

## Panel 4 Discussion Session

*This is the edited transcript of the discussion session following Panel 4, “The Beauty of Human Culture,” of the Schiller Institute’s Nov. 13-14, 2021 conference, “All Moral Resources of Humanity Have To Be Called Up: Mankind Must Be the Immortal Species!” Participating in the discussion were panelists Prof. Zaher Wahab, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Jacques Cheminade, Prof. Ole Döring, Denise Rainey, and Diane Sare.*

**Diane Sare (moderator):** I’m going to start this with a question for Prof. Wahab, since he also had some things he wanted to bring up from an earlier panel when he wasn’t able to get on.

**Question:** I read that Afghanistan had one astronaut go into space, spending nine days aboard the Mir Space Station with the Soyuz TM-6 Soviet mission in 1988. This was Abdul Ahad Momand, who was evidently educated at Kabul University. Can you tell us about the quality of advanced education in engineering in Afghanistan, and its status now, as the number of trained engineers who might be involved in reconstructing the country? I also know that NASA sent a group of U.S. astronauts, including Neil Armstrong and Gene Cernan to meet with Afghan pilots in 2011.

Coming from a country of scholars which during the Islamic Renaissance made breakthroughs in astronomy, is the space program a big influence in Afghanistan today? We know that the first Islamic mission to another planet is now ongoing with the mission to Mars from the United Arab Emirates.

Can you comment on Helga LaRouche’s proposal for the Operation Ibn Sina; and finally, can you tell us about the impact of the Taliban schools and fundamentalist Islam, and what was education like under the Taliban?

### Afghanistan Today

**Prof. Zaher Wahab:** I want to thank the Schiller Institute and the panelists and the musicians at the beginning. I apologize for not being able to join you yesterday; there were some technical difficulties. This morning, listening to the music, which was beautiful, it sort of epitomized beauty in every sense—figuratively and literally.

I was watching the pictures when I was listening to Beethoven. Watching those children’s pictures—it was obviously a group of Afghan children—I kept thinking, how many of these children and many more like them will be able to survive this winter, the famine, and perhaps extinction. It’s very troubling.

If I had been here yesterday, I would have had some things to say to Mrs. Malik and to Dr. Mehrabi; especially to Dr. Mehrabi as being director of the central bank in Afghanistan [Da Afghanistan Bank].

Where was Mr. Mehrabi when the bank was emptied of all of its resources when there was massive corruption; when the bank was treated as private property; and when Mr. Yama Siawash was butchered—a famous journalist, a very lovable journalist and bank worker. And what happened when the SIGAR [U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction] reports were coming out? Did Dr. Mehrabi read these reports? Did he know about the emptiness of the bank? Did he know about the murders? Did he know about Mr. Ajmal Ahmady, and why he allowed this disaster?

I wanted to talk to Mrs. Malik to say that it was Pakistan that had been meddling in Afghan affairs for the last 40 years, even during the Presidency of [Mohammed] Daoud [Khan] in the early 1970s. It was Pakistan along with Saudi Arabia and Washington that overthrew the progressive government in the late 1970s which wanted to move Afghanistan from the Middle Ages to perhaps at least the 20th Century. I wish that Mrs. Malik would publish her speech in some Pakistani newspaper. But anyway, I missed it.

I’m sorry, I don’t know anything about this space exploration. I must confess, I’m not really interested. It’s not one of my priorities, and it’s not what Afghanistan needs right now. What the UN and other agencies such as the European Union, the World Food Program, the UNHCR, the UNDP, and everybody else are all telling us, is that most of the Afghan people right now cannot eat, most of them are hungry, famished. Poverty and hunger will reach almost 100%, and there will be a massive number of deaths in the country, unless the world acts very quickly.

In the last 20 years, I have spent more than half my time in Afghanistan, travelling between Lewis and Clark College [in Portland, Oregon, from which



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*Clockwise from top left: Prof. Zaher Wahab, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Jacques Cheminade, Diane Sare, Denise Rainey, Prof. Ole Döring.*

institution Zaher Wahab is a retired professor of Education—ed.] and Afghanistan, where we tried to modernize the educational system, particularly higher education. We tried. Of course, when I arrived, in early 2002, under the former Minister [of Higher Education] Dr. [Sharif] Fayezi, higher education, like the rest of education, was simply a skeleton.

