeat the fascists of the Conservative Revolution, and build a constituency for policies of economic development and cultural renaissance.

The lessons of universal history

On the second day of the conference, Helga Zepp LaRouche, the founder of the Schiller Institute, opened the



Helga Zepp LaRouche addresses the Presidents' Day conference on the theme of "Pre-Christian Cults vs. the Principle of the Renaissance."

first panel, "The Lessons of Universal History for Today," with a presentation on "Pre-Christian Cults vs. the Principle of the Renaissance."

She divided her speech into three parts: The first examined the cults of pagan antiquity, shot through with a tragic, ultimately horrible view of man and life, the antithesis of the concept of man as created in the image of God. The second part investigated the 12th-century battle of ideas and world-views between Peter Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux—a clash which mirrored the conflict between Platonic and Aristotelian views of man—the view of man as capable of knowing, and hence participating in, the work of God—as opposed to the idea of man bereft of reason. The third section considered the highest expressions of the concept of man as made in *imago Dei*, the conception of man expressed in part in Plato's work, and fully with the advent of Christianity—the idea of the limitless self-perfection of man; the idea that man, through creative reason, participates in the ongoing process of creation.

This idea, said Zepp LaRouche, lived on in Augustinian tradition, but became politically effective only with the Renaissance. The highest expressions of that idea, can be seen in the Renaissance, and in the figures of men like Friedrich Schiller, with his notion of *universal history*.

Essentially, Zepp LaRouche said, in the culture of Mesopotamia (ancient Sumer, Akkadia, Babylon); in the culture of ancient Egypt and of the Hittites, there is a tragic view of human existence. The gods are demonic, and man is created

to serve the gods. This is a totally pessimistic idea: Man is already condemned through his genesis; the distance between the gods and man is insurmountable.

The significance of all these theogonies and cosmogonies was an image of man and his role in the universe characteristic of the oligarchical society, in which a ruling set of families behaved as if they were gods, acting out their irrational will, over the mass of more than 95% of the population.

That is the tradition of Mesopotamian and Babylonian culture, of Tyre, of Egypt, of the Roman and Byzantine empires, of European feudalism, of Venice, and of the financial oligarchy dominated by London today.

In contrast, in the form of society attempted by Solon, by Aeschylus, by Plato, those creative powers of reason which manifest themselves in valid fundamental discoveries, lead to an increase in man's power for dominion over the universe.

The Platonic method of thinking, which takes the principle of change of the Higher Hypothesis or a higher degree of reality than the concrete set of knowledge, which each of these hypotheses produces, represents the fundamental characteristic, upon which the continued success of any culture depends.

As Augustine pointed out, the essential idea existed in Plato, but it was the power and authority of Christianity, especially with the added concept of *agapē*, which put the Platonic tradition on an undebatable foundation.

This is well perceived by the international oligarchy. The reason why Prince Philip wants to "replace" Christianity with

the pagan cults, and to subvert monotheistic religions, is because Christianity forcefully and for ever broke with the cyclical nightmare of nature and established the idea of limitless progress and limitless self-perfection of man in the image of the Creator, Who is the Good, and Who is increasingly intelligible for man, who participates in God's creation.

That was a revolution! That was a watershed in human history! That underlay the birth of modern science in the 15th century with Nicolaus of Cusa, the birth of the nation-state with Louis XI of France, the Renaissance itself, and all that European civilization has brought to the human race.

The power of great poetry

Next, Muriel Mirak Weissbach, of the European Executive Committee of the ICLC, spoke on "The Power of Great Poetry to Shape Character and Build the Nation: Dante, Humboldt, and Helen Keller."

In order to discuss Dante Alighieri and the role of his *Divine Comedy* in transforming the vernacular language of Italians into a tool for expressing the highest conceptions concerning man and nature—a tool, that is, for statecraft and nation-building—Mirak Weissbach examined the origins of the poetical forms Dante used, tracing these back to the Arab Renaissance in Spain in the ninth century and forward, and pointing up the emphasis which Arab-Muslim culture and religion placed on the Word—books, literacy, education.

