EIR Feature

The Dialogue of Cultures

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder of the international Schiller Institute, a leading German political figure, and the wife of American statesman Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., gave the following speech on Feb. 17, 2002 to the annual Presidents' Day conference of the Schiller Institute/International Caucus of Labor Committees, in Reston, Virginia. Subheads have been added. Some of the graphics used in the presentation have been omitted here for copyright reasons, or replaced with similar images.

Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche was introduced by civil rights heroine, and Schiller Institute leader, Amelia Boynton Robinson.

Thank you very much, Amelia. You always warm our hearts, with your beautiful, poetical descriptions.

Now, I want to discuss today, how to defeat this evil policy of the "Clash of Civilizations." And, indeed, if you look at the happenings in the Middle East, in the Gulf region, and elsewhere, one can actually see that the danger of the world plunging into a Clash of Civilizations, is very big. And, I still remember the words of the former head of the CIA, [James] Woolsey, who, immediately after Sept. 11, said that the war against terrorism would last, maybe, a hundred years.

Now, if this would happen, and you would have a war of a hundred years, there is no question that the world would plunge into a New Dark Age, and we would have a global religious war—an always perpetuating war—and, it is already clear, that after the bombing of Afghanistan, the fuse to this Clash of Civilizations has been lit.

Contrary to what the media are trying to tell you, trying to brainwash the population, nothing has been solved in Afghanistan. As a matter of fact, the German TV openly said, if the foreign troops would leave, the Taliban would be back in six days. And, when we were in India, in December (Mr. LaRouche and I), the Indians expressed very strongly, and said, "What crazy idea is it, that you want to eliminate fundamentalism, by dropping bombs on it? You just make it worse." And, it is very clear, what Lyn [LaRouche] outlined yesterday: that, contrary to what is being said, the Clash of Civilizations is the real intent of these policies. Already, the entire region is a powderkeg. And, therefore, everybody in Europe knows that, if these policies, which were pronounced by President Bush in the State of the Union address—the so-called "axis of evil" of, supposedly, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea—if this would be, indeed, carried out, this region would blow up.

And, therefore, you have an unprecedented wave of protests, from Germany, from France, from many politicians in other European countries, because they for sure don't want that. Because they can see, very clearly, that, contrary to the propaganda, that any such attack on Iraq, let alone Iran or North Korea, would mean a strategic crisis with Russia, and all of this, in the context of the financial meltdown, would lead to an incalculable situation, where the outcome could very easily be World War III.

Huntington and the 'Clash of Civilizations'

Therefore, what I'm going to talk about today, the need for a "Dialogue of Cultures," as a way to defeat the Clash of Civilizations, is one of the most urgent questions of civilization today. And, I think it is important to study, what are these civilizations we are talking about? How can you understand them? And how you can see that the idiotic thesis of the evil Samuel Huntington about the Clash of Civilizations, is actually an idiotic, wrong idea: because what it is based on is the idea, the axiom, that all the different cultures, and religions, and civilizations, are completely different; that they are absolutely not united by universal principles, common to all of them; and, therefore, because they have nothing in common, a war among them is eventually inevitable.

What Samuel Huntington says in his book [*The Clash of Civilizations*], is that Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and so forth, are all fundamentally different

Helga Zepp-LaRouche addresses the conference of the Schiller Institute and ICLC on Feb. 17. The ideology behind the Clash of Civilizations "depends on this axiom, that there are no universal ideas among the different cultures. Because only then can you keep control, keep them separate, keep them manipulated."

and separate. Now, I don't know if you've read this book. If you do, you have to eat something first, because your stomach will turn around. Books always reflect the mind of the author, and, when you read this book, you see immediately: This author has an extremely ugly mind. It's the same ugly mind, which comes out in his other book, *The Soldier and the State,* where he discusses the role of the army in relation to civil society, and why a professional army, which blindly is obedient, and in which the soldiers are the legions holding together the empire, is actually what is desirable. And most revealing is that he says that the good example of a soldier who is not thinking, but just obeying orders, is the Reichswehr, which did not oppose Hitler coming to power in 1933; and a bad example—of what the soldiers should not be—is the Resistance of the 20th of July [1944]—I mean, so much for his mind-set.

Now, you have, in the recent months, an open discussion in the *New York Times,* and elsewhere, that there should be a global American Empire. So, what H.G. Wells, in his *Open Conspiracy,* develops, and which has unfortunately polluted the minds of generations of Establishment figures in the United States ever since—namely, that there should be a world empire—this policy has now come out of the closet.

The entire control of such a new empire, dominated by, especially, the United States, but also the Anglo-Americans, depends on this axiom, that there are no universal ideas among the different cultures. Because only then can you keep control, keep them separate, keep them manipulated. Now, this is not anything terribly new, because, if one studies the books of British historiography, it is absolutely amazing what gigantic effort the British historians have made in the last three centuries, to prove that all the cultures have developed completely autochthonously, autarchically, and they have not influenced each other.

If people believe that, then obviously, it is extremely easy to manipulate them. And, you all (or some of you) remember that, at a certain point, you may have had a fight with a person. And you were the real opponent of this person in this moment. And, then, your mind tends to just make up a list of negative points about this person. And you think of this person, and you just think of these negative points. And, then, eventually, when you want to end this fight, and overcome the conflict, you have to remember that the person does not consist of this list of points, but that there are, actually, common grounds which unite you with this person, and there is a higher level of reason which you can relate to.

In a similar way, this is how you have to approach the different cultures, because if you only focus on the negative points, then there is always room for conflict. This dialogue can also not be just in the form of a nominalist way, but you have to approach it from the standpoint of Universal History: namely, from a standpoint which the British say, does not even exist. But, I can assure you that, among insiders, Universal History is the hottest issue in town.

Nicolaus of Cusa and Universal History

When one tries to develop this idea of the dialogue of cultures, based on Universal History, I still think that Nicolaus of Cusa is the best reference point. I already referred to his beautiful call for a dialogue among cultures, in my call last October,[1] but since there are many new people listening today, I want to quickly go into this dialogue here, again: It's called

1. "Zepp-LaRouche Urges Dialogue of Cultures," *EIR,* Oct. 26, 2001.

