

Enabling Understanding, via Classical Culture

During the discussion session of the Schiller Institute's June 10 Conference, "The World Needs JFK's Vision of Peace!" founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche responded to a caller from Peru.

Watch the entire conference [here](#).

Questioner: How is it possible that large sectors of the population continue to accept surreal narratives developed by power structures alien to nation-states? Not only are they unaware of the true colonial processes involved, but also, like the German population in Hitler's time, they accept and support policies such as the prohibition of artistic expressions just because they were created by Russian artists. I mean the prohibition of the works of Tchaikovsky in Europe for example.... How can the institutions of the planet work to immunize their populations from this apparent process of social engineering and distortion of information? What kind of cultural and educational processes should be promoted by nation-states to raise the cognitive and moral capacities of their people?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: It may not come as a surprise, but my answer is Friedrich Schiller. The reason why the Schiller Institute is named after Friedrich Schiller is that in 1983, when I looked for a name to give to the effort to create an institute for statecraft, I thought this was urgently necessary. The Schiller Institute was founded on the idea that we needed a completely different idea of statecraft, whereby you would not have coups and you would not have interference in the internal affairs of the other country, but that you would relate to the best tradition of the other. When you're talking to an American, you don't want to talk about Vietnam crimes all the time, or the Iraq War, or whatever other things you could mention. You would want talk about the high points of American culture.

Similarly, when I'm talking to somebody as a German, I don't want to be reminded entirely only about the 12 years of the horror show of National Socialism. I want to be reminded of Cusa, of Leibniz, of Kepler,

of Lessing, of Schiller, of Goethe. Even Goethe, who some would cite. Beethoven, and all these other great minds.

I think we have to gradually shift (or not so gradually), and really adopt a different mode. Because I think that the foreign policy conception which takes for granted the legitimacy of these coups and things like that, is an outgrowth of geopolitics. And once we move to the New Paradigm, which is imminently on the horizon, a new relationship among nations [will prevail], which the BRICS countries, for example, are trying to implement right now. Many Asian and African countries are clearly trying to establish this. Then, you do not have the kind of zero-sum game where the advantage of one is the disadvantage of the other, and therefore you have to manipulate, and blah, blah, blah.

I think that's really part of an oligarchical way of thinking which we must overcome. And I'm absolutely confident that we will be able to do that, because we are human; we are not some kind of a two-year-old or four-year-old boy who permanently has to kick the knee of the other one to be the top guy. I think eventually we will grow up and relate to each other as intelligent, morally developed people.

So, the answer to your question is: Look at the *Aesthetical Education* of Schiller, and in a similar way of Confucius, and there are some other such thinkers like Humboldt or Cai Yuanpei, the first Education Minister of the Republic of China. But it is the idea that through aesthetic education, you can elevate the emotions. The reason why people are able to be manipulated by the media is because the oligarchy wants to bring out the worst in people, because when they are piggish and selfish and pornographic and violent and all these things, it's easy to manipulate them. You can shift the views of people by bringing out the worst in them.

Our task is much more difficult. We have to bring out the best in people. The way to do that is to apply the aesthetic education method, which is the most developed in Friedrich Schiller, because he had the idea to do that through great Classical art—the music of

Beethoven, the works of Shakespeare, the works of Schiller and many other such great poets and composers.

But there is nobody exactly like Beethoven, I want to say. What happens when the listener listens to his composition? At least for the moment of being involved with a great piece of art, you have to engage in the beauty of what you encounter. That is both sensuous, because beauty appeals to the senses, but it makes it better; it improves it. The more people engage in great Classical art—poetry, painting, especially music—the more their character improves; especially when it's combined with the effort to intellectually understand the composition.

So, we have to make people better people. Confucius said you can recognize the character of a state by looking at their music. If their music is degraded, the country is degraded. If the music is elevated, the country is elevated. So, that is why I think we should get rid of certain ugly music. Right now in Germany there is a big scandal about a band called Rammstein, which may be not so accidental because it has the same name as the military air base [the U.S. Air Base at Ramstein,

Germany —ed.] which is the coordination center for the wars in the Middle East and elsewhere, such as now against Ukraine. The Rammstein band has one M more in their name. It now turns out they were involved in a totally disgusting sexual molestation, and so on. That is ugly, so why do we listen to ugly things? Why do we allow ourselves to be born into the pit of drugs, of degeneracy, of ugly things. It hurts our soul, and our soul is a very precious thing. It has a potential. Either we protect it and nourish it, and we make it more beautiful, or at one point we lose it and then we are becoming like beasts.

So, the *Aesthetic Education* [Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* —ed.] is my absolute best recommendation, because you have to change the way people think; you have to ennoble their ideas, and Classical great art is the best way. Schiller said you have to catch people in their leisure time, because when they are working, it's very difficult. But in their leisure time, you have to playfully bring them up to a higher level. That is one of the many reasons why the Schiller Institute is called Schiller Institute. So, please read Schiller.