

Helga Zepp-LaRouche and Dr. Werner Rügemer

BlackRock's Candidate for German Chancellor, Friedrich Merz

The following is an edited transcript, translated from the German, of the Jan. 29, 2025 German Civil Rights Movement Solidarity (BüSo) webcast, featuring Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute, and Dr. Werner Rügemer. Dr. Rügemer lives in Cologne, Germany, and works as a publicist, author, speaker, consultant and city guide. He is co-editor of the World Marxist Review. Subheads have been added. The video, in German, is available [here](#).

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Yes, good evening. I wholeheartedly welcome you to the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity weekly webcast. And I am particularly pleased to have a very special guest today, namely Dr. Werner Rügemer, who is a very renowned author and has written many books, all of which are extremely interesting.

He is currently in the process of publishing a new book, which deals with a very current topic. And I am particularly pleased that we are speaking today, because as of a few hours ago, or yes, much more recently, there was a vote in the Bundestag on a proposed law by Friedrich Merz, which he introduced on behalf of the CDU-CSU [Christian Democratic Union–Christian Social Union], to change the asylum law.

It went through with a very narrow majority, with the support of the AfD [Alternative for Germany]. There was a lot of commotion beforehand that this was a breach of the dyke and that the firewall between the establishment parties and the AfD had now been torn down.

In any case, there is a possibility that Friedrich Merz, leader of the Christian Democratic Union, will become the next Federal Chancellor. Against this backdrop it is perhaps very important to consider what implications this has.

We have an incredibly dramatic world situation. United States President Donald Trump has only been in office for nine days and has already caused a lot of

commotion: Panama, Canada, Greenland—I could go on and on. The situation in the Middle East: At first there was hope that the ceasefire might bring about an improvement. But now he wants to resettle all the Palestinians to Egypt, Jordan and even Indonesia. So, we have a lot of topics to discuss, and that's why my very first question is: we are four weeks or a little more than three weeks away from the Bundestag election on February 23. What should voters know about what they will face if they give their vote to Mr. Merz?

Dr. Werner Rügemer: With his even more direct turn to the right toward the AfD, Merz has done what his former boss at BlackRock, Lawrence Fink, did before the election in the U.S.A. He also supported the Democratic Party for a long time. BlackRock grew up with the Democratic Party. But even before the election, BlackRock CEO Fink said, we don't care who wins the election; we are in talks with both candidates. And then it turned out that BlackRock advised Trump on his choice of Treasury Secretary....

Zepp-LaRouche: Before we look at the different regions of the world, it would perhaps be good for our viewers if you explained what BlackRock is. People think that it's just one of many multinationals, but that's not exactly the case. Since you're probably the best expert on the subject in Germany, can you give a brief outline of why BlackRock is such a problem?

The Rise of BlackRock in Germany

Dr. Rügemer: BlackRock has been the largest of these multinationals since the 1990s due to the deregulation that began under U.S. President William Clinton. These new up-and-comers, with today's BlackRock as the largest, became bigger and initially spread out across the U.S.A. After the turn of the millennium, and particularly after the financial crisis, they gradually established themselves in Europe: in France, Switzerland, England, and also in Germany.

In Germany, these multinationals are the majority shareholders in the most important, let's say 100 German stock corporations, each with a three, four, five, six, seven, eight percent share in these corporations. So, as a group, BlackRock, along with Vanguard and State Street and Fidelity and Wellington, in different compositions, have a majority stake in about all 40 DAX [German blue-chip index on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange—ed.] companies in Germany. In this capacity, they have contributed to the deindustrialization in Germany that has been going on for years, with large German corporations relocating jobs to China, the U.S.A., or even partly to Eastern Europe, because this outsourcing, naturally, increases the profits for BlackRock and company [i.e., the other multinationals].

Zepp-LaRouche: What would you say to a normal, medium-sized business owner in Germany who says, “but it's good to have someone like Merz, who at least knows what he's talking about, who is well connected, so that's good for medium-sized businesses”? What would you say in response to that?

Dr. Rügemer: Merz in particular was bad for owners of medium-sized companies in Germany, extremely so, because he had resigned from his position as parliamentary group leader of the CDU in the German Bundestag in 2004, and then became the co-owner of an American business law firm, Mayer Brown, in their branch in Düsseldorf. And that was important because at the turn of the millennium ... came the so-called, later so-called locust investors, private equity investors from the U.S.A. They bought up the non-stock listed companies, i.e. the good German medium-sized companies, restructured them, as you called it, i.e., closed down the unused parts, resold them and so on.