De Pace Fidei, about peace and religion; and it was written in 1453, after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, which one can say was an earlier Clash of Civilizations, and it caused big fears in all of Europe about what had happened. And, the reports about bloodshed, rapes, killings, and so forth poured in. And Nicolaus of Cusa had just previously been in Constantinople; then, he writes under the impression of this [war report], this very lofty, beautiful dialogue: where the representatives of 17 religions and nations go to God, to the Divine Word, and say: "We are all fighting each other, killing each other, in Your name, and that cannot be Your intention. Can You please help us, to overcome this problem?" So, God, the Divine Word, says, "Well, you all are wise men, sages of your religions; and therefore, you can all understand that there is only one Truth." And, the wise men say, "Yes, we all know this; there is only one Truth. But why do we still fight?" And then God says, "Well, you make the mistake, to mistake the words of the prophets, for the Word of God." And they can easily see, that the Word of God is of a higher value, than the words of all the prophets.

"But we still fight." So He says, "Well, you make another mistake, that you mistake the Truth with tradition. The Truth is one, but the traditions are many."

So, the wise men all agree, and say: "Well, we all agree. But how can we now go back to our people, and tell them they should believe in a new religion, when they have shed so much blood for the old one?" And then God says, "Well, I'm not asking you to preach a new religion. I'm talking about the one religion, which was before, and above, all other religions. Now go to your people, and teach them that Truth."

Now, Nicolaus applied here, in the concrete case of religious war, what was his deepest conviction, from his first sermon, which he preached in 1430—that there is a multitude of voices for the one Truth. This was the humanist tradition, which believes that there exists a continuous original wisdom of all people: a *prisca theologica,* an old, very wise theology, above the different ones.

The Hindu Cosmogony

Now let us investigate, if evidence of this can be found in the different religions. Let us first go to one of the cradles of mankind, to India, and Hinduism, where we find a continuous civilization of at least 8,000 years, and probably much, much longer. And here, in the oldest Indian writings, in the *Rig Veda,* which are the earliest Hindu writings, we find the famous sentence about the One Truly Divine, with the Many Names. The Truth is One, the sages only give it different names. In Hinduism, there is the deep recognition, that the One Divine Truth does not give privilege to one language or culture. That the One Truth is not the possession of anybody alone, but that this Truth shines differently in different souls. There is the "Sanatana Dharma," the eternal religion, which is even more than the Hindu Dharma, and more than any other religion. This eternal religion is understood as behind all religions, or, as Cusa would say, "above all religions."

Dharma also signifies the eternal order, which governs both the Cosmos and the moral law of man—an idea very similar to the concept of the Macrocosmos/Microcosmos in Nicolaus of Cusa.

Mahatma Gandhi saw himself as a Sanatana Hindu, respecting, at the same time, the truth of the other religions. Hinduism is not a missionary religion, but it is guided by the deep conviction that the other person, or religion, has his own way of reaching the way to God. It is even considered blasphemy, if a person thinks that he or she can usurp what the one Truth is, with a single notion for himself or herself alone. If one takes the color of one's own spectacles, as being the only color to exist, one can only see the imposed color, and not the object as such. One has to understand that God deliberately created the many colors, and that the multitude is wished by God.

The very famous—and very beautiful—"creation song" of the *Rig Veda,* describes the creation of the Universe, as "resting before all Creation" in the Original Oneness, out of which the Divine Creator emanates, and creates the Universe. In the fourth verse of this "creation song," the idea is expressed, that the first seed of thinking, was the desire for love. And, that the sages reached in their heart, and in reflecting in this way, they found the original existence of the non-existent.

Now, remember this aspect of Indian cosmogony, when we later come to the Egyptian myth of creation.

In the Hindu writings, the *Rig Veda* roughly can be compared to the Old Testament (even though in Hinduism, there is no binding text, like the Bible or the Koran); and the *Upanishads* could be compared with the New Testament. Of all the very interesting concepts I could talk about, I only want to pick two ideas: on the one side, the Absolute Brahman, with distinctive features, which is called the "Saguna Brahman"; and on the other side, that aspect which is beyond all distinctive features, which is called the "Nirguna Brahman." This Brahman, without specific attributes, is the highest form of consciousness. It is exactly what Nicolaus of Cusa discusses with the "negative theology," which Nicolaus of Cusa called the "Non-Other": namely, that you cannot give any positive name to God, because it diminishes the greatness of God, and that you can only describe God as being that, "the Non-Other is Non-Other than the Non-Other."

The majority of people need a personal God, with attributes, and in Hinduism, this is called "Ishwara," who also gives grace to the people. Hinduism, in the later period, represented by the big epic dramas, *Ramayana, Mahabharata,* and the *Bhagavad-Gita* (which was the favorite book of Gandhi), made this ideal of the Saguna Brahman the most popular form of Hinduism.

Now, there was a change in the notion of the use of God, from the older *Rig Vega* to the *Upanishads.* Now God is not one God, but it is the omnipotent, omniscient One. He is in us, beside us, and above us. Now, we will see this later, in the Egyptian concepts, and it is also the Cusan idea of the *"quodlibet in quolibet,"* that everything is in everything. This

God, in the *Upanishads*, cannot be comprehended, through speech, thinking, nor seeing; only through the words, "He is": the idea that all notions of dualism and multitudes, are confusion, and only the negation of all positive descriptions, all determinations have to be negated; that this is all the more so, if one refers to the one truth, the Absolute Brahman.

Some of the key concepts in Hinduism, are very similar to what we find in Christianity:

First, that there is an eternal religion, above the specific traditions of religions, as expressed in *De Pace Fidei;*

Second, that the true character of God cannot be described with positive adjectives—the "Non-Other" negative theology of Cusa;

Third, that man participates in God's nature (the idea of *imago Dei* in Christianity: man in the "image of God"); and,

Fourth, that, according to the "creation song" of the *Veda*, love and intellect belong together, which is the Christian idea of *agapē.*

The Cohesion Between Christianity and Philosophy

What other evidence do we have of this original wisdom, existing in all of mankind's history, the idea of an enduring tradition of knowable truth? St. Augustine, in the Seventh Book of his *Confessions*, talks about the cohesion between Christianity and philosophy. The neo-Platonists, he says, would have said nearly all with the same words, what is said in the Gospel of St. John: The unity and Oneness of God; the creation of the world through the Logos; the enlightenment and creation of human souls through the Logos. Only the Incarnation of God, and the Redemption of man, through Christ's death, would be missing, said Augustine.

