

Will Ongoing Shocks Provoke a New Kind of Thinking Necessary to Overcome a New Dark Age?

This is the edited transcript of the Schiller Institute's March 11, weekly webcast, featuring Helga Zepp-LaRouche. A [video](#) is available.

Harley Schlanger: Hello, I'm Harley Schlanger from the Schiller Institute. Welcome to our webcast with our founder and President Helga Zepp-LaRouche. It's March 11, 2020, and we're very deep into a process now which has been unfolding rapidly with the COVID-19 coronavirus—the emergence of a pandemic worldwide. Helga, this is something that people in the West have been trying to wish away, but it's not something that's going to be wished away: It requires a total change in thinking. Why don't you start with your thoughts on that? You have been very out front with your emergency call to reject this old paradigm, and move to the new,

COVID-19 in Europe

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Yes. I think the situation is very serious. It probably will not be possible without a lot of casualties, but nevertheless, if decisive measures are taken now, combined with a complete change in attitude, the damage can be minimized. Otherwise, it will be catastrophic.

I think it is useful to listen to the experts from Germany who are making regular podcasts, Christian Drosten, for example, the virologist from Berlin Charité Hospital, and Professor Lothar Wieler from the Robert Koch Institute, have put out very drastic

warnings. Drosten said that there will be no lessening in the rate of infections in the spring and summer period—which some people temporarily assumed—because we will face a virus wave. During the summer period in the northern latitudes, the virus will continue to spread to the Southern Hemisphere, where it will be winter, and then in all likelihood will return to the Northern Hemisphere countries with an even greater



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China set a new standard in its response to the outbreak of COVID-19. One of two 1,000-bed hospitals, built in just two weeks, is shown here under construction in Wuhan.

intensity, and with the possibility of mutations in the fall. As of now, a vaccine cannot be expected before a year or so.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced what is now commonplace among many leaders of countries, that COVID-19 will probably infect 70% of the population. Unfortunately, it is absolutely not true what Germany's Health Minister Jens Spahn still thought in January—which is really incredible—that the COVID-19 didn't represent a danger for Germany,

and that the mortality rate of COVID-19 would be lower than of the common flu. That's what he said in January!

That that was not the case should have been clear even then if people only looked to China, which in the month of January was waging an incredible battle against the COVID-19. Only by closing down the entire city of Wuhan and Hubei province, effecting a lockdown for 60 million people, implementing it and also enforcing it, and having a population which was very cooperative in doing so, did China set a new standard in dealing with such pandemics, according to the World Health Organization. The Western countries could have

nounced right now are not accurate.

In speaking with my colleagues in France today, they told me only a little bit more than 1,000 tests have been done in France so far! Therefore the number of reported cases is not an accurate figure. And we have some cases in which people clearly have symptoms, and they tried to get tests, but were told, there are no tests in France right now. France doesn't have the production capability and all the tests have been bought up; there simply are no tests. The fact that in Germany, there are only two deaths so far, as of this webcast [midday in Germany March 11] is being attributed to broad testing. We have to see.



All of Italy has been placed in quarantine. Shown: what is now a common city street scene.

taken that as an example, but people in the West have been too arrogant, too Euro-centric, or too Western-centric.

Many thought they could ignore the virus, or even that this is affecting China and will not come to Europe or the United States. Three valuable months to prepare were largely lost. A completely different attitude would have been necessary.

And now, COVID-19 is spreading and changing by the hour, so people are completely aware of the fact that it is out of control. And I do not want to add to any panic, but it is very clear that the numbers being an-

nounced right now are not accurate. All of Italy has been placed in quarantine after some very irrational behavior on the part of many citizens in the north of Italy, who violated government recommendations and traveled to the south of Italy, thus spreading COVID-19 basically to the whole of the country. It's quite an advanced situation there now. I think the lesson to be learned from all of that is that we have to learn from China. We have to get rid of our Western arrogance, and simply look at the way that China effectively mobilized, and then the only conclusion is, that isolation measures once announced must be enforced to avoid a mass of cases.

