

# The European Renaissance Is Our Model for Addressing Today's Existential Crises

*This is the edited transcript of the Schiller Institute's March 4 weekly webcast by Helga Zepp-LaRouche. A [video](#) of the webcast is available.*

**Harley Schlanger:** Hello, I'm Harley Schlanger from the Schiller Institute. Welcome to our webcast for today, March 4, 2020, with our founder and chairman Helga Zepp-LaRouche. The obvious starting point is the issue that's on virtually everybody's mind—the spread of the coronavirus. People are trying to figure out how to deal with it, governments are in action. There's a lot of panicking being spread by some people, and then there's also a lot of disinformation. I think, given the record we have, based on Lyndon LaRouche's forecasting going back to 1971, what you have to say on this, Helga, is very significant for people. So, why don't we start with what the recent status of this is, and how are nations addressing it?

## The Coronavirus Danger

**Helga Zepp-LaRouche:** I think it is a very serious threat. There are several renowned virologists and experts who say it is, de facto, a pandemic already. Now, I will qualify that in a second. For those people who think this is too much, or that this will cause panic, I think when you have a situation like that, it is extremely important to take a calm assessment of the situation and then take the actions necessary to combat the threat and do the kinds of things that will hopefully succeed.

The reason this coronavirus is a very dangerous pandemic is that it has characteristics which are more serious than previous pandemics, and it coincides with



CGTN

*People all over the world are looking for leadership in dealing with the virulent coronavirus, which has now become pandemic. Common scenes in South Korea (above) and Iran (below).*



CGTN

a financial system which was already bankrupt before the coronavirus appeared. Naturally, the effects—both in the real economic situation and the real economy, as well as on the financial system—in all likelihood will trigger a collapse of this system.

So, rather than looking only at the health aspect of the coronavirus, it is the absolutely urgent moment and

necessity to reform the international monetary system which is bankrupt; to replace it with a new credit system which we should discuss in a second. And then use that crisis to bring about the changes in the strategic situation which will help to solve a whole bunch of other problems. President Trump reflected this in his way by saying it is an irony of the situation that because of the coronavirus crisis, forces are coming together which would normally never do so.



CC/Olaf Kosinsky

*Jens Spahn, Germany's Health Minister.*

Having said that, I think we should first look at the coronavirus itself. It is now officially spread to 70 countries, and it is not possible to reconstruct the origin, and who infected whom. But it is now spreading according to what is called “asymmetric transmission” or “community transmission,” and now beginning to hit countries whose health systems are not as good as China’s or even the European countries or the U.S., all of which already have big flaws in their health systems.

The danger is that it will now begin to spread much faster in this way. I also think there is a vast under-reporting, because in many countries, the kind of testing which was done rigorously in China has not even started—including in the United States, where the first test kits were flawed and did not work, which shows you one dimension of a broken-down health system. *Several* countries are now regarded as hotspots. It is spreading now more quickly in countries other than China: It is now in South Korea, Iran, and Italy.

The situation is serious enough that major international events are being cancelled. In Germany, it was the Leipzig Book Fair, which was supposed to open shortly, and the Kraft International Conference in Munich. The Hanover Fair has been postponed for three months. Similarly, in France, the Louvre Museum has been closed, and indoor events involving large crowds are no longer permitted. That shows you that there is actually a serious concern.

I must say, however, that the reaction both in the United States and in Europe was delayed. I think measures should have been taken much earlier. Early on, German Health Minister Jens Spahn said the coronavirus would not come to Germany, a rather absurd assumption. The collapse of the health system which we have talked about many times before, is now really coming home to roost.

Last December, the European umbrella trade union for health workers and nurses issued an urgent complaint that, because of the budget cuts and austerity in the last decade—especially after the 2008 crisis—there was a severe health crisis. Not enough staff. Pay for nurses and health workers has been cut in several countries; and resources have been cut down, and hospitals have been closed. That is now leading to a very critical situation.

