

## Leibniz's vision for China, versus British geopolitics

by Helga Zepp LaRouche

*Mrs. LaRouche, the founder and president of the Schiller Institute in Germany and chairman of the board of directors of the Schiller Institute in the United States, addressed the Dec. 15, 1996 conference of the International Caucus of Labor Committees and Schiller Institute in Kiedrich, Germany. The following is edited from her remarks.*

I want to announce that Samuel Huntington, the infamous author of the thesis of the coming *Clash of Civilizations*, that the war between different cultures will cause World War III, is dead wrong. The biggest crisis in human history will be caused neither by the sudden rise of China, which is what Samuel Huntington kept repeating on a lecture tour in September in most of Asia, nor by a conflict between Western civilization on the one side, and an alliance between Islam and Confucianism on the other side. The biggest crisis in human history, which will be settled fairly soon, I dare to predict, will be the resolution of the war between those people who fight for the cause of humanity, and the proponents of such bestial views as articulated by such lower forms of life, like Mr. Samuel Huntington himself.

The question which will determine the twenty-first century is, will there be the greatest global economic miracle the world has ever seen—and I am saying this deliberately: the greatest economic miracle the world has ever seen—combined with a beautiful new Renaissance, in which the best traditions of all cultures of this world will have a Renaissance and lead to new stages of mankind; or will there be a collapse of mankind into barbarism, chaos, wars around the globe, and, in the meantime, a population collapse to maybe less than 1 billion people?

This is the question of Leibniz's vision of the unity of the human race and the cooperation among the different peoples and nations for a common purpose and a mutual benefit of all. Will that vision shape the next century, or will the evil spirit of British geopolitics, an ideological worldview which already has caused two world wars in this century?



*A railroad traverses a segment of the "New Silk Road" in one of the Chinese mountain ranges between Europe and Asia. In Leibniz's time, "it took people years to traverse these obstacles. It was an incredible thing to do."*

Let me again make this clear, even though Lyndon LaRouche mentioned it yesterday already: When I talk about British oligarchs, British geopolitics, for sure, I do not mean those poor subjects living in Great Britain, people who are probably among the most miserable people of the whole world. If you ever have been in Manchester or any of those so-called industrial cities of England, you really feel like you are in the nineteenth century. I mean that group of oligarchs who took over the natives of the British Isles, those people who use Great Britain today as the center for the continuation of the Venetian concept of a maritime world empire based on the control of the oceans, of trade and usury. When this oligarchy transferred its headquarters out of Venice into Northern Europe, to the Netherlands, to England, they took with them the idea that world power lies in the hands of those who control the oceans and, therefore, natural resources, and, therefore, trade, and have the power to impose usury on all the peoples of the world.

That that has not changed since the time when Venice was the headquarters of such a system of usury, becomes very clear, and everybody who is not blind or evil-minded can see it: that today the entire complex of so-called globalization, free-market economy, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization, United Nations, European Union, the Asia Europe Meeting [ASEM], and similar supranational institutions which control the world, are of such an oligarchical nature. These are the supranational crutches on which the casino economy, which is now about to bust very soon, is limping

along. I can assure you: That group of international oligarchs is freaked out! They are freaked out beyond their wits! Not only do they know that their system will collapse, but their worst geopolitical nightmare, the one which has been torturing them since before World War I, has come true.

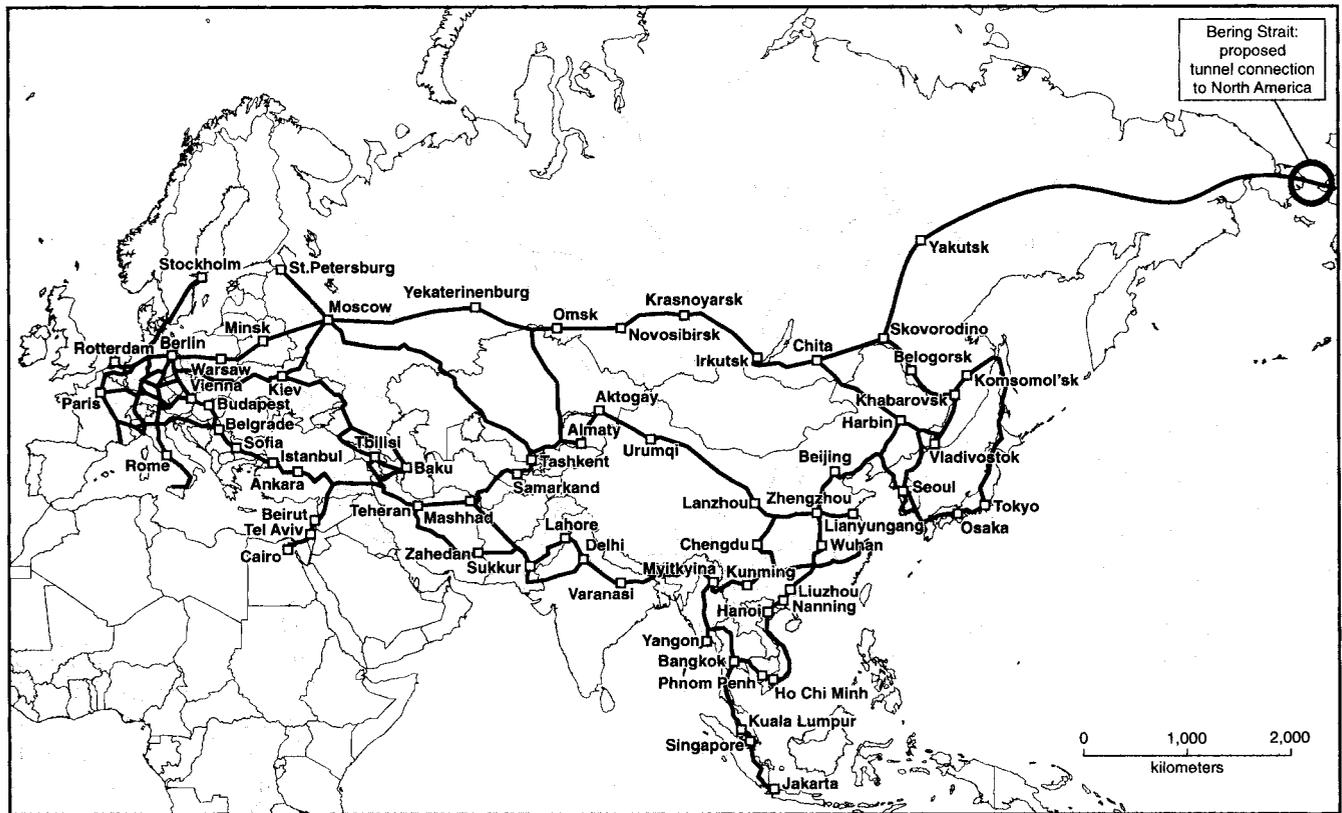
We spoke a very short time ago to a top representative of this oligarchical group, and he said: "The history of the twentieth century is coming full circle. This is horrible. The idea of the economic development of the Eurasian land mass, which was threatening to end the control of the British Empire before World War I, that is now coming back full circle." From their standpoint, the situation today is much worse than it was before World War I. . . .

