

V. Interview

Interview: *Richard Black*

The LaRouche Factor in Shaping the BRICS Process

The following is an edited transcript of EIR's Nov. 7, 2024 interview with Richard A. Black. Mr. Black is a 50-year associate of the LaRouche movement and currently serves as the representative of the Schiller Institute to the United Nations. He was an invited speaker at the Oct. 1-3 BRICS International School conference in Moscow, where he presented the ideas of Lyndon LaRouche to an international group of young scholars. The interview was conducted by EIR co-editor Michael Billington. Subheads have been added.

Michael Billington: This is Mike Billington with the *Executive Intelligence Review* and the Schiller In-

stitute. I'm joined today by Richard Black. Richard has been associated with the LaRouche movement for the last 50 years, perhaps a little bit more, and is the representative of the Schiller Institute to the United Nations. In that capacity he has been engaged with leaders from around the world at the United Nations extensively. So, Richard, welcome.

Richard Black: Thank you. Good to be here.

Billington: You were recently in Moscow to speak at the BRICS International School, which was held just two weeks before the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia.



8th BRICS International School, Moscow

Students from Vietnam and others at the 8th BRICS International School. Oct 1-3, 2024 joined by Richard A. Black, center with scarf.

Can you tell us about the BRICS International School?

Black: It brought together 85 college students, graduate students, some young diplomats, from all over the world. About 300 young people, students, applied to be at the three-day school, and they accepted 85, including numbers of young professors from Brazil, South Africa, China, other places.

The idea of the school was launched eight years ago by Professor Georgy Toloraya from the Russian Academy of Sciences, and he's been for several years now the director of the Russian National Committee on BRICS Research. This was an opportunity to bring together young people who will be the cadre—people in their 20s, young professionals, some college students—who will be the cadre which moves the whole international BRICS process forward. So, I was really happy to be able to speak on the first day, on the first panel. It was quite an experience.

Billington: What was your impression of the students who were attending the school?

Black: It was quite striking. On the one hand, they were coming from across the globe: Ecuador, Brazil, Laos, Vietnam, Yemen, Egypt, Indonesia, India, and more—very, very diverse. They were completely excited to be at the school and absolutely hungry for ideas. The presentation that I gave, on the question of the role of principle in shaping world history and in shaping the BRICS process going forward, was received with great excitement.

A lot of what I presented was not known to them, and I was mobbed day after day for three days, during the lunch periods and the breaks, by groups of students asking questions about Lyndon LaRouche, and the role of ideas from the Treaty of Westphalia through the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Asian-African conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, all the way up to the proposal of the Ten Principles of a New International Security and Economic Development Architecture, which Helga Zepp-LaRouche has circulated over the last couple of years. Everybody at the school received the Ten Principles [document](#) by Helga Zepp-



8th BRICS International School, Moscow
Richard A. Black, at podium, during his 20-minute presentation on the first panel. Seated is Professor Georgy Toloraya from the Russian Academy of Sciences.

LaRouche, either in English or in Russian. So, there was great excitement. I was completely bowled over by the optimism. These are young people, very bright, top of their class, who were thinking about shaping the world in the future, with the Global South being a force in history that defined their attention span and their openness to ideas, to concepts.

‘Historical Amnesia’

Billington: How about the other experts who spoke during the session. Did they respond to what you presented about Lyndon and Helga LaRouche?

Black: I did give a bit of a history, as best I could in a 20-minute presentation, talking about Lyndon LaRouche’s experience in India at the close of World War II and his pledge to himself upon seeing the genocide, which was the British Empire, of coming back to the U.S. and somehow founding a movement of some sort, a body of ideas and a movement around it to change the direction of the world. I gave this presentation citing the period of the Peace of Westphalia.

Somewhat to my surprise—perhaps I shouldn’t have been surprised—one of the Russian scholars on the panel with me said, “No, no, no, no. The Treaty of

Westphalia was a failure, was not important, because even though it may have resolved the war fighting in Europe, there were conflicts going on in the rest of the globe. So, therefore, the Treaty of Westphalia was not important.” Another scholar said, “Well, I disagree. The Non-Aligned Movement in the 1950s and 60s has no relevance to the BRICS today, because back then it was merely an opposition against the Soviet Union and the West. Therefore, ignore that.” So, interesting.

I said to one of the experienced diplomats there: “I don’t quite understand this objection to what I put forward from these scholars. These are the leading scholars of the BRICS process. Is this historical amnesia? Nothing before 1991 has any relevance?” And this individual said, “No, no, no, you don’t get it. What you’re seeing among some of these young professors, scholars, is two decades of your American tax dollars at work, brainwashing young scholars in Russia.” So, what I said was quite controversial, and I must say, some of the other presentations were somewhat flat. There was a great, great excitement about what I presented.