We tried to build both the quality and quantity of education at all levels. By early 2021, there were many private and public institutions at all levels. There was a system that you could call the educational system, although there was much to be desired in terms of both quality and quantity, that is, in access, equity, equality, democracy, resources, money, buildings, professors, schoolteachers, the curriculum, teaching methods, etc. We still had to make a lot of progress.

But all of that was disrupted on August 15th, which, of course, was the doing of Washington and [then President] Ashraf Ghani and his gang. No one is really addressing why and how this happened. Were Washington and Kabul asleep? Were they reluctant?

Were they resistant? Did they actually not want a stable, progressing Afghanistan? Why is it that Washington and Ashraf Ghani and his gang are not being held accountable right now for their crimes against the Afghan people and humanity?

Right now, as we know, most educational institutions from first grade through college are closed; they're not really functioning. The system is being disrupted. A lot of schoolteachers and professors are leaving and have left. There are no buildings; there is no security. Most institutions are closed, for boys and for girls, for men and for women. Although theoretically, the boys' and men's schools are open, they are hardly functioning. For girls, up to 6th grade there are schools, and most of them are open. In some cases, schools for girls between 7th and 12th grade have also been opened, but there's fear, there's concern, there's intimidation. There are cultural barriers, there are difficulties. Very few people—teachers, faculty, and students—actually report. This morning, a former professor at the university said to me that Kabul

University is, in fact, closed; it's not really functioning. So, that's education.

I really want to indulge your patience for a minute. As I said, Afghanistan is in crisis; it's a catastrophe; it's a disaster. I would say it was one of the biggest crimes of the century. The United States and its partners are responsible for this. So is the previous Afghan government. Right now, the United States must recognize and engage the Taliban in normalized relationships. The United States must apologize to the Afghan nation for imposing the misery that they're suffering. The United States must release *all* of the Afghanistan money from the United States, from the World Bank, and from the International Monetary Fund. The United States must do something to end this tragedy once and for all.

**Helga Zepp-LaRouche:** We discussed some of this in previous conferences, starting with the Schiller conference in July, where we went into the reasons that the Afghanistan war was ill-defined from the very beginning. It was clear to the U.S. and European militaries that it was completely untenable in 2010 as reported in *The Afghanistan Papers*. You are coming new into the discussion, but we had a lot of these discussions. I urge you to go to the conferences we have archived on our website, because we are in the middle of trying to solve all of that. I fully agree that a lot of crimes were committed, and I also think that the non-action of the West right now, after they did this to the Afghan people for 20 years, leaving the country without an economic anything must be remedied.

The United States alone spent \$2 trillion, and the German Bundeswehr another \$60 billion or something. Two weeks after the previous government and the U.S. left, nothing is left. Nothing has been invested. This is a crime, and I absolutely insist that the United States and the European nations—our NATO members who were there—have an absolute responsibility to step in. To release the funds is the bare minimum, because this money belongs to the Afghan people, and given the fact that according to [UN World Food Program's Executive Director David] Beasley, 95% of the Afghan people are in acute danger of dying of hunger and cold. That is the reality to start with.

Whatever you may think about the Taliban, talking about women's rights and not trying to save the lives of 95% of the women obviously shows the hypocrisy of a

lot of this discussion.

I would really encourage you to help us. We are trying to put together an alliance of people to put the solutions, the short-term humanitarian aid, but also to integrate Afghanistan into the Belt and Road Initiative projects, the only feasible perspective to have a real economic development in the short-term. I understand that you are under an enormous pressure because of the situation, but I also want to tell you that we have considered a lot of the things you said already.

**Prof. Zaher Wahab:** Good. Thank you!

### 'The Advantage of the Other'

**Jacques Cheminade:** Helga said something extremely powerful yesterday: that when there are divisions or fights, on the level of states and on the level of persons, to solve the situation, you have to do something good for the other. This is the principle of "the advantage of the other" from the Treaty of Westphalia.

As Diane stressed, this should take the form of sending immediately teams of youth to help in medical services and be trained on the spot. Also bringing food to the starving children in these countries. This has to be done with teams of people who are sent there, who should live with the population. There are examples of such cooperation where people would live with the population and get to know the history and progressively share what the population went through in its history.

