



Office of the President of India

Lyndon LaRouche and Helga Zepp LaRouche meet India's President Shri Kocheiril Raman Narayanan (second from left) in New Delhi, December 2001. EIR correspondent Ramtanu Maitra is at far left.

and 1991, the U.S. was actually in a situation like that of Classical Greece after the Greeks had defeated the Persians in the Fifth century B.C.: They no longer had a major enemy, and they very easily could have put the relationship between East and West on a completely new basis of partnership and cooperation. But, as

The One and The Many, and The Dialogue Among Cultures

Helga Zepp LaRouche, founder of the international Schiller Institute, authored this article for the 'Asia Annual, 2003,' published by the Multidisciplinary Institute of the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Calcutta, India.

One can certainly say, that the mind of an author is visible behind the articles and books he or she writes. And, after having tortured myself to read several such products by Samuel Huntington, Director of the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, I can definitely say that Mr. Huntington has a very ugly mind. Where more noble souls always look for the best and most beautiful in another person or culture, Huntington's mind is divisive; he sees only conflict, violence, and difference. From his scandalous 1957 book *The Soldier and the State*, to his recent works on the supposed "Clash of Civilizations," it is clear that he has a completely oligarchical mind, and the corresponding bestial image of man.

So, why then should one even bother to look at his trivia? Well, unfortunately, his ravings are not merely those of an academic who must have had a very unhappy childhood, but his theses are presently the operational basis of U.S. foreign policy.

When the Soviet Union started dissolving itself in the period between 1989

Thucydides describes in his *Peloponnesian War*, Athens decided under Themistocles and Cimon to turn into an empire economically and militarily, and to transform its allies into slaves, which finally led to the collapse of Greece in its entirety. In a similar way, the U.S. decided after the collapse of the Soviet Union, not to satisfy itself with the role of the only remaining superpower, but to transform itself from a constitutional republic into a world empire in the tradition of ancient Rome.

It is part of the strange logic of the present war party around Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and Co., and their shared ideologue Leo Strauss, whose students they all are, to believe that one must always have an enemy. So, when the East-West conflict no longer functioned as the controlling regime, various neo-conservative thinktanks came up with the idea of replacing the East-West conflict with a North-South conflict, in general, and the clash of the West against Islam, in particular. In the Summer 1993 issue of the Council on Foreign Relations' journal *Foreign Affairs*, Hunting-

ton presented for the first time his thesis, that a clash among the eight major civilizations—Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and African—will be inevitable.

“Why will this be the case?,” asks Huntington. “First,” he answers, “differences among civilizations are not only real; they are basic,” and he then proceeds to prove that he has no knowledge of any of the named civilizations. The exact opposite is true: of course, the differences among them are real, but they are not basic. What is basic, is what unites them as just different expressions of the one human civilization. But, unfortunately, one can not simply ignore Huntington’s gibberish, since, beginning with the outbreak of the war in Afghanistan, the Clash of Civilizations is on. And therefore, everyone who is interested in a human world, should engage in a dialogue of cultures, to counter the bestial outlook of those who think that war is a perfect imperial instrument of power.

The ‘Peace of Faith’

A very good way to engage in such a dialogue is on the basis of a beautiful Socratic dialogue written in 1453 by Nicolaus of Cusa. Cusanus, as he is also called, was a Cardinal during the time of Pope Pius II (Piccolomini); he was the founder of modern natural science, and of the principles of the sovereign nation-state. He was also instrumental in locating the original writings that became the basis for the unification of the churches at the 1437 Council of Florence, which marked the high point of the Italian Golden Renaissance.

In 1453, Constantinople was conquered by Mohammed II. The news arriving in the West was horrifying—stories of murder, rape, blasphemy—and it convinced most people that barbarians had taken over the city. The fall of Constantinople was truly regarded as a “clash of civilizations” at the time. Nicolaus, who had just visited the city to escort the delegation of the Orthodox Patriarch to the Florentine Council, reacted in a completely different manner.

