The following are edited comments, delivered by Gerry Rose, on the September 24, 2020 weekly Thursday night LaRouche PAC Fireside Chat. The full audio of that two-hour program, with questions from the live audience, is available here.

I want to present this in the sense of a strategic study, because a new book produced in 2018, called Giants: The Global Power Elite by Peter Phillips, provoked me—and often this happens—provoked me in a number of ways. First of all the book is useful. It’s not a great book, because it does a sociological analysis of what Phillips calls the power elite or the transnational capitalist class which is ahistorical. He’s really looking at the impact of the British Empire, and for reasons I’m not going to go into, he’s muddy on the question. But the book is useful in giving the extent of the magnitude of what we’re up against.

The first, most salient thing that hit me was that the 17 largest hedge funds, banks, wealth funds, other things, the 17 largest, control $41 trillion worth of so-called assets—$41 trillion. Just to give you a sense of what that means, if you take the gross domestic product of the United States, of Russia, of China and of India, that is $38 trillion. These 17 institutions that he references here, control $41 trillion, and that’s just the 17 largest. And therefore you’re dealing with a power and a concentration of power that no individual nation state could deal with, as an individual nation-state. This is the British Empire.

The Modern British Empire

A famous video documentary called, The Spider’s Web: Britain’s Second Empire, which you can get on YouTube—and I recommend people look at it—indicates that the British Empire morphed into what was called “the Spider’s Web.” It was the offshore banking empire run by the City of London, which is not even Britain; it’s not even London. The “City of London,” is a private corporation, which created these offshore banking facilities in the Cayman Islands, Antilles, and other places.

One of the authors of this piece actually had penetrated Deloitte, which is one of the biggest accounting firms, and he got involved in one of these offshore so-called tax havens. And 99 of 100 cases he looked at, were involved in illegal activity. In the most famous case, the HSBC in 2012 laundered $880 million in one account for the Sinaloa drug cartel, which was exposed at the time by Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan. Not one of the officers of HSBC—and this is hard drug money—went to jail, and in fact Eric Holder, Obama’s Attorney General, covered the whole thing up, and gave them a fine. The argument was, if HSBC goes down, with its leveraged trillion-plus, then the whole banking system goes down. The banking system of the central banks of Wall Street and the City of London are nothing but corruption.

This was not a mistake; this was not somebody who was led astray. An exposé came out on Deutsche Bank, in which 6,000 transactions were unregulated, but actually much more; in one of the banks it was 6,000 transactions that were unregulated.

So the British Empire is largely a financial empire. To give you a sense of the concentration of power—and this is in this book Giants—the richest 1% of the world population has more resources than 50% of the lower part of the world’s population. The top 30% of this fi-
nancial elite owns 95% of the world’s wealth. The remaining 70% of the world has 5% of the world’s wealth. And this goes on and on. What you’re dealing with here, is a financial and political leviathan.

They financialize everything, they securitize everything. They invest in military budgets, because it’s a safe return, because governments pay for that. They invest in, as you know, the famous mortgage-backed securities, and they have brought to ruin the actual physical economies of the world. In other words, if you want to invest in long-term infrastructure over a ten-year period, or a 15-year period for the payback, this financial system will actually make it impossible to do. They will not do it. And unless you break the powers of the British Empire, then there is no way you can have long-term capital investment, long-term improvement.

They say to the nation states, “We’re too big to fail, you cannot put us under law; we will loot, we will steal, we will destroy.” And they say to the United States, Russia, China, India, and other nations that have any self-respect, “If you stop us, we will bring the system down.” You must have a very clear, precise answer to that threat.

These guys have names. They have institutions, they are committed, and they are quite insane. I’ll give you an example: In roughly 2007-2008 when everything went haywire and we were able to put on the table the Glass-Steagall question before the House, and we had sponsors and everything else, both Sandy Weill, who is quite insane himself, of Travelers and Citicorp (he’s the guy who brought down Glass-Steagall), and Warren Buffett, and sections of Goldman Sachs, said, “well, we might have to live with a financial reorganization under Glass-Steagall, because this thing has gotten completely out of control.”

But Jamie Dimon of Chase, which is one of the 17 largest, and Larry Fink of BlackRock, the largest in the world, overruled Buffett, Weill, and sections of Goldman Sachs and they just said, “It’s not going to happen,” and in fact, Fink said you have to privatize the Social Security fund, and let Fink and Dimon and the British Empire run Social Security. That’s what they actually proposed.