It's the same, in a way, in a theater play. If you know only your part in a theater play, you make a disgrace of yourself. You have to know the part of *every person in the play*, and then you have a sense of the unity, the intention of the author. It's the same also in music, with this beautiful example that you brought, which is the choral music, Where the many create a unity, and this unity, a principle of cross-voices, creates a unity with the compositional intention of the composer.

So, this "advantage of the other" is something that is our way, or it's a way for humanity to solve the problems where we are. And I think that people who are involved in all that was shown at the beginning, could step out of this universe if they have this personal sense of something which is over and above them, and which defines what they are as human beings, creating for the advantage of the other.

## Honesty, Integrity and Respect

**Prof. Ole Döring:** I would like to respond to both interventions. First, in the same line that we just heard, but being a philosopher engaged in global health ethics in particular for some time, I'd just like to say that the basic thing we need is honesty. A very profound and very simple virtue. Honesty and integrity, doing what we say we want, and what we can do. This would be a recipe that is as old as humankind's philosophies, so as true as ever. And it will actually show that all our excuses of not acting properly in the area of health policies are just excuses. So, one perhaps provocative remark.

The other is, when we're talking about education systems and cultures, and we hear about thoughts and inventiveness, we should talk about Prometheus, and we should talk about the role of the Greek gods in the background of our modern world. It's very interesting that Schiller and Goethe and the Weimar classics were benefitting from the Renaissance understanding that there is an agreement between monotheism and the ancient Greek Olympic pantheon.

I'll say something about my teaching in China. I'm right now doing this semester, which is half over now, I'm teaching two classes about appreciation of Greek and Roman myths and mythology. And there's one thing that very frequently gets introduced first is the main narratives. First, of course, it is entirely new to these Chinese students. They have their own myths, their own mythology, their own gods they learn about. But when they look at what we depict as the Pantheon in the ancient context, they find it surprising because there are no good role models there. They say, what's the point of having gods that don't behave well and show us how to do it properly? They ask, how can Zeus be so polygamous, and how can there be so much shifting of identities and realities, and all that?

I think this meeting of ancient European and ancient Chinese traditions in the classrooms of young people now, is a good opportunity to start interacting and to give up our claim that our narratives, so much influenced by our deep-set prejudices, [are the truth].

We can overcome that. We have very good reason to at least appreciate the good in looking for good role models. The world is getting increasingly complex, complicated, and for many people, pointless. So, let's make the best of the little good that we actually have and that we can show; try to explain how this can work

across cultures, and to mobilize cultures. I would like to make this a little bit optimistic note in this little comment of mine. Thank you.

## American and Chinese Education Compared

**Question:** Many thanks on your honest, first-person report on China's national commitment to the educational and cultural development of all of its students. You rightly harken back to the 1960s, as the end-point of a mission-oriented educational and culturally optimistic USA. As a career educator and administrator, can you contrast the effects of this leap backwards on our teachers, as compared to teachers in China?

**Second Question:** Can you describe your sense of American urban education today? Strengths, weaknesses, etc.?

**Denise Rainey:** I'd need a webinar devoted to the second question. To the first question: From my observation and experience, American teachers are very discouraged now. What you heard from the teacher in California is probably universal in American urban districts. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students are *not* coming in with basic foundations for literacy readiness. Students do not have the most basic skills intact. In first and second grade, while teachers should be teaching students to decode words and become fluent oral readers, and by third grade to fluently understand what they read, instead they're teaching the alphabet and the sounds associated with the letters, and very basic pre-literary skills.

By contrast, the foundational skills in China are taught so systematically that we're not seeing the gaps in Chinese students that we see in American students. The system in the United States for addressing remediation, or to help students gain skills that they're behind in, is very complex. The funding of American education is complex; it's different in urban districts than it is in suburban districts. That would take some lengthy explanation not worth going into, but suffice it to say that Title I funding for the big No Child Left Behind legislation, is complicated and legislation systems do not get remedial education directly to students as quickly as needed. Those sources of funding are issued to districts through block grants, and through bits of legislation that bear politicians' names, and

therefore impose lots of criteria over how those services are delivered when the funding does make it down to the district level. Consequently, over time, the academic gap seriously widens between urban students who come in with deficient skills, against their suburban counterparts.

