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## From a Schiller Institute Seminar

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# How Russia might exit from a Dark Age in the 21st century

*At a seminar held by the Schiller Institute in Germany, following its Dec. 10-11, 1994 conference in Eltville, Prof. Yuri Kobishchanov of the Africa Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, presented part of his paper, "The Socio-Ethnic Condition of Civilization in 21st Century Russia." During the discussion, Lyndon LaRouche commented on Dr. Kobishchanov's thesis. Their remarks are presented here with the permission of both speakers.*

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### Dr. Yuri Kobishchanov

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The construction of new communication networks across the space of Eurasia, which will connect Europe with the Far East and with southern and southwest Asia, poses the question of those ethno-social circumstances and conditions of civilization in which Russia will be living during the 21st century. Sooner or later, most likely at the beginning of the 21st century, the current degradation of the Russian economy will be superseded by stabilization and a certain degree of upswing. The most ecologically polluting, water-intensive, energy-consuming, and gigantic types of production will be developed for both external and domestic markets, for which there is no room in a country whose population is dense, well-to-do, and cultured.

Unemployment is already growing quite rapidly in Russia today, in comparison with the reduction of the population. The population's health is declining, as is its skill level for production and general intellectual qualification, as well as, possibly, its morality.

In the largest cities of Russia, fertility is only 6 to 7 births per 1,000 population and exhibits a tendency to decline further. The overall fertility coefficient for Russian women has fallen to 1 and continues to fall. That is more than twice as low than the limiting norm [two births per woman of childbearing age], below which the population begins to die out. Despite the decline of the average life-expectancy, there is a growing excess of mortality over fertility. And the worst demographic situation holds for the most numerous peoples, affecting the Russians and the Ukrainians, the largest ethnic minority in Russia.

As many as half of all children are born ill. Approximately 20% of newborns come into this world out of wedlock.

Many children grow up in incomplete families, or in orphanages. There are families of alcoholics and drug addicts.

A significant portion of the youth wish neither to work nor to study. And finally, they lack the concept of duty to parents, society, or humanity. This constitutes a reserve of criminality, not of creative activity.

It must be said that the situation with the Islamic population is not as bad. There, fertility continues to exceed mortality by a significant amount. The population density is increasing, as well as is the percentage of Muslims living in their traditional areas. Muslim families on the whole are larger, more stable, and healthier.

Among Russians, there are groups which are relatively more solid in their family structure and have more children. Those are the Baptists, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the Pentecostals, who are all confessional minorities in society. The Chuvash people, who inhabit one of the relatively larger geographical areas of Russia, also have a relatively better demographic situation.

Despite the influx of Russians and Russian-speaking people from the republics of the former Soviet Union, the numerical level of Russians living in Russia has fallen by over 2 million in the past three years, and this is only the beginning. By the year 2020, the number of hereditarily ethnic Russians in Russia will have fallen to 85 million, and subsequently will continue to decline, to 80 million and lower.

This loss is not compensated by the growth of non-Russian ethnic groups in Russia. With the exception of the urban concentrations and certain rural areas in the south of Russia and the Volga-Ural region, the Russian Federation as a whole is a huge, but extremely thinly populated country, full of emptied-out villages and areas of lost population.

At the same time, this vast expanse of several thousand square kilometers, from the Kuriles to Vladikavkaz, borders with overpopulated Asia, beyond which are Africa, South America.

### Labor shortage

When industrial growth of an extremely resource-intensive type recommences in Russia, it seems that a very important component will be lacking—labor resources. And then, to multinational Russia, where ethnic Russians continue to be the dominant segment, will be added an at-first approxi-



*The marketplace in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. In the next century, Russia will have to assimilate refugees from the Central Asian republics, as well as from more distant countries. This great challenge, if dealt with effectively, can provide the opportunity for a cultural rebirth.*

mately equal, and subsequently numerically superior, mass of immigrants from various countries of Asia and other such areas, from Africa and other regions.

By the middle of the 21st century, the hereditarily ethnic Russians will still be the largest group, but not the absolute majority, of the population in Russia. Alongside them will be several dozen large new national minorities, among whom the largest without question will be the Chinese.

This is inevitable: During the next century, hundreds of millions of inhabitants of the South, worldwide, will strive to go to the North, where the overwhelming majority of material wealth, comfort, and modern information is concentrated. North America is preparing to receive a limited number of them, and united Europe is doing everything it can to make sure that the population of the South does not overwhelm it, but comes in drop by drop. Japan and Korea have taken even stricter measures to keep foreigners out.

The rulers of the world, to whose number China and India and some other Asian countries are now being added, will be sending their surplus population into Russia. Actually, the first trickle of this stream has already appeared. These are the refugees from Tajikistan, as well as the numerous refugees of Turkmen, Uzbek, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Georgian, and other Caucasus nationalities. There are also, however, immigrants to Russia from farther abroad: Chinese, Kurds, Afghans, and Somalians. Many of them come here in transit, trying to reach western Europe via Russian territory. Quite a significant number of Afghans, Chinese, and Kurds whom I have interviewed, however, have actually been living in Moscow and its suburbs for several years. They have assimilated quite well and speak Russian. In the future, however, the number of such people in Russia will be multiplied a hundredfold.

On the basis of worldwide experience, and the observation of African and Asian ethnic groups in Moscow and its

suburbs, as well as in some other Russian regions, we can get a preliminary picture of the behavior of the new national minorities in Russia in the 21st century, as well as of what the attitude to them of the local population, both Russian and non-Russian, will be.