From their standpoint, unlike before World War I, China today represents 1.2 billion people. And this is a map which shows the population distribution in the year 2010 [not shown here], where—even so, one has to take these statistics with a certain care, because they mostly are based on wrong ideas—but, according to the projection of the UN, the population of Europe will more or less stagnate, will go back a little bit, Russia will go back, Africa will go back, the rest of the world will collapse. The only area of the world which will progress, according to the UN, is South and Southeast Asia, but especially also China will be a country of 1.5 billion people.

The Chinese people, according to its own government, has the intention to bring the Chinese economy as quickly as possible up to the level of the world. Every greenie is losing his marbles about that idea. We can hear the greenies saying:

FIGURE 1

**Eurasia: future main routes of the Eurasian Land-Bridge**



“What does that mean, that every Chinese wants to have a Mercedes?” Which obviously will send people like Lester Brown up the walls as well. But not only does the Chinese government, according to their own intention, have the perspective of bringing China up to the world level, but of taking the initiative to help create a new era of mankind, through the development of the land-locked areas, by bringing infrastructure, development, and advanced technologies into those areas of the world which so far have been cut off from development.

Starting with the Eurasian land-bridge, but, then, also connecting, through the Bering Strait [see **Figure 1**], the Eurasian land-bridge with the Americas, and through the Middle East into Africa—these are, by far, not all the infrastructure projects, these are just the main railway lines—to end a situation in which 80% of the human territory has not been habitable so far, and where the advantages of a country were more or less conditioned by its geographical, natural preconditions. To end that, and to bring, through infrastructure, development into all corners of the world, and by doing so, also increase the area of the habitable world incredibly.

China, already now, is working together with many countries, like Iran, Pakistan, the Central Asian states, Turkey, and

others; and, in just the recent period, major new developments have occurred, in addition to that, after Indian President Sharma visited Beijing, and then, in turn, President Jiang Zemin went to New Delhi. We knew that the Indian elite was completely beside themselves, because they looked at the infrastructure maps of the Eurasian land-bridge, and the whole area of the Indian subcontinent was excluded; there was nothing there. So, now, after these visits, both Presidents have stated a commitment to integrate the southern tier of the Eurasian land-bridge and to integrate, not only India, but to connect Europe all the way down to Indonesia and Jakarta. That means that, now, the southern tier perspective between China, India, Iran, and the other countries is on the table, and this will happen. Also, what is improving massively, is the quadrilateral relation between China, Russia, India, and Iran.

Suddenly, Pakistan, too, obviously influenced by this whole dynamic, has shifted policies and made overtures to India in the direction of settling previous conflicts, including Kashmir and so forth.

**Sam Huntington’s disease**

If you look at this dynamic, it is no wonder that the leading British-dominated oligarchical circles are absolutely going

wild. We talked to another top naval military strategist from Great Britain, and he said: "This Chinese land-bridge project and its broader implications poses the greatest geopolitical threat of the twenty-first century to Europe and the United States, but it is scarcely understood by the policy-makers on both sides of the Atlantic."

Well, that is unfortunately true, and that defines our work, to make sure that Europe knows about this. But you can also be sure that the hard-core criminals of the oligarchs, they know for sure, that this perspective exists. And they are all involved in what Noordin Sopie, the director general of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies of Malaysia, described as a massive, intensive, and uncompromising campaign to sell the China threat theory to the world.

And, as a matter of fact, nowadays, you can easily identify a British agent: If somebody says, "China is the coming threat," you'd better look at who is paying this person.

There is, on the one side, Samuel Huntington with his crazy scenarios. And I want to give you a taste of what kind of pathological nonsense he is peddling: He has the scenario that World War III will start with China attacking Vietnam over an oil field. Then, a U.S. aircraft carrier comes to its aid. China, thereupon, attacks U.S. ships; India will then attack Pakistan; Japan joins in the battle on the side of China; then, China and Iran give nuclear arms to Algeria and Bosnia; and then, the first nuclear bomb will be launched by the Algerians against Marseilles. And that will, then, be World War III unfolding.

Now, Samuel Huntington is a very low creature, which becomes very clear when you read his piece called "The West Unique, Not Universal," in which he makes the point that there are no universal values common to all people, but that each regional group, according to its own culture, is completely different. He denies the idea that there is one human race, and, therefore, his conclusion is, that the people of the West must hang together or they will be hung separately. The essence of Samuel Huntington's philosophy and culture is the ethics of thieves: namely, you should avoid being hung, but the fact that the idea of being hung is on his mind, is an interesting insight.

A similar scare scenario is unfortunately also to be taken seriously: It is called *The Next War*, which is a book, co-authored by Sir Caspar Weinberger, the Knight Grand Cross of the most excellent Order of the British Empire. You may have thought that for seven years he was the defense secretary under Reagan, but he has progressed up the ladder of oligarchs to become a "Sir." In this book, he has five likely wars that the United States could get into: One is, North Korea attacks South Korea. A fictitious North Korean dictator with the name of Kim acts together with General Hu of China, who attacks Taiwan; then the U.S. fleet arrives from Singapore; China attacks U.S. ships from the air; then the United States is joined in the war by Japan and Australia, France, and Great Britain; and then, Kim uses the entire ABC arsenal against this coal-

ition. China launches a nuclear missile to destroy the U.S. 2nd Armored Division. The United States retaliates, with nuclear destruction of a Chinese division. And finally, the U.S. President is forced into a compromise peace, because the U.S. forces are too weak to carry out the war with China.

Weinberger's book also has wars with Iran, Mexico, Russia, and Japan in various scenarios.

Unfortunately, one cannot discount these scribblings as morbid fantasies of a deranged imitation of Dr. Strangelove, because there are people in the United States, in Great Britain, who are actively thinking in these terms. For example, according to Martin Walker, who wrote in the London *Observer*, that the U.S. Naval War College had two computer simulations of a war between the United States and China in the year 2010. And, interestingly, in both cases the United States lost the war, which is obviously supposed to motivate military spending in the United States.

### **Britain's 'ring around China'**

There is no question that this is very serious, and that the British oligarchy right now is involved in an absolutely massive campaign to try to split China into as many parts as they can.

There is a coordinated series of destabilizations encircling China [see **Figure 2**], which all are coordinated by the British Foreign Office and its intelligence arms. This includes the operation of the Taliban in Afghanistan, which reaches both into Kashmir and Pakistan, and affects also certain forces in Xinjiang; and that situation in Xinjiang, in turn, affects the situation in Tibet. Obviously, the Chinese are extremely concerned about this, and are putting pressure on Pakistan to stop all support for the Taliban, which poses an interesting question for Pakistan.

