

Rhodes ‘Dialogue of Civilizations’ Hears LaRouche Spokesmen

The Fourth Annual Conference of the “World Public Forum Dialogue of Civilizations” in Rhodes, Greece, brought some 600 religious leaders, former high-level government officials, heads of civil organizations, and academic figures together from around the world, in the effort to prevent a “new dark age” of religious and ethnic conflicts from engulfing our planet. The three-day event, on Sept. 27-Oct. 1, was chaired by the Forum’s two initiators, Russian Minister of Railways Vladimir Yakunin, much discussed as possible successor to Putin as President of Russia, together with the famous Indian thinker Jagdish C. Kapur.

The World Public Forum was founded in Rhodes in 2003 as an explicit counterpole to Samuel Huntington’s notorious thesis about the “Clash of Civilizations.” The Forum has since then grown rapidly in size and influence, in reaction to the insane push by the Bush Administration and its backers to bring about exactly such a clash. With a very large and high-level Russian delegation and major Russian sponsorship, the event reflected, albeit unofficially, a foreign policy orientation of Russia’s government, as well as the thinking in India and a number of other views. The conception of the Forum was approved by President Putin and officially supported by the heads of state of India, Iran, Uzbekistan, Greece, and other nations.

Already at the 2003 annual conference of the Forum, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and president of the Schiller Institute, and head of Germany’s Civil Rights Movement Solidarity party (BüSo), was a featured invited guest. This year’s conference had an even larger attendance, and included for the first time a working group devoted to debating different approaches to global economic policy. LaRouche advisor and *EIR* representative Jonathan Tennenbaum was specifically invited to address that working group. (The advance summary that Tennenbaum submitted to the conference organizers accompanies this article, below.) The very fact that this session was held marked an important change relative to previous years, which had nearly exclusive emphasis on religion and culture in the context of the Dialogue.

Among the high points at the opening plenary session were the remarks by J.C. Kapur and by Berl Lazar, Chief Rabbi of Russia. Clearly aiming at shaking up the audience, Kapur declared that “time is running out!” World civilization is headed for a collapse “of unimaginable proportions” unless

the present course of history is changed. Chief among the causes is an economic system which keeps the majority of the world’s population poor and aims at preventing people from developing a sense of their own minds. Berl Lazar, in a mixture of endearing Jewish humor and earnestness, focussed on the utter absurdity of religious conflicts. “We are all God’s children” he said. “How can you claim to love God, and at the same time hate His children?”

The Economy of Development

Jonathan Tennenbaum opened the working session on “Problems and Perspectives of the Global Economy” with a 35-minute speech on “Dynamics and the Dialogue of Civilizations—The Principles of Physical Economy.” His presentation, attended by a selected audience which included some of Russia’s leading experts on strategic planning, as well as representatives from Poland, Egypt, Brazil, Mexico, and Germany, focussed on the present world crisis, the perspectives of Lyndon LaRouche’s concept for a Eurasian Land-Bridge, and LaRouche’s original discoveries in physical economy.

Tennenbaum stressed that the present system of financial and economic relations between nations, based on the axioms of “free trade globalization,” is incompatible with the survival of civilization. He challenged the audience to look at economics from the standpoint of no less than the next 50 years. When you do that, you see that economic reality is determined, first of all, by the gigantic scale of physical investments that must be made, starting now, to secure the infrastructural basis upon which the existence of the world population depends. You see how ridiculous it is to try to measure economic value by money. To measure economic value, you must understand that human economies depend upon the discovery and communication of ideas. Tennenbaum went on to present key points of LaRouche’s original discoveries in physical economy, discoveries which made it possible for the first time to define a truly rigorous measure of economic value. It is on this that LaRouche’s proposals for a New Bretton Woods reorganization of the world monetary-financial system are based.

Tennenbaum’s presentation became de facto the keynote for the whole session, and was then referenced by practically all the following speakers. It was followed by a lively and controversial discussion.