In the already-mentioned sermon by Nicolaus of Cusa, from 1430, Nicolaus quotes this passage of Augustine, and then elaborates the cohesion of the prologue of the Gospel of St. John, with the general human tradition of wisdom. Nicolaus adds that, not only would the neo-Platonists have recognized God as Logos; that, already, Hermes Trismegistus would have recognized nearly the whole truth, and would have described the power and majesty of the Logos.

For Nicolaus, the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus were an expression of a very, very old, ancient wisdom, out of which Moses and the Platonists would have drawn. Nicolaus' conviction was that this wisdom would be the common basis of all the multitude of human history, and that therefore, the diversifying views could all be brought back in their convergence.

Who was this Hermes Trismegistus? I must say, this person has been known to me for a long time, because Nicolaus quotes him all the time, but in the recent period, I looked more closely, and I was completely intrigued about him. Here we come to one of the most fascinating stories of ancient *and* modern history, and to the absolute dividing line between the British Empire faction, and the humanist tradition. A controversy about this question, erupted during the last 25 years, one of the biggest freakouts among historians, ever: the famous *Black Athena* debate, about a book which was published first in 1987, by Martin Bernal, discussing the Egyptian roots of the Classical Greek, and therefore, the European civilization.

The controversy about this book was so big—and still is—that, for example, a certain John R. Lens wrote in the magazine *Free Inquiry*, "Not since the Old Testament, has a book about the second millennium B.C. generated so much controversy as *Black Athena."* And a David Gress writes in the *New Criterion:* "Who would have thought it possible to enlist Bronze Age Greece, in the current academic war against Western civilization?" What would be at stake, he said, would be nothing less than the distortion and dismantling of higher education, which would be exactly the intention of the author, Martin Bernal.

Why would Bernal's argument, that the ancient Greeks learned a lot from the Egyptians, be an attack on Western civilization? Could it be that here is someone shrieking, who has the mind-set of the Clash of Civilization crowd? We will see.

Guatemalan Group Supports Zepp-LaRouche's Appeal

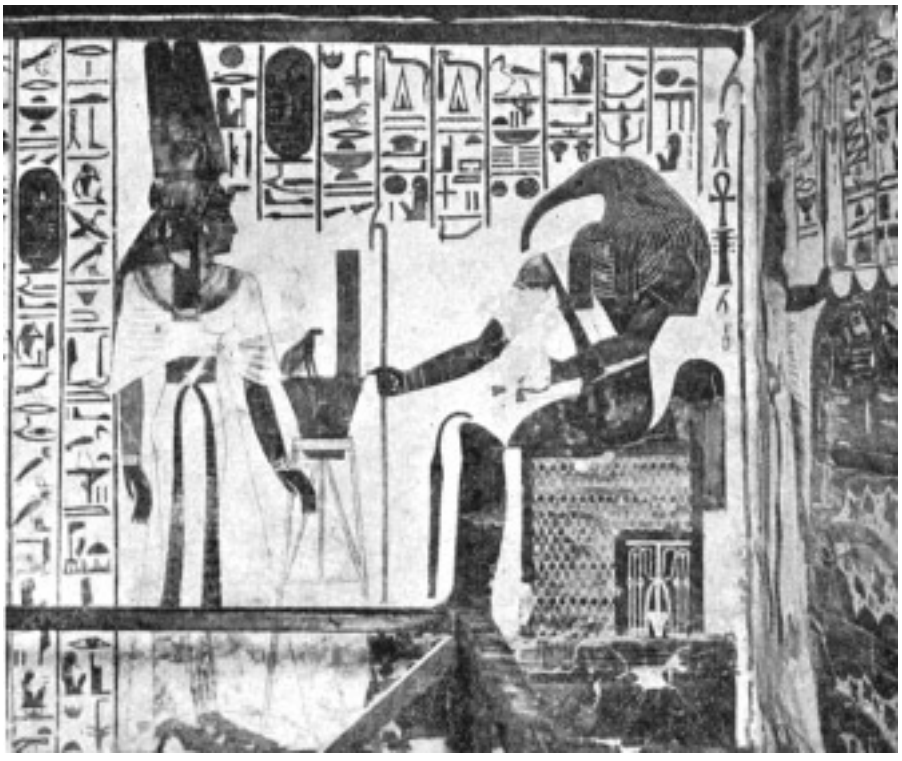
The General Assembly of the Guatemalan Association of Cultural Centers, at its national conference on March 3, endorsed Helga Zepp-LaRouche's call for a Dialogue of Cultures:

"Considering that since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the world has moved dangerously toward the possibility of war, whose escalation, based on the concept of a clash of civilizations—which concept denies the possibilty that civilizations can find points of convergence around universal principles—is being fanned by the world press; and

"Considering that the Schiller Institute, whose main offices are in Germany, and its president Helga Zepp [LaRouche] have promoted a project for a dialogue of civilizations worldwide;

"Therefore, this assembly, which represents a love of peace not only for our country beaten down by intransigence, discrimination, and racism, declares itself in favor of all those initiatives—national and foreign—which come out for world peace, for which reason it not only embraces the initiative of the aforementioned Schiller Institute, but calls on that Institute to take our association into account, given that it is made up of more than 130 cultural centers throughout the national territory. . . ."

FIGURE 1



A relief from the Egyptian 19th Dynasty, during the reign of Ramses II.

Who Is Hermes Trismegistus?

Let's look at the different aspects of a very complex question. Let's go back to Nicolaus of Cusa's statement, that Moses and Plato learned very essential truths from Hermes Trismegistus. All the academics agree, that Hermes Trismegistus was identical with the Egyptian god Thoth. And, even modern authors don't deny his role as god of wisdom and knowledge. Here (**Figure 1**) you have a relief from the 19th Dynasty, during Ramses II; this is about 1250 B.C. These reliefs and paintings are one of the most beautiful of the royal decorations of the New Kingdom. What you see here is the vignette of Verse 94 of the so-called *Book of the Dead*, where the god Thoth, with the head of an ibis, gives the writing set and water pot to Neferati.

