

II. Africa

The African Continent and the Future of the World

by Jacques Cheminade

Jan. 31—*The following is an edited transcript of the presentation given Dec. 14, 2025, by Jacques Cheminade to the [opening panel of the international online youth conference](#), “Young People of the World, Unite!” sponsored by the Schiller Institute. A longtime associate of economist-statesman Lyndon LaRouche, Cheminade, based in Paris, is a prominent policy leader in France. He is Chairman of the Solidarité et Progrès party, and three-time candidate for President. Sub-heads have been added. The video is available [here](#).*

Greetings to all of you, citizens of all countries and citizens of the world. Our future is not NATO; it's Africa—provided we build it and keep it.

When the conditions of the present lead to a high-risk future, and the threatened annihilation of humanity if nothing is done to change our way of thinking and acting, then human inspiration must come from the beautiful achievements of the past. In the long arc of our human history, in those moments when man's creative free will and commitment to the future—to natural law—prevail, we can build the basis for increases in the potential relative population-density. This potential for humanity to increase comes from those contributions from the past. It's like in a chorus, when the contribution of various voices—various singing, cross-voices—creates the beautiful unity of the composition.

Those moments of achievement have taken place in practically all parts of the world during portions of human history. It did not reach a durable level for the



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Jacques Cheminade at the December 2025 youth conference points to an Ife head and a passport mask.

whole of humanity, because the various contributions were relatively isolated. The creative thinking was located in one part of our Earth and could not spread everywhere through a continuous process of ongoing organizing. Therefore, it collapsed. It could not then be based on a durable self-perception necessarily rooted in the perfecting of the other, on organizing, on universality.

The good news among our present disasters that we are confronted with, is that, among others, Bach and Beethoven composed; that the German classics existed; that Kepler existed; that France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands—but also other countries—have been the cradle of the Renaissance; and that the history of China is both past and ahead of us; and that



Karel Vereycken

Closeup of the Ife head replica on Mr. Cheminade's desk.

Lyndon LaRouche has been the creative heir of that long arc of history—the arc of the moral universe, long but always bending towards justice.

The good news is that now the whole world is connected, and all that beauty is given to us—and it's given to us all; it has become available. And today is a celebration for being responsible for the continuation of this motion in a unified universe.

That's why we have the means to respond to the challenges of continued human existence—away from criminal wars, away from [NATO Secretary-General Mark] Rutte, from [German Minister of Defence Boris] Pistorius, from [French President Emmanuel] Macron, away from these insane criminals. And we are all the more determined to fight against warmongers, because this time the threat is the annihilation of all humanity by an insane nuclear war.

You, the youth—and may I ask you to accept us all here as part of the youth—we are confronted with the most demanding and beautiful challenge. Our times are such times: the expression in our times of the goodness of humanity to reach a new age of reason in the future. For that commitment, our challenge is to recognize all the beautiful achievements of the past without leaving anyone aside, because the multiplicity of perspectives enriches the one.

The Ife Civilization

Now I come to Africa, which is our topic here. First, Europe—and in general the West—have to get rid of colonialism forever, neocolonialism, and geopolitics as well, to respond to the challenge of the oneness of humanity. It demands that we propose to the people of the African continent the most advanced means for development,



The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. CC BY-NC 4.0

An example of a passport mask, from the Dan people of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

leaving it up to their free will to accept or refuse them. I am nonetheless convinced that they are going to accept them, because they are fully committed to a better order. They are committed to becoming a type of new China with African characteristics.

Now, racist ignoramuses like [former French President] Nicolas Sarkozy and his advisors here in France say that Africa has not been part of human history until now, and needs to be helped to enter human history. To this crazy statement, we can reply that Africa has belonged the whole time to human history. Most of our ancestors in Europe, and the

United States as well, come out of Africa. According to experts in genetics—it's the only thing that I would accept from them—our ancestors were originally all Black, and our skin only adapted to the cold weather of Europe.

Cheikh Anta Diop, the great African historian, has shown us that Egyptian dynasties come from Africa, and in particular those from the upper region of the Nile, in the Meroë region.

Now, I want to show you the civilization of the Ife region, which covered the present states of Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and [surrounding areas]—it's part of the great Yoruba civilization. I have here on my desk—and introduce you to—one of the most famous heads that you can admire for its beauty. This is it here. It's a copy from the British Museum. And more deeply, the Ife started its development many centuries before Christ, in the Neolithic age, and there is a lot of archaeological material on that.

The Ife then blossomed between the 9th and the 14th Centuries of our era, were affected by a terrible Black Death plague during



Unknown author

Renowned Senegalese historian Cheikh Anta Diop (1923-1986) as a university student in Paris.

the 14th Century—the same as in Europe—and managed to recover from it during the 15th, and in particular the 16th to the 19th Century, before being destroyed by colonial looting.

These heads of the Ife culture are heads of kings, queens, and also close collaborators of the kings and queens. There was even a famous woman queen of Ife: Luwo Gbagida. Not only men were kings; women also. *Ooni* meant king or queen. And it was derived from art, from the word for art.

These heads are not things in themselves for the sake of art. They are the product of a whole advanced civilization which at some points was more advanced than Europe.

The heads are made either of terra cotta, bronze, or brass. The heads are from the Middle Ages—the first ones between the 8th and 9th Centuries—more advanced than in Europe.

