

Mobilize the 'Spirit of the Elbe' To Meet The Great Challenges of this Century

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

This is the edited transcript of opening remarks of Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche, the founder and President of the Schiller Institute. She spoke to the May 9 conference from Germany. Subheads and embedded links have been added. A video of her presentation is available [here](#).

I greet all of you on this day which marks both the end of World War II and the defeat of National Socialism.

It is actually high time for a very deep reflection, much deeper than people usually have. Especially in times of an amazing historical amnesia, when the question of war is almost not present in the minds of people; at least not in the way they should be thinking about it. Those who had the experience of World War II are getting old, and only a few are still alive. For many young people, world wars are not an issue at all, and for the United States, in any case, wars since the Civil War have always been wars somewhere else, not on Ameri-



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can territory. So, you have a population which is almost sleep-walking into the danger of a new world war.

It is therefore of existential importance that we try—despite the fact that our moderator Dennis Speed is right when he says we have to approach life with a sense of optimism—in light of the realities of this world

and the dangers of a new geopolitical confrontation, it is absolutely necessary to truly remember the full nature of World War II, to relive it in a sense. To remember the absolute horrors of that war, and then to see the real importance of what happened when soldiers of the United States and soldiers of the Soviet Union met for the first time on April 25, 1945 at the Elbe River near Torgau, Germany.

As they extended their hands to each other they made a solemn oath, the Oath of Torgau, swearing never to have such a war again, and to create a world in which people could sleep peacefully without the fear that bombs would fall on their heads. Their emotions and their pledge on that momentous occasion has become known as the “Spirit of the Elbe.”

The danger today is that we are repeating the mistakes by not paying attention to how the two world wars came into being. World War II was a collapse into barbarism that engulfed the whole world. It was a situation where acts were perpetrated that destroyed all ideas of civilization. It was a war around the whole world. Sixty-five nations were involved directly or indirectly. There were 110 million soldiers under arms. The victims were mostly civilians. Altogether, 60 million dead. There was the Holocaust, and other massacres; there were genocides, war crimes, all of it the result of the inhuman ideologies of some of the key protagonists and the way they were manipulated on a chess board orchestrated by the forces of the Empire.

The Horrors of War

Just to recall: Adolf Hitler had the utopian idea to create a 1,000-year Reich, which people who read *Mein Kampf* and other writings could have known. Even so, later it was found that *Mein Kampf* was not read so much.

Then you had the Tanaka Memorial of 1927 in Japan, which had a concrete plan for world conquest. As a result, you had tremendous suffering of people in Russia, which all tolled lost 27 million of its people.

Victory Day, in remembrance of the end of the Great Patriotic War, is therefore today the greatest holiday in Russia. For Germany, you had total capitulation, unconditional surrender. It took my country 35 years to come around to the idea, introduced by then President Richard von Weizsäcker, that May 8, 1945, was actually the day of Germany’s liberation, and therefore not simply the day of the end of World War II or capitulation; that implied that the Germans were also, or many

Germans were also, the victims of National Socialism, which was not a self-evident idea immediately in the postwar period.

Almost completely blacked out in the West is the fact that China suffered the second-largest number of casualties. Japanese aggression, which had started in 1937, led to unbelievable battles with high mortality in China. The Massacre of Nanjing, is still a memory of absolute horror for the Chinese people. That war lasted even longer, to September 2, 1945.

Why am I saying that there were not just these protagonists—Japan, Germany, Italy, and so forth—but that there was also geopolitical manipulation? *EIR* has documented in great detail the role of the British in manipulating the chess board, which led to World War I—including the ouster of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1890, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, the two Balkan Wars, and finally the shots at Sarajevo, which was just the trigger but not the cause of World War I.

We should also remember that manipulation occurred before World War II by some people financing Hitler’s coming to power. Among them, the then Governor of the Bank of England, Montagu Norman, and the eugenics faction in the United States around Averell Harriman, who was convinced that the racist aims of Hitler were perfectly in line with their own intentions. We know that some people who had studied Hitler’s intentions in *Mein Kampf* and other writings, knew that you just had to put Hitler into power, and war with the Soviet Union, sooner or later, would be inevitable.

