

is no longer god, then they're going to change their way of thinking — suddenly.

Moderator: Thank you, Mr. LaRouche. Thanks to all of you.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche

A New Approach To The Dialogue Of Cultures

This is the presentation made by Mrs. LaRouche on Dec. 15, to the Moscow seminar in honor of Pobisk Kuznetsov.

Ladies and gentlemen: I am actually very happy to speak to you today to the honor and memory of Pobisk Kuznetsov.

As you know, his life was dedicated to the idea of education, and how to kindle the creative spark in his students, so that they would realize their full human potential. I think it is therefore in his spirit, that I speak to you today about the urgent need for a dialogue of cultures, which is also about this kind of education. And for this, I want to suggest a completely new approach, and I want to do it through the eyes of one of my favorite philosophers, and one of the favorite philosophers of Russia — a person who was also loved by Pobisk — which is Kuzansky (Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues, known as Nicolaus of Cusa, 1499-1565).

After the attacks of the 11th, and after the bombing of Afghanistan, and the terrible escalation of Sharon against the Palestinians, everybody can see that we have the danger of a clash of civilizations today. This is all the more the case, because the evil Samuel Huntington, in his writings about *The Clash Of Civilizations*, is not only warning of it; but he actually wrote this as a scenario which is being acted out at this point, with the immediate threat of religious war, not only in the Middle East, but actually in the whole world — a war which, once it is fully set into motion, could last for a very, very long time.

Nikolaus of Kues, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 — which was a kind of an early “clash of civilizations” — wrote a very beautiful Socratic dialogue about peace and religion. In this dialogue, 17 representatives of different religions and different nations go to God, and say, “We all fight each other, and kill each other, and we all pretend to do it in your Name. This can not be your wish. Can you not help us?” So God says, “I will speak to you now, not as representatives of your religions, but I will speak to you as wise men and philosophers; and as philosophers, you are capable of understanding that there is only *one* knowable truth, and *one* God.”

So the representatives say, “Yes, we can see that, but why do we then kill each other?” And God says, “You make the mistake, of mistaking the words of the prophets, with the word of God.”

Again they say, “Yes, this we can see. But still, this fighting is going on.” And God says, “You make another mistake. And that is, that you mistake traditions, which are different, for the one truth.”

So the wise men say, “Yes we can see that. But do you now say that we should have a new, one religion, when all our people were spilling so much blood for their old religions? This does not work.” And God says, “No, I am not suggesting a new religion. I am talking about the religion which was before the differentiation. The One before the Many. And the One has a higher quality and is of a different magnitude than the Many.”

The wise men agree, and God tells them to go to their respective countries, and educate their people in this spirit.

Kuznetsov was actually convinced, that Kuzansky [Cusa] got some of his ideas from his being in the East, encountering some of these ideas there. And since I am really trying hard to find a basis for a dialogue among all the cultures of the world, and since I am just coming back from a trip to India, I looked into Hinduism, to look for Cusa-like ideas there. And I was very happy to find a lot of these ideas. For example, there is this very famous *Rig Veda* sentence: “The truth is the One, and the wise men just give it different names.”

What Is The Universal Principle?

In Hinduism, you have the Sanathana-Dharma, which is the eternal religion. And Mohandas K. Gandhi actually regarded himself as a Sanathana Hindu. The one divine truth, in Hinduism, does not give privilege to one language or nationality or culture, but says that the divine truth glows differently in different souls. Only if one makes the color of one's spectacles the truth, then one only sees the color of the spectacles, and one sees the object colored with the color of the spectacles. Or else, one would be willing to see the many-coloredness, which is desired by God.

According to Hinduism, it is all right to believe that oneself is on the right way; but, to insist that the other one is on the wrong way, Hinduism regards as arrogant, and even blasphemous.

So, what is this universal principle, which you can find in all cultures, in all religions, and in all civilizations? It is the image of man — man in the image of the Creator; or, as Kuzansky says, man in the “living image of God.” Also in Hinduism there is the idea that the human soul partakes in the divine soul.

