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# I. Along the New Silk Road

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SEEING THE NEW SILK ROAD FROM THE FUTURE

## Who Has Grasped What the New Silk Road Really Is?

by Flavio Tabanelli

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February 2018—Credit is like a newborn baby: both of these are anticipations or advances of wealth, and imply a constant and industrious intention toward the future, for the common good.

The New Silk Road is the initiative taken by a nation, by China, in assuming the responsibility to develop each newborn baby, and to “protect the credit.” It is the pivot of all Chinese foreign policy, including as it does an open invitation to every other nation to share, each in its own way, in that responsibility. This is an epochal project, advanced with courage, which is derived from the decision to take as its point of departure the construction of the future, free from the mental schemes of geopolitics, cold war, and so-called “zero sum” economics. (As recently stressed by [Hua Chun-ying](#), spokeswoman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry.)

When a baby is born, she or he passes directly into the infinity which encompasses everything and all of us, largely ignoring the troubles about which adults fidget so often—thanks to their own political shortsightedness. So we should see, in the New Silk Road, an opportunity to collectively build a durable peace based on rejecting prejudices concerning the purported

finiteness of resources and of the world itself—prejudices which frequently have been the true, although artificial, historical causes of crises. Once absorbed by national cultures, these prejudices often are expressed in wars, as tragic as they are senseless.

The New Silk Road is like the hypothesis of the *quanta of energy* whispered by Planck in the ears of the late 19th Century’s physicists, while almost all of them were “selectively deaf,” in insisting that everything fundamental had already been discovered. Fortunately, some of them were able to listen to him.



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To understand such an epochal project, which has already been funded on the scale of ten post-World War II Marshall Plans, we can either rely on the explanations of the Chinese government and the institutions which are engaged in this major effort, or on its detractors, who turn to sophisms or invent double and hidden Chinese purposes—or we can rely on the vision of the international movement which inspired

this project more than thirty years ago, and has repeatedly visited China over two decades in order to further a dialogue among civilizations.

I prefer to devote the next paragraphs to the latter and third source, to whom I’ve been so close for all these years of battle to “exit from the international financial crisis,” even before its 2007-2008 eruption. The wider public needs to complement the inspiring ideas of the New Silk Road with the information which is

within reach, but so hard—at the moment—to “separate from the chaff.”

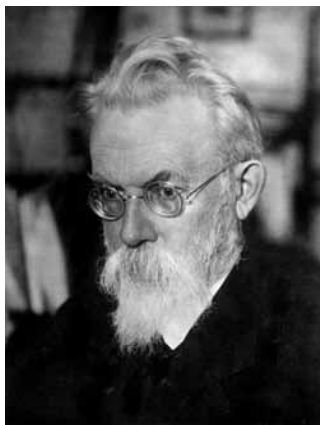
### The New Silk Road in its Full ‘Geometric Dimensions’

The actual epochal transformation is representable in terms typical of the “market” or of “billionaires’ affairs,” but only as a projection of a process characterized by a higher number of dimensions. One has to be aware of that. Many criticisms made against it, for example, can be made believable only inside such a dimensional limitation.

In my own experience, it is best to situate the Chinese initiative in the domain of history, or—better said—in the “simultaneity of eternity,” where the principles manifest in our species, which alone is capable of cognition, are located. My experience is that of a person who speaks about this in every context, whether appropriate or made so. For instance, I have manned the sidewalks with posters to trigger discussions with passers-by, portraying the choice of principle compelled by the New Silk Road, between geopolitics and war on the one hand, and the adhesion to the new paradigm of mutual development and peace on the other.

Those who study the geological ages, find traces of enormous and traumatic transformations undergone by our planet. It was still only the fifth day of creation, and thus nothing was imputable to man, yet we see:

Mountains where before oceans heaved;  
Woods where before there were silent deserts, and the reverse;  
Icy bridges between continents or valleys now divided by seas or mountain ranges;  
Snowy expanses for millennia, where before broad-leaved plants thrived, which now are known only by paleontologists;



Vladimir Vernadsky

The birth and the drift of continents; and Mass extinctions, and also phases of new speciation.

### The Quality of the Human Species

Historians who study the process from the sixth day onwards, relying on the gifts of speech and writing, exult every time that they verify one of those great moments when our human kind was able to itself overcome by willfully progressing, using wise concentrations of spiritual and physical forces, when we could foresee and act upon a future direction for ourselves, to realize a perspective of greater prosperity and more advantages, than those given by the practice of war.