Billington: So, you also mentioned that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov spoke.

Black: This was great, Mike. On the second day, the entire morning was devoted to Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov giving a presentation. He gave a very sharp briefing to the assembled group of 85 students on the danger of global war and the BRICS process as a pathway away from that direction. Then he took about 45 minutes, 50 minutes of questions from the entire room, one after the other. They weren’t cen-



EIRNS/Richard A. Black

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, who addressed the assembled group of 85 students.

sored, they weren’t written down, they weren’t scripted. These young people from Africa, South America, had one question after the other, mostly around the prospects for the development of each of their nations. He was very exhaustive in his answers, very relaxed, very studied, and the young people really appreciated speaking to one of the directors of the Russian Federation on foreign policy.

Then, after about an hour and a half of the session, the moderator said: “Okay, let’s have a picture.” So, Minister Ryabkov plopped himself down on the stage, sitting on the ground. All the young people rushed up, in a mob scene, everybody trying to get close to him. There were 20 photographers taking pictures of all of us on the stage. The scene was just epitomized by the fact that these young people know



8th BRICS International School, Moscow

Students from 34 countries at the 8th BRICS International School, with panelists. Top right, Richard A. Black and Professor Georgy Toloraya. Seated, center, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov.

they have access to history. In a sense, by this very open, extended dialogue with the Deputy Foreign Minister, who was the Russian sherpa for the whole year’s Russian presidency of the BRICS, having a direct relationship with him, asking him questions, piqued their

excitement and just reaffirmed the fact that we are making history.

Billington: Is there a relationship between the BRICS International School and the BRICS meeting itself, that took place in Kazan, two weeks after that?

Black: I think there were a couple of hundred pre-meetings in the course of 2024 leading up to Kazan at the end of October. So, the BRICS International School, which as I say, has been scheduled every year for the last eight years, was one of the events. It was noteworthy in that it was not a group of high-ranking ministers discussing banking policy or relations, but it was young people there to learn and to think and to share contact information. I think probably about 20 students gave me their information on WhatsApp and WeChat and whatnot, and I've been in touch with them since then. They're very anxious to be involved in some way in what we're doing. So, this BRICS School, although it was only three days, was an important pre-meeting going into Kazan.

Putin's 'Serious Proposals'

Billington: At the Kazan meeting, Russian President Vladimir Putin put forward what he called several "serious proposals" for BRICS discussion. This included an investment platform, a grain platform, and some other ideas that were not spelled out in great detail, but sort of ideas to be filled out. How do you view what Putin has proposed at this moment, when the BRICS presidency is passing to Brazil for next year?

Black: One of the things that struck me is that in his opening statement, as the Kazan summit began, Putin asserted that BRICS is shaping history, not just in words, but in deeds. So, this was an extremely powerful statement of the sovereignty of the process of these nations across the globe coming together to do something new. And among the things that he cited by the end of the conference, I think perhaps in one of his closing speeches, is that BRICS has several initiatives: an investment platform, a grain platform; the Africans have proposed a geological platform for the development of



8th BRICS International School, Moscow
Sergei Ryabkov speaking with students at the BRICS International School.

the untapped riches underneath the Earth. Other platforms connected to nuclear medicine, etc. So, what he proposed was something quite concrete from the standpoint of ideas.

We in the LaRouche movement, of course, have been putting forward the idea that the current international monetary system is in fact not reformable, and that you need new institutions which are not monetary institutions, but credit institutions, to be able to extend very long term, very large credits into Africa, into Central America, into Southeast Asia, to do the projects which may take five, ten, 30 years time. So, this kind of idea, of a new investment platform, which Putin put forward, moves in that direction.

And certainly, there have been many speakers since Kazan who have been making contributions in this direction. As we speak today, the conference in Russia at the Valdai Club, the Valdai Conference, in Sochi, is going on for several days, with major papers on designing a new world based on physical economy and the transfer of advanced science to the former colonial South. Papers are being put forward by Sergei Glazyev—academician Glazyev of Russia—by Paolo Nogueiro Batista, Jr., of Brazil, Dr. Wang Wen of the Chongyang Institute of Renmin University in China. These are eminent thinkers putting forward new ideas. That is what resonated with the college and graduate students that I addressed at the BRICS School. They know something new is happening. When we talk to



8th BRICS International School

Senior Russian diplomat Prof. Georgy Toloraya, Schiller Institute representative Richard A. Black, and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov speaking on second day of the School.

them about Earth's next 50 years, they know that if it's going to be done, they are going to do it. So, these proposals by Putin, such as a grain platform, a finance platform, I think are going to be very important as the BRICS presidency is handed over to Brazil, to President Lula, on January 1, which is just a few weeks away.