[Another graphic, not shown here, depicts the god Thoth, at the judgment of the dead.] This is, again, the 19th Dynasty, 1285 B.C. This is in the British Museum. This is a vignette to Verse 125 of the *Book of the Dead*, where Hunifer is guided by the jackal-faced god Anubis to the trial, and his heart is weighed against the symbol of truth, the feather. If the feather has the same weight as the heart of the newly dead person, it is proof that he has lived a life according to the laws. Beside the scale, to the right, you have the god Thoth, the god of wisdom, with an ibis head, and he writes the results of the weighing. The script names Thoth as the "master of the divine words."

So, the big controversy erupts concerning the age of the writings, combined with the so-called *Corpus Hermeticus*, which are texts possibly dating back to this god Thoth, and possibly many of them being written much later. The big controversy is, whether these texts are reflecting the ancient Egyptian philosophy, or if they originated in Classical Greece; and also controversy erupts concerning the person of Thoth, who is called Hermes in Greek, in his role. Admittedly, the borderline between the undeniable, very old tradition of Thoth in Egypt, and the philosophy of the Hermetic texts, is fluid, and it is very difficult to come to definite conclusions from an archeological, from a philological standpoint. The fact is, that, until the writings of the French textual expert Isaac Casaubon, in the beginning of the 17th Century, all thinkers referred to Hermes Trismegistus and the Hermetic writings as Egyptian.

Casaubon proved the philosophical, theological, and even literal cohesion, between the Hermetic texts, Plato, and the New Testament, to then argue, that that could only mean that the Hermetic writings had to be written *after* the emergence of Christianity, in Greece; namely, in the Second and Fourth Centuries A.D. But, one can also take the opposite view, that this cohesion rather gives credence to St. Augustine and Nicolaus of Cusa's arguments, that there is no contradiction between the universal human truth and Christianity.

Either Plato's ideas are identical with Egyptian tradition, or they originate there. Let's look at the different aspects. In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates says he, Thoth, was the one who created the numbers, mathematics, and geometry, and especially all the letters: the hieroglyphs. What is clear, is the idea that Thoth was the originator of writings, of wisdom, and that he is referred to several times in the so-called *Book of the Dead*, which was especially widely distributed in the 18th Dynasty, which was the 16th and 14th Centuries B.C. There are also references from the 19th Dynasty, which speak of the writings of Thoth, and that Thoth was described as an extremely powerful deity.

Newer discoveries indicate that at least elements of the Hermetic writings can be dated definitely much earlier. In Esna, in Upper Egypt, the name Thoth (who is also called the "three times greatest"), was found from the Third Century B.C., and "Trismegistus" means the "thrice-great" Hermes.

There were also found, the so-called Demotic texts from Saqqana, near Memphis, from the Second Century B.C.

An extremely interesting text, called the "Memphis Theology," from the Second or Third Millennium B.C., contains a cosmogony, where Ptah, the god of Memphis, and Atun, his emanation, appeared as the first beings. Ptah created the universe in his heart, the location of his intellect, and realized it through the tongue in the act of speaking. Again, a similarity with the account of the original creation you can find in Plato, and in the first chapter of John (remember: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God"), is obvious. Even James Breasted from the University of Chicago, who otherwise opposed the views of Philo of Alexandria and Schiller on Egypt, wrote, after the publication of the translation of the "Memphis Theology" in 1901: "This conception of the world represents a sufficient basis for the assumption, that the notion of *Nous* [the mind] and *Logos* [the word], of which one up to now believed that they were introduced to Egypt at a much later point, already existed in the much earlier period. With this, the Greek record, that the origin of Greek philosophy has to be looked for in Egypt, has obviously much more truth to it, than one is willing to admit in modern times."

In the cosmogony, Thoth played the role of the heart of Ptah, while the tongue is Horus. This tradition, which connects Thoth with the heart, is still 2,000 years later in the *Treasure of Hor*. John Ray, who published these texts, emphasizes the association of the heart with the intellect, with which Thoth is associated.

Isn't that a similar idea as we found in the four verses of the Vedic creation song: that the intellect and the heart belong together?

It seems that the *Corpus Hermeticus* was written over a very long period of time, probably using older traditions being written up then, between the Sixth Century B.C. and the Second Century A.D., but it surely contains the religious and philosophical ideas of much earlier Egyptian times.

The Greeks and the Egyptians

Concerning the Greek influences, which are also there, it remains to be investigated further, since much of the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy had a strong Egyptian influence in the first place. In this period, also, there was what is called a "euhemerization," namely, the transformation of the gods into sages, but the person of Hermes Trismegistus continued to be referenced in both Christianity and Islam, as an epitome of knowledge.

Before we turn to the question of, "Why is the argument, that Greek philosophy is based on Egyptian influence, so controversial?," let's look at the Greek and Renaissance thinkers themselves, how they saw this question. Martin Bernal assumes that there were waves of colonizations, not only of Crete, but also of Greece, in the Second Millennium B.C. And, why would there have been a break to this tradition? Plato describes, in the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*, the early civilization of Atlantis and how it was destroyed. This probably refers to the destruction of the volcanic island Thera, in 1625 B.C. In the very famous account about Atlantis, Critias tells the following story: Solon, who lived 640-560 B.C., would have visited Sais, then the capital of Egypt in the early Sixth Century, where he would have been received as a family member, because there was a close relationship between Sais and Athens. A high-ranking Egyptian priest scolded Solon, with the famous words: "Oh Solon, Solon! You Greeks are nothing but children, and there is not one adult Greek." Which seems to reflect that Plato saw Egypt as the older culture, and maybe the old Egyptians looked at the Greeks as the Baby-Boomers of the time.

Then, Plato explains why the Athenians had so little knowledge of their own past, which would be due to the fact that Greek culture, again and again, was destroyed through fires and floods—the famous dark age—so that no memory of earlier glory would exist. In Egypt, because of its better location, very old institutions and records would have been preserved over long periods of time. Therefore, anybody who wanted to find out about the early periods of the Athenians, had to go to Egypt.

He also reports that many people, like Solon, Pythagoras, but also Pelops, Cadmus, Aigyptus, Danaos, would have brought ideas and cultural goods from Egypt.

