

We Must Mobilize to Defeat a Dark Age

This is the edited transcript of the Schiller Institute's April 15, 2020 interview with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, by Harley Schlanger. A [video](#) of the webcast is available.

Harley Schlanger: Hello, I'm Harley Schlanger, with the Schiller Institute. Welcome to our weekly webcast with our founder and President, Helga Zepp-LaRouche. It's April 15, 2020.

We're clearly in the middle of a situation in which decisions are being made about what to do with the coronavirus, what to do with the economy. There are new reports coming out that the virus pandemic is spreading into different areas, including Africa and India. So Helga, how do you want to address this problem? Why don't you go ahead and give us a picture of what you have?

A New Dark Age?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: The situation is starting to look like a Dark Age. I wonder how long it will take some of these people who believe that this whole thing is just like a "flu," or just a plot to impose world dictatorship, to realize *this is a pandemic*, and that because of the combination of the economic policies and the financial system failing, there is a real danger of a Dark Age. Those who have not yet thought about it, should look at *The Decameron* by Giovanni Boccaccio, how he describes the Black Death in the 14th century:



Food distribution in Nairobi, Kenya, April 10, 2020.

CGTN

ture is developing in many other nursing homes.

In France, you have similar situations; and in Italy, people are being left to die at home, their bodies not being found until days later. Because so many of the nursing home staffs have become infected, this is a terrible development. Also, at centers for juvenile delinquents in the United States, there is a very high ratio of sick to healthy. The prison populations and the staffs in the jails and prisons are very much in danger, as there is a high infection rate in these institutions.

The food supply is also collapsing. At a recent food distribution in Nairobi, Kenya, as there was not enough food for the many people who were in need, a riot broke out, and the riot police intervened with tear gas, causing the people to flee. A similar situation exists in many places, even in San Antonio, Texas, where a line of 2,000 cars stretched out in a drive-through food distribution setup, and in the end there was not enough food for all.

Similar situations are threatening all over the place, and while governments in the developing sector in many instances have reacted more



A food bank in Moorehead, North Carolina, April 9, 2020.

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A “Solidarity Flight” of medical supplies from China arriving in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, organized by the Jack Ma Foundation, the African Union and the WHO’s World Food Programme, from which hub it was distributed to other African nations. At right: Abiy Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister of Ethiopia.

quickly than the so-called “Western” governments, because they had experienced Ebola and other epidemics and disease outbreaks, they enforced early lockdowns, but this is not sustainable. If you are sitting in a shack in Africa, with ten people crowded into the same room, there is no point if you are being told to stay home; you cannot self-isolate.

The Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed, who is otherwise doing an excellent job, basically said the measures taken are not sustainable; that they cannot be kept up. The same goes for India, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi has just announced another extension of the lockdown by three weeks. We have already seen absolutely incredible scenes where service workers, who only make income a day at a time, because everything is shut down in the service economy, are trying to get back to the countryside, overfilling buses and being stopped by police. The same in the favelas in Brazil.

The symptoms of a Dark Age are everywhere, and whoever does not want to see that is just morally unfit. The only moral way to react to this situation is by doing exactly what the international Schiller Institute is doing: Namely, making a huge campaign to change the system, to build up a health system in *every* country, not just reconstructing health systems in the United States, Germany, France and other countries that used to have good health systems before the privatizations over the last thirty years. Top-level health systems are needed in {every single country;} that is the moral test for humanity to come out of this crisis.

Some Good News

Schlanger: Helga, one of the things that has happened in the last few days, is that aid is being transferred from China and elsewhere: The “Solidarity Flights” are now going into Africa. This is small step, but it does indicate the right direction, at least in terms of the immediate emergency.

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes. This was very good. This was organized by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy, whom I just mentioned, and also the Jack Ma Foundation from China, the African Union, the World Health Organization, and the World Food Programme. It was a full planeload of medical supplies, very urgently needed and most welcomed. And from Addis Ababa, it was then distributed to all other African nations. And there is the intention to build up similar hubs all over the world.