Yevgeny Primakov: Originator of the BRICS

Billington: President Putin also reminded the attendees at the Kazan BRICS Summit, 12,000 of them, approximately, that the original concept for the BRICS was put forward by then Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov. This was in 1998. Primakov declared during a visit to India, that the future would be shaped by what he termed at that time the RIC—Russia, India, China. In your view, what is the significance of Putin bringing this up?

Black: I think it's extremely important. Certainly, we in the Schiller Institute have reminded people over the years of the tremendous importance of this genius—in my view—Academician Yevgeny Primakov, who was appointed Russian Prime Minister in 1998 and was facing a horrific international crisis. There had just been the bankruptcy of the state bonds in Russia. Russia had been losing one million citizens per year as their population shrunk under the shock therapy in the 1990s. China was still quite poor; relations between China and India were unclear. And in the midst of this crisis, you

have a visionary such as Yevgeny Primakov saying that the future is going to be determined by the success of the collaboration between Russia, India and China. Quite amazing.

In fact, this is the launching of the BRICS idea. The fact that Putin made the point is polemical, because if you read the Western financial media, they give you this baloney story about a Goldman Sachs banker, Jim O'Neill, coining the BRICS term. It's a complete falsification of history. This has been a 25-year project to allow the Global South to move on to the center stage of making history. And this has been, of course, one of the key suggestions put forward by the Schiller Institute founder, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, that the Global

South has to make history in conjunction with opportunities, as a bridge to the West. And now we see that it's happening.

So, I think it was quite polemical for those who know a little bit of history, for President Putin to cite Academician Primakov. By the way, the conference was held at a downtown hotel in Moscow, right across from the huge Foreign Ministry building. Right downstairs from the hotel is a big commemorative statue of Primakov, in honor of his contributions to world history

Billington: There also was a somewhat unexpected but extremely important meeting at the BRICS summit in Kazan between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi from India, who met at length during the summit. Can you comment on the significance of this?

Black: This is, I think, one of the wonderful dimensions of the BRICS process. Our friend from the Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor Georgy Toloraya, who has been really a moving force around the Russian BRICS process, made the point that the nations of the BRICS come together in order to deliberate on policy and to agree on movement forward in new directions around economic justice, which has been denied. There are, of course, conflicts between various of the nations, outside of the BRICS process, but those conflicts are not brought into the discussion of the BRICS itself.

That is, the BRICS is committed to new ideas based upon a common, as the Chinese say, “win-win” process.

This coming together of India, a long personal meeting between Modi and Xi—the first time this has happened in five years—it was around the fact that we’re moving into a new paradigm, as Helga Zepp-LaRouche discusses it. The border issue was taken up; the militaries of both China and India were pulled back. It was an important step. We know that in India, many industrialists and entrepreneurs have been telling Modi: “We should see China as an opportunity, not as a threat. And we would love to get Chinese investment into the chip industry and other high technology capabilities in India.” This is just another proof that what people are taught at the London School of Economics, the Wharton School, etc., is baloney.

These conflicts between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Egypt and Syria, China and India, can be solved if you know how to think. And this is where Helga Zepp-LaRouche emphasizes the “coincidence of opposites,” a method of thinking pioneered by Nicholas of Cusa, many hundreds of years ago, which is relevant today. You have to proceed from the One, from the universality of mankind, and then from that standpoint, from defining the common aims of humanity as a whole—then conflicts can be resolved in a way, and in no other way, except through that process.

The Future Role of the New Development Bank

Billington: One of the leading speakers at the Kazan meeting of the BRICS was Dilma Rousseff, who is the head of the New Development Bank, which is the bank officially associated with the BRICS movement. She is also a former President of Brazil. How do you see the role of the New Development Bank coming out of this process?

Black: As usual, President Putin created a flank. In the course of the discussion at the Kazan BRICS Summit, he made a suggestion that, although it is up to Russia to appoint a new head of the BRICS bank, the New Development Bank, in July, he said that Russia doesn’t want to bring its problems and controversies into this positive process of developing the bank. Putin suggested that Dilma Rousseff stay on, saying she’s done an absolutely extraordinary job. Putin and Dilma

Rousseff, as you say, met during the conference. At the same time, President Xi in China had bestowed on Dilma Rousseff the highest civilian medal that can be awarded by the Chinese government to a foreign citizen. So, this is quite brilliant.