This law firm, in which Merz not only worked as a lawyer but also as a co-owner, advised these locust investors on how they could best buy and exploit German medium-sized companies. And, of course, Merz was a very suitable choice because, as a CDU politician, he knew best the medium-sized companies that constituted the backbone of the CDU for decades.

Zepp-LaRouche: Can you describe that? BlackRock, for example, has also acquired a large share in

the large housing companies. What effect has this restructuring or takeover had on the housing sector?

Dr. Rügemer: It was the case that, as I said, from the turn of the millennium onwards, it was initially not BlackRock and company who came along, but rather the second league, so to speak, the private equity investors, i.e., Blackstone and KKR and Carlyle and so on. They started by buying up the medium-sized companies, including tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of apartments, public apartments in individual cities, and also from companies, from large corporations in the Ruhr area, that also had their own housing companies.

BlackRock Corners the Housing Market

They were initially bought up by these private equity investors, one by one, city by city, sometimes ten thousand, sometimes fifty thousand, some in Berlin, some in Frankfurt, some in Cologne or in Dresden. But then, with the financial crisis, came the first-league players with BlackRock and company. And they bought up these individual stocks again and combined them into large housing companies.

The largest housing group in Germany that has ever existed, in fact, in the entire European Union, there has never been such a large private housing group as Vonovia, with around 600,000 rental apartments. In addition, there are commercial properties, garages and other parking spaces. Today BlackRock is the second largest shareholder in Vonovia, with nine percent. But at the same time, BlackRock is also the leading shareholder in Deutsche Wohnen, the second largest housing group. BlackRock is the largest shareholder with eleven percent. In the third largest housing group in Germany, called LEG, which is concentrated in North Rhine-Westphalia—it used to be called the Landesentwicklungsgesellschaft; it was the housing corporation of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia—this was also initially sold to a locust firm and then bought by BlackRock.

So, BlackRock is the leading shareholder in the three largest housing groups in Germany. And in being so, it actually forms a monopoly, but only in relation to the housing sector, a monopoly that has never existed before. This, naturally, contributes to the fact that rents are rising even faster, that ancillary costs are rising even faster and that the prices for condo-

miniums are also rising, because it is part of the business model of BlackRock and company, that selected apartments from the purchased rental apartments are then converted into private property or sold to private investors.

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes, the housing shortage is known to be very severe in Germany, and the “traffic light” [SPD, FDP, Green coalition] government’s intention to build, I believe, 400,000 new apartments per year remains far below this target. So, BlackRock has not invested in new apartments, or how should we look at it?

Dr. Rügemer: BlackRock has concentrated on consolidating the parts, which were initially bought up individually by the locust investors, into these three aforementioned nationwide housing groups. And they did a bit of new building, but essentially they worked on utilizing the existing inventory, increasing rents and making profits, for example by making the ancillary costs a separate business segment.

So, the previous subcontractors who carried out the repairs, the maintenance of the green areas, the reading of the meters for the heating, the electricity consumption, etc., were fired and BlackRock and company created new ones that they themselves own, and have pushed for the fees to be increased and the ancillary costs to be turned into a profit area.

Zepp-LaRouche: Now the German medium-sized companies are in an existential crisis that has never been seen before, at least not since the post-war period. The German economy is in free fall. There are, of course, many reasons for this: the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines, rising energy prices, and the fact that we are now buying expensive American LNG [liquefied natural gas]. And now Mr. Merz in Davos, I happened to hear an interview where he said, oh, if President Trump now wants the trade deficit between the U.S.A. and Europe to be reduced, that is no problem at all. We will simply buy more American LNG, and we will buy more American armaments, which then also goes in the direction of significantly increasing the military budget. Then I thought, well, if this is in Germany’s interest, then one has to be very surprised, because with these policies, what does Merz want to do for the German

economy? That will only make the crisis worse. What do you think?