Now, let's take a look, briefly, at some later thinkers on the same question: a Church writer called Caecilius Firnianus Lectantius (who died in 317 A.D.) wrote that Hermes lived before Moses, and Philo of Alexandria, who lived in the First Century [A.D.], tried to connect the Hermetic thinking with the Old Testament and Platonic thought. Abelard referred to the Hermetic writings to, again, make the point Augustine had made earlier, how deeply the philosophers had understood the secrets of God, and that God is not only good, but He is the Good itself, and that He, as a world-creating wisdom, produces the entirety of ideas, and that He moves the totality of the world in a loving way.

These basic principles of a philosophical teaching of the Trinity, Abelard already found in Hermes Trismegistus, as well as Augustine, and Plato, whom he calls "the greatest philosopher."

A similar notion of Trinity, we find with Ramon Llull (Llullus), who lived in Mallorca, who described God as the Creator (*Deificans*), the Created One (*Deificabilis*), and the action process of Creation (*Deificare.* Nicolaus of Cusa, who knew Llull from his studies in Padua, tries to prove the Trinity in a philosophical way, and he sees himself in the tradition of Hermes and the neo-Platonics, about whom Augustine had already said that they would have philosophically comprehended the Trinity. Also, influence of Hermetic writings, you find in Albert the Great in the 13th Century, who speaks of the Egyptian wisdom of Hermes: "Man is through intellect, the 'bond,' the tie, between God and the world," says Albert. The English mathematician and philosopher Thomas Brad-

wardine, who died in 1349, spoke of Hermes as the Father of Philosophers; *Trismegistus triplex,* the three-times great Trismegistus; *in philosophica Pater Maximus,* the Greatest Father; the *Rex Aegypti,* the King of Egypt; the philosopher and the prophet.

Ficino translated in 1463, on the request of Cosimo de Medici, the great sponsor of the Renaissance in Florence, the entire Hermetic writings, which had just been brought by monks from Macedonia, even before [translating] several of Plato's dialogues, out of respect for the older sources. Through these translations, the idea got strengthened that there *is* a universal, original wisdom, available in all of Universal History. Also, Ficino wanted to prove the unity of Christianity, Platonism, and the Hermetic tradition. And, actually, Giordano Bruno said, "We Greeks" (calling himself a Greek, because he was in this tradition) "give thanks to Egypt, the great monarchy of education and intellectual nobility, that she is the ancestor of our fables, metaphors, and teachings." Now, Bruno was burned alive for these beliefs.

Still, in the 17th Century, the German Jesuit Athanasius Kircher wrote: "Hermes Trismegistus, who was the first one to introduce the hieroglyphs, and in this way, became the prince and ancestor of all Egyptian theology and philosophy, was the first and oldest among all the Egyptians. And from him learned Orpheus, Musaios, Linos, Phyllagorus, Plato, Eudoxos, Parmenides, Mellisos, Homer, Euripides, and others, everything they knew about God and the divine."

The Injection of Romantic Racism

Coming back to Bernal's book, in which he makes the point that this ancient model of Greek history, which the Greek themselves, in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, regarded to be their own history, was replaced by what he called "the Aryan model," which first came up in the first half of the 19th Century, actually starting in the 18th Century. Where I fully agree with Bernal, is the thesis that, for the racists and the Romantics of the 18th and 19th Centuries, the thought was unbearable that Greece, the cradle of European civilization, was a mixture of European and Egyptian—namely, African—and Asian and Semitic colonialists. Knowing (and I studied this very intensively) how the Romantics worked hard to replace the Greek Classic through a strange mix of fantasy, Middle Age conceptions mixed with Nordic mythologies, changing the history of ideas with a blood-and-soil identity, combined with racism; and how this was the basis for the different colonial empires, I think the case is clear.

The absolutely amazing thing is, that if one reads Greek history and philosophy, they absolutely ignore the Egyptian side. According to [the secondary literature in] Greek history, Hermes Trismegistus is Greek, and the Egyptologists have nothing to say about it. Also, if one reads in Renaissance philosophy, or in Plato, the secondary literature, even though the name of Hermes Trismegistus is present, the secondary literature almost *never* mentions the Egyptian background to these ideas. It is quite something.

FIGURE 2

The Rosetta Stone, from the Ptolemaic Kingdom in 196 B.C. The stone contains the same text in Greek, in the Demotic language, and in hieroglyphics—which made it possible to decipher the hieroglyphics for the first time.

You have, first, a history, which is European, and then, secondly, you have a history, which is Egyptian, and the experts of both sides pretend the other one does not exist. The issue is even more obscured, obviously, by the fact, that various strange sects and tendencies trace themselves back to the Egyptian history and philosophy—especially since the 17th Century, the Rosicrucians and various Freemasonic groups, and modern-day esoterics.

Despite the fact that some of the most important archeological work occurred in the 19th Century, such as the deciphering of the hieroglyphs by Champollion; here (**Figure 2**) you have the famous Rosetta Stone, which was from 196 B.C., in the Ptolemaic Kingdom, and what it describes is the 18th day of the second Winter month in the ninth year of the reign

of King Ptolemeus V, when the priests in Memphis issued a decree concerning the crowning of the 14-year-old King, who had come from Macedonia. Now, you have three different types of writing: One is the Greek, which is the official language; then you have, secondly, the Demotic language, the popular Egyptian language of the time; but, the sacred texts are also written in the old hieroglyphs. And, they're all on a single stele, which was discovered in 1798, during Napoleon's campaign to Egypt, in a port city, called El Rashid. This stele, despite the fact that it's 762 kilograms, was stolen and brought to the British Museum, and where, later, Champollion got a copy, and he could actually decipher the hieroglyphs on the basis of this.

The Ideology of Colonialism

Secondly, one of the discoveries of the 19th Century was of Troy, by Heinrich Schliemann, and the Linear B script by Michael Ventris, which were all groundbreaking events. It is nevertheless true, that from the late 18th to the 19th Century, to the 20th Century, the question of Egyptian influence on ancient Greece, became more ideologized. It is very obvious, that the British dislike for Egypt (and Sudan, for that matter) increased with their occupation of this country. And even if there were decent archeologists in England, such as William Matthew Flinders-Petrie, the various racist or Aryan views—à la Gobineau—became increasingly dominant. Typical is a quote mentioned by Bernal, of the English Egyptologist Wallis Budge: "The Egyptians, in their essence an African people, had all the advantages and shortcomings, which are characteristic of the African race in general. And one cannot assume, for one instant, that any African people would be capable to develop a metaphysics in the modern sense." And, against the German Egyptologist Heinrich Brugsch, who took the chair of archeology in Göttingen in 1868, and who argued that the ancient Egyptians had developed monotheism, Budge wrote: "It is very difficult to understand, how an excellent Egyptologist would try to compare the image of God of 'Hellenized Africans' with that of such cultivated nations as the Greeks and the Romans have developed"! (Now, how cultivated the Romans were, we all know.)