China has 4.3 hospital beds per 1000 citizens. In the United States, it’s only 2.5 beds per 1000 people. So,



CC/Zairon

*In Europe, in an effort to arrest the spread of the coronavirus, many large conferences and fairs have been postponed and museums closed, as is the Louvre Museum in Paris, shown here.*

you can see that China has been in a much better situation to deal with the coronavirus, and it has taken measures characterized by the World Health Organization as a new standard in how to deal with such epidemics and pandemics. China has now offered help to other affected countries.

It has offered help to the EU countries, but also Iran

and other countries that are being hit very hard, offering expertise gained from its experience with the coronavirus over the last several months, but it is also offering masks, protective gear. I think the European Union and other countries would be well-advised to take China's advice and its help. This is extremely important. A lot of time has already been lost, and now it is time for the kind of international cooperation which overcomes prejudice and geopolitical stupidity. I think this is now something that should really occur immediately.

### LaRouche in 1971: 'Depression Ahead'

**Schlanger:** When you now speak of delay, I think back to 1971, when your late husband, Lyndon LaRouche, spoke about how, if the world continues with the policy of neo-liberalism which came with globalization, austerity, and so on, that mankind would be confronted with biological holocausts. His warning was made very clearly, and yet, under the neo-liberal doctrine, the healthcare system, as well as the industrial system, manufacturing, food security—all of this has been torn down. So, apart from the emergency measures, we really do need this radical transformation of the monetary financial system.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Let me stress one thing. Many of our viewers are quite aware of the fact that the name of my late husband has been slandered by many forces. But if you look at the present situation, I think it is a simple matter of honesty to recognize that every one of his prognoses has come true. And the reason why he was so "controversial" is because he went against the powers that be, against the people who were going for the complete deregulation of the markets, of the increase of the power of speculative interests in Wall Street and the City of London.

When he made this historic prognosis on the 15th of August, 1971, saying that when President Richard Nixon decoupled the dollar from the gold standard, abandoned the fixed exchange rates among the world's currencies, and destroyed the Bretton Woods system by doing so, if that trend were to be continued, it would inevitably lead to a new depression, to the danger of a new fascism; or that system would be replaced with a completely new economic world order.

Then he proceeded every step of the way to warn about the consequences of the extreme monetarism which had been introduced and escalated, by warning that you cannot continuously lower the living standard



EIRNS

*"I warned you!" In 1974 Lyndon LaRouche created a Biological Holocaust Taskforce that forecast outbreaks of new diseases and new outbreaks of old diseases, and proposed remedies.*

of entire continents—as was done to the developing sector in Africa and Latin America and many of the Asian countries—without causing old epidemics and new diseases to emerge. And that that was the big danger.

In 1974, we created something we called the [Biological Holocaust Task Force](#), [See the report in the *EIR* article, "LaRouche's 1974 Task Force Forecasts Global Epidemics," published October 24, 2014] to study the danger of the outbreaks of such new diseases. We also proposed the remedies, namely, to go into a crash program for optical biophysics for the study of life sciences, to find cures for these old and new diseases. Obviously, this was not done, because it was not seen as profitable by the pharmaceutical industry and the banking interests behind them.

### LaRouche in 2014: Four Laws

So, now we are at the situation where all the forecasts of Lyndon LaRouche have come to a boundary condition. This financial system is absolutely bankrupt; we have to dramatically replace the monetary system and change it into a credit system.

This is why I have issued a call for the immediate implementation of the Four Laws of Lyndon LaRouche. I will just briefly summarize again what they are.

There has to be an immediate end to the casino economy. That means you have to have the introduction of a global Glass-Steagall banking separation in exactly the same way as Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed and implemented it in 1933.

Then you need new credit mechanisms; you need to bring back the issuing of credit into the sovereign power

of governments, away from private interests. Which means you have to have a national bank in every country to issue credit for productive investments.