Mirak Weissbach took her audience through the *Divine Comedy*, through the experience of Dante who, having lost his way in life, finds that the love of another, of his beloved, Beatrice, is actively organizing the process of his salvation.

This poetry, this language, was nation-building, Mirak Weissbach explained. This is central to what it is to be human. This is essential to the education of the child into the human adult.

Briefly reviewing Wilhelm von Humboldt's philological work, his understanding, and love, of the multiplicity of ways in which various human languages express the same concepts (in many ingenious ways, as Humboldt said), the speaker then raised the question: But how do you educate the child who cannot see, nor hear, nor speak?

She then turned to the story of Helen Keller, the American child who, at the age of 19 months, was rendered blind, deaf, and dumb by illness. Unable to be reached, unable to be taught, she was like a wild beast—until, when she was slightly over six, her teacher, Anne Sullivan, came into her life. Sullivan's writings, and Keller's own autobiography, describe the teaching process whereby Sullivan gave the child *words, language*—and her prison was suddenly broken open.

Mirak Weissbach discussed the process whereby Keller came to understand abstractions, and the words for those abstractions, and painted a picture of these two wonderful women, the student and the teacher, in all the girl's curiosity and liveliness, her desire to know all that there is, and the teacher's teaching through play, through beauty, through introducing

her charge to the beauty of nature, and thence human history, and art.

The axioms of the American System

The next panel was on "The Axioms of the American System."

Webster Tarpley, ICLC National Executive Committee and president of the U.S. branch of the Schiller Institute, spoke on "Paolo Sarpi and the Venetian Roots of Locke." He opened with a brief reprise of the accomplishments of the Council of Florence and the France of Louis XI, history's first nation-state. The evil city-state of Venice, center of modern oligarchism, decided to pervert the nation-states of Europe from within, by destroying their natural impulse toward scientific, technological, and material progress for populations, with the epistemological corruptions known as the British Enlightenment and the French Encyclopedists school of René Descartes. The godfather of this effort was the Venetian monk Paolo Sarpi, who was personally responsible for, among other atrocities, the assassination of Henry IV of France, and the Thirty Years' War. Sarpi was the creator and controller of Galileo, Hobbes, and Isaac Newton. The evil British empiricist John Locke—so often misidentified as the father of the American Constitution—was nothing more than a second-rate plagiarist of Sarpi.

The next speaker was historian Philip Valenti, author of "The Anti-Newtonian Roots of the American Revolution" (*EIR*, Dec. 1, 1995). Drawing on the research that produced his recent *EIR* cover story, he demolished the myth that Locke and Hobbes were the formative intellectual forethinkers of the American Founding Fathers.

Historian Graham Lowry, author of *How the Nation Was Won* (Washington, D.C.: *EIR*, 1987), then described the process by which the American colonists—the world's most literate population of that time—self-organized to accomplish the revolution against Great Britain. Deepening degeneracy in Britain following the 1714 death of Queen Anne, and the death of the Leibniz-educated Sophie of Hanover whom Leibniz, Jonathan Swift, and their allies had hoped would succeed Anne, led to such abominations as the Iron Act of 1750, which forbade the colonists from establishing their own manufactures.

In the closing presentation, Anton Chaitkin, author of *Treason in America* (New York: New Benjamin Franklin House, 1985), spoke on the subject of his recent *EIR* cover story, "Leibniz, Gauss Shaped U.S. Science Successes" (*EIR*, Feb. 9, 1996). Chaitkin explained how the American Revolution and the science breakthroughs, the important inventions and the great industries from the 1700s to the beginning of this century were all the deliberate projects of a single "Promethean" leadership faction, associated with Benjamin Franklin and later nationalist leaders, using government protection and promotion to accomplish every significant element of human advancement.