In Russia, immigrants from African and Asian countries move very quickly and in friendly collaboration with each other to set up their own formal and informal activity, including criminal activity. To the extent possible, they will settle together, so new areas of ethnic communities will appear in Russian cities—sometimes whole Chinatowns, with places of worship that are exotic for Russia.

### **Assimilation of immigrants**

Some of the immigrants who are brought in to work in mines and factories, will go home after the end of their contract work. But some will try to stay in Russia. They may move into another region, even into rural areas. Here, many of them will take up agriculture, especially in close proximity to urban markets for produce. For this segment of the population and for the better-off urban immigrants, the problem of acquisition of real estate will arise.

The question of religious confession will take on a new significance for Russia, insofar as in place of a religiously homogeneous mass, with a few concentrations of non-Orthodox Christians, Islamic Tatars, and Jews—as it was at the beginning of this century—or an almost completely atheistic society where all national religion and culture was suppressed, there will appear a complex system of ethno-confessional groups, where Russian Orthodoxy will be just one of many.

Some immigrants from Africa and Asia will convert to Christianity, even Orthodoxy. But mainly they will convert to Catholicism, Baptism, Adventism, and other Protestant

denominations. Among the Russian-speaking population, in turn, there will be a broader dissemination than now, not only of Protestantism, but also of Buddhism and the syncretic religions of the East.

In Chuvashia, Mari-El, Yakutia, and other regions [in the Volga-Ural area and Siberia] there will be further cultivation of their own forms of religious syncretism, together with forms of Christianity indigenous to those regions. Inside the Protestant churches, the Catholic Church, and the Buddhist community, an extremely complex and interwoven system of relations will be developed among various ethnic groups, and groups of mixed origin. The domination of Russians within the Adventist and other types of Protestant groups and Poles among the Catholics will be seriously tested. Similar developments are to be expected in the Muslim community, which so far dominates in Tataria and the Caucasus.

The absolute numbers and the relative weight of these Muslim communities within the life of Russia will increase many times over. Several regions in which Muslims predominated until the middle of the 16th century, already have reverted to being more than 50% Muslim. Now, under the influence of this African and Asian immigration, there is a new consolidation of religious communities under way.

It is an admissible hypothesis that, in some regions of Russia and associated states like Kazakhstan, there will be a diverse reaction to this influx from Africa and Asia.

My paper reviews this region by region, which is more than I shall go into at this point.

This is not a pessimistic prognosis. After all the tribulations, the Russians will have turned into a predominant group comprising the relative but not absolute majority of the population; then the question of Russian citizenship for these immigrants will be fought out long and hard. Ultimately they will be assimilated into a new nation, as a result of which Russia can have a rebirth and its culture be enriched by the cultural heritage of the most diverse civilizations.

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## Lyndon LaRouche

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This presentation involves something which is absolutely fascinating in its implications for mankind. Unfortunately, in the teaching of science, as I said this past weekend, the term "science" is often misused to really mean what we call engineering, particularly by people who don't know mathematics very well, and are very impressed by complicated procedures in mathematics. And we don't realize that these little things that people are fascinated with, may have their importance, but they really are not what makes the history of mankind.

The most important thing about human knowledge and human practice, is a branch of knowledge which is called epistemology, which is the question of human knowledge which pertains to human creativity, which, relative to any formal system, means the discovery of valid new sets of

superior axioms and postulates. Naturally, my own discoveries in economics and related matters make this of very special importance to me.

Now, those of you who heard this presentation, I would like to ask you to hear it as I heard it.

Until the beginning of the 15th century, mankind had not developed a culture which was capable of sustaining more than a few hundred million people on this planet. The planet as a whole depends for its very existence on these discoveries in modern European culture; and the ability of the human race to sustain a higher population density than several hundred million people, depends upon the ability of people to assimilate this culture. Of course, as you all know, I take for granted the elimination of this British garbage from humanity so that the culture can flourish in all its natural potential.

But just think of the problem now. We have China, which is 80% essentially illiterate peasants. We have South Asia and Southeast Asia, which have a somewhat similar—not as acute, but similar—situation. We have problems in Africa, and so forth.

And what the professor has outlined, which I think is a generally good projection, says the following to us, if we think about it: He's saying that under the influence of the counterculture, which took over European civilization during the 1960s, we have gone through a moral and cultural collapse, to the effect that great sections of the North American, western European, and eastern European cultures are not morally capable of sustaining themselves.

The point is, what the professor described, which has similar echoes in western Europe and in North America, can be described as the collapse of European civilization into a Dark Age, a Dark Age which spans the length of about three generations, in which the ability of the population even to reproduce itself has largely collapsed. And he paints the prospect of coming out of the Dark Age, say, about 2020, in which a much-reduced percentage of the European population is now called upon to try to save society by assimilating a lot of people with other cultural backgrounds.

Now, from my knowledge, this can be done; but it involves problems of epistemology which present governments and present academic circles are very poorly equipped to address. And I should just say, in concluding these remarks, that I would recommend that people look at the professor's report. I think it's too pessimistic; I think we can do better. But nonetheless, it's very useful to put it in that form, because it poses problems we must treat seriously in statecraft.

It's an extremely important question, but it must be looked at from an epistemological standpoint, which most people who call themselves scientists are completely unprepared to deal with. Because science today will look at this problem incompetently from a formalist or formal-mathematical standpoint; and it must be looked at from a cultural-epistemological standpoint. And I must say in conclusion, I found it fascinating.