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Maria Montessori spoke of “supranature,” in referring to the presence and action of our species in this world. She insisted that the child can be “the teacher of man,” even during the raging of the two world wars. She entrusted the building of peace, to education—an education which would respect the sovereignty of the “absorbent mind” of the child and its instinctive modes of learning.

We should recall Vladimir Vernadsky, who emphasized the role of the noosphere in his tripartition of the world into the sphere of inert matter, sphere of living beings, and sphere of cognition. Vernadsky emphasized the lawfulness, in the order of the universe, of what Man adds

to the world, particularly economic infrastructure, which development in Russia was an object of his teacher Mendeleev’s dedicated effort. For Vernadsky, Man is a “geological force,” but a force with the advantage of not being blind like the aforementioned geological upheavals preceding man’s emergence.



Painting of Dmitri Mendeleev by Ilya Repin.



*Baby at play by Thomas Eakens.*

Writing under the pen-name “M. Ilyin,” Ilya Yakovlevich Marshak (1896-1953), another Russian chemist, boldly committed himself to encouraging children to devote their lives to science. Even if stained by Stalinism, his books popularizing science have the same inspiring quality as Jules Verne’s novels. The preface of his *How Man Became a Giant* (1948) is poetic:

On earth, there exists a giant.  
 With such arms that it can lift a locomotive without  
 any effort.  
 With such feet that it can walk a thousand kilometers  
 in a day.  
 Eyes that see the invisible, and ears that hear what is  
 being said on another continent.  
 So strong that it drills straight through  
 mountains from one side to the  
 other, and stops waterfalls in  
 mid-course.  
 According to its will, it rebuilds the  
 earth, plants woods, connects seas,  
 and waters the deserts.  
 Who is this giant?  
 This giant is Man.  
 But how did it happen that Man became  
 a giant, the master of the Earth?

These are the theme and the purpose of this narration.

*How Man Became a Giant* is the title of this old book for children. “How Did Man Become Impotent?” could be the question to formulate for today. Many

of us do not grasp that we really represent a “supernature”: yet, science and technology allow us to create materials, states and conditions which do not exist and may never have existed in nature. An example? In research reactors for nuclear fusion, we bring plasma to far higher temperatures than those measured in the stars. And we do it “in our backyard.” This is no random example: China is now demonstrating seriousness and determination in the search for controlled fusion.

By ignoring this creative quality expressed in every one of us, and by thus ignoring the reality that (in European mythological terms) Prometheus revealed the secret of fire to us; we expose ourselves to Zeus’ deceptions and to a sense of impotence in relation to events, and we further expose ourselves in many tragic ways to the renunciation of our own humanity.

### Optimistic International Relations

The essential feature of our species, on the contrary, leads us to directly recognize a new historical phase with the emergence of the New Silk Road—after the enthusiasm-filled phase of man’s first Moon landing. Optimism is now coming back forcefully. We see this in the active idea that development holds the main key to solve every problem, as China’s President Xi Jinping emphasized at the “Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation” in May. Clearly the New Silk Road *isn’t* what many see—and often criticize—with mere businessmen’s glasses. The [Beijing Review](#) reported that Dong Manyuan, vice-president of the Chinese Institute for International Studies, reports that “the idea of



*Chinese students in a class, conducted from space, by Wang Yaping aboard the Shenzhou 10 space mission.*

common development advocated by the Belt and Road Initiative, based on the principle of construction through consultation, is very appealing.”

The problems that humanity must deal with have been planetary in scale for a long time. Without depending on any form of world government, we must invite nations to compare and discuss important ideas: how to participate in mankind’s Promethean power, and sharing in the fruits of creativity for the common good within the noosphere as defined by Vernadsky. That noosphere focuses on the intervention in and over nature, both the abiotic domain and the biosphere.

The great advances made by technologies which are available today or have been “left in the drawer” (in the case of sectors dumped after decades of austerity), show that problems like so-called natural disasters or poverty, are exclusively issues of political will or lack of will.

This said, the way must be cleared for the broader conception of the New Silk Road, which under its initial name, the “Eurasian Land-Bridge,” was proposed to the world by Lyndon and Helga LaRouche’s movement, in response to the collapse of the Soviet system. Two pillars of that Soviet system which should have been kept as the backbone of a plan of international cooperation are efficient national educational institutions—freed from ideology—and the industrial apparatus, wholly converted to serve civilian needs. The spirit of the Eurasian Land-Bridge proposal is still the same, and is now embodied in the New Silk Road initiative. This is now called “One Belt, One Road,” encompassing two main paths for infrastructural development: the “belt” of maritime transport to and from the Horn of Africa and the east African coast, as well as the more traditional “road” of terrestrial transport between Europe and Eastern Asia.

