

## 'Silk Road Lady' rallies Europe around Land-Bridge

by Ortrun Cramer

Two high-level meetings in Europe—one in Prague, and one in Paris—have brought Europe a step closer to breaking with its current, suicidal climate of pessimism, and getting on board with the Eurasian Land-Bridge project, as the alternative to the looming financial crash and economic disintegration. Both events featured Helga Zepp LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute, who, along with her husband, Lyndon LaRouche, developed the land-bridge concept in 1989, and who has recently come to be known as the “Silk Road Lady.” Helga Zepp LaRouche has announced that she will run for the post of German chancellor in the upcoming elections on the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity slate.

The May 6 seminar in Prague was the first public intervention by *EIR* into the Czech Republic in four years. The much-celebrated “Czech model” has now begun to crumble, and the negative effects of “shock therapy” and massive financial speculation can no longer be overlooked. There are growing strikes and demonstrations against the economic austerity policy of the government of President Vaclav Klaus. Consumer prices are rising steadily: For example, the price of beef has risen by 45.6% since 1993. Industrial production fell 7% in the first quarter of 1997, as compared to the first quarter in 1996. None of the plans currently on the books for infrastructure development have materialized, such as building superhighways connecting Germany and Prague, or high-speed rail connections from the northern part of the Czech Republic, through Prague, into the south of the country, with connections to Berlin in the north, and Vienna in the south. The social fabric is also eroding: Visitors from abroad are shocked by the increase in prostitution, with brothels even in small villages, and street prostitution all over the country.

In this climate, it is not surprising that the event organized by *EIR* attracted wide attention. Mrs. LaRouche addressed an audience of high-level representatives from several Czech ministries, from economic associations, political parties, church organizations, and intellectuals. Various trade union organizations also sent high-level representatives to the seminar, and several industrialists attended. Press representatives from Czech economic magazines, and correspondents from international press agencies were also there. Guests travelled from all over Czechia, including Plzen, Hradec Kralove, and Ostrava.

In her presentation, Mrs. LaRouche discussed developments in eastern Europe since 1989, when the hopes for real economic growth and infrastructure development were betrayed, while “shock therapy” policies and the quest for “quick money,” increasingly known as “casino economy,” were adopted instead. This has led to economic decline not only throughout eastern Europe—Russian industrial capacity today stands at only 20% of what it was in 1990—but in western Europe as well. Mrs. LaRouche stressed that unemployment in Germany today is at its highest level since 1933, the year when Hitler seized power. She presented the Eurasian Land-Bridge development plan, the “New Silk Road,” and the associated Great Projects that are already under way in China and other countries along the Land-Bridge route.

Many seminar participants had vivid recollections of how Lyndon LaRouche had proposed his “Productive Triangle” program in 1989, a program that included the highly developed industrial regions of Czechoslovakia (which has subsequently split into two separate countries). Questions posed to Mrs. LaRouche following her presentation, revealed an unusual depth of understanding, not only about the implica-

tions of the development projects as such, but also of the policies and strategic aims of the enemies of such development: first and foremost, the forces of the British Empire, whose elites are already preparing to save their hides after the anticipated financial collapse, by grabbing and hoarding raw materials in eastern Europe, as well as in the developing sector.

### **Europe's leaders paralyzed**

The main point to understand, Mrs. LaRouche stressed, is that in the present political framework, where "fulfillment of the Maastricht criteria," through austerity and cuts in social programs in western Europe, precludes any longer-term political or economic vision, no political initiative can be expected from statesmen in western Europe. The initiative must therefore come from U.S. President Clinton, who must adopt an economic policy in the tradition of Alexander Hamilton, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, which means support for production and productive full employment.

In this spirit, several members of the audience signed the "Urgent Appeal to President Clinton to Convoke a New Bretton Woods Conference," which had been jointly framed in February by Mrs. LaRouche and Ukrainian parliamentarian Natalya Vitrenko (see *EIR*, April 18, 1997, p. 14). This call is presently being widely circulated in the Czech Republic. Seminar participants expressed the need for a change in American economic initiatives in the Czech Republic, which, so far, have differed little from British and German free-market initiatives.

There was also much discussion about problems of shaping a post-communist society. The difficulty of filling the vacuum after the collapse of communist ideology, is a problem that directly confronts all former East bloc countries.

### **France: the Land-Bridge as a vision**

On May 13, the Schiller Institute sponsored a Paris conference on "Building a Bridge from the Atlantic to the Sea of China," a title chosen in the tradition of President Charles de Gaulle's vision of building a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals." More than 100 guests attended this conference, which was addressed by Helga Zepp LaRouche, along with Jacques Cheminade, former French Presidential candidate and long-time associate of Lyndon LaRouche; and by Emmanuel Rwirangira, president of the Rwandan Solidarity Circle of France, who spoke on the necessity of bringing Africa into the New Silk Road project.

The special significance of the Paris conference, lies in the fact that it occurred in the middle of the campaign for the National Assembly elections, the first round of which will take place on May 25. It also took place on the eve of President Jacques Chirac's state visit to China.

Chirac called early elections, out of fear that holding the elections at the regular time in 1998, would diminish the

chances that his government will be re-elected, given the fact that for France to "fulfill the Maastricht criteria," he must impose massive economic austerity. The Chirac government is also well aware of the ongoing financial collapse, which will soon bring down France's badly declining economy. Official unemployment currently stands at 12%, but in reality, one out of four working-age Frenchmen is either unemployed, or is employed in some form of make-work program.

None of France's institutional parties is offering any real alternative to Maastricht. Rather, for the conservative parties, Chirac's RPR and the UDF, the "modern world" means "global economy," and "France cannot shy away" from this challenge, or even return to the traditional state-directed economy, which is being denounced as a "thing of the past." But the Socialist Party of the late President François Mitterrand has also accepted "globalization," and is merely demanding that the worst consequences for the workforce be alleviated. Worse still, the Socialist Party has entered into a de facto alliance with the Green Party, according to which each party's candidates have agreed not to run against each other in any given district.

Schiller Institute spokeswoman Christine Bierre stressed, in her opening remarks at the May 13 conference, that "it is not by chance that this conference is taking place in the middle of the election campaign. Here, the real issues of France will be addressed; a real alternative, a long-term, worldwide vision will be presented."

Jacques Cheminade, well known in France for his warnings of "financial cancer" during his Presidential campaign in 1995, spoke about the causes of the present crisis, and about what is required to create a new world economic order. Mrs. LaRouche then outlined the full potential of the New Silk Road project, describing the Great Projects, and showing the enormous possibilities for real growth and progress, economically as well as scientifically. In conclusion, she stressed that the realization of the Land-Bridge vision also requires a new cultural Renaissance, which must include all the positive elements of the different cultures and histories represented in the vast area along the New Silk Road.

Jean Royer, former mayor of Tours, a deputy in the National Assembly, and one of the last true Gaullists in France, took the floor, praising Mrs. LaRouche for her vision. He described some aspects of the legislation he himself had introduced in the National Assembly, to try to get a French infrastructure project off the ground. He indicated how he had been able, as mayor of Tours, to finance several projects which would be impossible to finance today, with current high interest rates and the short maturity of credits. Royer, who has not been chosen by the RPR/UDF to run as a candidate again in the current elections, has decided to leave parliament and dedicate the rest of his life to the education of real politicians, who will act in the interest of their country, instead of appeasing the prevailing ideologies.