That means that if you have many cases anywhere—a region, for example, like some cities or areas in North Rhine-Westphalia—the Wuhan model should be applied immediately. The area should be closed down, there should be a quarantine for a certain number of weeks, and these measures must be taken early in the spread of the disease. Speed counts in taking preemptive measures before the virus spreads completely out of control.

So I think we are in a very serious situation, but there is no reason to completely panic. There are clear ways forward, and I think the efficiency with which China dealt with this, should be a lesson for everybody.

The Murderous Arrogance of Geopoliticians

Schlanger: When you speak of the arrogance, I think you're referring, in particular, to the continued adherence to geopolitics, to the neo-liberal model, the idea

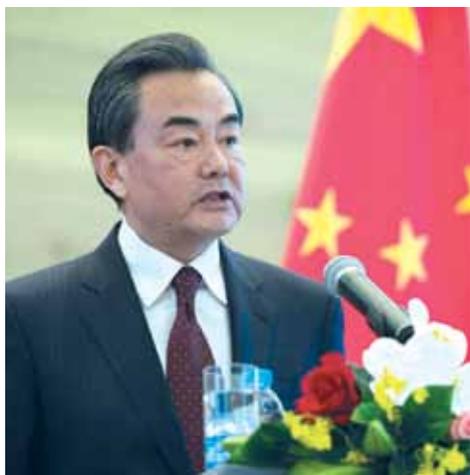
that the West is superior, that the West has solved all the problems. Isn't this what hampers the thinking of people at the European Union and many of the people in the U.S. Congress, and think tanks in the United States?

Zepp-LaRouche: The European finance ministers, for example—the so-called Eurogroup—have a meeting scheduled for March 16. The first item on their agenda is the European Stability Mechanism, and then something else, and then only third, is the COVID-19 attack. The reason the reaction was so late—they didn't want to use the word pandemic—was because they were more concerned about the stock market, the profits coming from the so-called “pandemic bonds,” which is an absurdity all by itself. These are bonds floated to supposedly finance the cost of dealing with pandemics, in which people will make a profit only if there is no call for the use of the funds before the maturity of the bond.

I think the thinking is still very much dominated by the geopolitical idea: For example, yesterday, I was listening—and one should actually stop doing this!—I was listening to the ZDF news and the moderator was reporting on the COVID-19 crisis, but then, instead of praising what the Chinese accomplished in Wuhan, he took the occasion to blast China and attack it. Continuing to attack Russia and China has to stop!

The only way humanity will get out of the crisis, is with international cooperation. Wang Yi, the Chinese Foreign Minister, has just telephoned the Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio, offering to share China's experience, to send their experts; they're donating masks, protective suits, and tests to Italy. This is a completely different approach. And I think the West has much to learn about how to respond to challenges which all of humanity is facing. And this geopolitical thinking is really the thinking of troglodytes and should be eliminated completely.

Schlanger: U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo continues to attack China, calling COVID-19 the



DoS



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Wang Yi, Foreign Minister of China (left), telephoned Luigi Di Maio, Deputy Prime Minister of Italy (right), offering to share China's COVID-19 experience, send experts, and donate masks, protective suits and test kits to Italy.

“Wuhan virus”—this kind of attitude, when in fact, the number of new cases in China has dropped significantly. And you mentioned earlier the importance of President Xi Jinping going to Wuhan to talk to the people on the front lines. I think it's important to report this, Helga. It's not being covered in the Western press.

Call for a Great Power Summit

Zepp-LaRouche: I have proposed something, which may look impossible to some people, but the situation will soon come to the point in which more and more people will recognize that what I'm saying is the only way to address this problem. I have reiterated my call to for an emergency summit of Xi Jinping, Putin, Trump, and Modi, as a minimum combination, to address all these problems. It's very clear that we need international cooperation concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.

This virus is already threatening the international financial system: In the last several weeks, there have been several plunges, as large as in the 2008 systemic collapse, and after the September 11, 2001 attack. And the central banks have now decided to flood the markets, to lower the interest rates—the Bank of England lowered the interest rate by a half-percent, 50 basis points, today—as if the simple injection of liquidity would remedy any of the real, physical causes for the system collapsing.

