
II. Seizing Today's Historic Opportunity

LAROCHE PAC TOWN HALL

How to Think in a Time of Crisis— Take a Cue from Beethoven!

This is the edited transcript of opening remarks by Helga Zepp-LaRouche to the LaRouche PAC Town Hall meeting on October 3, 2020. Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche is the founder and President of the Schiller Institute.

Today is the 30th anniversary of German reunification; not the fall of the Wall, but the actual unification which occurred the following year. Looking back, that was the accomplishment. Were there mistakes done? We created a documentary about it called *The Lost Chance of 1989*. Since this is something that happened in Europe, and many young people probably were not yet born when this all occurred, I actually want to go into some detail of what happened leading up to that unification, what mistakes were made, and what lessons can be learned from it.

It was called by us and also others, “a stellar moment of humanity.” I don’t know if that works well in English, but in German it is *Sternstunde der Menschheit*. One of these extraordinary moments in history where it is the quality of the people on the stage at that point to use a chance and start a new era of mankind—or, if they don’t have the quality, or the objective circumstances are too powerful against which one cannot win, then it is a lost chance and things go awfully wrong.



Demonstrators on top of the Wall near the Brandenburg Gate in divided Berlin, November 9, 1989.

If the chance in 1989 had been used, we would not be where we are today. Because that was the moment when you could have initiated the kinds of changes which would have secured the world for the entire 21st century. I’m going to tell you about that in a second. But this opportunity was not used, and therefore, we have today an unbelievable combination of crises. We have a pandemic which is clearly out of control.

I’m not only talking about the United States. I’m talking especially about the developing countries, about which the mainstream media choose not to say so much every day. But the situation in countries like India, or continents like Africa, is actually much worse than in the so-called industrial countries. Not only do they have high infection rates, but for example, they are now in Africa hit by a famine, which the UN World Food Program head, David Beasley, has called a famine of biblical dimensions.

Then, you have the ongoing economic collapse; mass unemployment, forced short-time work. The threat of more bankruptcies to come in the coming period if government subsidies are not there, as in the case of the United States. Because the tension in the Congress did not allow Trump’s proposals to go through.

The Chance of 1989

We are looking at an unprecedented crisis, and therefore, I think if you look back into what happened in 1989 and '90, and how that chance was not used, I think it is an urgent lesson which we can draw upon for how to deal with the crisis today.

I will go into this now in some detail. We need to think about it, because though it may have been 30 years ago, it has absolute relevance for the situation today. My late husband in 1984, as shown in video played earlier in this meeting, made the very clear prognosis that if the Soviet Union were to stay with its policies then, which meant building up heavy armaments, not paying attention to infrastructure, and rejecting the SDI proposal, it would collapse in five years. Then in 1988, he made this incredibly prophetic forecast that Germany would soon be unified, with Berlin as the capital. I can assure you, there was absolutely nobody who thought that the Soviet Union would disappear, that Germany would be unified. It was just not in people's minds.

On July 7, 1998, the German government published the official—up to that point, classified—documents about this period of the German unification. Normally these papers are classified for 30 years, but the Kohl government decided to publish them, for reasons not totally clear. In these documents—it's 1,400 pages, very worthwhile reading for people who have an historical interest—they said that in the spring of 1989, there was absolutely no indication that German unification would soon be center stage. Now remember, that was almost a year after Lyndon LaRouche



EIRNS/Dean Andromidas

Lyndon LaRouche forecasts the collapse of the Soviet Union in a press conference at the Kempinski Hotel in West Berlin, October 22, 1988.

had predicted German unification at the Kempinski Hotel.

In June of that year, Mikhail Gorbachev went to Bonn, which was still the capital of West Germany at that time. He was greeted with “Gorby! Gorby!” There was a complete “Gorby” mania. In the same month, German cabinet official Rudolf Seiters went to East Berlin and talked to government officials of the G.D.R. [East German] government. He immediately recognized that the G.D.R. was about to go bankrupt. That should have been the latest point at which the West German government started some contingency plans, but it did not.