There is also a British campaign to overthrow the present government of Myanmar (formerly Burma), and there is a massive upgrading—unfortunately, financed by the U.S. Congress—of Radio Free Asia, which is now taking on the same role that Radio Free Europe had in respect to the Soviet Union, before it collapsed.

This British operation also includes the idea to get Japan totally on an Anglophile anti-Chinese policy, to get them to go back to their "Go North" policy. The British, for sure, want to strengthen the Japanese impulse to seize political hegemony over the northern tier of China and Mongolia, and to eventually break these parts of China away from the central government in Beijing. Japan, or certain forces in Japan, are also engaged in trying to encourage the independence of Taiwan.

### **The special case of Japan**

In this context, the recent incident around the Diaoyu Islands [see **Figure 3**], which started in the July-October period, played a significant role. This is a little group of eight rocky islands, 160 kilometers northeast of Taiwan, where a

FIGURE 2

**British-backed strategic thrusts against China**



Moonie-linked right-wing youth group from Japan built a lighthouse and put up a Japanese flag. This had no purpose, there is nothing growing on these islands; they have no purpose, but obviously it was meant to be a provocation against China, and even according to Japanese historians, these islands have belonged to China since the Ming dynasty, which is when they were first mentioned in Chinese records. The Ming dynasty was between 1368 and 1644, and the first time the Japanese claimed these islands was only after the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95, when a Japanese decree annexed them. So, this incident was linked to the Moonies in Japan, and, therefore, very directly to George Bush and his brother Prescott Bush, who is basically running crime for Bush in Asia; and to the International Republican Institute, which we have identified as being involved in dirty operations in Russia, in Myanmar, and many other places.

You have to understand that this was a provocation to China, because it refers to something which is very shameful in Chinese history, namely, the occupation of Taiwan and the wars lost with Japan. And you have to understand the context of the colonial aggression against China in the nineteenth century. When this incident occurred, we looked a little bit deeper into it, and we found that this Diaoyu Islands question

was introduced in 1971 as a footnote in the U.S.-Japan Okinawa Treaty, which was set up by Nixon, together with Japan, when Kissinger was the head of the National Security Council. The Okinawa Treaty literally traps the United States into militarily intervening on behalf of Japan, concerning these islands.

The Okinawa Treaty was a provision of the earlier 1951-1960 U.S.-Japan security treaty, and, for various unfortunate reasons, this hit an especially raw nerve, because, when Clinton went to Japan at the beginning of 1996, he signed the Clinton-Hashimoto security agreements, wherein it is suspected that there is a secret clause, not only allowing the United States to use Japanese bases, but to allow Japan to go into out-of-area deployments, which, like Germany, was forbidden after the war, and which was prohibited under the Japanese Constitution, until now.

Obviously, this incident brought back to people in China, people in Taiwan, and elsewhere, the worst memories of the two Sino-Japanese wars. And the idea of having Japan and the United States in a military alliance against China, indeed, is part of a nightmare scenario.

Japan, quite like Germany, is a country which has practically no resources and not enough food for self-sufficiency,

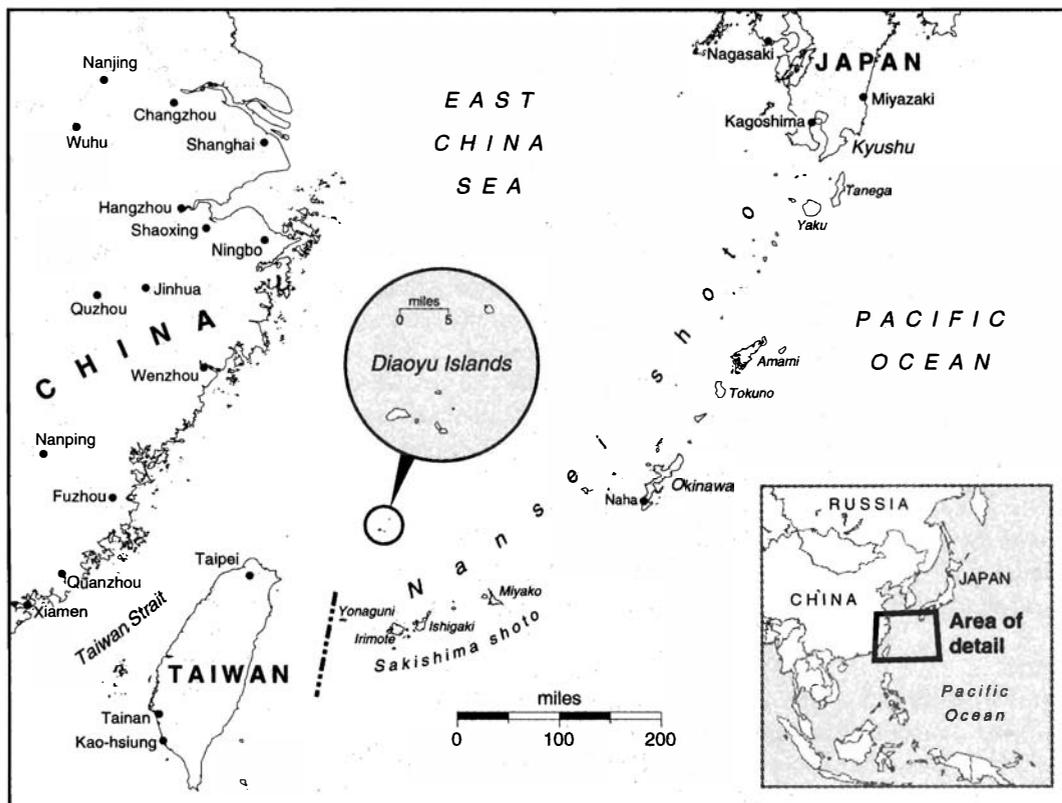


FIGURE 3  
**China's Diaoyu  
 Islands claimed  
 by Japan**

and, therefore, is dependent on high-technology exports, which used to be the case for Germany up to recently. The only way that Japan can have a useful function, is as a motor of development in a growing market throughout Asia. If Japan, because of the collapse of the world economy, is prevented from playing this role, then naturally the more imperial impulse inside Japan is strengthened, namely, to establish controlled spheres of influence in the existing nations of the Pacific Rim.

This is exactly the dynamic which was generated by the European colonialist policies at the end of the nineteenth century, which strengthened those tendencies in Japan, which finally launched the war against China in 1894 and the initial occupation of Korea. And it was exactly the same dynamic of economic collapse between 1927 and 1931, which was the reason why Japan launched the second Sino-Japanese war in 1931.