Now, what is this living image? It is the power of cognition. The thing which makes man in the likeness of God, is his ability of the method of hypothesis.

And for Kuzansky, man was capable of limitless self-perfection; of again and again, having scientific hypothesis



Helga Zepp-LaRouche addresses the symposium. “What is the universal principle, which you can find in all cultures, in all religions, and in all civilizations? It is the image of man—man in the image of the Creator; or, as Kuzansky [Nicolaus of Cusa] says, man in the ‘living image of God.’ ”

leading to scientific and technological progress. When you apply this scientific and technological progress in the production process, it leads to an increase in productivity. Then, the effect of this, is an increase in the living standard, an increase in the longevity, and an increase in the relative potential population density of the Earth.

This is a very important concept, that Pobisk Kuznetsov recognized, because it was touching on the essence of his own method. And since this is a concept developed by Mr. LaRouche, he [Kuznetsov] called the unit, with which you measure this increase in relative potential population density, the “La,” like in “LaRouche.” I want to encourage all of you to look at that; because, from the previous discussion, the question of the measurement—how do you measure the law of the universe in an efficient way?—was very much at the center of the discussion. And I think that Mr. LaRouche has provided something that science has not yet fully appreciated; because it is, for the first time in history, actually, a way to define, scientifically and not just morally, if something is good or bad.

Cradles Of Civilization

Now, whenever this power of cognition is effective, you have progress of universal history. When you look through history, for those phases where this happened; and you take the approach of Friedrich Schiller, to take the totality of the history of man as universal history; you realize that this is not the property of one culture, but that this human development shifted from one culture to the next. I want to give you a very sketchy overview, to see the method that I’m applying.

We have four cradles of mankind: India, China, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. In India, you have the Vedic tradition and the Upanishads; in China, you have Confucius, Mencius, Chu Hsi; Egypt is very important, because it was the cradle of European civilization, and it had *many* high phases. In the so-called Old Empire, which laid the foundations—especially the Third Dynasty, from 2660-2590 B.C.—you had the first universal genius of the kind of a Leonardo da Vinci. His name was Djoser, who was, together with Snofru, the builder of the large pyramids. Then, other high phases were the 4th, the 12th, and the 19th Dynasties; especially there [the Nineteenth], with Sethos and Ramses II.

Now, Ramses II lived from 1290-1224 B.C.; and as you can see, this gold mask is of such an extraordinary beauty—the idea of a beautiful man was expressed here. When this picture was shown for the first time in the British Museum in 1817, it caused a world sensation, because it was of such an extraordinary beauty and created so early.

This is the head of Nefertete, who lived to 1340 B.C., which you can see in Berlin in the Egyptian Museum. And again, you have an unbelievable beauty, which can only be the reflection of the beauty of the soul of the artist who created it.

The next high phase in Egyptian history was the 26th Dynasty, and especially after Alexander the Great conquered Egypt and created Alexandria, which became the center of Greek-Egyptian education. There, was the famous library of Alexandria, where an enormous number of famous thinkers were studying. One of them was Eratosthenes, who was the first one to measure the circumference of the Earth. Many Greek scholars studied there, laying the foundation for the

Greek Classics; among them, Solon, the first philosopher of statecraft, who studied several times in Egypt. Schiller talked about Solon, as the one who defined the goal of mankind as progression.

Later, Augustine and Abelard said, that the fact that the old Greeks—especially Plato—were able to recognize truth, which only later was revealed by Christianity, proved that there was no contradiction between faith and knowledge.

Christianity obviously laid the decisive foundation for European civilization. But the idea, that every man was in the image of God, was politically not realized, because the Roman Empire was an empire. And, as all empires, it depended on the oligarchy being able to rule over backward, enslaved masses. And naturally, like all empires, the Roman Empire had to collapse, and this led to a dark age in Europe.