The “spirit of the New Silk Road” is already transforming this whole geometry. Other roads have been added: the Polar route, and branches on other continents, Africa and the Americas, of what the LaRouche movement calls the “World Land-Bridge.” In yet other dimensions, there is cooperation in space exploration and deep-sea exploration, and also cooperation in web protocols and rules to strengthen communications in the



*Helga Zepp-LaRouche, front right, with other non-governmental representatives, participating in the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, May 2017.*

service of the dialogue between civilizations.

It is thus evident that the advantages for transport and commercial exchanges are only minor aspects of the intended purpose, or—as we said—a projection of the first and also ultimate purpose, the emancipation of humanity. Zhang Yansheng, chief researcher at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, confirms that the creation of platforms for international cooperation can push forward the industrialization of countries which have been left behind in the age of globalization. Ndubuisi Christian Ani, researcher at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies in Addis Ababa, reports happily that the Belt and Road Initiative is “totally in line with Africa’s much-desired need for infrastructure and economic development.”

After many years of waiting by Africans and by the Italian company Bonifica SpA—waiting caused by years of skillful sophistries equivalent to “cover-up” and dissipation of energy—one company, PowerChina, the big Chinese company which built the Three Gorges Dam, has now joined the [project](#) to solve the problem of the Lake Chad region.

### **Italy and the New Silk Road**

I agree with the contributions of other authors on these pages [of the Italian magazine *Galileo*], that Italy, our country, is too shy in keeping itself away from this development.

We should denounce the fact that the then-Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti, while making a *pro forma* declaration in favor of cooperation with China, nevertheless refused the financial aid that China had offered us (being aware that our peninsula is the “stable link with the European hinterland”) to help build the long-proposed Messina Strait Bridge between Sicily and the Italian mainland. Subsequently, he shut the project down, claiming lack of funds.



*Container freight train en route from China to Duisburg, Germany.*

This is an example of the magic trick of the disappearance of “true money” (an expression for real-economy productive credit, used by a former president of the General Confederation of Italian Industry), which is the mirror-image of the manipulation of popular opinion with the bogeyman of unsustainable “costs.”

Current Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni Silveri has substituted the Northern Italian ports, which are much more active and believed to be more cost-effective than those of Sicily and Southern Italy, for the transit of cargoes passing through the two Suez canals. But he has not protected those ports from probable competition from other routes of the New Silk Road project’s articulation. By so doing he has continued to indulge in the drift that is moving Italy away from the New Silk Road.

Why not start, instead, from the perspective of the railroad pioneer Luigi Negrelli, of economist Carlo Ilarione Petitti di Roreto, and even more, that of Cavour, who believed that Italy should have prepared in advance, with a well-balanced system of seaports, for the first moment of the envisaged excavation and opening of the Suez Canal in 1869?

### **The New Silk Road as a Dialogue Between Civilizations**

The theoretical elaboration by Beijing builds on the Peace of Westphalia, which was achieved after several years of negotiations, and was focused on respect for national sovereignty. China wants to play an international role using three powers: culture, conviction, and responsibility, as outlined by Xi Jinping, and asserting categorically that it rejects the practice of “regime change” and foreign interference. “Our leaders emphasize the concept of the ‘Three No’s’,” said Shi Ze, direc-

tor for International Energy Strategy Studies and Senior Fellow of the China Institute of International Studies.

“First,” he explained, “we do not interfere in the internal affairs of other nations; second, China does not seek to increase its so-called ‘sphere of influence’; and third, China does not strive for hegemony or dominance. That is, we are all equal partners.” Dr. Shi was speaking at the international conference on the 30th anniversary of the Schiller Institute, founded and directed by Helga Zepp-LaRouche. [That conference](#) also featured the participation of Enzo Siviero on the theme of “Mediterranean bridging.”

As Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the “Silk Road Lady,” assessed last November at the international conference of the Schiller Institute, the dialogue between the highest expressions of the two cultures, the western and the Chinese, is progressing. The New Silk Road can really be the “new model for international relations.”