The only reason one cannot completely ignore such crazy scenarios as those of Samuel Huntington and Sir Caspar Weinberger, is not the rise of China or the population growth of China, but because the present financial system—the European Union/Maastricht, the U.S. idea of balancing the budget, the IMF conditionalities for Russia, for Latin America, for eastern Europe, for Africa—is creating a dynamic where you have financial and economic catastrophes in all the countries that stick to this policy. It is only under the conditions of a

world economic and financial collapse, that such a war could become reality.

It is extremely worrisome, for sure, that Japan and Great Britain have signed what the London *Times* called a groundbreaking agreement: an action agenda for a special partnership, establishing unprecedented levels of cooperation in world affairs. This was signed in September, when British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind and Japanese Foreign Minister Ikeda met.

The problem is, that apart from useful bilateral relations between the countries in Eurasia, the entire international framework of foreign policy structures is a disaster, and is tending to become more so, which is underlined by the following: The infamous British think-tank of the royal family, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), wrote in their recent newsletter that they take credit for establishing the new Council for Asia-Europe Cooperation, called CEC, which brings together the 12 main research institutes of Asia and Europe as a braintrust for the next Asia-Europe Meeting conference and the preparatory meeting for this ASEM conference.

Remember that the ASEM conference, which took place in Bangkok in March 1996, which was supposed to establish closer cooperation between the European Union and Asia, had no other purpose than to bring the exploding land-bridge cooperation under control and to strangle it. And this was

stated without any question by Sir Leon Brittan, because they don't want this land-bridge to progress by means of state-financed credits. They want to impose the corset, the structures of the IMF, the World Trade Organization, and similar things, on this development, to then impose their usual conditionalities, and only build the Eurasian land-bridge by private means, namely, credits from the private markets; and that way, you can be sure, it will never come into being.

This newsletter said that the IISS is proud to have been a prime mover behind the CEC, which is seen as an important way for the institute to remain at the heart of the European and Asian debate about Asia and its connection to Europe. Also, the IISS, which is one of the headquarters, one of the centers of war against the land-bridge, had a conference in Canberra, Australia, in May of this year, where, according to its own coverage, there were heated debates about the nature of Chinese politics, always with the aim of portraying China as a complete monster, as building up military potential, developing ballistic missiles, and similar things.

### **The Maastricht madness**

Remember that one of the core strategists at IISS is none other than Gerald Segal, who is also a member of the task force preparing policy papers for this European-Asian cooperation; and, he is famous for saying that he wants to split China up as quickly as possible.

I say this, because we have to be aware, that the present policy of the European countries, which submit to the supranational control of the European Union, their crime is not only that they are destroying the European nations by the idiocy of Maastricht; that the policy of Maastricht is ripping apart all European nations: Look at what is happening in Italy, look at France, look at Germany. Just three days ago, this insane policy destroyed the Vulkan shipyard in Bremen, announcing that it will finally be closed down in the coming year. And you saw workers demonstrating in the Christmas markets, with signs reading: "Our Region Is Dying." So, no Christmas mood will be there, for sure.

These people are not only destroying the tax base of Europe, they are then proceeding to cut health care, killing people, going back to Nazi policies. But, by being stupid and historically ignorant, they are also capitulating to British politics, and, by doing so, risking new wars around the globe. If you think how World War I came about, how World War II came about, it is not out of the question that a continuation of European Union policy, of Maastricht, will be a contributing factor to a global dynamic of economic and financial collapse leading to World War III.

This is why these people have absolutely no moral right—and we have to really mobilize the mass of populations in Europe—they have no right to do what they are doing. The people of Europe, the governments of Europe, who are pursuing these policies, are making the same mistakes as what happened in World War I and World War II, and they have to

be confronted. We have to educate the people, so they are no longer so stupid as to tolerate idiotic governments like these.

Why is all of this happening? Why are they doing this? Why are they self-destructing? At least for the British part, it is very clear. We talked recently to a senior military source in Germany, who said, "You have to understand the British psychology. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the British Empire controlled the world, and they defeated the danger, from their standpoint, of the Eurasian economic development, by orchestrating two world wars. Now, their new base of operation, the British Isles, is a post-industrial garbage heap, and they're confronted with the perspective of China becoming the dominant superpower of the future, of having 1.5 billion people in maybe 15 years; and, on top of this, they propose a new land-bridge era for all of mankind: Naturally, the British will try to do everything to destroy that."

I just wanted to make these remarks, to underline the fact that there is no question, that the new Silk Road, the new era of a land-bridge-based world economy, is *the* most important strategic issue, which underlies everything. Whether people discuss it or not, you have to have that in mind, that that is the strategic issue above all.

### **Revival of Sun Yat-sen**

As you know, just a couple of weeks ago, the 130th birthday of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founder of modern China, took place. We, for that occasion, just published the book *The Vital Problem of China* by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, either written by him or under his inspiration by one of his pupils, which, we discovered to our great surprise, was nearly unknown in China. You cannot find it in Chinese libraries; you could not find it in Taiwanese libraries. So, we published it in Chinese, and we did so, because it is one of the best analyses of what led to World War I. He wrote it basically as a polemic: Why it was against the fundamental interest of China to enter World War I on the side of the Entente Cordiale against Germany. And, I also suggest we publish it in German, because the Germans really need it badly, to finally understand what caused World War I.

I only give you one quote here which I think is really extremely interesting, because it reveals that Dr. Sun Yat-sen really understood the British. He said: "In other words, Britain seeks friendship only with those which can render her services, and when her friends are too weak to be of any use to her, they must be sacrificed in her interest. Britain's tender regard for her friends is like the delicate care usually shown by farmers in the rearing of silkworms: After all the silk has been drawn from the cocoons, they are destroyed by fire or used as food for the fish.

"The present friends of Great Britain are no more than silkworms and they are receiving all the tender care of Britain simply because there is still some silk left in them."

It is interesting that Friedrich List—who, as you know, was the mentor of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, and Dr. Sun Yat-sen had

the *National System of Political Economy* by List translated into Chinese—challenged the Germans to be sympathetic with the Chinese, because they would be engaging in the same battle against the English world-trade monopoly to protect their young industries as Germany.

He said: “We believe that the throne of the Son of Heaven would sooner collapse—and all of mandarindom along with it—than have 300 million people look on as the English complete their destruction of all normal trade activity.” This was the prognosis issued by Friedrich List in an article in the Customs Union’s newspaper in 1844, on English free trade policy’s plundering of the Chinese economy. “The most probable course, is that sooner or later, millions of indigent workers, in utter despair, will let loose against the red-haired barbarians, and will force them to defend the honor of English underclothing, by once again staging one great bloodbath after another. And then, one fine day, the Chinese free-trade experiment will explode like an overheated pressure-cooker, and will end in horror. . . . The red-haired barbarians will be driven out, and will have to make war; Chinese trade will be interrupted for an extended period.”