But if you look at the amount of money involved, it was about \$300 million. Needed, however, is several orders of magnitude more, and that is obviously the big challenge, right now. So, that is why I want you, our listeners, to join our campaign, because we need to have a completely new system: Because, with the present casino economy, and just private donations, this will not be sufficient. We have to create a new credit system; we have to have a national bank in every country to issue credit for the construction, not only of a health system, but also of a corresponding infrastructure, and the beginning of real development, industrialization and the development of agriculture. And that can only be done

with a New Bretton Woods system.

There are many calls emerging right now in this direction: In Latin America, for example, the President of Argentina Alberto Fernández said the old system has clearly failed, that we need a new system. There are calls for a Glass-Steagall banking separation. There are even calls for a New Bretton Woods system, coming from one of the former collaborators and employees of the Banque de France, the French central bank.

But we need this to be on the agenda immediately: Because this pandemic will not go away. As it looks now, it will be with us for *at least*—at least a year, until vaccines come online, and it may be longer.

When to Reopen the Economies

Schlanger: Helga, one of the things that is most striking is the pressure that's being put on governments in the Western countries to reopen their economies. Clearly, there's a lot of suffering going on, but this was an economic crisis that existed before the pandemic. What are your thoughts about this pressure coming, in many cases from bankers, but also from small businesses, to reopen the economy quickly? I think the French have announced they'll be sending children back to school in the beginning of May—what are your thoughts about this?

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, I understand the pain for many people, who are cramped in small apartments, single mothers with yelling children, small businessmen who are losing their business, people losing their jobs—it's a terrible crisis. But, at this point, if you loosen the economy too early, if you open up too quickly, it's almost guaranteed that the virus will come back and be much more costly than if you follow what the Chinese did in Wuhan.

I can only repeat: If you open up the economy now,



Casa Rosada

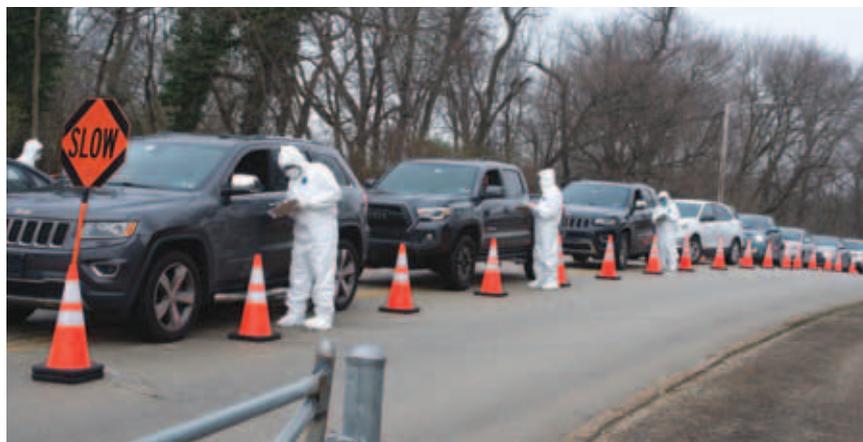
Alberto Fernández, President of Argentina.

without having a thorough testing of the population, you will have no idea how widespread the infection is. By testing, I don't mean just the people who have symptoms. You have to do surveillance testing in supposedly unaffected areas, to get a broad overview of the condition of infection.

Then, you have to have absolute protection of the population—a full supply of medical staff, medical facilities, protective clothes for the population whenever they go to a public function, like to work or shopping. *All of*

these measures have to be in place beforehand. I don't think we have reached that condition yet. And there are many warnings that if we open up too early, we may pay a much higher price.

I'm not saying this goes for everybody, but it's also very clear, some people could not care less about the developing sector and the population, they couldn't care less about the elderly. There is this very Nazi-like,



USANG/Wil Acosta

Cars line up at the entrance to Montgomery County's first mass coronavirus test center in Upper Dublin Township, PA, on March 20, 2020.

Malthusian axiom, where such people think there are too many people anyway, and it's a good thing that this is happening! I know that this is the case for some people, because they have been speaking out quite openly, like Jeremy Warner, Assistant Editor for the *Daily Telegraph*, who wrote this view on March 3.

So I think that we really have to fight for the adoption of what was learned in Asia in general—it was not

just China, but China did the most efficient job, but it was in Singapore and South Korea, and I think that the Asian reaction was much, much more serious, than that of the Europeans or the Americans. We have to really study what the Chinese did right, and just replicate it, because they have clearly proven that they could defeat this virus in Wuhan.