On the other hand, in China, the financing of education is simple; it's cut and dry, it's government-funded. I saw many examples of very rural Chinese schools being given as much consideration in terms of materials and resources as their urban counterparts, so the emphasis on experiences, on literacy, on access to children's books, on access to curriculum is not as discrepant as it is in the U.S. You don't see that tremendous gap between urban offerings and rural offerings in China.

In China, students have a very clear path to their curriculum, and what's going on now is a renewed emphasis in China on Classical education and teaching of the arts. Not in a superficial way that we see often in American schools, where elementary or secondary students might go to a 45-minute to 1-hour class in art once a week; or they may have an art class on their high school schedule. Art education in the U.S. tends to be superficial, as the professor was saying. Emphasis is on product—the production of a painting or a drawing or a series of visual pieces that can be entered into a local competition or shared in some kind of school display.

The emphasis in arts education going on in China right now is not superficial in that way, but deep enough to trigger reflection on the question of what does it mean to be human. This is the very essence that we've been talking about of the impact of Classical education. If I am human, what is my responsibility to my community and to my nation? And what does that look like for me as a citizen of China, and as a global citizen?

We don't have those discussions in American schools. American schools have gotten so far off track that our ability to compete academically with our international cohorts is, sadly, vastly deteriorated. Just like Sputnik was a wake-up call in the 1960s, I think Americans who are constantly told that we have the best universities, and the best educational system, have no clue what's going on in other countries, and have no clue how very far behind we are. In 10-15 years, when Americans finally get some recognition of the fact that China will have long surpassed us in

sciences and the arts, it is going to be a wake-up call. But because our media never shares what's going on internationally with other systems of education, Americans have no clue, and they assume that we are still in the forefront.

You mentioned earlier that if you join the Schiller Institute, you will have access to an online magazine, *Leonore*, [named after] my favorite opera character. Richard Black and Leni Rubinstein have written articles to be published in the next issue of *Leonore*. Richard's article is a very practical look at what's going on in Chinese schools now; and Leni's is a look at Classical education and the importance of bringing that influence back to American education. Both of those articles speak thoroughly and very well in terms of what's going on in other countries. Richard's is focussed on Russian and Chinese educators taking steps to make sure that their students stay focussed on what's important.

Nothing like that is going on in American education right now; it needs to. But again, American educators and American citizens are ignorant to what's happening in China that's going to catapult them way ahead of us intellectually. Many Americans still think that the Chinese are stealing our technology and our science and desperately wanting to see what we do, so they can copy it. China is so far ahead of that! I hope it doesn't take ten years down the road for Americans to learn from others as China has been willing to do, and to institute some significant and badly needed reforms in American schools.

**Prof. Wahab:** I, too, find the same trend in American education. One of the ways to judge and evaluate the American educational system is to look at American society and life in America. American society, our government, our politics, our highways, our bridges, our buildings, our court systems, our neighborhoods, the violence, the polarization, the instability, the people not knowing their civic responsibility, the lack of ethics, the corruption, the plutocracy, the demise of democracy—all of these are indicative to me of a very inadequate education system, even the best higher education institutions like the Ivy League institutions, and so forth.

The difficulty starts in preschool: Schools, the quality of school teachers, class sizes, a short school day, a short school week, a short school year, a lack of commitment by the government and by the parents, the

inequities, the inequalities, the inaccessibility, the lack of democracy, etc.—all of these are sort of indices of a failing American educational system which translate directly to the failings of the American society. It seems like we're becoming—I hate to say this—but a Third World country; a banana republic.

Obviously, the Chinese educational system, the European educational systems—all are much better than the American educational system. For example, when the National Educational Assessment of Progress compared the quality or the performance of school children, we are very low in that hierarchy. American kids lack the basic skills in math, science, geography, history, foreign languages, general knowledge. When you look at character building or fostering creativity, innovation, problem-solving, I'm afraid the American educational system is declining, and it shows in American society. Soon, I think we're all going to be very sorry for this.

**Döring:** I'm very sad to say that in spite of being able to know much better from monitoring what's going on within the United States, Germany has been faring exactly along these same coordinates over the last years. I won't get into any details here, but I can say that all the things that have just been described right now concerning the U.S., are absolutely happening in Germany as well.