He further emphasized that in both China and Germany, it was a matter of the nation-state’s sovereignty “to guard against the destruction of manufactures by England.”

Then, Dr. Sun Yat-sen continues—and I am referring to this part in his book for the benefit of those who are concerned with the present crisis in the Balkans and British policies in the Balkans: “When Serbia attacked Austria under orders from Russia, she was under indirect instruction from Britain. Serbia, in taking the initiative, and bearing the brunt of the war, staking the fate of the nation, was praised as loyal to Britain. But how has Britain treated her, in return? Before Bulgaria attached herself to Germany, did not the British offer her a slice of Serbian territory, to induce her to join the war on the British side? The Anglo-Bulgarian negotiations failed. But this afforded Britain an excuse for her diplomatic fiasco in the Balkans. If Britain wanted to satisfy the Bulgarian desires, why did she not sacrifice her own interests, why did she not sacrifice Russian interests, why must she sacrifice Serbian interests?”

The answer he gives is: Serbia, at that point, was already too weak to be of any use for Britain, and Bulgaria still was of some use.

I can only advise people to read this booklet, because he then proceeds with a violent attack against British colonial power in India, saying that “the entire world power of Great Britain only rests on their sucking the blood out of India.” He continues and says: “An analysis of the art of British statesmen reveals that they never speak the truth.”

### ‘A true understanding among peoples’

It is funny—and looking at the encirclement of China as a threat to the land-bridge—that this understanding of foreign policy, that foreign policy is only the manipulation of other

countries by subversion, by coups, by terrorism, and similar means, this is exactly the reason why, 12 years ago, the Schiller Institute was founded. The Schiller Institute was founded as an institute for republican foreign policy and for statecraft, because we reject the idea that the relation among nations should be of such a nature; because all of these are obviously the characteristics of an oligarchical system, but, unfortunately, that is the dominant policy in the world. The Schiller Institute set out 12 years ago (or actually before that—13 years ago) with the idea that the only way we can organize relations among nations, among cultures, and among peoples, is on the basis of a true *Völkerverständigung*, a true understanding among peoples and their cultures.

But, that requires that people have to develop, people from different cultures in different nations, have to develop a passionate desire to find out about other cultures, and that is not self-evident: If you take your modern German tourist (and the Germans are known to be the world-champions of tourism: they travel more around the world than any other country), what do they really know about the culture of other people? What do German tourists or other tourists know about the cultures of Africa? They may know the Holiday Inn on a beach in West Africa, but they may not know anything about the culture. What do they know about Asia? What do they know about America?

Today, where the future of mankind will be determined one way or the other, by solving that problem: by solving the problem of knowing the cultures of other people, by identifying what is positive in the cultures and relating to that, which was the founding idea of the Schiller Institute. The whole civilization depends on that, and I want to make an effort to give you a sense of what difficulty it involves, that it is not so easy—even in the times of the Internet—it is not easy to find out about the reality of cultures.

I want to discuss it, not because it is the only culture relevant to discuss, but because it is a good way, which can be used as a model, to study other cultures. I want to discuss the question of China, and how European civilization related to China over the last centuries. What could be a better approach to this question, than to go back to one of our greatest thinkers, who is very close to our movement, namely, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who happened to have been a complete enthusiast of Chinese culture, and who was a model in his love for the universal understanding of human culture, and who was, beyond question, centuries ahead of his time?

### The European mission to China

Leibniz was convinced that the development of the economic and cultural relation between Europe and China was a question of the fate of mankind; not only because he stressed that China, of all parts of the world outside Europe in his time, had reached the highest level of civilization and had a technological level which was far ahead of Europe until the fifteenth century, but also because there were very far-reach-



*A statue of Father Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-88), in his birthplace, Pittem, Flanders (Belgium). Father Verbiest was a Jesuit missionary in China who became China's deputy minister for public works in 1675, and was one of the key correspondents with Leibniz.*

ing commonalities in Confucian thinking and in Platonic Christianity.

He saw it, therefore, as a great mission of Europe to let China participate in the technological progress Europe had made since the Renaissance of the fifteenth century, when Europe had surpassed China in terms of technological development, by far.

The first reports about China to arrive in Europe, apart from some unclear sources around much earlier times, were reports by Marco Polo and some Portuguese missionaries. But these were very fragmentary, and they only discussed the political organization and the material conditions in China. They did not really give a sense of the intellectual and cultural life, because the visits were too short, and these missionaries were not really in contact with the educated elite.

So, the first major work about China was written by the Spanish Augustinian Juan González de Mendoza in 1585, a book which was then translated into all languages, and which appeared in 1589 in German. It was called *A New, Short, But Truly Correct Description of the Gigantic, Very Far Reaching, Until-Now-Unknown Kingdom of China*. Now, this was the basis of a first, new idea of China in the West, and it went far beyond the reports from Marco Polo.

Then, shortly afterwards, the reports by the famous Italian Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610, appeared, and he must be praised as the real discoverer of the Chinese intellectual culture. His Chinese name was Li-Mao-tou. He arrived 1582 in Macao, and, in 1595, came for the first time to the southern capital, Nanking, as it was called then, and after some difficulties—he could not easily settle down—finally managed to stay in Beijing between 1601 and 1610, until his death.

This man deserves to be emphasized, because I think he is a model of how you have to approach other cultures: namely, that you have to be attentive, you have to be sensitive, you have to want to find out what is this other culture. He was able to get on the inside of Chinese culture and Confucian philosophy, because he did not do what most foreigners do in Third World countries, with China, with Africa, with Latin America. He did not go bullying his way, telling them what to do. He did nothing of this sort: He did not even present himself as a missionary, but he emphasized that he had come to China primarily to study the teaching of the Chinese philosophers, and by doing so, gained the trust of the Chinese. He taught Christianity, not as a challenge to the Confucian tradition, but in cohesion with it. He emphasized all the ideas in the Confucian and neo-Confucian tradition, which are in conformity with Christianity, and he noted that these are by far the majority, and there are only a few minor areas which are in contradiction.

Ricci learned to read and speak Chinese fluently, studied their philosophy and customs, gained enormous respect and even love among the people he worked with. One has to say, this is one of the historical things which are much more important than wars or other things you learned in history, because, here, a window was opened between European culture and Chinese culture. History could have been completely different, if that road had been followed, that was opened here.

The high point of this Catholic mission in China occurred under the two first emperors of the Qing dynasty, Emperor Shunchih (1644-61), and the famous Emperor Kang Xi (1662-1722). The first person to have direct contact and collaboration with the emperor was the famous Jesuit from Cologne, Adam Schall von Bell, whose Chinese name was Tang Ruowang, who had an excellent knowledge of astronomy, which he taught the Chinese; and he also taught them how to build cannons, and, because of that, he rose in his position. He also gave the Chinese a new calendar, which was of extreme importance in China, not only from a practical point of view—navigation, agriculture, and so forth—but because the Chinese, since the ancient Confucian times, always desired to draw the cohesion of their cosmos and the political order; it's a kind of natural law in Chinese tradition. And, therefore, the position of the stars and the way people would organize their life with reference to the cosmic order—having this be precise was highly appreciated by the Chinese for this reason.

