

SCHILLER INSTITUTE FORUM

# The Significance of India's 75th Year of Independence and Gandhi's Non-Violent Direct Action

by Stanley Ezrol

Aug. 20—The Schiller Institute held an international (virtual) forum Aug. 20, titled, “India’s 75th Independence Anniversary: The World Needs Gandhi’s Non-Violent Direct Action.” The event was timed with the anniversary date of Aug. 15, 1947, which was marked in India with high ceremony and celebration. The three speakers at the [forum](#) were Schiller Institute founder and leader Helga Zepp-LaRouche; Sam Pitroda, innovator, former Cabinet minister in India, and adviser to several Indian heads of state; and Diane Sare, Independent candidate for U.S. Senate from New York. The

2.5-hour forum included an hour of live, international questions and answers.

Moderator Dennis Speed, of the Schiller Institute, introduced the proceedings to honor India’s 75th anniversary as an independent state, by recounting the time spent in India in World War II by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., the late economist and designer of future growth for humanity, who saw first-hand Britain’s inhuman treatment of their colonial subjects in India, and vowed that this must end.

Speed then introduced his widow, Helga Zepp-



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*Participants in the Schiller Institute’s Aug. 20 forum, “India’s 75th Independence Anniversary: The World Needs Gandhi’s Non-Violent Direct Action.” Clockwise from upper left: Dennis Speed (moderator), Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Sam Pitroda, and Diane Sare.*

LaRouche, who began by briefly discussing the LaRouches' experiences in India, working with India's heroic Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and with subsequent Indian heads of state, and others. The transcript of her full presentation is published in this issue of *EIR*.

Zepp-LaRouche noted that this year's anniversary of the second most populous nation in the world, marks a time for breaking through the ruins left behind by the pre-1947 British colonial control. India is assuming its rightful leadership role among the world's powers.

She described the role of the great founder of Indian independence, Mohandas K. Gandhi (affectionately known as "Mahatma," "Great Soul"), and his powerful non-violent, direct-action approach, in the context of the 5,000-year history of Indian culture.

Sam Pitroda, who participated fully in the live forum discussion, provided a video-recording of his Aug. 15 anniversary presentation in tribute to his homeland. He is a non-resident of India, now based in Chicago, and still very active as a leading cyber engineer, entrepreneur and promoter of world development. His latest book is *Redesigning the World—A Global Call to Action*.

Pitroda gave an engaging account of his personal history. He was born in 1942 as a carpenter's son in a small town, who was five years old when India gained independence. He recounted his education process, and then, long government service. He particularly appreciated working in the administration of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who, at 40 years old, succeeded his mother in 1984 when she was assassinated. Rajiv was himself assassinated in 1991.

Pitroda's approach to the future is to accelerate access to advanced productive employment by eliminating racism, religious discrimination, and the caste system from India and all other nations. He talked about the difficulty in bringing people together to collaborate with each other and with their technology. He is working on providing for "human needs" and doing away with the "command and control" ideas carried over from colonialism. In addition to improving the capabilities of all by eliminating social obstacles to their success, he has focused on what he calls "hyper-connectivity."

### **The Power of Truth and Beauty**

Diane Sare, who is a musician and conductor, discussed her own history in building access to justice for all. Now running as an independent candidate to unseat New York's Senator Chuck Schumer, the incumbent in office for 23 years, known as the Wall Street Senator, Sare made the remarkable achievement of getting ballot

status, by overcoming a new, unjust action of the state legislature to demand an impossible number of 45,000 petition signatures. The Sare campaign, showing widespread support, filed over 65,000 valid signatures.

Prior to this important, direct political role, Sare was founder and leader of the Schiller Institute New York City Chorus. She took this step in order to temper the widespread anger concerning the case of Eric Garner in New York City. On July 17, 2014, Garner was killed by a police officer who used an illegal chokehold on him. Despite clear video recordings of the killing, a grand jury, on December 4, voted against taking any action against the killer. In this situation, the Schiller Institute was concerned to do whatever it could do to prevent violent outbreaks in the city. Sare and others decided that building a classical chorus open to all races, religions, and musical capabilities, that would engage in performances involving difficult social situations, would help.

Justice was clearly denied in the Garner case, but revenge against the police officer would probably only increase the potential for violence. She pointed to General Douglas MacArthur's opposition to using torture or abuse against prisoners during World War II, and to Martin Luther King's commitment to creative non-violence.

In the question-and-answer period, the nature and power of non-violent, direct action was discussed. Zepp-LaRouche reminded listeners that at present, we are all in dire jeopardy of an outbreak of nuclear war; but she pointed out that despite the wild insanity of NATO and its American and British leadership, there are voices speaking out to condemn the risk of use of nuclear weapons. One of those voices is that of the 99-year-old Dr. Henry Kissinger, himself a founder of the strategy of nuclear retaliation. Another is Dr. John Mearsheimer, a professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, who is cautioning against escalating the clash between Ukraine and Russia, though he has made his career by forecasting conflict between any two powers which happen to be in competition with each other, for instance China and the United States.

The forum concluded with discussion on how to deal with the crises before us, involving the destruction of agriculture, energy delivery, and other necessities of human survival. This requires continuing to push for a new economic and security architecture, as the Schiller Institute is mobilizing for, which will replace the current danger of nuclear confrontation with collaboration for the future of all humanity.