The BRICS process will now be handed over, the presidency will be handed over to Lula and Brazil on January 1. Presumably Dilma will stay on in the New Development Bank. Other people, like Paulo Nogueira Batista, Jr., of Brazil, who is a former Vice President of the New Development Bank, are outlining exactly how steps towards a reserve currency, complete alternatives to the IMF and IMF conditionalities, can be worked out. So, I think the role of Dilma Rousseff and the agreement on the part of the heavies, so to speak, Russia and China, to keep her on, indicates, if you put that together with what we were discussing a few moments ago on the need for a new investment platform—that means credit. That means large amounts of capital into such things as the Grand Inga Dam in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has been delayed and delayed and delayed; like the Transaqua project in West Africa. These are all projects which have to be, as Glazyev is calling it, “polycentric” in terms of investment.

The thinking is, at the top, at the very top—Putin, Xi, Lula—that the New Development Bank can become what Lyndon LaRouche outlined in 1975-76, a long time ago—an International Development Bank, or a Development Bank of the South, and for the South, as Dilma has described it. So, I think this is fraught with potential. With President Trump coming in again, and his repeated statements that he will meet with Putin and move to end the war in Europe, there are good prospects if we hold these various leaders to their word.

BRICS Is Non-West, Not Anti-West

Billington: In contrast to that, the mass media in the West portrays the BRICS as a dire threat to the U.S. dollar, to institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, and to America and American citizens in general. What’s your response to that?

Richard Black: President Putin is a master of the flank. He said very clearly in the course of the Kazan summit that what we are putting together is non-West, but it is not anti-West. At every major speech he’s given

that I've seen in the last six months, he says that this new international architecture which we are piecing together is open to all nations, including NATO nations. Putin said that BRICS is not against anyone; it is for the development of humanity as a whole

So far, the propaganda in the media is just scare stories to try to trigger anti-Russia, anti-China feelings in the American population and the European population. But if you look at the facts, presidents Xi and Putin have said that they are completely open to the West joining. As Helga Zepp-LaRouche recently reminded us, President Xi met with then U.S. President Obama and offered Obama to join the Belt and Road Initiative, to collaborate with it. This has been the standing policy. And it's true. The BRICS leaders proceed from the standpoint of "one humanity." This is the destruction of geopolitics. This really goes to Helga's great insight in her Ten Principles for a New Security and Development Architecture. In principles nine and ten, she says the basis of our proceeding is that man is good and is capable of perfecting the power of his mind, the power of reason, and the beauty of his soul. And since those qualities of mind and soul are universal, from that standpoint, geopolitics is a false doctrine based on an opposite set of axioms, which is that man is a beast. And since man is a beast, someone is on top, someone is on the bottom, and therefore you get the idea of the hegemon.

In regard to this process of discussion of the BRICS as open to the West, I was in Minsk about a year ago at a major security conference, and every single foreign minister or deputy foreign minister who spoke, from Lavrov of Russia, to Szijjarto of Hungary, to many of the deputy foreign ministers from Asia—they all said the same thing. We're creating something new, and we'd like the West to join. They're not prepared to join now. They are holding on to their system of imperial control. As soon as they drop it, we welcome them in, if they come in with mutual respect and good faith.

So, we have to do a good job, Mike, in getting to our fellow Americans and explaining that this is a golden opportunity—and by the way, a very American opportunity. One of the things I discussed with the students at the BRICS School is President Roosevelt's 1941 speech, known as the Four Freedoms speech: freedom from hunger, freedom from fear, freedom of religion, freedom of speech—for everywhere, everywhere in the world. These are freedoms that we are fighting for,

for everywhere in the world. This is not an American policy. This is a universal policy. And that's actually the orientation of the BRICS nations.

China Is No Threat

Billington: So, besides your tour of Russia and Belarus and your work with them, you've also been to China several times. And I know you worked heavily on the issue of relations between the United States and China. I heard what you said about President Trump committing to ending the war, the Ukraine war with Russia, the NATO war on Russia, which is extremely important. But as you've also noted before, Trump, before the election, said that one thing he wanted to do was to separate China from Russia, that the connection between China and Russia was a threat to the U.S. and to the West. So, is there any reason for Americans to fear China?

Black: Absolutely not. This takes me again to the students at the BRICS School. They are excited about a new world, and are hungry for the new ideas to make it work. One of the extraordinary things about China—I'll mention two things that come to mind. Number one, they said in about 2016, we have to deal with our extreme poverty. And they launched a program to eliminate extreme poverty in every province, every village across the vast nation. Geographically, it's about the size of the United States. They employed 240,000 social workers, engineers, economists, across the country, and organized the elimination of rural poverty, through large scale economic development. And they succeeded in 2020. They eliminated all extreme poverty in the entire nation of 1.4 billion people. That's extraordinary.