The situation got worse. In June and July, it was clear that the shops in the G.D.R. were becoming empty; the supply was not there for food and other necessary products. Long lines were forming in front of the stores. Then, the refugee wave, with hundreds of people looking for shelter in the embassies of West Germany in East Berlin, in Warsaw, in Prague, in Budapest. You had hundreds of people sitting in these embassies, not being allowed to travel. The G.D.R. was preventing passports from being given to them. So the situation became completely tumultuous. In August, a secret meeting took place in Bonn, whereby the initial efforts were made, with German financing and Gorbachev's de facto agreement in the back-



Bundesarchiv/Hans Peter Lochmann

Students from West Berlin encourage East Berliners as they cross the border, the day after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

ground, for some of the people from the embassy in Budapest to travel via Austria into the West.

Then, some of you may remember, peaceful candlelight demonstrations started in September. They grew in October; they became bigger. Then on the 6th of October, the 40th anniversary of the G.D.R., Gorbachev met with Erich Honecker, the last head of state. Gorbachev had already introduced *perestroika* in the Soviet Union, and clearly saw that the Warsaw Pact and the Comecon countries had such incredible economic difficulties that he had to make some reforms, for which he was hated by people in the Soviet Union, but loved by people in the West.

Gorbachov recognized in the discussion with Honecker that Honecker was absolutely hopeless, that he wouldn't move. Honecker at that point made the very famous statement: "Socialism in its run will not be stopped by donkeys or oxen. Socialism will be here in a thousand years from now." It took less than two weeks before the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the G.D.R. kicked him out, because he was untenable. This was on the 18th of October.

On the 8th of November, I was in Paris at a conference. I called for a German-French initiative to appeal to the Soviet Union. Germany and France would give massive food aid and other necessary products to the Comecon countries if the Soviet Union would grant self-determination to East Germany in return. They all



Bundesarchiv/Rainer Mittelstädt

Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of (East) Germany (right), with Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

would then cooperate in putting a new world economic order up for discussion, with debt relief for the developing countries and massive development projects for the developing sector.

One day later, Helmut Kohl, then the Chancellor of West Germany, went to Warsaw, and met with Lech Walesa, the President of Poland. The big demonstrations in Berlin and Leipzig were everybody's discussion, because they were becoming bigger—500,000, 700,000 people in the streets. In his discussion with Kohl at that point, Walesa said, "It will take only a week or two weeks until the Wall will come down." Kohl said, "Oh, no, this will not happen."

The evening of the same day, G.D.R. government member Günter Schabowski held a press conference, saying something like the borders are open. Not exactly, but he was understood like that, so everybody rushed to the border. This was an involuntary opening of the border, but once people were in motion by the thousands and tens of thousands, the borders got open.

Then you had these incredible scenes where people were dancing on the Berlin Wall, they were kissing and lying in each other's arms. These were families which had been separated for decades. So, it was an unbelievable moment.

We were the only people who knew what to do. As I said, these documents



Bundesarchiv/Wolfgang Thieme

A massive demonstration for political reforms in front of the town hall in Plauen, East Germany, October 30, 1989.

of the German government said there was no contingency plan, despite the fact that German unification was *the* most important question in the entire postwar period—supposedly. But when it actually happened, there was no plan on what to do. But we did, because of Lyn’s famous speech in the Kempinski Hotel, and subsequent discussions about the need for a crash program for the development of Poland, which was in deep economic trouble.

Our idea was that the unified Germany would use, among other things, the industrial capacities of the G.D.R., which was, after all, a heavily industrialized state, to help modernize all the countries of the Warsaw Pact. This was a plan which we had discussed, and I wrote a leaflet on the 15th of November, encouraging exactly that proposal.