Some people are peddling absolutely horrible ideas—fascist ideas—such as the so-called herd immunity. Herd immunity means just letting people get infected. If you were to have a mortality rate of even only 1%, well, that's a lot of people dying! And the people



"The Federal Reserve and other central banks are buying everything! They're buying junk bonds!" Shown is the Federal Reserve Board Building in Washington, D.C.

promoting that "herd immunity," take those deaths into account, and just write off those millions of deaths. But I think the right way, is to try to completely wipe out the virus, and that requires harsh measures and not to loosen up too early.

The Financial Casino Must End

Schlanger: Speaking of wiping out the virus, we have that other virus, the bailouts under way to keep the casino economy in business. It's not going to work, is it, if you go ahead with the idea that we're going to "go back to the old system," because the old system was collapsing anyway. It collapsed in 2008, and it was collapsing again back in September. That's why there's a demand from you and the Schiller Institute that we have a global health system which includes economic policies. There's an idiocy of the idea that we have to make a payday tomorrow, without thinking about the fact that the system itself is collapsed.

Zepp-LaRouche: It's almost like vultures eating off of corpses: The very firm which is supposed to manage the trillion-dollar bail-out package of the Federal Reserve, BlackRock, is basically gloating and bragging that it's running this whole thing now. The idea that you can just keep on pumping money,—The Federal Reserve and the other central banks are now buying everything! They're buying junk bonds! There is a junk bond revival, and all kinds of financial charlatans are advising their customers, "Now is the time to buy junk bonds, you will make a fortune!" Well, you know, this is really the last straw before a hyperinflationary collapse of the whole system.

And it's really nasty! Because, the rating agencies are downgrading the developing countries, Argentina and such countries, and it's really a brutal fight where these vultures are trying to make the last round of profit, to make the rich richer. This is reaching a point where *we cannot do this*, because it will cause riots. We will see vast social upheaval, and as this pandemic gets worse, threats of real social chaos.

So, the only way this can be answered, is by implementing Glass-Steagall, now, before such an unhappy future occurs. For example, the oil shale sector in the United

States is completely at the verge of collapse: the oil price did not go up, even after Trump and Putin and the Saudis tried to make some arrangements. As of today, the price of oil is somewhere near \$20/barrel, and this is absolutely a time-bomb. Therefore, we have to have, now, a Glass-Steagall reorganization, and the whole package that was proposed by my late husband in 2014: National Bank, New Bretton Woods, a reorganization of the whole system. Make a new credit system, and then we can finance this, and we can restart the economy, after the pandemic is under control.

There *has* to be such a change! We cannot continue with this insane casino economy, which is causing havoc all over the world. It was that casino economy that destroyed the health system, by privatizing it; it was that casino economy that kept the developing countries down and prevented their development, and that is what gave rise to these pandemics.

So people must be brought to recognize that we have to change our ways, now. I think that this is *the*

moral test that will determine *if* the human species is capable of surviving or not.

Insane, Geopolitically Driven China-Bashing

Schlanger: Another area to look at, you had mentioned, is to study what the Chinese did to deal with the pandemic. China is beginning to reopen its economy, but they're doing it on the basis of continuing the Belt and Road Initiative, the infrastructure development. And yet, key networks in the West are fully engaged in the most vicious anti-China campaign. This is something that you've been calling out. Where does this come from?

Zepp-LaRouche: I think it comes from a deep-seated geopolitical view that the rise of China necessarily means the downfall of the United States or the West in general. I think that that view is a wrong view. At no point has China threatened to replace the United States as the hegemonic power. They have offered win-win cooperation. They have offered to the United States a special great power relationship.

It is an absolutely absurd idea that one can prevent a country of 1.4 billion people, which has determined that it wants to go the road of scientific and technological progress, and has proven that that method functions by lifting 850 million people out of poverty, and then, is starting to offer the advantage of such an approach, that you can stop that, other than by nuclear war! And that is, obviously, what some people are willing to play with.