There was just now an [article](#) in *Sputnik* by one of their journalists and former BBC correspondent Chris Summers, who reports that Churchill, within hours after Roosevelt’s death on April 12, 1945, ordered his Imperial General Staff to draft a war plan against the Soviet Union. Fortunately, this was rejected by the American Joint Chiefs. But it took only two more weeks after Torgau, which had evoked the “Spirit of the Elbe,” until Truman invited Churchill to come to Fulton, Missouri, where he delivered his infamous Iron Curtain [speech](#), which launched the Cold War.

Since that time, the world has lived in one form or another under the Damocles Sword of nuclear war. We should keep that memory in mind when we look at the very important difference between two recent official statements on the occasion of VE Day. First, there is the joint [communiqué](#) of President Trump and President Putin for today’s occasion, wherein both of them said that this event at the end of World War II and the meet-

ing at Torgau are examples of the fact that our nations—meaning the United States and Russia—can cooperate, that they can put aside differences, build trust, and cooperate in the pursuit of greater causes.

The Great Challenges of the Century

In their statement, Trump and Putin say, “As we work today to confront the most important challenges of the 21st Century, we pay tribute to the valor and courage of all of those who fought together to defeat fascism. Their heroic feat will never be forgotten.”

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, on the other side, has chosen a different narrative by putting out a [joint statement](#) with the foreign ministers of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, the Baltic countries, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, which is a completely geopolitical narrative with the connotation of anti-communism, anti-Russia, implicitly equating Russia with communism.

So, let’s go to what are the great challenges of *this* century. You have the pandemic, which is unprecedented and causing havoc, not only in the casualties of the people dying from coronavirus, but also with unprecedented effects on the world economy, about half of which is locked down. Now you have an increasing rebellion in some countries where the populations there no longer agree that such measures are necessary. Some authorities are fearing a murmur of mass opposition and implicitly chaos. But that’s just one aspect.

It intersects with incredible effects. The ILO, the International Labor Organization, just published figures saying that 60% of all jobs in the world—that is 2 billion of 3.3 billion jobs—are actually in the “informal economy.” Under conditions of lockdown, that means that these people who are living from hand-to-mouth have been thrown overnight into an absolute crisis of not having enough to eat.

In Africa, the informal economy is 86% of the jobs; it is 50% in India. In India, where the lockdown has been in place since the end of March, serious social crisis is building. On top of that, come reports from the World Food Programme that we are looking at the danger of a world famine. On April 21, David Beasley, the director of the World Food Programme, [briefed](#) the UN Security Council that we are heading towards a global famine of Biblical dimensions. Before the coronavirus crisis erupted, 821 million were living in permanent food insecurity. In the past, the World Food Programme gave food relief for 80 million of those people in 80 countries. But, because of the pandemic

and the escalation of many other crises, this number has jumped to 265 million a year.

If this famine fully develops, as Mr. Beasley is warning, the death rate of famine could go up to 300,000 people a day! If food can be mobilized, famine can be averted, but that danger clearly exists. In Africa, there are 194 million people in need of food supplies in 37 nations. In Asia, it’s 61 million in 10 nations; in Latin America, it’s 33 million in 6 nations.

Because of the crisis of agriculture, the tonnage to relieve this shortage may not be there. Farmers in the United States and Europe are protesting because the policies of the EU impose completely unreasonable conditions on the farmers, threatening their very existence. Large tractorcade demonstrations were already going on in the streets since last fall. In the United States, many farms are in danger of going out of business. Because of the coronavirus crisis, there is now a shortage developing where food is being rationed. Meat is rationed in the United States. Food processing and meat processing plants are being closed down because of the high infection rate among their employees. These are things which can be remedied, but it urgently requires immediate action.

The Great Solutions for the Century

If there is one lesson from the defeat of National Socialism and the fact that two World Wars happened, it is that we absolutely have to put aside all geopolitical confrontations, all secondary issues, and go back to the spirit of Torgau and the oath of the soldiers from the Soviet Union and the United States at the time to create a peaceful world. That is why the Schiller Institute, in the spirit of Lyndon LaRouche, is calling for a Four Power Agreement, and why we are mobilizing internationally, including an effort to get the youth of this world mobilized to demand, with a chorus of countries and forces around the world, that the four most important countries of the world make an emergency summit and fix the world system.