Then you have to implement a New Bretton Woods system by connecting these national banks in every country, which must go back to a fixed exchange-rate system.

The nations of the world must then establish long-term agreements among themselves for investments in very well defined infrastructure projects, in industrial investments, to increase the productivity of each and all with a special emphasis on such frontier areas as fusion, bio-optics, bio-physics, cooperation in space ventures.

And we need an urgent implementation of the many worthwhile projects as touched on in *EIR*'s [Special Report](#), *The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge*, published in 2014, and [updated](#) in 2018 by the Schiller Institute. The idea is to bring economic development to all regions affected by crises right now. That would specifically include Southwest Asia, because of the refugee crisis; and Africa, because of the coronavirus crisis, but also the locust crisis, the migrant crisis.

But the key message of all of this is, *there is a solution*. This solution could be implemented extremely quickly. As a matter of fact, we have also proposed that a summit should take place among the four most important powers of the world—Russia, China, India, and the United States—not excluding other countries, but because these four most important and powerful countries, together, have the economic and population muscle to actually implement LaRouche's Four Laws.

Such a summit is already in the works and is on a very good track. I first made my proposal for such a summit on January 3, following the assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in Iraq. A few days later, Russian President Vladimir Putin made a similar but different proposal, suggesting that the five permanent members of the UN Security Council should have an immediate summit to address the basic questions facing all of humanity. In the meantime, China and France have agreed, and today, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reported that President Trump also has said he is very interested in participating in such a summit. So, that is the framework which could solve these problems very quickly.

I would appeal to all people, rather than becoming anxious, despairing, help us, rather, to bring these solutions about. I think this is the key characteristic of our organization—the Schiller Institute, the LaRouche

movement—that we are fighting for actual solutions. The only solution which would function in such an extraordinary crisis, is to abandon the system which caused all of these crises, and replace it with a system which is in the interest of all nations. Let us achieve a New Paradigm of international cooperation. That is eminently feasible if the political will can be mobilized. That's why I am asking you to contact us and work together with us to create the international support for these ideas.

### **Mere Money Machinations Won't Work**

**Schlanger:** In that context, we see the crazy response of the European Union and the Federal Reserve to the crisis, that the coronavirus can be dealt with by flooding more money into the system: The Federal Reserve's dropping the interest rates, and so on. That's the continuation of the neo-liberal system; that's what we have to change, isn't it? That kind of thinking?

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Yes, exactly! That really shows you that there is an absolute disconnect of the present neo-liberal establishments on both sides of the Atlantic—a complete disconnect from the causes of the crisis, and what is actually needed to remedy it. I have not seen any reflection, by any of the leading liberal representatives in Europe, or in the United States in the Democratic Party, for that matter, nor the neo-cons in the Republican Party, who have sat back and said, "Wait a second, why is our system not functioning? Why do we have a financial crisis? Why do we have the outbreak of pandemics?" That unwillingness of the liberal establishment is a very good reason for ordinary citizens to really mobilize and force a change, because, as it looks right now, it will not come from these elites.

**Schlanger:** I think that's why we're seeing a global insurgency precisely against these elites. We just saw in the United States, besides the craziness of the Federal Reserve, the election underway. The Democratic Party looks as though the establishment has decided they're—at least for the moment—going to rally around Joe Biden, who is Mr. Establishment, the Obama-Clinton Democratic Party. Bloomberg just announced today that he's dropping out; \$500 million for a handful of delegates. Probably the worst businessman in world history.

What are your thoughts now after Super Tuesday?

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I think the Democratic National Committee (DNC) clearly wants to rig the election again: get Bernie Sanders out, who has his own massive problems, without question. But to basically try to get all the other contenders to drop out and support Biden. This reflects the fact that they have absolutely not learned the lesson of 2016. They still don't know why Hillary Clinton lost that election. As you say, Bloomberg probably paid \$1000 to \$2000 or \$3000 for every vote he got. I haven't calculated it exactly, but it was a very expensive vote-buying. He blew \$500 million for advertisements; this is really a joke, but I think a Biden candidacy would implement exactly what Bloomberg has been proposing: Green financing. It would be a complete catastrophe.