Plus, I would like to emphasize the problem of a lack of understanding of authority. Germans seem to have a very deep problem with reasonable authority. It has some historical reasons, but it also totally undermines any consensus about pedagogy, about asking all these vital questions, not in terms of nationalism or in terms of chauvinism or any of that, although, such attempts would always be associated with such no-goes in the public realm. But there is huge timidity among the people who know better; who know that guidance is needed, that responsibility is a matter of character, which also requires maturity.

All these things have ultimately led to a situation where we are getting bossed around for very legitimate reasons by young people, who are just noisy and premature, but who put their fingers into gaffs and our mistakes, asking, "Where is your leadership? What kind of world are you leaving us with?" They are asking these questions, but they don't even dream of the reality that Germany has been the place where Humboldt,

Goethe, Schiller, and Kant actually thrived for a long time. This is a very sad story. We can, of course, revive this better knowledge, even in Western countries, I hope.

**Question:** With a cynical use of United States school boards as a site for increasing polarization, where can we best organize for a Humboldt-style Classical aesthetical education? Jumping into these organized battles? Organizing independent charter-style schools? Crafting materials and seminars for home schooling?

**Sare:** We have to get to people's morality, because as you have heard from all of the teachers here, if a population cannot find within their hearts the ability to address the fact that we could lose tens of millions of people on this planet due to totally curable ills like starvation, then that population is not morally fit to survive. Also, there's the threat of thermonuclear war, another moral question.

I was very struck by what Denise Rainey was describing about China, where the parents are very much involved in the educational process—unlike in the United States, where there seems to be a trend toward what Bertrand Russell called for, which is to get rid of the families so you can manipulate the children. This seems to be particularly the case where they are working to convince children that they were actually intended to be a gender other than the one with which they were born, and the parents are not informed at all, and people are told not to tell them.

I can understand why people would want to yank their children out of the public schools, but I would also say that if we don't have a decent public educational system, then we are finished. Because one person who was well-educated and who has a great character and morality, had better be one heck of an organizer if everyone else is completely insane and illiterate. Therefore, we have no choice but to restore a high standard of public education. This is part of the General Welfare. We have to have public schools that function.

In New York City, and I imagine this is the case in many cities around the country, the schools are treated as public housing; they are allowed to go into decay, the buildings have all kinds of problems. Then, of course, the ongoing assault on what's being taught there. But I don't think there is a solution in the private realm in that

way if we don't return to a standard of universal public education, but probably not through the NEA [National Education Association], I just have to say.

### **A Whole-of-Society Change Is Needed**

**Question from Argentina:** “Jacques has described the manipulation exercised by the intellectually mal-formed media. Shouldn't we be promoting a Belt and Road Initiative for communications? It's not enough to be right if nations can be poisoned with lies, including from the entertainment industry.”

**Question from Texas:** Concerning Mr. Cheminade's presentation, could we not call for the shutdown of the internet sponsors of *Squid Game*? Could we not have some kind of standard for what is allowed on social media? I think there used to be standards, but they seem to have been thrown out the window. Now, the standard is, the more gory, violent, and disgusting it is, the more it's going to be shown.

**Cheminade:** It's a change in the whole society that is needed. It's not only *Squid Game*, or this or that. It's a change in how we are thinking. From that standpoint, we should address the question as a wake-up call. The wake-up call should be also about our very process of decision-making in the West. In China, you have a problem; it comes from the period of the single child. If it's a male child, the male child was over-protected by the family; it could have become in many cases, a capricious, yelling, screaming child. But there is something else. It's overcome by a sharing of values transmitted both as was said before, as a One by the families and the professors, or the people in schools.

That's one form of society and thinking. This creates a situation where one meets in China some people who may still have to scream, but all are concerned about how to make better. And in that sense, because they have a reference to a higher principle, they don't consider a little case as such. They are able to consider what went wrong with them; to investigate about their misdoings. And it creates a process of decision which is honest. We spoke about honesty, there is honesty; while in the West, nobody wants to recognize whatever his mistakes generate. So, people in this process of decision-making in China, are able to focus on uplifting of the social group. So, the social group, as for China, but also seeing as the best thing of humanity is seen as

a whole, while we in the West are divided into a series of more selves. So, I think there is a lot to learn, basically, on what is far beyond the issue of video games or else.