Where should the solution come from if not from the most powerful governments? The United States, Russia, China, and India, supported by other nations, must fix this situation. There is no other place. The G20? Well, they had the chance, but there are too many forces moving in too many different directions. The G7 you can almost forget, as well as other regional organizations, valuable as they may be—like the BRICS, the SCO, other organizations I could name. In the Four

Powers together, resides a powerful enough combination to force a change of the system.

Now, what are these changes that are necessary? I think the obvious immediate one is, we need a world health system. Every single country of the world must have a health system as good as the standard used to be in the United States with the Hill-Burton Act, or as the health systems of Germany and France were before the privatization of the health sector that began in the 1970s. Naturally, you need a crash program—temporary hospitals, the kind of measures that were done in Wuhan and Hubei province in China. But then you have to turn that into permanent health facilities, and for that you need infrastructure; you can't put a hospital in the middle of the desert. In other words, you have to earnestly start to overcome the under-development of the developing countries.

There is a program that can be the blueprint to start this kind of global infrastructure development *tomorrow* if the political will can be mobilized. That is the program [published](#) in 2014 by the Schiller Institute, called *The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge*. This was our answer to President Xi Jinping putting the New Silk Road on the agenda, and this was a program we have worked on literally for more than 40 years. It contains a concrete development plan for Africa, which we published in 1976; it contains a program for the integration of Latin America; for the development of South Asia, the Pacific Basin, the Eurasian Land-Bridge, the Oasis Plan for Southwest Asia, and many more aspects. So, we have a blueprint to completely start the development of the planet immediately.

Concrete Steps for Good

As a first step, you need to implement a New Bretton Woods system to replace the bankrupt casino economy, kept alive only by insane amounts of liquidity being pumped in by central banks. That liquidity pumping will lead in the short-term to a hyperinflationary blow-out of the entire system. We have to go back to the idea of Bretton Woods as Franklin D. Roosevelt intended it; namely, that the main aim is to overcome poverty in the developing countries by providing them with long-term, low-interest credit lines for real industrialization. This program was never implemented because of the untimely death of Roosevelt, and the fact that Churchill and Truman organized much of the environment of the actual Bretton Woods which was then implemented, despite some useful features it had.

Roosevelt's idea that the need to overcome poverty and increase the living standard of the entire world population as the precondition for a durable peace and stability is absolutely valid today. The Four Powers must combine that policy with the implementation of the Four Laws of Lyndon LaRouche.

First, a global Glass-Steagall separation of the banks. The commercial banks must be protected; the casino part of the finance system has to be ended. Then, a national bank in the tradition of Alexander Hamilton in every country for credit generation, combining these national banks internationally into a New Bretton Woods System which then provides credit lines for large development projects.

The fourth law of Lyndon LaRouche is even more important, because it defines the basis for the implementation of the common aims of mankind. You need to increase the productivity of the entire world economy, because as the present coincidence of crises—the pandemic, the famine, the collapse of the real economy—demonstrates, the present industrial capacity of the entire world economy is not sufficient to provide for the livelihood of the current world population of a little over 7.5 billion. We need a crash program for the implementation of the commercial use of fusion power, which is largely a question of international cooperation and large funding. We need to invest in biophysics to find the causes of the coronavirus as well as many other potential viruses which could come easily after this pandemic.

There is no guarantee that an even more horrible virus will not follow immediately upon the coronavirus. We have to better understand the issues of life, the issues of the laws of the universe in order to combat these kinds of threats. And naturally, we need international space cooperation, which is the way to our future, and the more adult cooperation required in our human civilization.

So, those are some very concrete steps we can take. They may sound impossible and utopian, but the big question remains: "Is mankind fit to survive? Can we create a basis, an order of international relations among nations, which guarantees the durable survivability of the human species?" I would like to have that question answered in a positive way. So, if we think about the heroes of the World Wars, especially World War II, and what it meant to defeat National Socialism, then if these lives are not to be sacrificed in vain, we had better come back to the Spirit of the Elbe and settle the question of cooperation among nations for good.