The Power of Sovereign Nations

The only way you can deal with this, as Lyndon LaRouche had said, you have to have, between the United States, Russia, China, and India and others, Japan and others, you have to get an international financial agreement that the speculative bubble will be dried out with a Glass-Steagall arrangement. You have to create a capability to issue credit. These guys say, “We will bring down the system,” but the system already is down! For 95 percent of the people on this planet, this system is down.

There has to be a combination of financial reorganization under Bretton Woods agreements, and there have to be, as LaRouche represented very forcefully, early on
in 2008 and repeatedly after then, his Four Laws. He said, you have to have a Glass-Steagall separation, you have to have national banking, you have to have a science driver policy, and in fact, it’s the science driver policy that drives everything, to propel the physical economy of each nation on the planet. This is what Roosevelt had proposed in 1941, in preparing to go to war against the Nazis. He said, “every nation in the world”—the United States included, and Russia included—that every nation in the world has to have a physical economy, and “freedom from want,” and “freedom from fear,” as he did in the Four Freedoms speech.

There is no coexistence now with the British Empire and its rapacious, insatiable appetite. Every year this $41 trillion has to bring a 3-5% return. Wall Street cannot and will not invest in long-term infrastructure development and long-term energy and long-term science, it cannot and will not do it!

Therefore, avoidance of this problem will bring chaos, no matter how well-intentioned President Trump is. See the reason they hate Trump, Xi and Putin, and they hate them equally for the same reason, is that they are committed to the future of their own people and they will fight any banking system, any arrangement that destroys the future of their people. The nation-state was based upon that idea.

Lessons from the Past

What the Giants book does usefully is to give the magnitude of the crisis, but not the command structure. Barbara Boyd and others are giving a real, hands-on sense of what the command structure of this thing is. That command structure is now deployed against Xi, Putin, and Trump.

The author of Giants references what’s called the “new feudalism.” However, to appreciate a more profound understanding of that term, let’s look at it a little deeper.

To me it’s the fact that the oligarchy of France and the oligarchy of Britain, in the 14th century at the height of the Black Death, were warring with each other. These guys had no sense of the population or commitment to the population. It was a rapacious destruction of Europe, through the combination of the Black Death and the unleashing of war between oligarch and oligarch. This became the subject of one of the most brilliant insights into the nature of the power of the nation-state. It was done by William Shakespeare in his famous Henry VI and Richard III—they were one piece. They were his first attempt at what today are called his “history plays.”

What Shakespeare understood—which is very reminiscent of Homer, and very reminiscent of Dante—was that from Edward III to Richard III, England had suffered through the 100 years of continuous war between England and France. So the ending of that, the bringing to power of the Tudors, which began with Henry VII, was Shakespeare’s purpose in drafting these history plays. In the start of Henry VI, Henry V is brought in dead, that’s how the play starts. He had conquered France and became the so-called “King of France,” from England. He had a very distant claim. Anyway, he was bad. His father Henry IV told him to “consolidate the realm.” He had no legal right to be the king, because he had usurped the throne from Richard II, so in order to unite the kingdom, they had a war on France. So, Henry V is brought in—he’s dead. Joan of Arc is beginning to liberate France from this oppression, and later this leads to Louis XI.

At Henry V’s death, his son, Henry VI, is only 9 years
old. The Lancasters, who are in charge of the war on France (Henry V was a Lancaster), say, “We’ll go to France and reconquer it.” But a messenger arrives and says, “We’ve lost this town, this town and this town,” all to the rival House of York. So the famous Wars of the Roses begins and leads to mass slaughter inside England. Margaret of Anjou, who was Queen of England, beheads Richard of York, who had briefly been made king, and then, ultimately, Henry VI is killed. It’s a fratricidal war, which destroys England. This leads to the ascendancy of Richard III, who was a devious, evil person. Because of the way he got into power, nobleman after nobleman deserts. They have no one to unite around.

So from France, the House of Tudor, which had a claim to the throne, asked Henry Tudor of Richmond to lead the fight to reunify England. And in the famous Richard III, Henry Tudor of Richmond defeats Richard and unifies England. For the 15 years he was in power, he never fought a war: he refused. He wanted to unite the kingdom in peace, because he had an idea of the “Commonwealth.” Under Henry VII you had Thomas More, you had John Colet, you had others, and they went to Italy to learn ancient Greek at Ficino’s Academy. You had Erasmus in Europe setting off a mass education movement, which later leads to the mass education movement in England leading into the time of Shakespeare, and fueled by his work.