**Döring:** The tone that is now prevailing in China regarding its national strengthening has to do with the fact that China is in many ways Americanized, like Europe has been Americanized, although in different ways than China has. In China this is, for many reasons, not public and common knowledge; it is not so much expressed.

I really think it is the responsibility of Western countries and scholars to formulate, as a problem, articulate, in terms of analysis, the problematic situation to see how wrong things have gone in the last 30 years regarding this influence. I'm not blaming this on America. Of course, each country is responsible for what we have done here. Germany is responsible very much, but the pattern that has been blending everything into a monoculture for neo-liberal gains—I think this was clear here in this conference as well, that most people agree to this assessment.

We really should look at the future. We really have to find a way not in terms of patronizing, but in terms of really creating a situation of equity and equality. Also finding a proper way of learning from our experiences, good and bad, and offering perspectives for collaboration. The future really lies in what's going to happen with all the young people in Africa who want a future and who will have a future, with or without being friends with us. China and Africa in that way really have the perspective of innovation in the future.

**Sare:** Some of us might say that the United States has also been Britishized. Professor Zahar Wahab?

**Wahab:** I have one preoccupation, and one obsession these days. First, I'm deeply concerned and very troubled by what I see happening in my adopted country, the United States. I came here as a graduate student half a century ago. When I look back, in the interim, I see this country declining rather precipitously. Its education, its economy, its political system, its what's called culture, its media, entertainment, values, etc. I'm really concerned about the country and my own place in it. It's very difficult to be comfortable or feel safe or secure or at ease, whether you're watching the “news”

or taking a walk in the streets. The violence, the racism, the sexism, the classism. Some of the inhumanity that I see to human beings is deeply troubling to me. This country, its ruling elite, could get us into some very big trouble and problems, so, I hope that something is done, and maybe we should begin with education. We should make it a top priority as individuals, groups, communities, the nation, and the government.

My obsession is really Afghanistan, my country of birth. We all know, and you have observed and pointed out kindly, that this is a country on the brink, man-made by the United States and its partners in crime, and with the collusion of the so-called Afghan governments over the last 20 years. As you know, most people are right now hungry, they are sick, they are famished, and they could starve. It's getting very cold, and COVID-19 is very severe. The country is experiencing a drought; there is no money; there is no government; there are no schools; there are no doctors; there is no medicine; there is no heating. There is not even enough drinking water. This is man-made. There are powers that deliberately produced this situation, and I think they are morally and ethically responsible to fix the situation as quickly as possible and end my obsession. Thank you.

### **Americans Are Clueless and Care-Less**

**Rainey:** So many good points have been made, and so much has been said. I don't have any outstanding wisdom to cap this all off with. But one of my biggest concerns is that Americans are ignorant, and worse than being ignorant, indifferent to what is going on in other parts of the world. Not only educationally, but politically, economically, socially. If you go to Europe, it's very easy to end up in a conversation about politics. Europeans love to talk politics and are generally better informed than Americans are about what's going on around the world.

Before I left for China, people were telling me, "There's no internet there, they don't have access to the web, you're going to be cut off for the weeks that you're there." That could not have been more untrue. The administrative team and the leadership team of the principal who I was connected with, informed me every morning about things that were going on in the United States and in the world: Natural crises, some big crime story, or whatever was going on in the United States, I was being better informed about it in China, than I probably would have been here.

Americans need to wake up and become more alert about what is going on in other countries. Americans make the assumption that they know what's going on in the world, and that people in other countries do not. That could not be further from the truth.

So, of course, it would start with our educational system, and volumes could be written on what needs to be reformed in American education, but it can't be done in isolation. It has to be done as a piece of overall cultural reform. I think the first step to Americans being cognizant of that and willing to make the change is that they need to become better informed about what's going on elsewhere in the world, and less focussed on the petty shows that they watch on TV, and the petty pursuits that occupy their time. The Schiller Institute, of course, is making a great beginning to that end. But so much more needs to be done, because the average American is just happily ignorant about what's going on elsewhere in the world.

**Sare:** I would say "unhappy," right now, but they could become happy, if they would do something for the Good.

### **The Antidote: A Renaissance of Classical Culture**

**Zepp-LaRouche:** What Denise Rainey is saying about Americans not knowing about the rest of the world, is an obvious fact to anybody. I gave a [speech](#) twenty years ago in Washington, D.C. about the New Silk Road, which we were promoting after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It had a lot of footage about the ancient Silk Road and the modern developments. That speech was, "Why Americans Should Go There," actually proposing that more Americans should travel to China, also Europeans. The massive anti-China campaign which started really in earnest in 2017, has only accelerated.

