

In discussions with Russian politicians and intellectuals, the parallel between the country's position after losing the Crimean War (1853-56), and that in the first decade since Soviet rule, was often drawn. Vladimir Putin is being compared to Czar Alexander II, not, perhaps, a genius in statecraft, but a significant reformer nonetheless, and one who made Russia's recovery possible.

Real Issue Is Spiritual

At present, Russia has a Presidential Administration, which holds sway over the government and Parliament. The "loyal" oligarchs who enjoy—both in Parliament and in the Presidential Administration—political influence in the pro-Putin party known as United Russia, have now, in the form of Glazyev's Rodina party, met up with a significant parliamentary counterweight. That Putin has openly approved the Lvov/Glazyev proposal to tax raw-materials profits points to this. *Vis-à-vis* the "loyal" oligarchs, the stand thus taken by Putin and the Presidium appears to be something along the lines of, "We shall let you count your money in peace, provided you invest, produce, and help the economy to move forward."

Given the critical role played by the Russian President at the present time, one cannot, however, overlook the danger that there be covert pockets of resistance to the Presidency. In France, in the early '60s, as General de Gaulle launched a huge wave of economic and political reforms, the Organization of the Secret Army (OAS) perpetrated several assassination attempts against him.

No one would venture to claim that corruption and nepotism have been rooted out in Russia, but one can say that in this respect, things are much improved relative to the 1990s. The systematic mafia rule proclaimed against the Russian state, by organized crime, and by both foreign and domestic economic interests, has withered away, as the balance of power shifts in the state's favor. Nevertheless, and although the higher-level public agencies are now run more ethically, and more competently as well, on a lower administrative level there remains the problem of a fossilized bureaucracy, a dead weight obstructing entrepreneurial initiative, flexibility, and progress.

At the end of the day, according to many of our interlocutors, the real issue for Russia is a spiritual one. How can Russia's rich cultural, scientific, and religious heritage become the focus of the educational system once again, a heritage that has recently tended to be put aside, just as we have done in Europe over the last 30 years, through all manner of alleged reforms? Russia has an extraordinary tradition of Classical education and science, which persisted throughout the Soviet period, and that could today be brought together with a renaissance of Orthodox religious belief. No matter how important the various forms of entrepreneurial and economic knowledge may be, the country's real strength will lie in her Classical education system.

The Geneva Peace Accord And 'Nathan the Wise'

by Our Special Correspondent

Top Israeli and Palestinian organizers and backers of the Geneva Accord were hosted in Berlin on Jan. 15 by the Social-Democrat-connected Frederich Ebert Stiftung. Their overflow audience of over 300 included some 20 members of the German Parliament, diplomats, representatives of German think-tanks and foreign policy institutions, and press.

Featured among the panel participants were the originators of the initiative, former Israeli Minister of Justice Dr. Yossi Beilin and PLO Executive Committee Member Abbed Rabbo. Former Israeli Ambassador to Germany Avi Primor also spoke, as did Prof. Yael Tamir and Dany Levi from Israel; and Palestinian leaders Suhair Manasse, Kadura Fares, and Marwan Jilani. It is difficult to capture the remarkable agapic spirit—deliberately rising above all pettiness and rage—radiated to the audience by both the Israeli and Palestinian organizers. It moved LaRouche representative Jonathan Tenenbaum, in a well-received intervention from the floor, to evoke the memory of Berlin's Gotthold Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn.

Overcoming 'Moments of Despair'

Abbed Rabbo described the resolve of Beilin and himself, starting in 2001, "to reverse the growing disaster" in the region by continuing on their own, the negotiation process they had been forced to break off as official representatives. "During two years of continuous work, there were many moments when we felt despair. Are we doing the right thing, with the insanity going on around us? By producing a document based on realistic options, maybe we could help turn the tide of events."

Beilin emphasized that the Geneva initiative negotiations deliberately dealt with the whole range of detailed issues which nearly everyone on both sides had avoided, out of fear of opening up a "Pandora's box syndrome." They proved, instead, that these issues could be mutually resolved *in their entirety*. The key now, is to win over the minds and hearts of as much of the population on both sides as possible. "Already 40% on both sides essentially support the initiative, and that is already almost a miracle."

Through their present international tour, the Geneva Accord organizers hope to gain support from major governments and institutions—leverage to change the political balance in their own region. They reported on the "great success" of their

Features of the LaRouche 'Oasis Plan'



talks with the German government, which has thrown “total support” behind the Geneva Accord. But both Israelis and Palestinians voiced harsh criticism of the Bush Administration. Avi Primor stressed that the only the United States possesses “every means needed to quickly bring about peace in the region. But this is evidently not the intention. There is only lip service to the cause of peace.”

With the United States refusing to put the necessary pressure on the governments, the Geneva organizers decided to go directly to the people. Beilin added, that “American involvement is not a *sine qua non*”; after all, the Oslo negotiations were carried out entirely between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, without any U.S. participation. “Warren Christopher did not change a single comma,” but the American government did put its weight behind the agreement, once it had been made. On the other hand, several speakers prominently cited the promise of Secretary of State Colin Powell’s letter to the Accord organizers.

The recent distribution of the text of the Accord to all

Israeli households was, by itself, a kind of revolution, since most Israelis had never seen any of the *previous* agreements in their actual text.

The Berlin discussion heated up, with Israeli and Palestinian “radicals” in the audience shouting objections back and forth to each other and the podium. Beilin smiled and said, “Now we seem to be at home. Now we got into the real debate, which is not an artificial one.”

The ‘Oasis Plan’

Early in the discussion, LaRouche representative Tennenbaum evoked the memory of Berlin’s Lessing and Mendelssohn, declaring to the Accord organizers: “You have spoken with the voice of Reason. This is a sign of hope for humanity. Your presentations are out of the pages of [Lessing’s drama] *Nathan the Wise*. I will do everything I can to support these efforts.” Tennenbaum emphasized the necessity of realizing the common interests of Israelis and Palestinians, through a long-term development perspective for the region. Given the thrust of Lyndon LaRouche’s long-standing efforts in this direction, including the “Oasis Plan”—which had been echoed in the annexes to the Oslo accords—he suggested that the time has come for a comprehensive development plan, and for European and other nations to support it. Tennenbaum also noted the efforts of LaRouche and his movement to turn Amer-

ican policy in the current U.S. political battles.

Former Israeli Ambassador Primor answered enthusiastically and at length. “We have to think: What is peace, really?” he said. “A peace agreement, by itself, only makes peace *possible*. But a real peace requires the realization of common interests. At the time of the Oslo accords, we deliberately emphasized trans-regional development plans as key to a comprehensive peace. With such an approach, also Syria could quickly be brought to the negotiating table. Unfortunately, this perspective went down with the collapse of the Oslo process. Now, the precondition is the establishment of a Palestinian state. . . . But there is no reason not to work *now* on elaborating development plans for the future.” As a crucial example, he took the water problem. “There is simply not enough water in the region. The only solution is to *produce* water by desalination. But this is much too expensive when done on a small scale. We are far too small and too poor to tackle this all by ourselves. That is why we need international support.”