So, I want to have a mobilization of the population to demand that the leaders of the most important governments—of the United States, Russia, China, and

India—discuss the four [points](#) proposed by my late husband Lyndon LaRouche, in June 2014, because you need to have an immediate end of the global casino economy, by implementing a Glass-Steagall system. We have discussed this many times on this program. LaRouche’s approach is the only combination of measures that will address the problem. Then, you need a national bank in every country; in Germany, we could extend the functions of the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau; have an international cooperation among these national banks, reinstate fixed exchange rates, and then have agreements for industrial development projects, like the industrial development of Southwest Asia, of Africa, and this will become then, a New Bretton Woods system.

There must be cooperation with the Chinese New Silk Road to have these kinds of development plans. And we need a crash program to go into a new platform of higher productivity of the economy, joint cooperation in advanced technologies, like fusion, like biophysics, like space research cooperation. And then, such a summit could implement these measures, and then could lead to a series of such summits, and that way change the geopolitics, and move towards an international cooperation, a shared future of humanity.

That shift has to occur. I’m predicting, and I think I’m on the safe side in doing so, that the crisis will accelerate, that there will be many more unfortunate consequences, and that people will recognize that to establish a completely different level of thinking will be the only way out for all of mankind.

If you agree with that, you should help this mobilization. Please sign the [resolution](#) and share it with your friends and colleagues, and get more people to sign it. We need a public discussion about this, and public demand that the whole world should move into a completely new way of cooperating and solving these kinds of problems.

LaRouche’s Biological Holocaust Task Force

Schlanger: I’ve received a few emails from people who have asked, why do we focus on “neo-liberalism” as the problem? “What does that have to do with the virus?” they ask. I think it’s important to look at what Dr. Robert Redfield of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) had to say about the need to rebuild the system: That the so-called “just-in-time” system, which has been accepted as an economic model,

doesn’t work. We need redundancy. Helga, I think it would be very useful for you to just review again, why this neo-liberal system is the cause, or sets humanity up for these kinds of crises. This is what your husband was warning against, going back to 1971, and then he set up the Biological Holocaust Task Force in 1974.

Zepp-LaRouche: On Aug. 15, 1971, when Nixon dissolved the Bretton Woods system by going to floating exchange rates, by decoupling the dollar from the gold-reserve standard, and in that way, opening the deregulation of the markets—which has escalated ever since—my husband made the prognosis that if the West continued on this road of liberalizing the markets, of going with neo-liberal, monetarist policies, that it would end up in a new depression and the danger of a new fascism; or, the world could go to a completely new economic system.

That prognosis has proven to be absolutely on the mark. The Biological-Ecological Holocaust Task Force you just mentioned, he set up in 1974, and it was to study the effects of the policies of the IMF and World Bank on the economic system, especially in the developing sector.

Since then we have produced *many* studies, which you can all see in our archives, that if policies of austerity or zero growth are imposed, especially on the developing countries, that inevitably causes the emergence of old diseases and new diseases, because you cannot consistently lower the living standard of entire continents, as the IMF and World Bank have done in the last 50 years, without creating conditions of breakdown. And that is exactly what we see right now: Not only do we have the COVID-19 crisis, but also a locust situation getting completely out of control in many African states in the Horn of Africa, and in the Arabian Peninsula and Pakistan-India, even threatening to go into China.

As part of this geopolitical, liberal scheme of the West, there is also the refugee crisis: It’s not a natural phenomenon; it is the result of the interventionist wars conducted by the Bush Administrations and, Obama, with the idea that the West has to spread “democracy” and “human rights,” and that it’s legitimate to make interventionist wars against Iraq—it doesn’t matter if such interventions are based on lies of there being weapons of mass destruction—in Iraq, for example—which Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi has since admitted that they all knew all along was a lie and they did it anyway. Iraq,



The Ceylanpinar tent camp in the Turkish border town of Suruç, where more than 12,000 Syrian refugees have been sitting for years.

Afghanistan—these are all the reasons why there is a refugee crisis. The underdevelopment of Africa is a result of these policies.