Merz: Propagandist for the Atlantic Alliance

Dr. Rügemer: Yes, of course. Friedrich Merz has been a propagandist for U.S. leadership in Europe for decades. He was chairman of the so-called Atlantic Bridge for, I don’t know, 10 or 15 years, which was a lobby organization for U.S. investments in Germany. And, as I said, he was the long-time lawyer for American locust investors in Germany. And yes, as you said, he wants that for Germany, and he wants to extend it to the whole EU. He wants to ensure that Europe speaks with one voice, if possible, under German leadership, perhaps together with French President Emmanuel Macron. And that not only Germany, but also the European Union is buying more fracking gas and more military equipment from the U.S.A. This would, of course, mean that this dependence on the U.S.A., which he has long promoted, would go even deeper. And what he is promising now, namely, to achieve an economic recovery, would actually be counteracted by this.

He accuses the traffic light government of having run the economy into the ground, while in reality, it was Merz who helped by advising the locust investors on their purchase and the deindustrialization of small- and medium-sized businesses—which he then continued from 2016 to 2020 as an official of the BlackRock Group; as chairman of the supervisory board of BlackRock Asset Management Deutschland AG. So, Merz himself contributed to Germany becoming impoverished, deindustrialized and, consequently, even more profits are flowing to the U.S.A. than before. The fact is that important corporate decisions in Germany are made in the U.S.A., in the headquarters of BlackRock and Vanguard and State Street and Capital Group and so on.

Zepp-LaRouche: The other thing that is, of course, worth considering is that Merz has repeatedly said that no matter what the U.S. does—there was a time when President Biden was still against the delivery or against the permission to release the ATACMS missiles for Ukraine—and at that time, Merz had already said that he would definitely release the Taurus missiles. As we know from this intercepted conversation with the three Bundeswehr officers, the Taurus missile can only be operated with the help of Bundeswehr soldiers. And if

the Taurus missile is made available to the Ukrainians, that would automatically mean that Germany would really become a party to the war. Since Russia has already said that it will absolutely not accept that, we will become the target of a conflict with a nuclear power, the strongest nuclear power in the world.

BlackRock's Role in Ukraine

Dr. Rügemer: Yes, but of course you have to take into account that Germany is actually, or with Merz, rather in the back ranks. Because the warfare and advice has been provided by British and American officers in Ukraine for years. Ukraine's entire digital warfare is carried out via SpaceX satellites, owned by Elon Musk. So, of course, when it comes to making decisions, Friedrich Merz is pretty far behind.

Furthermore, it should also be taken into account that BlackRock has been the official coordinator for the reconstruction of Ukraine since the end of 2022. And that is what has remained and will remain the case with Trump—and Trump does not touch it at all. BlackRock is with a team in Kiev, sitting next to President Volodymyr Zelensky, so to speak, collecting proposals from Western investors on who wants to have the mining licenses for the rare earths, who wants to buy the still state-owned energy companies in Ukraine, who wants to buy the fertile farmland and so on. That is all in the hands of BlackRock. And it is certainly no coincidence that a few days ago at the World Economic Forum, BlackRock CEO Lawrence Fink invited Friedrich Merz for dinner, but of course entirely private, outside the official program.

Therefore, it can be assumed that proposals such as those made by Merz to take even more aggressive action against Russia, are certainly due to the fact that Merz is trying to fill the gap that might arise if Trump does not want to continue the war in this form; he wants to get his finger more in Ukraine, so to speak. But I do not believe that the U.S.A. and NATO will be lectured on this key military issue by a Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, the situation in Ukraine seems to be heading toward the point where the war will end one way or another.... Any peace solution, as I see the situation and as many military observers and experts see it, will not work if it fails to take into account Russian security interests. And if the West does

not want to cooperate, then Russia will bring the matter to a military conclusion—entirely at the expense of the Ukrainian people. So how do you see this?

Dr. Rügemer: The war in Ukraine could never have been won militarily—that was clear from the beginning; it was not the goal. The real goal was not for Ukraine to win the war, but, rather, they wanted to weaken Russia as much as possible through this war. And, of course, they also wanted to test Russia's ability to react, see what weapons it uses, what new weapons it has developed and so on. And that is common knowledge. NATO has a much longer-term goal, because the admission of new states from Europe is an important part of this long-term rearmament.

Finland has over 1,000 kilometers of direct border with Russia. The Baltic States are being rearmed; military bases are being upgraded in Poland and Romania; in Kosovo the military base is being further modernized and so on. The U.S.A. and NATO know that the purpose of this war is to use little Ukraine as a guinea pig, so to speak, which will be sacrificed as long as the profits of the American defense and energy corporations continue—and BlackRock is also involved. That is why BlackRock has been in Kiev for one and a half years as the coordinator of the reconstruction. And it has never been the interest of the U.S.A. that a proxy war, like in this case of Ukraine, is doing well or something.