England became the second nation-state based upon the principle of the development of the Commonwealth. Wars were anathema to any Commonwealth. This was an offshoot of the development of Louis XI in France. I want to read you something to understand the power of the nation-state, because the first two nation-states in history, based upon these principles, were Louis XI’s France and Henry VII’s England.

This is from the famous letter of Louis XI, near his death, to his son, Charles VIII, called The Rosebush of War. Louis XI defines what an actual monarch or leader must be:

The Prince must provide for the maintenance of public works and edifices, and make improvements and repairs on the roads, the bridges, the ports, the walls, the moats, and other things in his towns and castles which are necessary. ....

Consider the duty of Kings and Princes and their cavaliers, that their estate and vocation is to defend the common good, both ecclesiastic and secular, to uphold justice and peace among their subjects, and to do good....

Inspired by Joan of Arc, this genius consolidated France, outflanking the petty princes and barons of the realm, and forged a unified nation. Simultaneously, he fostered industrial development. He promoted the industries of the time; he wanted the cities to involve themselves in industry; he defended agriculture. By the end of his reign—Stephanie Ezrol has written a very interesting article on this—there was a 300% increase in the wealth of France. Real physical-economic wealth.

What Louis XI and Henry VII demonstrated was the power of the nation-state to break the back of oligarchism, of this overweening, mad obsession with power. They broke the back of it. Later, the case of Franklin

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Roosevelt illustrates this in the most dramatic way. Because the commitment of the nation-state is to the common wealth. It is to the people. That’s why the oligarchs hate Trump! He said at the UN, we’re going to end this global empire. He said, every nation should be proud of itself, should develop itself, to become as great as it can. This was a declaration of war against the British Empire, and the British understood it as such. The only power to break this international British Empire, is to return to national banking, is to impose Glass-Steagall, is to concentrate on the physical and economic well-being of the whole population against this rapacious looting!

**Roosevelt**

I want to end with Franklin Roosevelt, because it leaps out at you. Look at recent developments. During this months’-long COVID crisis, the Wall Street and London banks have received $3 trillion dollars in bailout financing, but those banks—particularly the Wall Street banks—have lent nothing to the physical economy! Their deposits went up, but their lending to industry went down by $700 billion, even though they got bailed out for $3 trillion.

After the 1932 crash, and Roosevelt and Jesse Jones, using the Reconstruction Finance Corp. (RFC) recapitalized the banks. The RFC bought preferred stock, refinanced the banks, and recapitalized them. They didn’t give them loans like they do now; they said we’re going to buy preferred stock and you’re going to use that money to invest in the physical economy. Well, Wall Street—Morgan in particular—would not invest in the U.S. economy after they got recapitalized, so Jesse Jones of the RFC and Roosevelt said, “If you won’t do it, then, through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, we will directly fund industry, agriculture, physical wealth, and infrastructure.”

What they created wasn’t a Bank of the United States, but the Reconstruction Finance Corp. became one-third larger than the total of Wall Street altogether, in terms of lending and long-term lending, through mortgages—Jones said those were the best. They lent to farmers, they stretched it out; the farmers said, “You care about us; this is a debt of honor,” and every single mortgage got paid back! The Civilian Conservation Corps was funded by the RFC; the Export-Import Bank was funded by the RFC.

Roosevelt intended for the physical economy of the country to get moving, and no Wall Street banker was going to stand in his way! He created an agreement with Congress that for every single worthy project, if the banks won’t lend, then we will. That’s also what President Trump said pretty much around this Covid pandemic: “If I need the Defense Production Act, I’m going to use the Defense Production Act.”

This is the power of the nation-state to break the back of the oligarchical rule! The key is sovereign commitment to the future. With globalization, the bankers, the Wall Street banks, the London bankers said, “Get it where it can be made the cheapest, get the runaway shops, do what you have to do.” Globalization. It’s complicated with respect to China, because China did something they didn’t expect; they went really bonkers on China.

Reversing this lies in the sovereign power of the nation-state. You must break the power of the British Empire! It must be bankrupted. Its banks must be reorganized, as LaRouche’s Four Laws indicate, and you must have a Bretton Woods policy so that if some nutcase at HSBC says, “We’ll bring the system down,” we’ll say, “OK. It’s already down anyway, it doesn’t function. We’ve got a new system.”