That is why I am saying, we must get rid of this paradigm, which has many elements—it has geopolitics, it has neo-liberal economic policies; but it also has a Malthusian dimension to it: The Green axiom, which says that nature, or some spiders or some ants somewhere are more important than human beings. On COVID-19, do you think that most African countries or Asian and Latin American countries that do not have the health systems we have, do you think they are testing their people? I don't think so. The figures are in all likelihood completely off, and the ability of these countries to mitigate or stop the virus is much, much less.

I'm absolutely convinced that there are some people who say, "Oh, there are too many people anyway," like Bertrand Russell, who said, in his 1952 book, *The Impact of Science on Society*, that you need a pandemic or a "Black Death" in every generation to control population levels. We have published these quotes many times! And the absolutely disgusting way in which the European Union (EU) is dealing with the refugee crisis, now again erupting at the Turkish-Greek border, that is a mindset which is disgusting! And it is the reflection of geopolitics, of

the Malthusian idea that there are too many people anyway.

Stop the Regime-Change Interventions!

Now, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is playing his own terrible games. Innocent people who have nothing, who have been sitting in camps for years on end, and have begun speaking Turkish, are now being instrumentalized by Erdoğan. That's what the Greeks are saying, and that may all be true—but what's the solution? You have to stop insisting that there must be regime change in Syria; that has to stop. There has to

be recognition that the only legitimate government in Syria is the one the Syrian people themselves elect. There was a constitutional process under way, which is now stopped again; that has to be resumed. There has to be an end to the war.

Turkey should not be backed by NATO—that is an



DoS/Ron Przysucha



MSC/Kuhlmann

While Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is playing dangerous geopolitical games, James Jeffrey, U.S. Special Representative for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, is demanding that NATO should back Turkey against Syria.

insane idea. The U.S. Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, James Jeffrey, just demanded that NATO should fully back up Turkey against Syria. Now, that is complete insanity! What needs to be done is, you have to have peace with Syria, and then there needs to be an orderly negotiation between the Assad government and the opposition, to arrange for the return

of the Syrian refugees to their own country, which is what most people want to do, anyway.

So I think all of these assumptions, that we just continue with policies proven to be a failure, has to absolutely stop. I don't see a sign that the European establishment is capable of doing it. That just means we need a mobilization of citizens. This is becoming a serious existential crisis for all of us, and we have to take responsibility to put in a new paradigm—a paradigm of cooperation—and then we can solve most problems; at least over time, we can find solutions to such problems as COVID-19. But we need to change the view of the West towards China and Russia. The idea that regime change is allowed under the pretext of spreading democracy and human rights, is one of those imperialist, colonialist ideas, which have to go.

Schlanger: Another perfect example of that is the expansion of sanctions against Iran and Venezuela to foster regime change there, in the face of this growing pandemic.

Quarantine Wall Street and the City of London!

I'd like to come back to one other point, which I think you alluded to earlier, which is the financial crisis: If anything ought to be quarantined, it ought to be Wall Street and the Bank of England. The idea that lower interest rates will solve everything, the repo lending, the incredible demand for liquidity without any concern for solvency. This is the other aspect of Mr. LaRouche's warnings over many years.

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes. I don't know how long this will continue. What the central banks are proposing is completely irresponsible. The continuous flooding of the markets with money, and the idea to go even to negative interest rates, all of this is already eating up the savings and life's earnings of the population, and is threatening at some point to go into a hyperinflation. Derivatives must be absolutely written off. This is why Glass-Steagall is so crucial.

The whole EU Green program as it was announced by EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, in the presence of this deplorable Greta Thunberg, that has to go, too! We will not continue to be an industrial state, if we implement these policies. If you want to have hospitals, if you want to have enough intensive care units to deal with such a situation, you have to have a produc-

tive society. And that Green policy of von der Leyen has to go. We need the full package that I talked about before: Glass-Steagall, and the return to Hamiltonian banking which, every time there was a successful economic system in history—whether it was the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt, whether it was the reconstruction of Germany in the postwar period—these were the principles that were applied, and that is what is urgently required now.

Schlanger: And while this is all going on, we have the incredible soap opera in U.S. politics around the Democratic Party's presidential nominating process. I think it would be very useful, as we come toward the end of this webcast, for you to emphasize again what people should do to make sure we can change the paradigm. There's a hunger for change, people are still extremely unhappy, and now, very nervous, both because of the financial crisis and COVID-19. What should people do? How should they respond?