We don't know exactly, since it is also deliberately kept secret, if it is now 200,000, 300,000, 400,000 Ukrainian soldiers, including many female soldiers (it is a modern army, of course) that have been sacrificed, so to speak—without hesitation, without conscience, without mercy—on the altar of Western values. And that is absolutely clear. In the EU states, including in Germany, many, many tens of thousands of Ukrainian men who are actually required to do military service are allowed to stay here and are not sent back to Ukraine. So, Ukraine is being emaciated: humanly, economicaly and so on. This is American war and profit policy....

Liberal Democracies vs. the Global South

Zepp-LaRouche: Coming back to Merz, of all the things that you can observe, I actually think the two really worst crux points are, on the one hand, of course, that he is fully committed to neoliberal financial policy. And this is, of course, an invitation for a total disaster,

because the trans-Atlantic financial system is hopelessly over-indebted and all attempts to take this a step further with crypto currencies and other tricks only makes the disaster worse.

So that is one point. The other, which might be even more serious, is that he now explicitly says that he wants to defend liberal democracies against illiberal autocracies, and that especially Russia and China should be viewed as opponents. And with that, Germany really loses any perspective of somehow getting out of this economic crisis, because the Global South is really building a new economic and financial system. If Germany, as an export nation, is to have any chance at all of getting out of this crisis, then it would be to cooperate with these countries.

Dr. Rügemer: Well, that's obvious. If we judge it based on the policy embodied by Merz in Germany, Germany and the European Union would become even poorer, damaged, rearmed, and become even more indebted—that is the case. And the British Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, is now also taking part in this direction, we would judge, more or less, in the same way. And yes, the solution would be, especially for Germany, to escape from this, to free ourselves from the dependence that has grown over decades and has now increased.

What is happening in the rest, much bigger part of the world, for years, in these continent-wide and international formats—such as BRICS and FOCAC [Forum on China-Africa Cooperation] and CELAC [Community of Latin American & Caribbean States] and SCO [Shanghai Cooperation Organization] and so on—what is happening there in terms of self-organization, especially in economic cooperation, is that Germany is getting involved in this; that companies, including medium-sized companies, are getting involved. And there is already a protest, albeit restrained, from large corporations in Germany, who say: “We don't want to give up our China business. We want to expand it.” And yes, from civil society, so to speak, if we want to get involved as small actors here, our task is to support German, European companies; to get involved in these self-organizations of, not only of the Global South, but China may not belong to the South and Russia may not belong to the South, but to get involved there.

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, I was recently in Guangdong again, in the south of China. And this triangle, the so-called Greater Bay Area, is the locomotive not only of the Silk Road Initiative, but the engine of the global economy. There is an Australian think tank, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, which monitors breakthroughs in various high-tech areas. They say that out of, I believe, 44 areas of high technology, China is a leader in 37 areas.

China just had a huge breakthrough again in the field of artificial intelligence. People are talking about the new Sputnik shock. That is not surprising at all, because China, in contrast to the European Union, has deliberately focused on innovation, as an engine of the economy, and on excellence in education. They are really in, yes their whole economy is really in a completely different mode: not profit maximization, but truly oriented toward the common good; a very fundamental fight against poverty, raising the standard of living, creating a growing sector of medium sized companies, purchasing power is increased, but above all, to continually introduce cutting-edge technology into the economy. And in doing so, they have actually developed a model where so-called cyclical economic developments no longer arise, because the constant injection of qualitatively new technologies always counteracts this.

Instead of German industry taking this as an example— And also the fact that China is relying not only on wind and solar energy, but they are also focusing on modernizing fossil fuels, they are committed to the expansion of the fourth generation of nuclear energy and, especially, they are leaders in the field of nuclear fusion research. For this reason, they brought back helium-3 from the far side of the moon from their last trip to the moon, because it is expected to play a role as a future fuel in fusion energy. So, they have a completely differently orientation to achieving really higher energy-flux densities in the production process. That's why it's not just China, but the whole of Asia, that really is the engine of the global economy. And that is why there is actually no other option for Germany and the whole of Europe than to cooperate with this.