And I can tell you, it has a massive, massive effect on every leadership in Africa, South America, Southwest Asia, Southeast Asia—around the idea that they did it. They were in extreme poverty. If they did it, we can do it. So that's one characteristic of China. China is gaining friends by doing the extraordinary, not by opposing the U.S. or opposing anything in the West. Secondly, they're involved in a very American economic policy debate whereby President Xi one year ago called for studies at the highest level of government to launch a new theory of productive forces in the economy. And with that goal, now is not the time to go through the detail, but the theoreticians at the top

of the Chinese government are saying the key to our continued economic success is not doing what we've been doing.

President Xi said doing what we've been doing is not adequate. What they have called for is advancing the rate of original and disruptive innovation in science itself. So, from quantum computing, life systems in space, thermonuclear fusion, seed science, they are producing statement after statement, paper after paper, that they are attempting to form a new theory of productive forces based on physics, based on science. Now, this is a very, very American idea. People have looked into the period, the late period of Franklin Roosevelt's administration, when you had the physicist Dr. Vannevar Bush, Roosevelt's brilliant science advisor, saying that the basis of our success coming out of the war will be based upon mastering new principles and new concepts, and propagating them through the nation—a very American idea, a very Lincoln idea, a very Hamilton idea. That's what the Chinese are doing now.

So, the Chinese are gaining friends, not by attacking the United States, but by doing something, in my view, extremely American. Secondly, the last time Trump was elected, he worked on a phase one trade deal with China. It took about a year, year and a half. And I remember vividly the scene at the White House with Chinese chief economist, a brilliant fellow, Liu He, standing next to Trump.

They had just consummated a huge deal of soybean sales to China and other things. Trump gave a speech with the Chinese top economists there, and the American Cabinet, Trump sat down and said that this is important, not just in terms of trade; what we're doing here is we're creating a whole new set of possibilities, and that's our work. Now, this was with Trump, with the Chinese economic leadership, a year after he was in his prior term.

As I often joke, the one really good thing about Trump—he has no principles. He's completely pragmatic. So, if he says something really stupid, as he did on the campaign trail, saying that as soon as he gets into the White House, he is going to break up Russia and China. It's absurd. Of course it won't work. But is he committed to it? I don't think so. He's committed to very little, except whatever he's thinking at the moment. So, one of the jobs we are going to have to do, typified by the national movement organized by Diane Sare—you see the poster behind me which

says “nuclear power, not nuclear war,” in Mandarin Chinese. That was one of our campaign posters in Chinatown in New York City. Our job is to get the movement that we are building across the country, to shake up Trump and get some sense in his brain around physical economy.

Will the BRICS Summit Lead to a New Paradigm?

Billington: So overall, how would you characterize the accomplishments of the BRICS summit in Kazan?

Black: Our colleague and leader, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, has been stressing in all of her interviews in TASS and other international media, that her hopes for the Kazan summit would be that not just some new policies were agreed to and signed, but that it ushers in a new paradigm of international relations; that we put a stake in the heart of geopolitics, British geopolitics, and replace it with a new paradigm of international relations. And I think we see the seed crystal of that development growing among the BRICS nations.

Remember, China is not a Christian nation; it's Confucian, it's Buddhist, it's Daoist. Russia is an ecumenical nation, with a lengthy, proud Christian heritage. Brazil, halfway around the world, is a giant in another hemisphere. How is it that each of these nations—China, 5,000 years old, Russia, 1,000 years old, that's a Christian nation—how is it that these nations are collaborating around certain fundamental principles? So, I think we're making some progress towards what Helga LaRouche set as a very high standard, that we need a new paradigm, a new way of thinking. As Doctor Sun Yat-sen polemicized in 1918, when he was frustrated at the chaos in China, even after the success of the overthrow of the dynasty in 1911, he had said that Chinese ideology among the peasants is wrong. Peasants believe that thinking is easy, while doing is hard, and this is the cause of all chaos. Doing is easy. Thinking is hard. If you can think in a truthful manner, then execution is relatively easy.

And I think we're seeing the beginning of a change in thinking at the highest level, not among the bureaucracies of these various nations, but at the level of President Xi and President Putin. Our input, and certainly the Ten Principles put forward by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, were circulating in Kazan. I think we're at the footsteps of bringing a new paradigm into being.