Then, very quickly, it dawned on the West German government that something was really up. On the 21st of November, Cabinet advisor Horst Teltschik met with Portugalov, his Soviet counterpart. Suddenly in this discussion, Teltschik discovered that the Soviets were much more willing to discuss German unification than even the West German government. On the 28th of November, one week later, Helmut Kohl published his famous ten-point program, which was a plan for a confederation of the two German states, not yet the idea of German unification, but just to have a confederation.

The First Assassination

Even that was too much for the powers that be, because Kohl had not consulted with the British, the Americans, the French, not even with his government coalition partner, the liberal Free Democratic Party. Three days later, the incredible assassination took place of Alfred Herrhausen, who was the chief of Deutsche Bank, the largest German bank, and a close advisor to Kohl.

Herrhausen had a completely different policy than Deutsche Bank does today. He talked about a Marshall Plan for Eastern Europe after the Wall came down. He talked about debt cancellation for the developing countries. He wanted to develop Poland on the model of the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau [Credit Institute for Re-

construction], which was the credit institution based on [President Franklin Roosevelt’s] Reconstruction Finance Corporation, in the postwar period.

So Herrhausen was crucial and very close to what we were proposing. He was assassinated by the so-called Baader-Meinhof Gang, or the Red Army Fraction (RAF), a terrorist gang, although no one really knows if the so-called third generation of that terrorist group really existed. This was a signal to all members of the Western establishment to not dare go it on their own, to not have consultations and agreements with the Soviet Union, or you may be next. The parallel was



Bundesarchiv/Lothar Schaack



Deutsche Bank/Josef Heinrich Darchinger

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s (left) bold move to begin German reunification negotiations with the Soviets was met with assassinations of Alfred Herrhausen (Deutsche Bank) (right) and Detlev Rohwedder (Hoesch steel), the banking and industrial figures who could have made reunification work financially and economically.

made that the Herrhausen assassination was for Germany what the assassination of John F. Kennedy was for the United States. It meant a paradigm shift. That parallel was not very wrong.

U.S., France, Britain Impose Conditions on Unification

In the beginning, Kohl had no intention of giving up the German currency, the deutschmark (D-mark). He knew that you could not have a common currency without a political union. You could not start with an economic union and then have the euro, and then follow with a political union; he knew this would not function.

At a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, Kohl said “I know I’m being asked to act against German interests on this D-mark question.” The Bush position—Bush, Sr. at that point—was against unification, but they were advised by some senior political advisors that if the United States stood against German unification in this moment, it would lose all influence.



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis



With Herrhausen and Rohwedder dead, UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and French President François Mitterrand ganged up on Kohl, so that in order to get reunification, he agreed to a European common currency (the euro) and otherwise to the British monetarist policies contained in the Maastricht treaty of 1992.

UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was on the record; she absolutely hated it. She said in an interview later that the British interest in 1990 was the same as the glory of the victorious powers in 1945. She said at a special EU summit in Strasbourg, “We defeated you twice, and now you are back here again.” She instructed her Transport Minister Nicholas Ridley to start a “Fourth Reich” campaign against Germany, which was really unbelievable. The Antifa was deployed against German unification; clearly the *cui bono* was the British. Thatcher also told Gorbachev that German unification was absolutely against British interests.

At the summit of the EU in Strasbourg in December, Kohl later called this the darkest hour of his political life, because everybody ganged up on him. Finally he capitulated; he agreed to the euro, to a European common currency—in that way, he submitted to the idea that Germany must be contained by integrating it into an EU which, from Maastricht on—this was a treaty in 1992—would be completely on the line of British monetarist policies. This led to a situation I will come to in a second.