The Power of National Sovereignty

Dr. Rügemer: Yes, of course. There is even a report by the European Council on Foreign Relations,

which is actually more oriented toward the U.S.A., but which points out in its last report, that China's success in developing into the largest industrial and commercial location in a historically short period of time, is primarily based on a state that is acting in its own sovereign interest. That means that they have, like Germany and other European states, brought in American investors, practices, consultants and so on. But unlike Germany or India and so on, the Chinese have imposed conditions and have made demands and, if necessary, issued bans, as it was, for example, the case with Facebook. And they also have put thousands of white-collar criminals in prison.

Yes, that means they have exercised national sovereignty and have not only practiced economics, but also national economics. Yes, they have increased wages, unlike Germany, the U.S.A. and so on, where the majority of wages are being reduced. And this was only possible through a national sovereignty that resisted, above all, American influences.

For example, in 2004 and 2005 there was a big dispute. Due to many strikes, China wanted to improve labor laws, increase wages, and so on. Apple and other companies protested heavily against this, but China pushed through and promoted a national economic policy that has increased the wages of hundreds of millions of Chinese; sustainably increased them. There is no other state that has done this. And I find it interesting that the European Council on Foreign Relations praised this and said, more or less directly, European states: take this as an example and finally promote your national sovereignty so that you can also achieve positive economic development.

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes, I am actually always very upset, you could almost say, about the false image of China, which started at least since 2017, when the U.S.A. started to describe China as an opponent and competitor. That's when the mainstream media started to portray China in a negative light, which wasn't the case before. And since then, the idea of what China actually is has deteriorated extremely.

I have been to China many times now, the first time in 1971, during the Cultural Revolution. And all I can say is that there must be a reason why the people are absolutely satisfied with their government. If you compare it, in Germany 80 percent of people think the government is bad. In China, there is at least as big a

percentage of people who absolutely agree with what the government is doing. And this is, of course, partly due to the fact that China has successfully combated poverty. For example, I consider it to be the greatest civilizing achievement of recent times that they have freed 850 million people from poverty. But above all, they also revived the Chinese advanced culture of 5,000 years and made it accessible to the masses. That is in total contrast to what we see here....

China Bashing Started With Obama

Dr. Rügemeier: By the way, you said that China has been denigrated by the West since 2017. I wanted to say this is not true, but the real systemic start of China bashing came from a certain U.S. President named Barack Obama. There is the key phrase that he also coined, the program called Pivot to Asia. So, Obama said, ten years before the date you mentioned, that the systemic enemy of the U.S.A. is China. That is why we, the U.S., must arm ourselves in Asia. And Obama, for example, gave big speeches at G7 meetings in Australia. We must now rearm in Asia. And that is why under Obama a new military base was established in Australia and new arms production was promoted. By the way, this was also the case with Rheinmetall.

This means that the China bashing was initiated by the Democratic Party and not by Trump. I think that is important to know, because in the West, including in Germany of course, there is always a traditionally friendly, overly friendly relationship with the Democratic Party, because they seem nicer somehow and Obama can grin much nicer.—but the reality is different. And Trump is, so to speak, just a slightly enhanced continuation.

Zepp-LaRouche: As far as Obama is concerned, you are of course right. But, unfortunately, I have to go back to my statement. And that is because we were the ones who in 1991, when the Soviet Union dissolved and the Cold War ended, proposed the Eurasian Land-Bridge as an economic basis for a peace order for the 21st Century. And we tried to bring that into the discussion back then.

I myself attended a major conference in China in 1996 on the topic of Eurasian Land-Bridge development. And it was not implemented at that time because the Russian crisis and the Asian crisis occurred. But

then when Chinese President Xi Jinping put the New Silk Road on the agenda in his speech in Kazakhstan in 2013, we were totally happy because over the years we had organized hundreds of seminars and conferences on five continents for the New Silk Road, for the Eurasian Land-Bridge. And that is why we followed this very closely, because when Xi Jinping said he was in favor of the New Silk Road, there was a real spirit of optimism, at least among the people who knew something about it.

It became clear pretty quickly that the New Silk Road was the largest infrastructure program in history. And then, when you looked in the mass media, in the mainstream media, there wasn't a word about it. And I said, how can that be? There is an infrastructure program here that is bigger than the Marshall Plan after the Second World War. And it is not reported on. But we have organized for it, including in small- and medium-sized companies and at all kinds of trade fairs and so on. At that time, the managers of the companies were totally fascinated, and of course recognized the enormous opportunities which lay in cooperation with this new concept, and that's what started.