Adam Schall was able to predict a solar eclipse with much more precision than all the Chinese astronomers, even though

Chinese astronomy had a very great tradition going way back, as did Indian astronomy. Because of his expertise, he was then made the head of the state astronomical office. And he became a Chinese official with all the rights and duties; and, very important, he became the teacher of the young emperor. After the death of that emperor, because of many intrigues, he was condemned to death, but then pardoned, because the new emperor recognized those intrigues, and then installed another Jesuit brother as Schall's successor.

As I said, Matteo Ricci had opened for the first time a window between European and Chinese culture, by demonstrating to the Chinese what the Europeans were able to do scientifically, and why it would be in their own interest to have this collaboration. One has to appreciate the difficulty of this task; it's not like times are today. During the Tang (and the Yuan period, which was the period of the Mongol occupation), there was a certain tolerance toward foreigners. But, after that, because of these developments, China was a completely closed country. Foreigners, easily recognizable because of their round eyes and funny clothes, were regarded as cultureless barbarians.

Ricci, who was, without any doubt, one of the greatest of the missionaries, succeeded in overcoming this mistrust, because he took a Chinese name, he adapted his way of life to the Chinese; he studied all the classical texts; he brought a cembalo as a gift from Count Maximilian of Bavaria, and taught the emperor to play it. But he became most famous because of his world map, which gave the Chinese, for the first time, an overview of the continents and the geographical position of the Middle Kingdom, which they did not know before.

The Europeans, on the other hand, even during Leibniz's time, had difficulties agreeing on the right name for China. The routes one had to travel across were difficult. It took people years to travel in these periods, so, it was an incredible thing to do.

But, even in the seventeenth century, people had a hard time agreeing on the right name for China: The first name was *Serer*, in Latin *seres*. This was the Chinese word for silk, and it was mentioned for the first time by the Ionian historian Ktesias in the fifth century B.C. This is why China was later called *Sinai*, in the geography of Claudius Ptolemy, and why today you call the studying of China, Sinology, because it comes from the Latin for *Sina*, probably coming from the word *Chin* dynasty.

But, this knowledge disappeared, and, then, in the Middle Ages, China was called *Kitai*. Marco Polo and others called it *Kitai*, and still in the seventeenth century, it was debated if the country *Sinai* (which probably came from the Sanskrit word for *Cina*, or *Cinisthana*), if that *Sinai* was identical with *Kitai*.

Leibniz wrote about that a lot; for example, in his book about China, he was very concerned about the right name for China.

Therefore, when Ricci went into this unknown land,



*The Confucius temple in Nanjing. Leibniz wrote of the Confucian moral code that, perhaps, "the Chinese would send missionaries to us, who would teach us the purpose and application of natural theology . . . since we do not surpass them but in . . . the divine gift of the Christian religion."*

where not even the name was established, he opened the hearts of the Chinese with beautiful treatises, among others, one "On Friendship," which talked especially about the friendship of peoples. And thereafter, this text was included in the official text every Chinese bureaucrat had to learn. But it was especially his knowledge in mathematics, geography, astronomy, and natural science, which happened to be the state-of-the-art of Europe at that time, because he had studied in Rome for several years with the famous astronomer and mathematician Christoph Clavius from Bamberg. So he brought that knowledge to China.

Ricci became famous very quickly, because he debated Chinese intellectuals in Nanshang, and, in Nanking, he debated with representatives of other philosophical tendencies and remained the winner, so his fame spread immediately among the educated layers.

Ricci also sent reports and missionaries to Rome about what he had found in China, and this had a very positive effect. On March 20, 1615, the pope wrote an encyclical, allowing the translation of the Bible into Chinese, allowing the mass to be conducted in Chinese, allowing Chinese priests to be ordained, and for them to wear Chinese hats during mass. The Belgian Jesuit, Ferdinand Verbiest, who was one of Ricci's

successors, even became, in 1675, China's deputy minister for public works. Verbiest, together with Claudio Grimaldi, was one of the key correspondents of Leibniz. They had the closest contact with Emperor Kang Xi, who happened to be one of the most important emperors in Chinese history. Kang Xi had extremely excellent education, and very far-reaching scientific interests, which Leibniz attributed to the fact that he had been educated in both European philosophy and in Chinese tradition. And it was the figure of Emperor Kang Xi who caused Leibniz to say, that if an emperor in faraway China can come to the same mathematical conclusions as I, then that proves there is only one God.

### **Leibniz, bridging the gap**

The impact of these new reports from China among the educated European circles was enormous. Leibniz wrote, in his *Novissima Sinica*, in 1697: "The situation of our conditions seems to be that moral degeneration is growing so monstrously, that one could nearly find it necessary that the Chinese would send missionaries to us, who would teach us the purpose and application of natural theology, in the same way that we send missionaries to them, to teach them revealed theology. I therefore believe, that if a sage, a wise man, were a judge, not about the beauty of goddesses, but about the excellence of peoples, he would give a golden apple to the Chinese, since we do not surpass them but in one single, indeed superhuman, property, namely the divine gift of the Christian religion."

In the preface to the same work, he wrote: "If we are their equals in the industrial arts and ahead of them in the contemplative sciences, certainly they surpass us—so it is almost shameful to admit this—in practical philosophy, that is, in the precepts of ethics and the policies adapted to the present life and use of the morals. Through a unique combination of destiny, it has occurred that the highest cultural goods of the human species are today located on the two extreme poles of our continent, that is, Europe and China, which decorate the opposite edge of each of the earths, somehow as an Eastern Europe, as a Europe in the East. And, furthermore, the highest Providence has caused, through a fortunate turn, that, in stretching out the arms to each other, the most highly educated and at the same time most distant people eventually bring everything, which lies in between them, to a way of life which is more in correspondence to reason. And it is no accident, I believe, that the Russians, who connect China and Europe through their gigantic empire and who control the extreme north of the uncivilized region along the coast of the Ice Sea, are encouraged by the energetic effect of a now governing ruler as well as the Patriarch who gives his sympathetic advice to imitate our accomplishments."

What Leibniz is referring to here is, obviously, Peter the Great. Leibniz wrote many memoranda to him, for Russia to be the mediator between Europe and China. He tried to

encourage Peter the Great, among other things, to explore Siberia, and to investigate also the geographical connection between the eastern rim of Siberia and America.

This caused Peter the Great later to send Vitus Jonassen Bering on his mission, who discovered in 1778 the famous Bering Strait, which is named after him, and which the Chinese government is now suggesting become the bridge between the Eurasian land-bridge and the Americas.