China is not an aggressive force. But naturally, its rise does threaten the idea of a unipolar world order, which some neo-cons and British elements in the period after the collapse of the Soviet Union had tried to impose by interventionist wars: The Bush Administration and then Obama, they did all of these interventionist wars, with the idea of regime change, color revolution, and that has gotten us to the crisis we have now in Southwest Asia and the refugee crisis.

But, you know, the idea that the rise of China must be stopped is very dangerous. We see it right now that this campaign is absolutely led by British intelligence. As a matter of fact, the former head of MI6, Sir John Sawers, fueled those attacks on China, speaking on BBC Radio yesterday, after President Trump, unfortunately—very terribly—had cancelled U.S. funding for the World Health Organization (WHO). President

Trump blaming the WHO for being responsible for many deaths, because, he claimed, it had misinformed the United States. I don't even want to comment on that. It's simply factually incorrect.

But this former British MI6 head, Sawers, said that Trump should not have focussed on the WHO, but on China. And the Henry Jackson Society [headquartered in the UK], which is a totally neo-con outfit, one of the worst reactionary institutions you can imagine, came out with a [position paper](#) declaring that China should be sued, to pay for all the costs incurred from the pandemic!

The German tabloid *Bildzeitung* published a story on this today on page 2, the full story, quoting the Henry Jackson Society's long list of bills—the cost for taxi drivers, for hotel owners, 20 such categories; that China



DoD/Michael Gross

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who has been the shrill, McCarthyite voice of the British anti-China propaganda.

should pay that. On page 3, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo lists arguments against China. I believe this is the final proof that this *Bild* tabloid is part of the Integrity Initiative—formally or not, I don't care—but *de facto*. They're spreading the propaganda of the British Empire. I mean, they just proved that in the last days, if it was necessary to still have a proof.

The Truth of China's Coronavirus Mobilization

But they're trying to hype up the population against China, and their charges are factually, absolutely not true! I'll just give you the figures. To say that China was "hiding" information about the virus, is factually not true.

The first cases of some new, unknown disease became known in Wuhan on December 23, 2019. On December 30, China reported a suspicious number of people having pneumonia. On January 3, the National

Health Commission of China gave out guidelines on how to treat these cases. And on January 4, already, those medical people in Wuhan contacted their U.S. counterparts and the WHO, informing them about that. Three days later, on January 7, medical-scientific personnel in Wuhan were able, for the first time, to isolate the coronavirus strain, and this achievement was praised then by the whole international medical community, for the extraordinary speed in which they succeeded in isolating this new strain.

So, that is the record. And I remember, because we paid attention to it when it happened.

And at that point, given the fact that SARS and MERS had broken out earlier, the Western governments could have mobilized their production of masks, of ventilators, hospital beds and so forth—but they didn't do it!

Instead, for weeks and weeks, they kept repeating, "Masks are absolutely of no use." German Health Minister Jens Spahn said, "The virus will never come to Germany." He kept repeating that into February, saying the German health system is perfectly prepared for any eventualities. They really did not take it seriously, until March, when the whole thing erupted with a speed that left everybody breathless. And then, they kept saying, you don't need masks. They did *not* say, "You do need masks, you do need mass testing, let's produce everything that is necessary." They just kept adjusting the line concerning what was medically necessary to what their meager resources were. And that is a fact. You can say that for all European countries; and it's still going on, to a certain extent, even now.

So, I think that the attack on China is the most foolish, most immoral, and lying operation, because if there is one country which *did* succeed, it's China, at least for now—it's a pandemic, you never know what will happen down the road. But they were able to contain and stamp out the virus in the hotbeds of Hubei Province and the city of Wuhan.

Rather than thinking, maybe it was China's centralized government system which was the reason that China was able to react so quickly and gear up the pro-



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for a ceasefire in all military actions, to concentrate everything on fighting the pandemic.

duction of the entire country; and that maybe it was the extreme liberalism of the West which was the reason why it was not possible there, that the liberal/neo-liberal system has some inherent flaws—they target China. Rather than discussing any of that, they go into this deflection and attack China.

It's very dangerous, and it's very stupid. It should stop, and people should really not be led by the nose by these lying mass media, which have nothing to do with journalism: They're really the forefront of the intel-

ligence community, trying to feed propaganda in order to further their aims. But it has nothing to do with honest journalism, at all.