There is no question, that the whole issue of Egyptian influence on Greece, and therefore Europe, is completely clouded by this form of naked racism, and that, therefore, Martin Bernal's efforts are totally legitimate, even if, in his justified anger, he makes the mistake to equate what he calls "European arrogance," with the views of the colonialists, and ignoring the humanist tradition. Unfortunately, his lack of knowledge of the invaluable contributions of the European humanists (or does he have a bias against them?) does not help the question of truth, since his characterization tends to support prejudices against the "Dead White European Males," among some Afro-Americans, thus cutting them off from knowledge which is theirs too, since it is universal.

After his book *Black Athena* came out in 1987, all kinds of plenary sessions took place in all historical associations; at the annual meeting of the principal Classical and Egyptological organizations, the American Philological Association, and the American Research Center in Cairo, all to discuss the merits of this book. Over 70 articles appeared in newspapers and magazines, and thousands are on the Internet, still, to the present day—it's one of the most controversial issues. And, one of the most freaked-out articles, with the title "*Not* Out of Africa," was written by a certain Mary Lefkowitz, which was supposed to be a devastating attack on what she considered to be an "Afro-centric" or even "Nilo-centric" view. She not only tries to dismantle Bernal's argument, but also attacks the following authors: Frederick Douglass, Edward Blyden, W.E.B. Du Bois, John Henrick Clark, Cheikh Anta Diop, Josef Ben-Yoshanan, and George G.M. James, for their view that Afro-Americans have *anything* to do with ancient Egypt.

Why should one care about Mary Lefkowitz? Because what she engages in, is not just some academic debate. In the preface of "*Not* Out of Africa," she thanks Wellesley College, the Bradley Foundation, the Olin Foundation, for their grants. Now, here we have closure! What a surprise: Behind this whole debate, you have the Clash of Civilizations crowd.

If you read the new LaRouche in 2004 campaign report, which was also discussed last night, on the background of the Sept. 11 events, then you find a profile of these foundations, and you also understand why they put so much effort in destroying history, because this is essential for their policy of the Clash of Civilizations. Because, they *depend* on keeping cultures completely separated, denying completely the continuity of ideas, and of universal principles. Instead, they want to reduce the population to the different races, with blood-and-soil identities, which, by definition, are pitted against each other.

The Dialogue of Civilizations

Against this apparent control game, which loses its power once it is unmasked, we set the Dialogue of Civilizations, where we refer to the best traditions of each culture, and we relate to it from that standpoint—of what the culture contributed to the progress of Universal History. So, we start with an image of man, which is the common identity of all human beings on this planet: the cognitive aspect of man, which differentiates mankind from all other beings. That which is the cognitive aspect, is what we call in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, "man in the image of God," in the image of God the Creator. In Hinduism, a similar idea exists, where man partakes in God's nature. That which makes man in the image of God the Creator, is his creative reason, his ability to formulate hypotheses about the physical universe, again and again. If these hypotheses are adequate, they lead to new discoveries—and then, how these laws of nature function, and this is called "scientific progress." If these scientific discoveries are applied in the production process, we call this "technological progress," which in-

creases the productivity of the labor force, *and* of the productive capacity of the productive process.

The effect of this on the economy is that it increases the living standard of the population, its longevity, and an increase in the potential relative population-density of the Earth, as Mr. LaRouche has called it. The late Russian scientist Pobisk Kuznetsov, a famous Russian scientist in the tradition of Mendeleyev and Vernadsky, was so impressed with LaRouche's method of physical economy, and especially the concept of the potential relative population-density, as a *measurement* of the economic processes, that he predicted that the measuring unit of how to judge economic processes, would soon be called the "la," after LaRouche; like the "ampere," or the "watt," which are named after these discoverers.

So, whenever man is truly human, meaning creative, when his power of cognition is efficient, you have progress in Universal History. Now, if you look back at Universal History with the eyes of Friedrich Schiller, namely, that it took thousands and thousands of generations, and their struggles and their contributions, to get us to *our* moment in history; if one glances back in history in this way, one realizes that this progress is *not* the property of one culture or civilization, nor nation, but that the torch of progress was carried by different cultures at different times.

There may have been, before and during the last Ice Age, a very advanced trans-oceanic culture. There are many indications for such an assumption. After the Ice Age, with the melting of the ice around 10,000 B.C., there was the development of different cultures, which reflected the trans-oceanic culture from earlier, from during the Ice Age. The organizing of life depended on the sea culture. A migration occurred, in all likelihood, in large flotillas of ships, after the ice melted. And then people would go upstream on large rivers, on which they would travel by boat.

Cradles of Mankind

There were four cradles of mankind: in China, India, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. In India, the Vedic and Upanishad period represented a very high level. And there, the Vedic calendars were developed, according to [Bal Gangadhar] Tilak, between 6000 and 4000 B.C. He could calculate that, because that was the time when the Spring equinox was in the [constellation] Orion, so the dating of these calendars was relatively easy. In China, there was, since about 5000 B.C., the so-called Xia period, from 2205 B.C. to 1766 B.C., and the Shang and Yin Dynasty in the 16th to the 11th Centuries, very important civilizations. And, then later, naturally, Confucianism and Mencianism contributed to Universal History. In Egypt, the so-called "Old Empire," especially the Third Dynasty, from 2665-2595 B.C., the great inventor Djoser, who was the builder of the Great Pyramid, which shows a very high level of scientific and cultural development, represents a benchmark. And, nothing of the same period compares with that.

In 1340 B.C., this beautiful head of Nefertiti (**Figure 3**) was created by an artist. This is now in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin. And, as you can see, this has an unbelievable beauty, which obviously reflects the soul of the artist. Anybody who created this, in 1340 B.C., must have had an image of man, which was just incredibly beautiful. There is even a little sign in the museum in Berlin, that this fits today's ideal of beauty.