EIRNS/Rosa Tennenbaum

Jonathan Tennenbaum interjected the urgency of the monetary-financial collapse into the discussions of the World Public Forum Dialogue of Civilizations annual conference in Rhodes, Greece.

The same session heard strong presentations by persons familiar with LaRouche's ideas, including Yuri Krupnov, the enthusiastic initiator of the soon-to-be-founded "Development Party" of Russia, and by the influential strategic thinker Yuri Gromyko. Krupnov presented a concept of "development economy," setting forth strategic projects for Russia, including massive new housing construction, infrastructure development of the remote regions, and the creation of a great new city, on a scale comparable to Moscow, in the eastern part of the country. This "Moscow of the East" would serve as a locomotive and coordinating center for developing the whole of Siberia and the Far East of Russia.

Yuri Gromyko provoked the audience by proposing that Russia adopt the national mission of demonstrating to the whole world, a new conception of development based on scientific revolutions. This will require an entirely different approach to the organization and spirit of society, and the creation of new types of institutions. He also emphasized the crucial role of nuclear energy worldwide in the coming period.

The session also heard presentations by strategic planning experts from the school of the late Pobisk Kuznetsov, a leading scientist in the former Soviet scientific-military complex who had developed his own approach to physical economy,

and, who, in his later years, became an admirer and personal friend of Lyndon LaRouche.

Much-Needed Interventions

Unfortunately, many of the presentations, in the sessions on culture and education in particular, reflected more the problems than the solutions. Especially problematic was the great emphasis given, in the discussion of education, to the role of the internet. In an intervention that generated much attention, LaRouche presentative Rosa Tennenbaum demolished the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's so-called "education expert" Seymour Papert, who claimed that computers and the internet were bringing about an "educational revolution" around the world. On the contrary, she said, the internet is intrinsically incapable of imparting real knowledge. Learning occurs only by a child replicating an original process of discovery in his or her own mind. So it is about time people forget about formalities and start to discuss the real content of education, she said.

In two other important interventions, Jonathan Tennenbaum sounded sharp warnings about the world financial collapse and the danger that "the clinically insane President Bush" might order an attack on Iran, including use of nuclear weapons. This was especially important, because among the speakers at the plenary sessions, only J.C. Kapur, at the very beginning of the conference, had spoken with any adequate sense of the magnitude and urgency of the crisis facing mankind right now.

A high point of the closing plenary session was an eloquent praise of the principle of human reason, from an Islamic standpoint, sent in by Mahmud Iraki, head of the "Center of the Dialogue of Civilizations" of the Iranian President; Iraki's contribution was read aloud on his behalf.

Low points included babbling speeches by the Germany "greenie" Prof. Hans-Peter Duerr, by oligarch Prince von Esterhazy, and by Olivier Giscard d'Estaing, brother of the former French President. Indicative of the pathological state of mind of Europe's aristocracy these days, Esterhazy presented a panorama of world history from the 15th Century until today, without mentioning a single word about the American Revolution or the United States! Olivier Giscard d'Estaing, on the other hand, stated straightforwardly that the world is basically run by 400 private companies, that are more powerful than the governments—and that people had better learn to live with it! Duerr could not stop talking, and nearly had to be physically removed from the podium.

At the end of the closing plenary session, a final resolution was read aloud, which clearly identified the threat of manipulated religious conflicts, but failed to mention the danger to civilization from a collapsing monetary-financial system. Tennenbaum intervened, in nearly the last word of the conference, insisting that the reorganization of the now-collapsing world financial system is a matter of life or death for civilization, and must be included in the Forum's future deliberations.

His statement was greeted by applause from the audience.

All in all, the conference demonstrated the central point Lyndon LaRouche developed in his latest book on *Earth's Next Fifty Years*: In order to succeed, good intentions are not sufficient; a Dialogue of Cultures cannot be satisfied with a pot-pourri of different opinions, but must proceed from a rigorous scientific notion of truth-seeking. This year's conference had some encouraging and laudable moments, but the next one—if civilization survives that long—will have to be much better.