Zepp-LaRouche: I think the U.S. is a big problem, because unfortunately, Trump said he had a hunch that the mortality rate of COVID-19 is much less than what the World Health Organization was saying. I think that he probably said that because of the election campaign. But I think reality will assert itself very quickly: This will come as fast as it came in Europe, maybe even faster, and the U.S. right now is really unprepared! The health delivery system was taken down even more than in Europe.

We Are Now in a Dark Age

The Democrats now have Joe Biden as a leading candidate in the race for the Democratic Party nomination for the 2020 presidential election. There is a very interesting [collection](#) of videos published by *Consortium News*. The author, Caitlin Johnstone, has collected about twenty or so videos of Biden's speeches, in which you can clearly see that he doesn't have it anymore—he's lost it. So the idea that somebody who has clear signs of aging (to put it mildly), to think he can be put through the Democratic Convention and the election campaign, and then win the election in November against Trump, is also a sign of extreme mental deterioration of the people who think they can do that and get away with it.

So if you look at all of these things, we need a completely new thinking: We are in a dark age, a dark age absolutely comparable to the 14th century when the

Black Death killed one-third of the European population and people just went crazy! You see signs of this insanity, already now, so we need, therefore, a completely different approach, like what came in the 15th century with the Golden Renaissance in Italy. We can talk about that some other time, but I think people have to really recognize, we are in a dark age, and we have to reject all the assumptions that have led to this present situation.

I would like to make one other point: I think COVID-19 will force lockdowns, it will force measures; schools and universities are already closed for several weeks in several countries; you don't know yet what will be the effect of all of this on the financial system, on the real economy. Merkel is talking about 70% of the population becoming infected. If you assume worldwide perhaps 100 million people will be infected, and then, if you take the present mortality rate, 2-4 million people will die—under these circumstances, we should not have war games.

Therefore, we need to stop the present NATO maneuver in Eastern Europe, the Defender-Europe 20. The virus does not stop in front of the military, and to have these kinds of things going on, when there is an immediate health threat to the population, doesn't make any sense. So this NATO maneuver should stop. The highest commander of the U.S. forces in Germany, Lt. Gen. Christopher Cavoli, is now himself a victim of COVID-19 and is in quarantine in Wiesbaden. That should cause people to reflect on the fact that COVID-19 doesn't stop in the face of the military.

I think we should go in the direction of mobilizing for the summit: I know people think that this is too big, but sometimes, when you are in a real crisis, only if you reach a completely new level of thinking, namely the idea that the leaders of all the major countries of the world should meet—the United States, Russia, China, and India, as a minimum, and then other countries can come together—only by changing the level of thinking, and the level of approach, can a solution be found.

So if you agree with that, then help us in this mobilization. We will do other things, as well: We will call for the rebuilding of the health delivery system, and there are other things we can do. But I think because of the complexity of the world situation, the interaction of all of the elements of the breakdown, that we will not



U.S. Army

NATO Exercise Defender-Europe 20 involves the deployment of a division-size combat force up against Russia's western borders. Shown: Battle tanks moving across the theater of operations.

solve any of these problems unless we go to a completely new paradigm, a new system of international relations, and you should help us in this mobilization; that's the very best thing you can do for your own life and your own future.

Schlanger: And I recommend, toward that end, that people circulate this webcast, get this webcast around, so people can hear the extent of the crisis and the solutions; secondly, you should circulate the [call](#) for the emergency summit by Helga Zepp-LaRouche. Take that to your city council, to your trade union group. At least you can certainly use the internet to get it around and get people signing and supporting it.

So, Helga, anything else you want to add?

Zepp-LaRouche: No. I think this is a moment in which people will be freaked out and it's understandable: But sometimes a shock is also healthy if it helps you to get out of a wrong idea, and to think things through and then move ahead and find a solution. So, I would urge people to overcome your present fears and be confident that if we work together as one humanity, we can solve this.

Schlanger: OK, well, with that, we'll see you again, next week.

Zepp-LaRouche: Till next week!