The LaRouche Productive Triangle Plan for Development

We kept organizing with our program. In discussions with Lyn, by tape in part, because he was in jail, we worked on a program to connect Paris, Berlin, and

Vienna, a territory the size of Japan, with the most industrial capacity of the world at that time, to beef that up through modern infrastructure. Maglev trains, other high-speed plans like the pebble-bed nuclear reactor. Beef up the entire region. Build infrastructure corridors connecting Berlin with Warsaw, with Kiev, with the Balkans. In that way, bring the infrastructure and modernization into Eastern Europe.

This proposal, if implemented would have meant, among other things, keeping the industrial power of East Germany and using it for the development of the rest of Eastern Europe. This was highly appreciated by German industry, but it ran into the fierce opposition of the British. French President François Mitterrand threatened war against Germany, according to some official documents. At that point, we wrote this proposal, this program, and we had it out in January 1990. This was a period

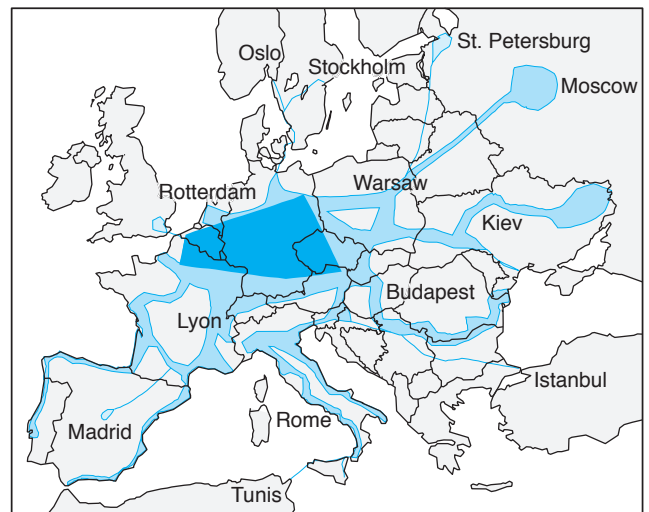
when people were really ready for profound ideas. It was a Shelley moment, so to speak.

At Christmas 1989, German TV performed two times Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*, and nobody complained to hear the same program twice, because people were elevated. They were ready to become better people during a very short period of time. It’s important to understand that such moments in history arise.

Then, we started to promote this Productive Trian-

Development corridors of the Productive Triangle

EIR program of 1990



gle proposal. I wrote many letters to Kohl, to the ministers. We had hundreds of seminars in all cities; people were absolutely in favor of it, and in a certain sense, it was really a possibility that could have been implemented. We thought that if this program were to be realized, it would become the motor for the world economy to bring about the kinds of changes Lyn had been fighting for all his life.

In spring 1990, Amelia Boynton Robinson and Rev. James Cokley came. They addressed the mass demonstrations in Halle, and in Berlin.

They gave many speeches to seminars in East German cities. In a certain sense, it was ready to go. Even in May 1990, there were still speeches given by the President of Germany, Richard von Weizsäcker, saying this is the outstanding historical chance of 1989. It would have been possible to implement this.

But then absolutely fierce opposition came from France, from Great Britain. In 1991—when we organized in Berlin a huge conference which had hundreds of top-level people from the Soviet Union, from Eastern Europe—it was on the edge of being a realistic option.

A Second Assassination

On the 1st of April, a second major figure in Germany was assassinated—[Detlev] Rohwedder. He was the CEO of Hoesch, of one of the largest steel plants. He was an excellent economist, and he was put in charge of the transformation of the state-owned industries, privatizing them through the government agency known as the *Treuhand*. He had the idea of putting human beings first, to keep the jobs at all costs; privatize only if it's socially agreeable and if alternative



EIRNS

U.S. civil rights leader Amelia Boynton Robinson sings We Shall Overcome with East German youth, April 1990.

jobs can be found. He was assassinated by the so-called third generation of the Baader-Meinhof Gang, which no one has ever seen, and which in all likelihood was some secret service intelligence operation.

