

‘Eurasian Youth Initiative’ in Moscow

by Andrei Andryushkov

A Eurasian Youth Initiative conference took place Oct. 8 in Moscow. Sponsored by the Moscow Academy for Culture and Educational Development (MAKRO), the Science Dialogue Center for Continuing Education, and the Schiller Institute, the event was attended by Moscow high school and university students, as well as representatives from the State Duma (lower house of Parliament), the Kremlin staff, and Russian and Chinese scientific circles.

The topic of the conference, designed to involve the students in a discussion of the current world situation and prospects for Eurasian development, was chosen in order to address the tensions in the world today, especially at various places in Eurasia. The Russian political elite, unfortunately, has little sense of the need for Russia to determine its policy and position itself strategically in this situation, and Russian youth are not involved in the process of understanding what is going on. The conference was a first attempt to raise the level of recognition of these questions on the part of the younger generation.

In many respects, this attempt was inspired by the activity of the LaRouche Youth Movement and the participation of three Russian youths, including this author, in the September 2004 European Schiller Institute conference in Germany, “A Turning Point in History.” The Moscow conference organizers also wanted to take up the problem of defining organizational forms for the inclusion of Russian youth in the process of active self-determination for the future of Russia and the world as a whole.

The main speakers were Gen. Leonid G. Ivashov, president of the Academy for Geopolitical Problems (and former chief of the International Affairs department of the Russian Ministry of Defense); MAKRO director Prof. Yuri Gromyko; and Karl-Michael Vitt from the Schiller Institute in Germany.

In introductory remarks, Dr. Nina V. Gromyko cited Bush Administration plans for stepping up military and economic pressure on Syria. That update placed the conference participants in the real context of the world today, in which Eurasian youth initiatives are needed.

General Ivashov analyzed the world situation and the possible course of events in Russia and Eurasia. According to

him, the main characteristic of the modern world is the destruction of the international system, built up after World War II. "As a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union," he said, "it is as if the world were standing on one leg, and leaning in different directions." The basic process of destruction is taking place at the spiritual level, more than the political, said General Ivashov. He sees the modern tragedy of mankind as an aggravation of struggle between the opportunities of nature and the growing needs of mankind.

Ivashov sees twin threats, in global U.S. military and economic expansion, and domination by "virtual" international financial capital. Both forms are mortally dangerous for Russia, he said, necessitating a counterbalance of global forces. For Russia, a unique conclusion would be the need to form a geopolitical continental bloc or union, based on Russia, India, China, and Iran, the key states of Eurasia. The primary goal of such a bloc would not be war against the U.S.A. or some other country, but a fight for the civilizational identity of all Eurasian countries, which aspire to spirituality but not materialism.

Therefore, Russia now faces an essential choice, Ivashov warned: "Either we shall pursue further leadership in the world by cultivating oligarchies, or we shall develop the moral and spiritual side of things, and concentrate on education, science, and the development of new technologies, on returning to our moral values of collectivism and mutual support." Unfortunately, he said, the Russian government has not yet decided how it wants to develop the country.

General Ivashov is one of the leading people who has developed a new continental approach in Russia, connected with an alliance of Russia with Iran, India, and China. The implementation of this approach was undertaken by Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov's government in 1998-99.

Groups Interested in Instability

Yuri Gromyko noted that when discussing "youth initiatives" or building other units of action, it should be remembered that "there are groups interested in constantly increasing instability." That is because under conditions of instability, few people are able to discuss basic scientific breakthroughs, or address the cultural basis and principles of spirituality on which Eurasia was constructed. Gromyko talked about possible forms of cooperation among Eurasian countries. He complained that Russia so far does not have an Asian doctrine, without which it is impossible to solve the major problems of Eurasia.

Gromyko identified four economic versions of an Asian doctrine for Russia: providing resources for Eurasian nations, above all China; industrialization of Russia's own Far East; development of the service economy in the Asian region; and, the preferable scenario from the speaker's standpoint, joint innovation-based economic development of the region's countries, on the basis of Russian fundamental science.

Thus Gromyko emphasized, that developing Russia's

Eurasian orientation does not mean radical anti-Americanism. Moreover, according to Gromyko, "the development of global aims and scenarios for Eurasian interaction based on anti-Americanism is very dangerous today, and is not constructive."

Gromyko cited breakthrough programs as a determining condition for Eurasian development. The ability to implement such programs, however, he linked with the question of whether or not Russia is capable of offering development scenarios for all of Eurasia. It is obvious, that such scenarios should take into account the different civilizations and values of the multi-thousand-year cultures, religious confessions, and different ethnicities in Eurasia.

The involvement of youth in the development of such scenarios, Gromyko sees as the basic process through which a "Eurasian generation" will be formed. Decisions on specific goals and scenarios requires civilization-to-civilization synergy, when cooperation of different people is supported through the interaction of their energies and interests. "To develop such synergy," Gromyko concluded, "it takes young people who have a good understanding of the socio-cultural conditions of their countries and can engage in dialogue about breakthrough scenarios for Eurasian development."

Vitt reported about the LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM) and its latest actions in Germany. The Russian youth were struck by the LYM's musical method of social action. The three who took part in the Schiller Institute conference in Germany, have been discussing the applicability of this method in Russia.

The LaRouche movement, Vitt said, turns to historical examples of ideas and cultural action. Russia, for example, has the foreign and economic policy, carried out by S.Yu. Witte in the late 19th Century. Citing the experience of the Schiller Institute, Vitt offered the following principle: "How is it possible to find in another culture something universal, that I then can use and somehow apply to my own culture?" or vice versa.

Dmitri Rylov, Konstantin Fursov, and Andrei Andryushkov, who had been at the conference in Germany, made presentations. Further discussion revealed some ambiguities concerning the current situation of Russian youth and how to mobilize them. But the group of students supported an initiative to organize a Eurasian Youth Club, which could bring together students and youth from the Eurasian national diaspora communities in Moscow, to discuss the prospects for Eurasian development.

An initiative group is now designing a website for this youth club, and is making up a program of meetings with key people who have a Eurasian outlook. Conference participants agreed on the need to organize an international camp next year, with participation from LYM representatives. It would be devoted to intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue in Eurasia and projects for the development of Eurasia.