

# Excerpts from the Conference Discussion Session

*The following are excerpts from the edited transcription of the discussion session during Panel 4 of the Schiller Institute conference on September 6.*

**Question:** *Europeans hear that the U.S. has low meat safety standards. What are U.S. standards?*

**Nicole Pfrang:** There's been a couple times that we had meat come in from Brazil [mixed in with U.S. meat by JBS and other monopoly packers]. That was when the inspectors came in and the meat was declared contaminated. It was said that we farmers contaminated it, because no one knows that we're importing from 20 different countries.

**Michael Callicrate:** To the extent that the United States has the most industrialized food system in the world, we're not lending much credibility to it being safe. It's a very highly regulated industry. When there's a problem, it's a really big problem, because it's distributed nationally and globally. The fact is, the U.S. Department of Agriculture [which does the inspections] doesn't work for the people. ... It works for the big meatpacking and big food companies across the world. ... We know one thing, we've got the most fragile food system in the world! After COVID-19, you saw what happened in grocery stores across the country—the shelves looked bare. That is not a commendable food system, and to that extent, it's not a safe food system.

**Ronald Wieczorek:** In the past 10 days, one of the larger chicken processors in California was closed down because four or six people died because of the coronavirus, and over 500 people were infected. That's a terrible example, and it's brought about by how we've got all kinds of rules and regulations on these processors, but are they being implemented? Are the inspectors being bought off, or what's going on?

**Question:** *What do you think of the current U.S. and Western method of price-setting for food?*

**Callicrate:** There is no market. It is a price that is set by the middleman, by the big retailers in partnership with big meatpackers and food companies. ... The beef industry is controlled by four multinational corporations. They control 85 percent of it. It's been concen-

trated. The farmer gets about 15 cents of the consumer dollar. Our share of the consumer beef dollar has never been lower. This is at the same time as the big meatpackers, in justifying their consolidation, their mergers, their buyouts, have talked about improvements in efficiencies as being one of the reasons, or economies of scale being one of the reasons. This is simply not true.

**Robert Baker:** Most people buy into the line that, "Well, this is more efficient, The consumer demands this." These are the narratives created by monopolies. What if we had a million new farmers in the United States? A million new farmers in Europe? A million new farmers in Africa, in South America? All using the highest states of technology, in the most productive way. Then, you've just upgraded the skill level of food producers all throughout the world. It's a whole new dynamic involved. But the monopolies—all this is, is the oligarchy's way of creating an instrument through which they can funnel trillions of dollars, and just rake off the money while they rip off the producers and the citizens.

**Question:** *What's behind the "market" myth?*

**Helga Zepp-LaRouche:** I think there is a method behind that, which is not just profit. The developing countries are confronted with cheap imports, which are much cheaper than what they can produce locally, which tends to completely ruin their agriculture.

So there is a method behind it, which is also expressed, for example, by the EU guidelines. Everybody knows that German farmers and the European farmers are all going bankrupt because the prices they have been getting over years and years, have been getting lower and lower. ...

And now the EU has made new guidelines which I think force the farmers to put 25 percent of the land aside for weeds to grow. Because weeds do better in poor soil, the farmers are having to destroy the good soil in order for the weeds to grow—so, the biodiversity and the insects and so forth all have a good life.

It is obvious that this is a complete destruction of food production. And it's in line with the exit from energy—it's the Green New Deal, which the EU is now enforcing very rapidly. ... Behind all of that is really the oligarchical idea to reduce the population. I think we should not overlook that. I am completely convinced

that people like Prince Phillip, the World Wildlife Fund, and similar organizations couldn't care less if people are dying of starvation. ...

Marcia Merry Baker: Look at the specifics in Africa. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, imported chickens cost \$2, whereas locally grown chickens are \$6. For the continent of Africa as a whole, they have to import 40 percent of their daily food staples; not specialties, but wheat, rice, sorghum and corn. ...

Things are moving very fast and badly on food shortages. Just Friday [September 4] the U.N. Security Council was informed that four nations are now at the point of famine—Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen, South Sudan, and northeastern Nigeria. In fact, famine is the other side of the coin, to the bankrupting of farmers in the United States and Europe.

All it shows is that the system is blown out. We should have parity pricing; we should have anti-trust—the laws are on the books. And we should be mustering the volumes of emergency food needed for any place in the world short of food.

**Question:** *What does the U.S. Federal Reserve, a private company, contribute to the financial power of the British Empire? If we nationalized it, would that defeat the British Empire?*

**Paul Gallagher:** The whole answers to those questions would take a while, but basically, what does the Federal Reserve contribute to the British Empire? At this point, virtually everything. The City of London banks as well as the Wall Street banks are being injected with huge volumes of liquidity by our Federal Reserve, both directly and through swap lines with the Bank of England. The Federal Reserve is providing the background for the moves that the Bank of England is trying to lead under this fellow, Andrew Bailey, who took over from Mark Carney, in order to introduce what they call central bank digital currencies. That takes a little time, but if the central banks get in their digital currencies and manage to take direct control of economies with those digital currencies, you're going to have an absolute, Green holocaust.

So, in terms of nationalizing the Fed, we should, yes.

But I'd like to respond to what's been discussed here as a whole. To say that there is a market for food—a national market or an international market for food—which one should be for or against that market, is like

saying that there is a market for credit in the United States. There is no market for credit; there are 11 huge banks, and they are withdrawing credit, as I mentioned a while ago. They are in the process of pulling credit out of that credit market, not putting it in. The Fed puts liquidity into these banks, and the banks pull liquidity out of the market in order to speculate.

So the individual farm household is not facing a credit market; instead, it's duking it out with probably one local bank, which has a lot of bad loans and a high cost of acquiring capital right now, and therefore is not offering them much of anything in the way of credit.

The same answer applies to whether there is market for food.

In the 19th Century, a great deal was written by Americans and American economists about wages, prices, tariffs. In particular, Henry Carey, Lincoln's friend and sometime advisor, put down as a principle that the closer producers were brought to their suppliers and those who were going to buy their products, the higher incomes for everyone would be. If you have a local diversity of both industry and agriculture, and the interchange of products among them is primarily in a local and regional area, the prices, wages, incomes of everybody are going to be higher as a result of that. We have to bring that about.

The kind of operation that Mr. Callicrate described earlier—his own operation—we have to make it possible that that kind of thing can spread across the United States and also in Europe. This is where a real national credit institution comes in—a nationalized Federal Reserve, a Reconstruction Finance Corporation on the model of Roosevelt's.

That kind of a credit institution can make it possible for the kind of advances that were described as happening at the Friesla company, in the local meat lockers and the way they integrate them into the power and water and related supplies. That can make it possible, through credit, for that kind of thing to proliferate wherever food is being grown, where other agricultural products are being grown. That way, everybody has access to that kind of credit and also has access to a production and distribution system which they can see and which works, which raises incomes generally.

Whether we nationalize the Federal Reserve or not, the point is, the mission. What are you going to try to do with the credit that a national credit institution is going to create? Once that's clear, there are a lot of ways to do it.