

Neo-Liberal Dogma Has Failed; Now Listen to LaRouche!

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Every participant in the Sixth Conference of the World Public Forum Dialogue of Civilizations, which took place on Oct. 9-13—after many weeks of daily reports of cascading catastrophe, respecting the collapse of the world financial system—came with a shared awareness of having arrived at a turning-point in history. Speakers with the most diverse philosophical and geographic backgrounds were unanimous that the neo-liberal free-market economic dogma has been a complete failure. The conference’s organizers saw this as confirmation that the goal for which the Forum was expressly initiated five years ago—namely, to create a new paradigm for a more human world order—has now been placed on mankind’s agenda as its most urgent task.

In his opening address, Vladimir Yakunin, the Forum’s president and co-founder, emphasized the existential nature of the crisis, in which the issue for mankind is “to be or not to be.” As did many other speakers, he stressed that we are facing not merely a financial crisis, but a crisis of civilization, and that its underlying causes must be rooted out.

Yakunin’s co-president, the Indian philosopher Jagdish Chandra Kapur, likewise a forum co-founder, saw the crisis as an opportunity to bring the future paradigm into harmony with the cosmic order, such that in this new world order, not only must every person have sufficient food, and a house to live in, but that each and all must be given the chance to realize the higher potential with which all human beings are endowed.

Russia’s Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Saltonov conveyed greetings from Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who congratulated the Forum for the impressive contribution it has made in formulating conceptual and practical solutions for such fundamental questions as the coexistence of diverse social

models, the preservation of nations’ cultural identities under conditions of globalization, the role of religions in political life, and the resolution of regional conflicts.

Another clear expression of the changing times, were the remarks of Austrian Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, who took up two points: first, that the market-economy model has failed; and second, that confrontation as a means of conflict resolution has turned out to be incapable of achieving the desired political goals. And amazingly, the very same Chancellor who only recently had put his signature on the European Union’s Lisbon Treaty, praised Austria’s neutrality as the model for others to follow.

Even though this has so far not been expressed even approximately in the western media (which is hardly surprising), the Forum has evolved, over its five years of existence, into a significant counterpole to the neo-liberal World Economic Forum in Davos. This year, its annual conference on the island of Rhodes attracted over 700 participants from more than 70 nations, for more than four days of discussion, including two plenary sessions and eight working committees devoted to politics, economics, education, religion, law, culture, migration, the media, and, as a special committee, Chinese civilization. Even though each participant could only monitor a handful of the more than 250 speeches which were delivered, a selection of these revealed some philosophical pearls, especially, for example, some of the contributions on Chinese issues and topics.

Financial Collapse and National Security

The overriding theme, however, was the financial collapse, which each participant reacted to according to his or her own temperament and ideological orientation, ranging from scarcely concealed panic (speakers

from certain western nations), to rather shortsighted *schadenfreude* over the demise of U.S. claims to hegemony, to responsible concern that the failure of one paradigm does not necessarily signify the emergence of a new and better one.

Many Russian speakers, especially in the committee on “Economic Parameters of the Integrated Development of the World Community,” emphatically stressed that the spirit of Franklin Roosevelt is now making a comeback. Both on the Russian side, and—interestingly enough—on the European side, speakers emphasized that there is an awareness that relations between the United States and Russia have the utmost importance for the world strategic situation.

Jacques Sapir, professor of economics at the High School of Social Sciences in France, warned of the imminent danger of a collapse only days hence, if governments do not succeed in bringing the banking and liquidity crisis under control. Sapir stressed that he had to conclude that, even though he does not have anything against the European Union, the EU has collapsed since the outbreak of the crisis, and that since then, all decisions have been made on a national level. One German participant explained that the German government evidently has had no interest in intervening with German taxpayers’ money in order to make up for mistakes made in other countries. There was talk of the failure not only of the EU, but also of the G7, which at its July summit in Japan had not even bothered to include the issue of the financial crisis on its agenda.

A second theme, which was only somewhat upstaged by the drama of the financial crash, was the existing outmoded systems of national security. The eastward expansion of NATO and of the EU have highlighted how quickly previously “frozen conflicts” can explode into hot ones. Salome Zurabishvili, Georgia’s former foreign minister and currently chairman of the Way of Georgia Party, presented her view of the situation. Many discussion documents stated that the decision to launch Georgia’s aggression against South Ossetia had been made not in Tbilisi, but rather on the level of the transatlantic command structure.

Another theme, one which is perhaps not as obvious as the end of the neo-liberal dogma and the transformation in the relative weighting of the world’s nations, but one in which the current controls will no longer function, was the total lock-step control of the Western media. Both inside the work-

ing committee, and in many conversations over breakfast, lunch, and dinner, the mass media as an instrument of manipulation of public opinion, was a hot topic, and this was also addressed by Yakunin in the plenum.

Hope for a Better Future

And herein, perhaps, lies the most important function of the WPFDC, in that it is far more in keeping with the actual political balance of power in the world today, than is the case with most western-dominated conferences and institutions. The United States, with its 16 Forum participants, did have the largest delegation, but also France with 13, Germany with 9, and Italy with 8 were well represented, and China and India also felt that they were adequately represented there.

The prevailing mood at Rhodes was a sense of an historic departure for a new kind of world. For this author, it brought up memories of a time which differed in its predicates, but which was similar in the systemic nature of the change under way, namely of 1989, when the Wall fell in November, and people had the profound sense of participating in an historic transformation, as they experienced the downfall of a system which everyone had thought to be unshakable, and began to feel hope for a better future. What Americans and Europeans today see as a crisis and a threat, is being experienced by the absolute majority of the nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as cause for hope for a more human epoch, a dangerous situation, and yet with a perspective for new options.

Even though it may be difficult for Europeans to see it this way, what the fall of the Wall meant to people in 1989, is what is signified today, for the majority of mankind, by the collapse of the system of globalization, which has meant immense wealth for a tiny minority, but only spreading poverty, hunger, and death for billions of people.

Everything will hinge on whether the responsible people in the world’s relevant institutions can grapple honestly and speedily with the question of what it was in their own thinking, that caused them to be taken in by neo-liberal dogma, and why they were incapable of taking up Lyndon LaRouche’s widely circulated analyses of the problem, and of acting accordingly. There is still an opportunity, and perhaps the last, to correct this error.