FIGURE 3

Bust of Queen Nefertiti, from 1340 B.C.

Then you have the gold mask of Tutankhamen, from about 1325 B.C. And, again, this is an unbelievably beautiful face—where I cannot say if it's African, or European, or Asian, or maybe a mixture of all of these; in any case it can, again, only come from the beauty of the image of the artist. When this picture was shown for the first time, in 1817 in the British Museum, it caused a world sensation, because of its beauty. Because it obviously violated all the prejudices, that all Egyptians were ugly and so forth. [**Figure 4** shows a statue of the King, done around the same time—ed.]

Then, after Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, and created the Library at Alexandria, this became the center of Egyptian-Greek studies for a long time.

The next major step forward, was Classical Greece, especially Plato and the development of the Platonic method.

Christianity, obviously, laid the decisive foundation for European civilization, and represented a watershed, in that

FIGURE 4

King Tutankhamen, statue from about 1325 B.C. A gold mask of the King, when it was first shown at the British Museum in 1817, caused a world sensation because of its beauty, overturning prejudices about what Egyptian art was capable of.

it broke with the cyclical idea of nature, and prepared the ground for the limitless perfection of man in the image of God. But, politically, the idea that man was in the image of God, was not yet realized, because the Roman Empire was an empire based on the oligarchical power-elite and a mass of slaves.

When the Roman Empire collapsed, as all empires eventually do, the torch of progress was carried further in India, in the Gupta period, and also in China, where, in the same period that India's Gupta period produced some of the most beautiful dramas and poetry, you have in China, these Buddhas, which, with their incredibly fine facial expression, had to represent a conception of man which was very lofty and noble. Very fascinating, is also the T'ang Dynasty, in the Seventh Century (**Figures 5a** and **b**). . . . Here, this is also from the T'ang Dynasty: The Seventh Century A.D. a girl playing polo (**Figure 6**)! Now, I find this completely intriguing, a girl playing polo. For sure, in Europe, people didn't play polo, at the time, because it was a Dark Age. So, it just gives you a glimpse—a taste, I hope, instilling a desire to look more into these cultures, and explain how this was possible.

The Arab Renaissance

Now, while in Europe, there was still a Dark Age, the Arab Renaissance occurred of the Abbasid Dynasty, in the Eighth Century. And, in 766 A.D. Baghdad (the same Baghdad which they want to bomb, now, again) was the world center of culture. One hundred thousand architects, craftsmen, and construction workers completed Baghdad. And, it was only through the contact of the Caliph Haroun al-Rashid with Charlemagne, that Europe could reconnect with its own cultural roots, because the caliphs had sent emissaries to all Mediterranean countries, asking them to collect all knowledge—including the Egyptian, the Spanish, the Italian, and the Greek knowledge. So, Europe needed the infusion from the Arabs to find its own sources.

The same fruitful contact, again, occurred between Frederick II Hohenstaufen and the Arabs. Ramon Llullus, in the 13th Century, forcefully made the argument of the need for the Dialogue of Cultures. Another excellent example of the exchange of cultures, is the missionary work of the Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, in China, born in 1573; who gained the trust of the Chinese Emperor and the mandarins, by bringing European culture and science, and, on the other side, demonstrated that, for him, the difference between the religious rites was less important than the one, knowable truth. Before that, you had, obviously, the beautiful Renaissance in Italy; in Moorish and Andalusian Spain; but also in Poland and Germany. And, this was only possible through the revival of the Classical Greek and the Egyptian ideas. In the same way, later, the German Classic period revived the Classical and Renaissance concepts.

The American Revolution

If you look at these long streams of contributions, over generations and generations, the American Revolution, again, represented a watershed of history, by establishing for the first time, a truly sovereign nation-state, and, the Constitution, where in practice, the guaranteed inalienable rights of all people, was, indeed, written and guaranteed, in a true republican, representative system. Now, were the Founding Fathers an autochthonous species? An autarchical phenomenon? No, they were not. But, they were a reflection of the best traditions of European culture: the Renaissance idea of the sovereign nation-state, being obliged to the common good of the people, as being the only thing which gives legitimacy to the power of the government. The American Revolution was not autochthonous, but it reflected the best traditions of Europe, including that of Leibniz. So, the American Revolution—and, as it was revived by Lincoln, and Martin Luther King—clearly represents the high-point of American culture.

We must have a Dialogue of Cultures, where we focus on the best periods of each one, in which this culture moved mankind forward. Therefore, we have to revive our own best traditions, and then see how all the cultures influence each other, through ideas, over very long stretches of time, and how they enriched subsequent cultures and civilizations. And, then you see, that the approach of Universal History, of the one human race, of the one mankind, is the only approach that makes sense.

The danger of a Clash of Civilization, is the result of oligarchism, whose ability to control depends upon playing up the differences, playing on conflicts, playing on petty-mindedness. If this Dialogue of Cultures, which is seen by many, many people in the world as the only way to go—by the Pope, by many people in the United Nations, by President Mubarak, by President Khatami, and many others—and if you add to what they say, with this specific approach *I* suggest, namely, that you have to approach it from the standpoint of Universal History, then, I'm absolutely certain, this will lead to a new, beautiful renaissance, and the end of oligarchism.

FIGURE 5

Statues of Boddhisattva from the T'ang Dynasty in Seventh-Century China.

A Dialogue of the World's Youth

I want to encourage a dialogue among the children and youth of the world, in this spirit. This is a proposal I already discussed, when we were in India in December, and in Russia: where, basically, I proposed to influential people, that they should sponsor such a dialogue. The idea is, basically, to engage children and young people, from all over the world, who should not only study the best traditions of their *own* cultures, but also those pearls of the other cultures. And, then, they will learn to love the other culture as their own. This idea, which already convinced some of the people, working with children and youth—for example, this was discussed at a youth conference in India, at the beginning of the year, where 400 children from all over India participated—and they want to be part of this ongoing dialogue.

