

## Editorial

# *Schiller and the future of the West*

A new institute has been founded on the western side of the Atlantic, which will link up with a fraternal institute on the European side within a few weeks, to stem the tide toward "decoupling" Europe from the United States. Both institutes will be named in honor of the German poet and historian Friedrich Schiller.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, who launched the call for the Schiller Institute in March of this year, stated at the founding meeting on May 12 that the Schiller Institute is the only pro-Western alliance force in the world today. All the other organizations concerned with the alliance favor decoupling.

Those Americans whose knowledge of world events is confined to the mass media may have virtually forgotten that Europe exists, the U.S. coverage is so minuscule and prejudiced. The European Community is falling apart. Riots and strikes are multiplying, and every major government is on the brink of collapse.

Yet, if present trends continue and the Soviets succeed in establishing hegemony in Europe—even without occupying it, simply through dictating trade terms—that will leave the Soviet Union as the only superpower, the largest military-industrial pact in the world, presiding over an economic base in Western Europe as large as that of the United States.

Most Americans would be outraged at this, if they were allowed to know the facts. On the first level, the task of the Schiller Institute will be to make this danger known, and mobilize the forces to strengthen and renew the alliance.

More deeply, the West requires an energetic revival of the heritage of Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805). Schiller's youth coincided with the American Revolution and the intellectual ferment which swept through the Old World when the world's first republican nation-state was established in the former English colonies. Schiller took up the topic of "universal history," becoming history professor at Jena University on the basis of his book on the Dutch revolt against the Spanish Hapsburgs.

Schiller reviled what he called the *Brotgelehrte*, the academic specialists who put every obstacle in the way

of advancing knowledge in order to protect their monopoly over a fixed body of lore. Schiller's conception of history was inseparable from the necessity of developing a republican citizenry around an understanding of its heritage, viewed as the fight between the tradition established by Solon of Athens (the republican tendency) and Lycurgus of Sparta (the oligarchist tendency).

His historical plays took up such themes as the sale of mercenaries by the Hessian autocrats to fight American revolutionaries (*Love and Intrigue*), the Italian Renaissance (*Fiesco*), the Dutch revolt and Hapsburg rule in Spain (*Don Carlos*), the Thirty Years' War of the 17th Century (*Wallenstein Trilogy*), the Hundred Years' War of the 15th century (*The Maid of Orleans*), and the reign of Elizabeth I of England (*Mary Stuart*). Each drama addressed the historical challenge to become "greater than one's fate."

Thus, to revive the knowledge of Schiller is to reconnect Americans, Europeans, and indeed, citizens of the entire world, with a precious understanding of history, the tradition we are responsible to preserve and enrich with our efforts. On account of these dramas, Schiller was America's most popular foreign playwright, second only to Shakespeare.

Yet, today Schiller's works, and even his name, are unknown to most Americans. Fortunately there is a broadly familiar path of access to that heritage: the setting of Schiller's "Ode to Joy" left to us by the greatest musician mankind has yet produced, Ludwig van Beethoven, in the choral finale of the Ninth Symphony. Beethoven intended these words for the opening recitative of that finale: "Let us sing the song of the immortal Schiller."

Joy (*Freude*, in German) is in that poem the outcome of a titanic struggle to overcome tragedy, the struggle to become equal to a great historical moment. Schiller's comment on the aftermath of the French Revolution was that "a great moment has found a little people." The founding of the Schiller Institute in 1984 is intended to nurture a republican citizenry, capable of greatness, to confront a crisis even more awesome than that of Schiller's day.