The only people who have a better view are people who have either lived in China, have travelled there extensively, are married to a Chinese, or have some other direct knowledge. What Denise was reporting is extremely valuable, because that is exactly the experience everybody has who goes there. I understand that not everybody can now go to China, but if people can, they should.

Otherwise, I would really urgently point to the fact that there needs to be a reflection of why the West

deteriorated to the point we are at today. I agree with Ole Döring that the situation in Germany and Europe is not very far behind. My late husband, Lyndon LaRouche, has written a lot of articles. Jacques was mentioning one of them; I mentioned another one yesterday, where he, already in the 1960s, uniquely recognized the paradigm shift which was going on then, where the optimism of the Kennedy period.... On the 50th anniversary of Kennedy's death, we had this beautiful [Mozart's] *Requiem* concert in Boston in the cathedral, and we played a couple of excerpts from Kennedy's speeches. People can go to the website and listen to that. It's like a different universe. Kennedy said things like there is no limit to the perfectibility of human beings, and many more things like that about the development of the developing countries—just a totally different paradigm. And when he was killed, and then the murder was covered up, that was the beginning of the paradigm shift.

Then, you had the rock-drug-sex counterculture, which my husband uniquely recognized as that which would, in the medium-term, destroy the cognitive potential of the population. He warned again and again to reverse it. So, I would encourage people [to investigate] how it came [to be] that Lyndon LaRouche was able to identify that with an absolute scientific precision. What we see today, in terms of all the elements which Professor Wahab correctly describes, is the end result of a degeneration process of the neo-liberal paradigm, which has taken the form that everything is allowed; everything goes. This is one of the reasons why the West was absolutely incapable of dealing with the COVID pandemic. In Germany you have right now an explosion of the fourth wave. In some European countries, the numbers are going past the one-thousand mark [in Covid deaths per day], which is really alarming. The United States has not been able, despite the vaccines, to really get it under control.

This is because people put this extreme, exaggerated individualism above the common good. Once people believe that they have the right to do everything, and they have no obligation to make the community, the nation work, then they don't take *any* advice. Not from doctors, not from anybody. The collapse in education, the brutality in the entertainment media, the lack of civility which a lot of people have observed—is all the end result of that paradigm shift of neo-liberal values,

the rock-drug-sex counterculture and all its aspects.

My husband said many times, we must correct that, and replace that paradigm with a true renaissance of Classical culture, which celebrates an image of man in which every human being is understood to be in the image of the Creator.

You don't have to look at that religiously if you don't want, but that there is such a deeper ontological connection between the image of man and the conception of the universe. Hinduism, for example, is absolutely clear that there is a cosmic order which affects the way people behave. Nicolaus of Cusa talks about the microcosm and the macrocosm being governed by the same lawfulness. You find the same idea in almost every culture—a connection between the image of man and the identity of man, and the way he relates to the physical universe at large.

We have to have a return to these metaphysical, ontological groundings of the image of man, and go back to the idea of natural law, go back to the idea of humanism, go back to the idea of the beauty in culture as that which makes culture. Schiller said that a piece of art which is not beautiful is not a piece of art.

There are many aspects to this, but I think we need a Classical renaissance. If people again would have the idea that their aim is to self-perfect themselves in their lives so that they can be of better service to humanity as a whole, then this would stop. This is what the Chinese are doing; they try to make things better, because they think that that's right. In the West, nobody tries to make things better. People want to have more money, they want to have more this, more that. We need this paradigm shift. Since we also are in the emergency situation, as we discussed about Afghanistan and Haiti—I could say Yemen, but I want to say Afghanistan and Haiti—are the two places where that paradigm shift must become a deed, and not just a word.

I invite all of you to join with us. We have these initiatives—the Committee for the Coincidence of Opposites. I really would love to get this Operation Ibn Sina going, because I think we can move mountains once a lot of people join together for a good plan.

**Sare:** I would like to thank everybody who participated in this last panel of our very important conference. I hope we'll be together again soon, and one day hopefully, in person. Thank you, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, for your work.