I think we are now in a revolutionary situation, so forget about November 2020. The kinds of changes which the world urgently needs are a question of now. I think the immediacy of the situation is here. There were reports in the Italian financial press saying the only reason there has not yet been a wide recognition that we are already in a pandemic, is because of the so-called "pandemic bonds." This was a financial instrument developed by the World Bank in 2017 after the Ebola crisis, which pay investors 6.9% to 11%, but if a pandemic breaks out, the principal is supposedly redirected to help low-income countries finance their emergency responses. The next date of maturity of these pandemic bonds is March 15.

That shows you the utter absurdity; to delay necessary measures, including informing the public in the necessary way, just to not risk the profit of some speculators. And it also shows you that the health sector is definitely not something which should be subject to financial speculators, but it should be absolutely the responsibility of sovereign governments to provide a health system for the common good of the people. I think this just shows you that the establishments at this point are incapable, unwilling, to recognize the reason why the liberal system is not functioning.

That means we will continue to have a very revolutionary moment. As the consequences of both the pandemic and the condition of the financial system get clearer, I think the upheaval which we have seen in the health sector in all European countries, but also among the farmers, will just increase. And it will force the kind of solution with the Four Power, or maybe the UN Security Council permanent five-member agreement which we have been proposing and which now



Creative Commons 2.0

*Democratic Party presidential hopefuls all endorsed the Green New Deal. A campaign rally in Detroit, Michigan on August 1, 2019.*

Russia has successfully put on the agenda.

That's the only thing to look at; don't be confused. Don't think the solution can be postponed until some date in November 2020, because the crisis is here, and it requires an immediate solution.

### **Turkey, Syria, and Greece**

**Schlanger:** This is to all of our viewers: This is why we have been emphasizing, "[Join us now!](#)" Don't think you can vote in November to change something. By November, it may be too late.

Helga, you've been talking about the unwillingness to change, the incapacity to change. We're seeing a situation emerging now with Turkey, with the fighting going on in Idlib province, the possibility of a new wave of refugees into Europe. A lot of dangerous silliness coming out of the European Union. What's going on with this situation?

**Zepp-LaRouche:** The problem is that Turkey is using the refugee issue to blackmail the EU. But also, they have attacked Syrian forces in Idlib, and are backing terrorist elements. It's really amazing. Instead of attacking Turkey for intervening again in Syria, trying to escalate the longstanding war against the Assad government, the British First Secretary of State, Dominic Raab, came



CGTN



CGTN

Turkey's President Erdoğan has created a large number of refugees in Turkey's longstanding war against the Assad government in Syria. Here, a group of such refugees, attempting to escape across Turkey's border into a Europe that doesn't want them, are caught in the middle of Greek police using tear gas to stop them, and Turkish forces using tear gas to force them across.

out in full support for Turkey. Then, this unfortunate German Defense Minister, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (AKK), also threatened to increase the sanctions against Syria, and basically fully took the side of Turkey.

Fortunately you have Russia in this situation, and Putin said very clearly that if Turkey enters Syrian air space and territory, it is at their own risk if they are attacked. Russia obviously has a big role to play; Erdoğan will go to Moscow tomorrow to meet on Thursday and Friday with President Putin. If Putin and Trump would—but they may be doing this already—but if they would agree on how to handle this crisis, then Erdoğan could be contained. Right now, however he is weaponizing these unfortunate and desperate refugees.

First the 13,000-15,000 refugees were fed the fake news that the border to Greece and Bulgaria was open. Then we saw the horrendous pictures of these refugees caught in the middle. Greek police used tear gas to repel them at the border. And Turkish forces used tear gas to drive these refugees back across.