The *Treuhand* then was put into the hands of Birgit Breuel, representing banking interests, who privatized like crazy. She did the same to Germany as was done by

Jeffrey Sachs to the Soviet Union and the entire Comecon. This was a form of genocide, causing utter devastation.

That is why on the 30th anniversary of German unification, there are many people in East Germany who think this was the worst thing which could have happened. There is no real German unity. Some people made it out of East Germany, and they are happier, but there is a large segment of people in East Germany who are completely unhappy.

We went to East Germany then. We went to Poland, to Hungary. We met wonderful people. I was invited by the organization of political prisoners from 1956 from the Hungarian uprising; many friendships developed. We organized many things.

The decision to go for the shock therapy, to completely



EIRNS/Conor Soules

After reunification of Germany, under so-called "shock therapy" imposed by U.S. economist Jeffrey Sachs, the entire Comecon was reduced to a state of ruin and immiseration. Shown here, street vendors in St. Petersburg, Russia, November 1999.

dismantle the industries of Eastern Europe, was a wrong decision. It led to the horrible years of the Yeltsin period, which many people think was a decade of genocide against Russia.

All the promises made to Gorbachev to never expand NATO to the borders of Russia very quickly started to be broken, because [Vice President Dick] Cheney in 1992 decided that never would any country be allowed to surpass the United States in economic power or military might. They started the policy of regime change, color revolution, pushing the borders of NATO closer and closer to the Russian border, up to the point where we are now on the verge of World War III.

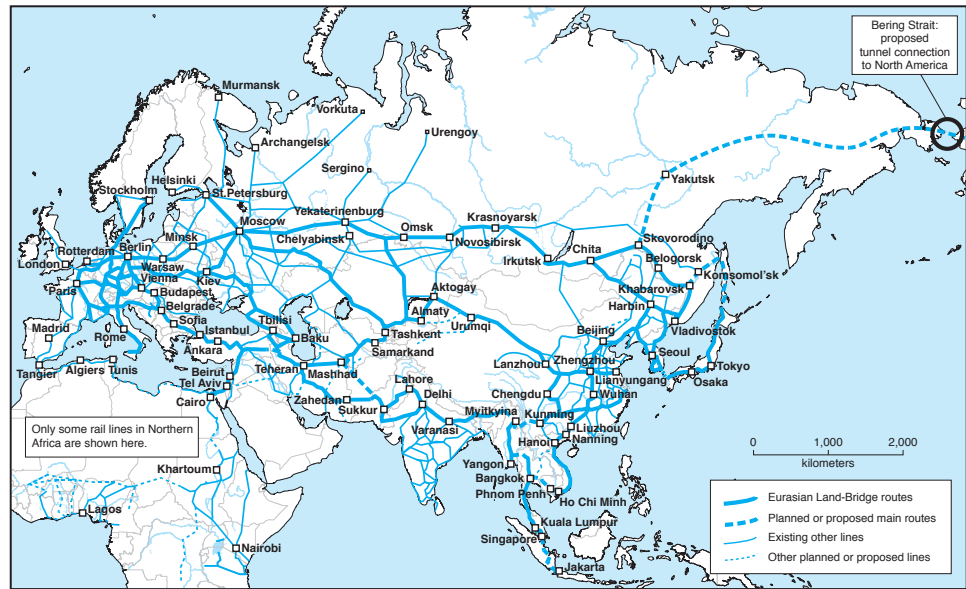
NATO is having maneuvers only 10 km from the Russian border. You have these incredible flight operations where B-52 bombers are almost penetrating Russian airspace, being then sent away by Russian jets. These are extremely dangerous maneuvers. The same thing is going on in respect to China.

Let me tell you about what Lyndon LaRouche had to say nine years after his speech in 1988 in a subsequent speech. He talked about his Kempinski Hotel speech and reviewed what happened given that the policy he had proposed was not implemented. He said that from his present position, he was warning—that the United States must succeed in entering the path of developing a Chinese-American partnership, or the entire civilization will collapse and go into a process of disintegration. This is the policy of the New Silk Road.