Re-Purpose Military Production

Schlanger: And it's very dangerous that this propaganda is being backed up by military maneuvers. Maybe you can say something about the so-called "elephant walk," which just took place in Guam.

Zepp-LaRouche: Yeah! I think this is not the time to show military potency, in a macho kind of behavior. Because, I agree fully with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who called for a ceasefire of all military actions, to concentrate everything on fighting the pandemic. I fully agree that there should be a complete *end* to all sanctions against all the countries that are targetted by sanctions right now, because it prevents these countries from fighting effectively against the pandemic.

But this applies especially to such military operations as this so-called "elephant walk" in Guam, which is essentially an exercise, rehearsing a mass take-off of fighter jets, of bombers, of drones, helicopters, just the whole arsenal, in a show of force. From Guam, what is the obvious target? It's China. Also, the continuous bellicose talk of NATO, that NATO has to be prepared for everything, even in the middle of this pandemic. It's just stupid! It should stop.

The military should be used for a positive purpose right now: Whatever capacity they have in terms of engineering corps, they should be employed—in part, they're doing it already in the United States, where it's

very useful. They are helping by delivering medical supplies, they're helping by disinfecting of apartments where people have died—these are useful jobs and they should be encouraged. The U.S. Army did that in Northern Italy, when there were too many corpses for the medical authorities in Italy to take care of it. So there *is* a useful role for the army in this situation.

But this is an absolute sign that we must change the attitude right now, stop geopolitics and start to think about the common aims of mankind: This is the level we have to have. And there must be a retooling of a lot of this production: Why should we continue to produce waste? President Trump talked about this a little while ago, saying he wants to enter discussions with Putin and Xi Jinping, regarding the incredible waste which is the huge military budgets. In a world of such dire human needs, why can we not retool all of this military production, and produce the kinds of things which are necessary?

Those who have made such an enormous amount of money off the military-industrial complex, up to this point—don't they have enough? They have already multi-billions! There is a limit to all of this, and we are at a point where the common good of people, of many people in the world, of *billions of people* has to come first place.

Attend the Upcoming Schiller Institute Conference

And this is what will be the subject of our upcoming conference of the Schiller Institute. I ask all of you to register for this [conference](#), this online conference, on Saturday and Sunday, April 25-26. Help to spread the news that it's taking place. The change of the paradigm will be the main subject of the conference. This conference will be an extremely important intervention into the present crisis, with the aim being to change the parameters, and establish a completely different paradigm.

Schlanger: And Helga, finally, in terms of our mobilization, you've also been behind the drafting of a global health,—almost a bill of materials call, which is [available](#) on the Schiller Institute website. It was also [published](#) in the *EIR* issue dated April 17. What should people do with that?

Zepp-LaRouche: It's a call for what needs to be done in terms of truly effective health systems in every



USAF/Michael S. Murphy

An “elephant walk” military exercise, rehearsing a mass take-off of aircraft, in a show of force aimed at China. The exercise took place at Anderson Air Force Base, Guam, April 13, 2020.

country, what kinds of materials must be produced, how to go about it. If you agree with that approach, then I would ask you to distribute this “ ‘Apollo Program’ for a New World Health System,” as widely as you can, in social media, among your friends and colleagues, and help us in this mobilization. As this Dark Age aspect that I mentioned in the beginning becomes clearer—unfortunately, I'm 100% certain that we will see many more horrible pictures in the next weeks and months—the *need* to change the system, the entire system, will become clearer and clearer.

So the more people fight for this world health system, the better the hope is that we can get it accomplished in time, and that we will save many, many millions of people from dying from the coronavirus.

So, join this mobilization, distribute this call, attend our Schiller Institute conference, and become active with us, because this is an existential question for all of humanity. We need to reach a completely different paradigm of thinking, in which war and geopolitics have to be put on the garbage heap of history. We have to go for a new Renaissance of humanist thinking, of dialogue of civilizations, of cooperation instead of confrontation. This is a worthwhile fight that I'm asking you to join.

Schlanger: Well, Helga, I think you've made it very clear, and people should study what you've said on this, look at the material we're putting out, and join us.

So, until next week. We'll see you then.

Zepp-LaRouche: Till next week. And stay healthy!