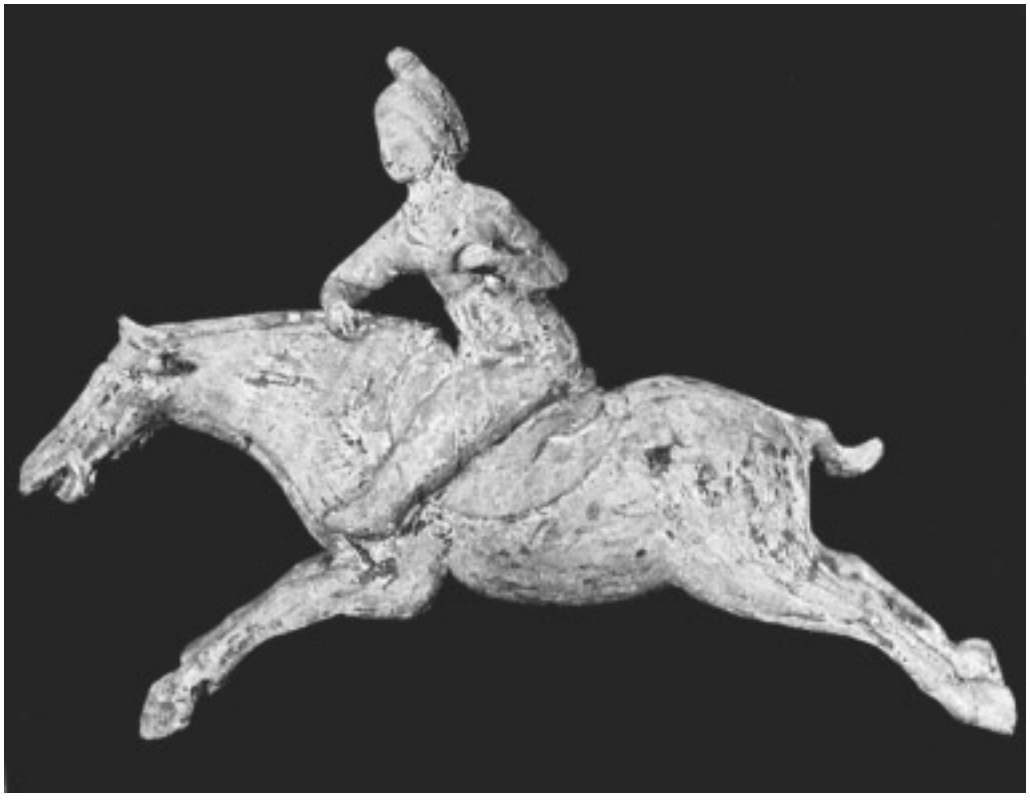
The idea that these children and youth from different countries should engage in such projects, and then, soon, form the first International Children and Youth Parliament, so that the children have a say in what the future should look like: I'm absolutely sure that children do *not* want to grow up in a Hundred Years' War to come—or not grow up, for that matter, because this war would destroy their future.

Cusa's 'Coincidence of Opposites'

Now, let's go back to Cusa, one more time. In the beautiful dialogue *On Mind*, the Philosopher says, "You have explained wonderfully well, the statements of Hermes Trismegistus, who said, that God is named by the names of all things, and all things are named by God's name." To which the Layman answers: "By means of a very lofty, intellectual grasp, enfold into a coinciding both naming and being named, and all will be clear. For God is the preciseness of whatsoever thing."

Nicolaus is calling us here to the realization that in God, opposites coincide, for God is undifferentiated being in itself. And, in *De Docta Ignorantia*, Nicolaus says, "Hence Hermes Trismegistus rightly says, since God is the totality of all things, no name is proper to Him. For, either he would have to be called by every name; or else, all things would have to be called by His name. For in His simplicity, He enfolds the totality of all things." It is most remarkable that he mentions Hermes Trismegistus, both in respect to what is called "negative theology"—that you cannot do justice to the nature of God by describing Him in terms of concrete predicates—as well as in respect to the method of "coincidence thinking." And, *this is the one*, in my view, probably the most important, aspect of the Cusan philosophy. He himself repeatedly stressed, that he was teaching something which had never been taught before. Other thinkers conceived of the idea of a unity which precedes all contradictory statements. But, what makes Nicolaus' "coincidence thinking" different, is to show how contradicting substantial

FIGURE 6



Statue of a polo player, from the T'ang Dynasty.

causes coexist in a principled connectedness, before they separate into their differentiation.

Thinking 'From Above'

In the universe, there exists a hierarchical order, of higher and lower species, which develop into each other, from multiple, individual differentiation. But, the development does *not* occur from the bottom up, so to speak; but from above. In the writing *On Mind,* Nicolaus develops the idea, that God's knowledge only descends downward into the nature of the human mind, further down in the scale of things, but it only descends through the human mind. And, it is the *higher,* which elevates the *lower* one. Nicolaus even says that it is being "snatched up." So, man partakes in God, in this way; the animal participates in the human in this way, by being "snatched up." And, this is why the physical universe obeys the human mind.

This method of thinking from above, from the level of the coincidence of opposites, is a universal methodological concept, applicable to all aspects of life. This is why seemingly insoluble conflicts can be solved, on a higher level—why the Dialogue of Cultures can succeed, if we start from the *one mankind.* In *De Beryllo,* where Nicolaus discusses this method, he says also, "And fourth, turn to what Hermes Trismegistus says, that man is a second God. Because, as God is the greater of that which really exists and the forms given by nature, so man is the greater of what exists conceptually and in the forms made by the mind." But Nicolaus says, the human mind is also capable of creating, through comprehension. There is existence which is *not* because God created it, and which the human mind therefore could only assimilate or repeat, but which is created by the human mind, entirely. In this sense, the pure power of creation, is divine. Man can be understood as a second God.

Nicolaus argues that it is this creative intellect, which is the self-similar image of the divine spirit, which the mere imitation, the repetition, is not, which is non-similarity. The more man is truly creative in this way, the more he becomes similar to God. What a beautiful way to set man free, to realize his fullest potential, and to locate man's identity on the highest, most lofty plane! And is it not beautiful, that Cusa sees in the Hermetic thinking, that central truth, which is also transmitted in Christianity?

So, Samuel Huntington—and Mary Lefkowitz, for that matter—can go and play "Rumpelstiltskin."

Nicolaus is completely right, that there is a *concordantia philosorum et theologorum:* a concordance of philosophy and theology. The difference lies only in the different expressions, not in the substance of the truth itself. And, is it not beautiful that, with the testimony of the "Dead White European Males," we can prove the Egyptian contribution to European culture? Universal History is a lot of fun!