The Productive Triangle Becomes the Eurasian Land-Bridge

After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, we extended this program of the Productive Triangle to become the Eurasian Land-Bridge, connecting the industrial and population centers of Europe with those of Asia, which then became the New Silk Road, which is now a reality in much of the world. Lyn endorsed that policy in 1998, and he says in that latter speech: If this

Main Routes and Secondary Routes of the Eurasian Land-Bridge



policy, as my wife and other collaborators were presenting it from 1991 on, were implemented, then the present spiral of collapse of a disintegrating world financial system would not have developed.

This policy is the only alternative to a collapse into a new dark age, as we have seen it with the collapse of the banking system in Europe in the middle of the 14th century. He asked, who would back up his prognosis to prevent the catastrophe which can be prevented, and of which he was warning. For a victory, it would be sufficient if only one patriot among 100 citizens were to do so, like in Gideon's army, and take a leading role in the defense of this matter.

That is what I wanted to tell you: What Lyn would say if he were with us today, though we are in a very difficult situation.

Hopefully, President Trump will recover, and everything will resume its normal course. The election campaign, his winning the election, which I think is very important in light of the policies of his opponents. But I think his getting sick reminds us that we have to absolutely get a citizenry which is educated, which thinks like statesmen. Each of you must learn how to think like a President or a Secretary for a certain department; in other words, develop the expertise. And the expertise is very clearly what Lyndon LaRouche has developed, who, throughout his life, proposed always the same policy: The SDI policy, the policy of the Eurasian Land-Bridge, the policy of the International Development

Bank; these were always an expression of the same idea—that we have to undo the underdevelopment of the developing countries.

This was his policy when he made the prognosis in 1973 that if you do not alleviate poverty in the developing countries, pandemics would be the result. That's why he denounced the conditionality policy of the IMF, as leading to pandemics. The pandemic was not caused by the coronavirus; it was caused by the underdevelopment of many countries. That is why we are calling for a modern world health system in every single country to protect not only against COVID-19, but against all other pandemics and other diseases which will come. That is simply the way the biological universe is organized.

I'm Counting on You!

So, what should we do? I think what we have to do is we have to support the call for the summit which President Putin has initiated since January, which I called for since January also, in a slightly different form. But it should be clear that with the combination of problems which we have today—an out-of-control pandemic, an economic collapse worse than anything since the Second World War, the danger of a financial crash worse than 2008, the danger of a geopolitical confrontation going out of control in respect to Russia and China—we have to change course. That is why such a summit, called for by President Putin, is the only realistic option right now on the table.

The permanent five members of the UN Security

Council must meet and address these questions. We need to have a new world financial system, a new credit system, a new Bretton Woods system. This system is bankrupt. We need credit for development. We can finance all of these things in the tradition of the initial intention of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his idea of the Bretton Woods system.

We then move forward with LaRouche's Four Laws. We end the casino economy, implement Glass-Steagall in the form of a separation of the banks, and protect commercial banks. No more bailouts for bankrupt speculators. Create a national bank, not only in one country, but in all countries on the planet. And then, establish a credit system that cooperates for long-term investment for the reconstruction of the world economy. Go to a crash program for fusion technology, which is really making incredible progress, as we heard in a recent Schiller Institute conference. And go for international cooperation in space exploration, as President Trump has said the Artemis program will be.

If all this is agreed among the United States, Russia, and China at a minimum, and then other industrial powers that have the capacity to reconstruct the world are added, then we can solve our problems. What is required is that many patriots—at least one in every hundred in cities all over the United States and in many other countries—really start to take responsibility for the outcome of this period. I think nothing else will work. I really think it can be done. I am counting on you.



The Jan. 27, 1989 Jailing of Lyndon LaRouche Defined an Era, Which Now Must End

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