“This is not the first time” she declared, “that Europe has been in bad shape.” She recalled the challenge launched by Gottfried W. Leibniz, in a memorandum dated 1670, in which he criticized Europe’s “badly established trade and manufacturing; ... an entirely debased currency; ... the uncertainty of law and the delay of all legal actions; in worthless education ... in an increase in atheism in our morals, which are, as it were, infected by a foreign plague; ... in the bitter strife of religions; all of which ... weaken us, and, ... may in the end completely ruin us...” Helga LaRouche said Leibniz recognized that Europe needed a merger of the Chinese ancient natural theology and European culture. In the preface of his *Novissima Sinica* (in English, *The Latest from China*), Zepp-LaRouche said that Leibniz recognized that there was a strong affinity between

Christianity and Confucianism ... and the latter had much more to offer than any other known belief system of his time.

“He asserted,” Helga Zepp-LaRouche added, that “we need the Chinese to send missionaries to Europe, so that we can learn from them the natural religion that we have almost lost,” referring to the fact that “there is in China a public morality, admirable in certain regards, conjoined to a philosophical doctrine, or rather a natural theology venerable by its antiquity, established and authorized for about 3,000 years, long before the philosophy of the Greeks.” (See <http://newparadigm.schillerinstitute.com/media/helga-zepp-larouche-new-silk-road-new-model-international-relations/>)

### To Protect the Credit

I could have invited readers to reflect upon the striking statistics already achieved by this diplomatic and economic policy, but I prefer to base our reasoning on its qualitative features. Even in the field of financing of infrastructure, China has been able to build on western wisdom forgotten by the West. Chinese banks have generated credit in the same order of magnitude as the European Central Bank’s “Quantitative Easing,” but Chinese credit has emphasized productive activities. China boasts a regime of banking separation similar to the Glass-Steagall law introduced in the United States by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933, to effectively respond to the Great Depression. While China is now wisely emulating that extension of federal credit, as did Roosevelt’s New Deal, some mouthpieces of the bankrupt circles of the trans-Atlantic region, such as the *Financial Times* and Washington’s Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), have cast suspicion on the financing of infrastructure projects by China.

Like the New Deal and every other historical experience of economic policy free from arbitrary “external constraints,” the New Silk Road disproves, as it proceeds, every pessimistic forecast. With the impetus of such self-nourishing processes, like life itself, it repeats the “miracle.” The dogs bark but the caravan moves on.

Thus far, the EU has hindered some advances, for instance in the cooperation between China and the Balkan countries, the EU has thrown up bureaucratic problems, claiming violations of European rules on financing and building infrastructure: this, after tens of years of deafness to the dreams of Serbia, Bosnia, and their neighbors. Priority is being given to papers in dusty files, rather than to a changing reality. This “pa-

ralysis of legality” reminds me of my discussion many year ago with the director of a nuclear plant. “Why couldn’t Italy,” I asked him, “seek nuclear agreements with Japan, which builds nuclear plants in three years, while we must allocate for fifteen years of construction?” “Because their safety standards differ from Europe’s,” he answered. But how is it possible now, that China’s President Xi and French President Macron are happily signing nuclear agreements? Because he who wants to, can, do it.

### Eradicating Poverty and Raising Living Standards

Speaking of France, what is now known as the Canal du Midi was built for quicker transportation of goods between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic, and to better cope with future regional droughts. It seems that the potential rise in the standard of living of the people, one of the most important effects of public investments, was almost “unexpected,” and some even tried to impede it. The high wages and innovative working conditions (rainy days off, paid Sundays and holidays, and sick leave) drained so much labor from the countryside, it provoked discontent among the landowners.

Initially pay was 20 shillings per day, twice that in agriculture. [Riquet cut it to 15, then to 12 per day.](#)

France was too heavily dependent on agriculture, as Colbert well knew. The effect of higher wages for the diggers should not only have been expected, but budgeted. If this historical reconstruction is true, France chose to reduce the pay of the workers instead of raising that in agriculture, triggering the first economy of high wages.

Beijing aims at lifting all the remaining 30 million poor Chinese from poverty within the current five-year plan (by 2020). One can safely assume that they will make it, whereas by that time, poverty in Europe will have increased. By fully collaborating with the countries that are participating in the New Silk Road initiative, and re-defining our future as a nation without the Troika ( European Commission, International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank) on our back, we could reverse the direction of the current economic decline. Only ambitious capital- and scientific idea-intensive national programs—drafted while looking back fifty years from the future—will make the immediate creation of tens of millions of jobs possible. We have suffered for too long: the New Silk Road is already four years old and we should no longer wait.