These poor people, who have absolutely nothing to lose, because they are desperate, are being weaponized. They are absolutely caught in the middle of all of this, but obviously these pictures are supposed to force Europe to make another deal like the one the EU concluded several years ago, paying 6 billion euros to Erdoğan so he would

build camps for the refugees. All together now, there are about three million Syrians in Turkey; plus many other people from Asia, from Afghanistan, from Iraq. Obviously, this is an untenable situation.

Turkey claims the EU did not pay the promised 6 billion euros—probably a lot of this money went to NGOs and not to the Turkish government. This is all a completely disgraceful situation. And the situation between Turkey and Greece is super-hot. A delegation of the European Union, consisting of EU President Ursula von der Leyen; Charles Michel, the head of the European Council; the head of the European Parliament David Sassoli; and the Prime Minister of Croatia Andrej Plenkovic, just visited and gave a press conference with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who basically said what is happening is that Turkey is absolutely making an asymmetric attack on the territory of Greece, and that this cannot be tolerated.



CC/European People's Party

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

These august European Union guests had very little to say and very little to contribute. It just shows you

one more time the utter impotence of the EU. But it also shows that if you have the statements of AKK completely echoing what the British First Secretary of State is saying, you have clearly the EU falling into the Great Game of the British again, using the Middle East as the cockpit for the Great Game. One only can say, the only counter to that is what I said earlier: You need the Four

Powers—the United States, Russia, China, and India—to work together to counter these machinations.

Otherwise, I think it should be obvious that the only way to solve the refugee problem and the resulting instability is with an economic development plan *for the entire region*. It's now been several years since China offered to extend the New Silk Road from Iran to Iraq to Syria, and to Turkey and Egypt; to connect the New Silk Road via Turkey with Europe, and via Egypt with Africa. That is something which *has to start*, because you have to give people

hope. You have to give the perspective of economic reconstruction of Syria, of Iraq, of Afghanistan.

If you don't have an economic perspective, there is no way this problem can be solved. I find it absolutely criminal that some politicians still are holding to the line that they will not give a penny for the reconstruction of Syria until President Bashar al-Assad is chased out of his office. I think this just completely criminal. The people who are saying that are personally responsible for the lives lost, and I think they should be treated with contempt.

What is needed right now is an urgent, international solidarity to reconstruct Southwest Asia as one region. Iran is one of the countries which has out-of-control poverty and coronavirus infections. President Hassan Rouhani recently said that there is not a single region in Iran that is not affected by the coronavirus. Even some members of the government are reported to be sick from it. The economic, trade, scientific and military sanctions which are being imposed on Iran by the U.S. are killing people.

It should stop right away, because you need a comprehensive solution. China has offered to help with the infrastructure; Russia has offered to build up the energy in the region. Obviously, other countries can participate in building up industry, agriculture, bringing in lots of new freshwater sources with new technologies. All of that is absolutely feasible, but it does require that the countries stop playing these geopolitical games.

If you are for ending geopolitics because you don't want to have refugees, work with the Schiller Institute.



Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We are the organization that is doing something; we are the organization that has solutions. That is why you should absolutely join us on the spot.

## A Renaissance

**Schlanger:** In the midst of this confluence of crises, instead of panic and despair, you're talking about solutions. I found it very interesting that Donald Trump, when he was in Davos, Switzerland attending the World Economic Forum there, spoke about the Dome of the Cathedral in Florence, Italy which you and your husband have often referenced, as an

example of the merger of beauty and science as the proper approach. Europe had been through a dark age before, when mankind was lifted out of it with the Renaissance. You've been very outspoken about the need for a new renaissance, so I think it would be very useful for you to say something about that now.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Many of you viewers probably know the extremely important book, the *Decameron* by Giovanni Boccaccio. Through the telling of 100 tales, he described the consequences of the Black Death in the 14th Century on the population of Florence. When you read this book, you can see the parallels to the present. The irrationality which naturally comes with pandemics; the misery; how people lose any kind of empathy because sickness overwhelms people.