Leibniz was deeply impressed, that, in terms of the moral ordering of their society, the Chinese were superior to the Europeans. And he noted, among other advantages, that the Chinese had a tremendous respect for older people (I know at least one person, who likes that!), that children had an almost religious appreciation of the parents. This respect for the parents was such that in Chinese culture at that time even a harsh word by the children against the parents was unthinkable. But he was most impressed that Emperor Kang Xi was the ruler of such a gigantic empire, who was regarded as a mortal god and had all powers (he could do whatever he wanted), nevertheless was educated in such virtue and wisdom that he surpassed all his subjects in this unbelievable respect for the law and in the awe for the sages.

I think it is correct to say that Kang Xi was a true philosopher-king in the sense Plato required it; or as Nicolaus of Cusa demanded: that the governors of any country, as a standard, should be the wisest and those who have the greatest respect for the law.

### **The natural theology of 'Li'**

How was it possible that Chinese culture and even its political system could reach such an extraordinary level? Leibniz was convinced, as was Ricci and the other Jesuit missionaries, that there was a very far-reaching affinity between Christianity and Confucianism.

In the *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*, Leibniz writes: "Therefore, in order to determine whether the Chinese recognize spiritual substances, one should above all consider their notion of *Li*, which is the prime mover and the ground of all other things. And which, I believe, corresponds to our Divinity. The first principle of the Chinese is called *Li*, that is, reason, as the foundation of all nature, the most universal reason and substance. There is nothing greater nor better than *Li*. This great and universal cause is pure, motionless, without body or shape and can be comprehended only through understanding. Thus," says Leibniz, "according to the Chinese, the *Li* is the sole cause which always moves the heaven, throughout the centuries in a uniform motion. It gives stability to the earth, it endows all species with the ability to reproduce their kind. This virtue, not being in the nature of the things themselves, and not depending at all upon them, but consisting and residing in the *Li*. It has dominion over all. It is present in all things, governing and producing all as absolute master of heaven and earth."

It follows a section which Leibniz struck out in the manuscript, but which has been handed down: “After all this, why not simply say that the *Li* is our God? That is the ultimate, if you wish, the primary ground of existence, and even of the possibility of things, the source of all good which is in things, the primary intelligence which was called by Anaxagoras and other ancient Greeks and Latins *noös* or *mens*.”

Leibniz implies that the *Li* has something to do with the principle of a generative hypothesis, because he says “they [the Chinese] call it the Summary Unity, because, as in the number series, unity is the basis, yet it is not itself a member. Also among substances, the essences of the universe, one of them is absolutely unitary, not at all capable of divisibility as regards its being and its principal basis of all essences, which exist or can exist in the world.”

What Leibniz alludes to, is nothing less than the Platonic conception of the hypotheses of the higher hypotheses. *Li* is, in other words, what Plato calls the good, it is the Absolute. But *Li*, according to Leibniz, is also the order of the universe. He therefore brings in the idea of the question of *Analysis Situs*.

Leibniz writes: “So, as Father Lessius has said that God is the place of things and that Dr. Guericke”—(this will make the members of our Wiesbaden office very happy, since it refers to Otto von Guericke, who, in 1654, performed an experiment involving the creation of a vacuum by pumping air out of hemispherical containers; since our office is in the Otto von Guericke Ring, and when you go there, you have a better reference)—“the inventor of the vacuum machine, believes that space pertains to God. In order to give an appropriate sense to this, it is necessary to conceive of space not as a substance which possesses parts upon parts, but as the order of things insofar as they are considered existing together, proceeding from the immensity of God in as much as all things depend on Him at every moment. This order of things among themselves, arises from their relationship to a common principle.”

For Leibniz, space determined only the mutual relations of co-existing things. Space, he said, is “only an order of things, like time, and in no sense an absolute thing.” What Leibniz does here, in his arguments against the opposing faction—people who opposed this dialogue with the Chinese—was to present his own view of the proper method of engaging the Chinese in an ecumenical dialogue. Leibniz was convinced that the only way this dialogue would function, would be if one would show them the truth, but not only by insisting that they believe the Bible, or by giving them advanced astronomical instruments, but also by showing that both scientific and theological truth can be found in their own ancient writings.

This method by Leibniz, to focus on the deepest and most profound principles as the basis of unity among cultures, is exactly the same approach Nicolaus of Cusa had taken in his



*Scientist and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who was convinced that the fate of mankind depended on the development of economic and cultural relations between Europe and China.*

*De Pace Fidei*, and, earlier, Peter Abelard, who demonstrated that the writings of Plato already contained the truth of revealed Christianity. But obviously, if Plato could know what only Christianity revealed, then that, for Abelard, was the proof that there are universal truths intelligible to all people at all times, and, therefore, there was a way to make even the deepest truth intelligible.

Leibniz had this beautiful vision that if you focus on these most profound principles about God, about the order of the universe, and about the role of man in this universe, then you could bring about unity of the entire world. And it was not an unrealistic dream, because with Emperor Kang Xi, there was a philosopher-king, where even the successors of Ricci managed to get the highest positions in the state.

### **The Rites controversy**

So why did it not function? And, looking at why it did not function, I think, is also very important, because, after all, we do want to learn from mistakes made in history.

Given the extreme importance that we succeed today, let's look at what went wrong on both sides: what went wrong on the European side, and what went wrong on the Chinese side. The European side went wrong, basically because of what is known generally as the so-called “Rites controversy.” Ricci

already had proposed that the only way you could have contact and dialogue with the Chinese was to accommodate the outer features of Christianity to the Chinese conditions, to tolerate the Confucian rites which included the cult of Confucius himself, the veneration of the emperor, the worship of one's own ancestors. Although Ricci died before Leibniz was born, it is very clear from Leibniz's writings that he completely agreed with Ricci.

Opposed to this was a Jesuit father called Nicholas Langobardi, the successor of Ricci as the head of the China mission, who believed that the ancient Chinese were materialists and the modern ones atheists, and that all their beliefs were incompatible with Christianity. He, unfortunately, was extremely important in Rome in undercutting Ricci's approach. Unfortunately, also, most of the other religious orders disagreed with Ricci, mainly not on theological grounds, but for political reasons, and competition, and such motives.

Prominent among them was the Spanish Franciscan Antonio Caballero y Santa María, whom Leibniz attacks in his *Discourses* many times. The arguments went back and forth for 150 years. Then, in the second half of the seventeenth century, beginning in France, there was the campaign by the Jansenist sect against the Jesuits, and in this climate of harassment, unfortunately, the China debate was no longer conducted in a factual way, but it became more and more political.

So, even before the dissolution of the Jesuits, the papal decree *Ex Illa Die*, forbade the practice of the Jesuits, and demanded the practicing of Christianity in the European form in China. It argued that Christian doctrine is incompatible with Chinese thought and that the conversion of the Chinese can only proceed by having them abandon their 3,000-year-old intellectual tradition.