At the same time [as this dark age], you had, in India, the Gupta Period, which was a high point of culture, and people in Europe did not even know about it, since travel and communication was a little bit slow in those days. But in India, beautiful dramas and poetry were created, and this high spirit also reached into China. New excavations have found 320 Buddhist sculptures in the Temple of Hsing Tsu; and there you see, again, the extraordinary beauty of the facial expression, which transmits something sublime.

Where The Best Of Each Culture Join

While Europe was still in a dark age, Haroun al-Rashid and the Abassid Dynasty organized a renaissance—collecting all knowledge, from Egypt, from Spain, from Italy, from Greece, and weighing all discoveries which emissaries brought in gold—and out of this, a new renaissance was created. At that point, Baghdad was the center of world culture. In 766 A.D., 100,000 architects, craftsmen, and construction workers completed Baghdad, which was the high point of the known world at that point. It was only through the contact between the Caliph of Baghdad and Charlemagne, that European civilization got pulled out of the mud.

The same contact occurred again, between Frederick II and the Arabs; and then the idea of a dialogue of cultures was especially promoted by Raymundus Lullus [Raymond Lull] in the 13th Century. Lessing, in his famous *Nathan The Wise*, makes the point that the truth is not in one religion's words, but in the proof of the works, and in the finding of the truth by the religious person.

One excellent example for the exchange of cultures is the missionary work of the Jesuit Matteo Ricci, born in 1572, who went to China, and gained the trust of the Emperor and the Mandarins by bringing, on the one side, European culture and science—especially astronomy—and by making clear on the other side, that the differences in the rites of religion are not so important as the common idea of the one knowable truth.

Going back one step: In the 14th Century, Europe suffered again a dark age, which was again the result of the breakdown

of the oligarchical system which had driven usury to its limits. But out of this, initially a small number of people created the beautiful Italian Renaissance, by essentially reviving the Greek Classical writings, which were brought to the Council of Florence.

A New Renaissance

I could give you many more examples, but I want to just point to the method: that you always pick, in each culture, those periods in which these these universal principles did move the development of mankind to a higher level. I could mention the Ming Dynasty, the Arab Andalusian culture, the German Classic, the discoveries of Wilhelm von Humboldt, about Sanskrit being the most advanced of all languages, in the 19th Century. But one should see how the different cultures influence each other over long periods of time; and that they enrich each other; and therefore, it becomes clear, that through such a dialogue of cultures, which features the best traditions of each, from the standpoint of universal history, this is the only way to peace.

So, if one not only revives one's own best culture, but loves and studies the other one, one can develop love for the other one. The conflict is only the result of oligarchism, which plays on the differences. If this dialogue of cultures is successful, it will lead to a new world renaissance. And I am convinced that then, the pictures of today's oligarchs, you will be able to study in the petrified way—as in the Museum of Vernadsky, in the State Geological Museum, where you have these old relics of plants and animals which lived millions of years ago, petrified in stone.

A Dialogue Of Children And Students

Now, I want to organize a dialogue among children and students of the world, in this spirit. If young children start to look at the other one through these eyes, the basis for chauvinism and hate will be gone. If children and young people do not just learn foreign languages early on, which they can pick up like their mother tongue, but also learn about universal history—which can even be done in a playful way—then I am certain, we will reach a new age in human civilisation.

Kuzansky said that the only reason that people can communicate with each other, is that each culture has scientists, poets, composers, people who have a universal language to speak with each other.

Therefore, I want to invite you, to help to facilitate this dialogue of children and young people, because the life of a young child, and a young person, is totally decided by whether he finds somebody who puts the creative spark into his soul, in time. So if you help to make this project a success, then I am absolutely certain that this terrible crisis of civilization can be turned into a gigantic chance, and overcome a childhood disease of mankind—oligarchism—forever.

And in doing so, you will contribute your share to make Pobisk Kuznetsov immortal.