Then, suddenly, the door closed shut. That was at the same time as the publication of the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review and National Security Strategy in December 2017. Then there were further such reports in January 2018 and February 2018.

And at that time, all the think tanks, i.e., the Mercator Foundation, the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, DGAP [German Council on Foreign Relations], they all started to talk like the American and British think tanks: Suddenly, China was the autocratic model. Well, I don't want to criticize you in general, but this took things to a whole new level.

And you can really see that this negative description of China was clearly an outgrowth of the American security doctrine, to which the Europeans then pivoted to. So, it is important that we somehow reverse this, because like China, the same is happening with other countries, for example Brazil or Indonesia or Nigeria.

A completely new economic system is now emerging with the BRICS states. And all member states are actually precious additions of new cultures, some of which have a tradition of 5,000 years. And I would find

it tragic if people in Germany were to turn a blind eye to these cultures. India is of course one of them, as is the Persian culture in Iran. Persia also has an endless history with enormous contributions to universal history. I would find it an absolute tragedy if we in Germany were to put on such Anglo-American blinders, and somehow disregard all these wonderful cultures, just because it is in the geopolitical or supposed geopolitical interest of the Anglosphere. So, that was actually the background of why I wanted to shed some light on this.

Great German Culture Must Be Revived

Dr. Rügemeier: Yes, I totally agree. The Federal Republic of Germany had what was once praised as German culture, along with a tradition of industrial research. This is due to the founding of the Federal Republic, which was undertaken at the request of the U.S.A. There are those values that were once associated with Germany, which have been, so to speak, undermined. And that is why, yes, this subjugation, especially of Germany, is even stronger than that of the other European states. It must be lifted. And we can't—we certainly agree on that—we, especially we Germans, cannot do that alone. Rather, we must seek cooperation, which would also be welcomed in the rest of the world.

And so, I myself am in the process of contributing to a New Silk Road of Science. I am co-editor of the new international journal, *World Marxist Review*, which was founded last year. It is published by a publisher in London, is in English, and the editorial staff consists of scientists from China, from Canada, from different countries, and is based in China. Among the co-editors, among the 60 co-editors, of whom I am one from Germany, there are members in this editorial circle from France, from Russia, from Brazil, Argentina, Greece, and China; from all continents. We want science in a broad sense—acquisition of knowledge in general, cultural knowledge cultivation—to be freed from the clutches of American private science funding. This is a very nice task that is developing internationally in this context.

Zepp-LaRouche: That sounds really promising, and I think that one should do that not only in the field of science, but also in the field of culture, because in my opinion, the dialogue of cultures is very important.

And the Schiller Institute, which has been working for 41 years now, was founded by me in 1984 with the idea that we need a different foreign policy that draws on the best traditions of the other. Because you can create a Third World War very quickly if you start insulting the other person or highlighting everything bad about them; you can make an enemy of anyone. Conversely, if you refer to the best traditions and most beautiful results of science and culture, then you can form friendship, you can develop creative cooperation—and I think we really have to start in Germany. Our scientific tradition, I mean, Germany is one of the countries that has produced the most creative scientists and discoverers.

We have one of the richest classical cultures in the field of music: everything by Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, even some Hugo Wolf. This is appreciated all over the world. And we need to give Germany a Renaissance by bringing this tradition to life and then, from an optimistic perspective, defining a completely new policy. So, I'm glad that you're working on this and I would suggest

that we should simply look for allies who, in this sense, do not give up on Germany, but really say, we have so much to offer, but we have to bring it to life.

Dr. Rügemer: Yes, I completely agree with that. And I also think that as good as it is with BRICS and so on, when states join forces and when the economy is developed cooperatively, it must also come from civil society, from the various areas of culture and science; that these international collaborations, these dialogues must also be developed—each with its own abilities. Now, I am not a musician. I can't do that in music now, but I do it in what I have developed as a philosopher, as a scientist, and as an author.

There are, as I have demonstrated through this editorial board of *World Marxist Review*, for example, completely new collaborations with similar scientists in France and Brazil, whom I did not know at all before. And that is why I am calling that these international collaborations—BRICS, New Silk Road—be also built from civil society; from a wide variety of areas.

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