The city of Ife, according to archaeological evidence, had probably about 100,000 inhabitants—more than any city in Europe at those times. And the heads in bronze or brass were made with a lost-wax casting process, which required an extreme refinement to master such a process. It was only mastered many years later in Europe to mold bells for the churches—which is easier to do than to produce a beautiful head.

The Ife culture produced all kinds of goods for the population, but needed copper, and also zinc and lead, both to produce the heads and to manufacture. The heads are made of 70-77% copper, 16.5% zinc, and 11.3% lead. So they have a very refined composition.

Copper came from continental Europe, Byzantium, Morocco through the Niger River, and also Timbuktu on the camel's back.

Timbuktu, by the way, has still today—in the historical families of the city—the most precious manuscript books from a Muslim African tradition. Ahmed Baba of Timbuktu was one of the respected thinkers of the 16th Century and also known in certain parts of Europe.

Ife was involved in heavy trans-Saharan trade, connecting Eastern and Western Africa, the Indian Ocean, and also the Mediterranean.

Supreme Creative Power

But there is more to it—and it's the most interesting part for us and for our knowledge of history, theology,



Solidarité et progrès

Jacques Cheminade during a 2025 book tour.

philosophical theology. The Ife believed in a supreme divinity, Olodumare, generator of the potential creative power in the universe—not so far, in a less accomplished form, from Cusa's *Posse Ipsum*: God being the all-possibility itself, or the power to be.

Olodumare created man in the following way: He asked the artist divinity—called Obatala—to mold in agile form the first human being with a potential to create *Ona* or art. Hence, *Ooni* art, representing the kings and queens as an expression of the most perfected man or woman—and not idols. The beautiful face here on my desk represents that [artistic] accomplishment of man.

With the mental and physical looting of the colonialists, showing how they think, Leo Frobenius, the German ethnologist and archaeologist who discovered, by chance, Ife heads in 1910—before dying, just before dying—assigned them to some Greek colony in Africa. They were so beautiful that he thought they could not be genuinely African.

Well, the truth is that they are genuinely African—the most advanced form of art, not only in Africa but at a world level. There are human heads with influences of Asian and Egyptian cultures, because there is one humanity beyond diversity.

And there we have, I think, one of the most beautiful expressions which gives hope for our future.

Abolish the Colonialist Spirit

Let me conclude: Let's get rid forever of the colonialist spirit. Let's get rid of neocolonialism and geopolitics. Let's get rid of all the consequences of the Berlin Treaty of 1885 and the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, which shared the looting of Africa by all European countries.

Let's then integrate ourselves in the long arc of humanity by our knowledge of the African input to the history of humanity.

I would have liked to tell you about so many African cultures: the Nok, the Igbo, the Edo, Oyo, Zulu, Xhosa—[South African leader Nelson] Mandela was, by the way, from a Xhosa culture—and the great kingdom of Benin culture, with Benin City on the Benin River, which according to enthusiastic experts—they may have exaggerated a bit, but they saw it like that—had walls four times longer than the Great Wall of China, and employing 100 times more materials and more workers than the Egyptian pyramid of Cheops.

The city was looted and destroyed by the British expedition of 1897 on behalf of free trade, and propagating at the same time the slander of an African gratu-

itous barbarity which “stinks of death.”

So, our commitment today as citizens from Western states should be to give the African countries the means for development: a new architecture for peace through shared security and common development—sharing the task with China, Russia, Turkey, India, and others which are active in Africa—sharing in a reverse spirit of the 19th-Century Treaty of Berlin.

Not pickaxes and shovels, but nuclear energy for all.

You, the youth—we, the youth—have this crucial task for world peace before us. Much more than that: We can only succeed if we learn from Africa—if we learn to learn from the best of African history.

I have hope. I have here also on my desk what's called a “passport mask” from Western African civilizations—to honor the ancestors and identify and protect the travelers. Yes, Africa was not an area of fixed ethnic entities. It was a continent of exchanges and traveling.

Well, we young travelers of the future of peace: Let's go there with the identity of one humanity beyond all borders.

Thank you.

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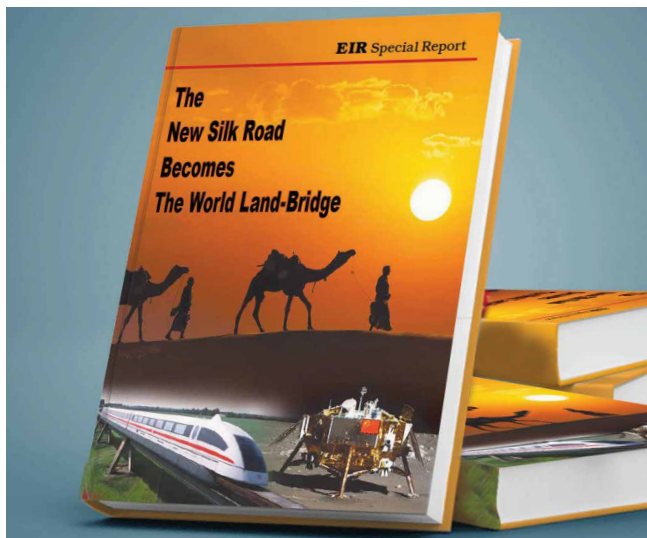
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