This had an extremely negative effect. The case was finally settled against the Jesuits by Benedict XIV, in the encyclical *Ex Quo Singulari* (1742). The whole debate and negative response created an impossible situation for the Christians in China. It prevented them from carrying out their civil duties. They were no longer allowed to give worship and reverence to Confucius, to the emperor, etc., and therefore, immediately, their loyalty to the state was put into question. This was regarded by the Chinese government as an unbearable interference into the internal affairs of China.

Unfortunately, because of this, still during the reign of Kang Xi, it came to the prohibition against teaching Christianity throughout all of China, and, under the successors of Kang Xi, all missionaries were expelled from China. From 1838 on, not one missionary was left in Beijing. Ricci's tradition ended.

On the Chinese side, there was also a problem, because the Confucius-based Chinese tradition was such that, in order to become an official in China—since the Han dynasty, that is, before Christ, and especially since the Sung and the Ming dynasties—it was a precondition for every Chinese bureaucrat to read and study all the classical texts, including Confu-

cius, Mencius, and similar people. So they were an extremely educated class which was called *Shen-shi*, and they were the only ones who would define the political line.

Ricci was extremely sensitive about not making representatives of this *Shen-shi* class feel threatened in their authority, by trying to integrate Christianity into the existing political order and to win the representatives of the *Shen-shi* class over to Christianity. This was especially important, because, since the Ming dynasty, China had been threatened many times from the outside, and the mistrust against foreigners was very deep-rooted. Ricci, for example, described the mistrust when the Japanese attack on Korea occurred in 1598, that many people suspected hostile spies everywhere. They also naturally mistrusted the missionaries, because some people said: How do they have this incredible knowledge, how can they build all these instruments? Also, there was doubt about their motives: Why do these missionaries come here? Is it really only idealism, or do they have other motives? This was especially the case, because in the history of China, the religious sects had frequently connected themselves with economically deprived layers, and that had even led to the fall of dynasties.

So Ricci and his successors were extremely careful not to neglect the *Shen-shi* class, and that worked for a while. But later, when the repression against the missionaries occurred and the missionaries were arrested, the officials were frequently surprised to find that these priests were, indeed, peaceful people. Documents from the eighteenth century express this astonishment, that they had no other motives than those which they claimed, obviously, since the highest goal of the Christian mission was to convert the emperor. But that was an absolutely impossible question, because, despite the successes of Schall and Verbiest, they never even came close, for the simple reason that, in Chinese culture, the emperor was the *Pontifex Maximus*, and to recruit the emperor to Christianity would have been the same as if the pope had converted to Islam and, yet, still remained the head of the Catholic Church.

Ricci was fully aware that this was not possible, and that under those conditions an accommodation was the only possible way.

What was also extremely damaging, was when the papal order to dissolve the Jesuit order was brought to Beijing in 1774, it was done in a very insensitive way, so that, as a result, the members of the *Shen-shi* class tried to eliminate any trace of their ancestors' connection to Christianity, because, after this shameful dissolution of the Jesuit order, it was regarded as shameful to have anything to do with that. In Chinese culture, it is extremely important to keep face, up to the present day.

It is interesting that, in 1939, the Rites controversy was fully sanctioned in favor of the Jesuits by the Vatican, but, unfortunately, this was too late, and a lot of porcelain had already been broken.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the window Ricci had opened was closed, and, basically, Europe and China knew of each other's existence, but they had no desire to know about each other, and their relationship was characterized by dislike and contempt. The question one can ask is, what course would history have taken if the approach of Ricci and Leibniz had been pursued? Maybe then, this mission in China would have functioned as the bridge between China and the Occident. And China would have taken a different way. Leibniz was completely aware of this, and, for him, the integration of Chinese and Western thought remained a passionate issue throughout his life, which is demonstrated by the very extensive correspondence he had on this issue throughout his life.

### Sun Yat-sen and the unity of the nation

After the horrible experiences the Chinese had with colonial aggression in the nineteenth century, one can really say that China had the extraordinary fortune in having as the founder of modern China, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, born on Nov. 8, 1866, who happened to be a Christian. In Hawaii, for five years he studied the fundamental difference between the American and the British system. He became, as I said, a follower of the *National System of Political Economy* of Friedrich List, which he had translated into Chinese.

He wrote a very beautiful book in 1921, which we only had to update a little bit with our Eurasian land-bridge report, called *The International Development of China*, which already contained the idea that China, with the aid of the most advanced technology and infrastructure, would become the new world of the twentieth century, and by doing so, would create the economic basis for world peace.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin, at the large birthday celebration of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, quoted Dr. Sun extensively. He said: "Dr. Sun proposed that China should be optimistic and learn from the strength of other countries. If we take the right for development in our own hands, we will survive. But if it lies in the hands of others, we will go under. Sun insisted on the defense of national sovereignty and national unity and fought against any activity which aimed at the division of the nation. He declared: 'The unity of the nation is the desire of all Chinese.' "

Jiang Zemin continued: "Seventy-two years ago, Sun Yat-sen said: 'If China becomes strong and powerful, then we will not only win back our national status, but also we will take a great responsibility for the world.' "

I think it is extremely important that Jiang Zemin decided to take that particular quote. It simply means that, provided that we act according to reason, and make, as Leibniz demanded in the *Discourse*, "a sincere return in work and deed in the submission one owes to the very law of reason," that the realization of Leibniz's vision is very much within reach.

In a certain way, China is already stretching out her arms in the sense Leibniz intended: They want our cooperation in



Dr. Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), the founder of modern China, who understood the British: "Britain seeks friendship only with those which can render her services, and when her friends are too weak to be of any use to her, they must be sacrificed in her interest."

building up China economically. They want our scientific and technological expertise. And they want our active European cooperation to build a new era of mankind.

Rather than having our nations, our industries, and productive jobs collapse, why don't we join hands and help ourselves by helping China and the other countries of Eurasia?

The Eurasian land-bridge, which soon can integrate the Americas and Africa, can very quickly become *the* economic and cultural basis for a true peace order in the world, where sovereign nation-states work together for the common good of mankind. I am absolutely convinced that the beautiful idea of the *Völkergemeinschaft*, a community of peoples, will be victorious, and that only the remains of creatures such as Samuel Huntington and company will be in the museum for extinct species.

But Leibniz was right: Both Chinese and European culture was based on the most profound principles of Confucianism and Christianity. China is obviously finding its way back to these ideas. But in order for Leibniz's dreams, his beautiful vision for the future of mankind in unity, to function, we ourselves have to grow, and we have to lift the beautiful concept of Christian *agapē*. I believe, that if we do this, a community of principle, where nations respect each other because they love the soul of each other nation, that this is possible, and that we are the ones who help to bring it about.