I don't think we are quite at that point, yet, in Europe, but if you look at what is happening in Africa with the locust plague destroying the basis for survival for many millions of people, we are quickly approaching such a situation like that in 14th Century Europe.

I have said many times, you need to study how mankind came out of the 14th Century and created the beautiful Italian Renaissance. Because that is a lesson to be learned. I can only make it very short. It was in Italy that a group of humanists developed, who took the ideas of Dante Alighieri, of Petrarca, of the school of Padua, who went back to the great philosophers of ancient Greece for a way forward. That environment allowed Nicholas of Cusa, among others, to bring the Greek Orthodox delegation to the Catholic Church's ecumenical Council of

Ferrara and Florence. The Greeks brought with them the entire works of Plato.

Nicholas of Cusa himself was one of the absolutely outstanding thinkers; I think he was probably the greatest thinker of the 15th Century, at least for European civilization. He introduced a new kind of thinking, the thinking of the coincidence of opposites—the *coincidentia oppositorum*—you have to think at the higher level of unity where you can solve problems that are unsolvable on the level of Aristotelian contradictions. So, it was that new thinking which, in my view, also influenced the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, coming together with the thinking of Plato, which had been lost for 1700 years in Europe. It then led to an explosion of a new image of man, a new optimism, a new role for science and technology, a new role for the common good, introduced for the first time in the question of the state.

The Italian Renaissance, which laid the foundation for 600 years of European civilization, which the United States is also a part of, is a model.

If you are in a crisis—and the West *is* in a crisis, because we have lost our roots, we have lost the connection to our great traditions—we have to do exactly as the Italians did, going back to the period of ancient Greece. We have to go back to ancient Greece, the Italian Renaissance, the German Classical period, and other great contributions in universal history, and revive the best traditions of what we had in the past. Which means we have to reject the liberal way—and I know I’m upsetting now again a lot of people—that starts with the Enlightenment, which really was an attack on the Renaissance.

Instead we must go back to the humanist image of man. The idea that man is a unique species; that we are the only creative species on the planet and the only such species that we know of in the universe so far; and that we have great art, Classical composition, Classical

music, great poetry and drama, great painting; classical art in general. We have to somehow go back to the image of man associated with these highest expressions of human civilization.

I’m absolutely convinced that if we do that in this moment of the coronavirus crisis and the other very severe challenges that we are confronted with, I think we can have a revival. I think we can have a true renaissance of our identity based on these great traditions. As the old Chinese saying goes, a great crisis is a great opportunity. I have always believed that Leibniz was absolutely correct that a great evil always means that mankind has the chance to create an even higher good, exactly because of this creative identity of man.

However, I have to say one thing. I am absolutely convinced also that this requires the full rehabilitation of my late husband, because his ideas laid the foundation for this movement and his analysis from 50 years ago has been correct all along the way. He provided the solutions we urgently need today. So, I think you should join our fight for the rehabilitation of Lyndon LaRouche. His exoneration would have the same intellectual spark and effect today as the re-introduction of Plato did to spark the Italian Renaissance, by getting people on a completely different level of scientific and artistic thinking. That’s why I’m asking you to support our effort to ex-

onerate Lyndon LaRouche.

**Schlanger:** Helga, I don’t think you have to apologize for upsetting people. Anyone who is in a comfort zone right now, is obviously hiding in their own delusions. You’re following in your husband’s footsteps by being the person who helps to break them out of that comfort zone.

So, thank you for that, and we’ll see you next week.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Yes, till next week.



EIRNS/Eli Santiago

*LaRouche PAC organizing in New York City for the exoneration of Lyndon LaRouche, and for a cultural and scientific renaissance.*