He wrote the Socratic dialogue “*De pace fidei*” (“On the Peace of Faith”), in which 17 representatives of different religions and nations all go to seek God’s advice. They ask him: “What should we do? We are all fighting each other and killing each other, and we all pretend that we are doing it in your name. This can not be your wish. Can you not help us and give us advice?”

And God answers: “I will not address you as representatives of different religions. You are all also regarded as philosophers and sages in your countries, and as such

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you know that there can be only one truth.”

“Yes,” they say, “as philosophers we know that the truth is one. But why then do we kill each other?”

And God says: “You make the mistake of mixing up the words of the prophets, with the Word of God. The prophets are many, but God is one.” So they say: “Yes, we can see this. But yet, the fighting continues. Can you help us further?” And God says: “You make another mistake. You confuse the many religious traditions, which are different, with the one truth.”

So, the wise men say: “Yes, we can also see this. But, how can we now go to our people, and tell them that they should believe in a new religion, when they have



Helga Zepp LaRouche and Lyndon LaRouche examine a pillar of pure iron, from the reign of Chandra Gupta II (A.D. 375-413), near Delhi, April 1982.

spilled so much blood for the old one?” And God says: “I am not suggesting a new religion. I am talking about the one religion, which existed before all others. The One before the Many. And the One is of a higher quality and of a different magnitude, than the Many.” The sages

agree, and God tells them to go to their respective countries and educate their people in this spirit.

As everyone in India knows, this is exactly what ancient Hinduism teaches. In the *Rig Veda*, there is the famous sentence: "The truth is One, the sages just give it different names." In Hinduism, there exists the "*Sanathana Dharma*," which is the eternal religion, which is even higher than "*Hindu Dharma*." Mahatma Gandhi regarded himself as a Sanathana Hindu. The one divine truth in Hinduism does not give privilege to one language or nationality or culture, but says that the divine truth glows differently in different souls. The world is so diverse, because God wants it that way. According to Hinduism, it is fine to believe that one is on the right path; but to insist that another is on the wrong path, is regarded as arrogant, and even blasphemous.

So, what is this universal principle, which one can find in all cultures, in all religions and civilizations? It lies in the fact that man is distinct from all other living creatures, through his identity as a cognitive being. Man's creative reason enables him again and again to formulate adequate hypotheses about the lawfulness of the cosmic order, the physical universe, which lead to increased knowledge about this order. When this improved knowledge, which we call scientific progress, is applied in the form of technology to the production process, it leads to an increase in the productivity of both productive facilities and the labor force. This in turn increases the population potential of the planet, both the living standards and longevity of the people.

Once a universally verifiable scientific principle has been discovered, it can be rediscovered and transmitted by any human being anywhere in the world. There is no such thing as an "African scientific idea," or a "Western scientific discovery," or "Indian scientific progress." What one human being has discovered about the physical universe, he or she has conquered for the whole human race.

The fact that something created in the human mind, a hypothesis, an immaterial idea, has an effect in the material universe, by increasing the power of mankind within that universe, is very revealing. It means nothing less, than that the laws of the microcosm, the human mind, work according to the same principles as those of the macrocosm, the universe at large. And that is something common to all human beings, no matter which culture or civilization they belong to.

All great religions emphasize that cognitive quality of man as divine. In Christianity, it is associated with the notion of man as being in the image of God, or even being

the living image of God, who continues the process of creation on earth. There is in Hinduism also the idea, that the human soul partakes of the divine soul. And, in the Koran (2:30) it is said, that man is appointed the Caliph of Allah, and that God has breathed from His soul into man, so that man's soul is from God's (Koran 32:9).

So, the first requirement of a successful dialogue among cultures is, therefore, that each human being relate to others in respect of their mutual cognitive or divine identity. If this cognitive aspect is treated as primary, then the "different cultural traditions," as Nicolaus of Cusa said, are an enrichment, not a threat.



Left: Jawaharlal Nehru (left), first Prime Minister of India, with Mohandas Gandhi, his mentor in the independence struggle against the British.

Below: Prime Minister Nehru inaugurates the Bhabha Atomic Research Center, Trombay, January 1957.



Government of India

Universal History

The dialogue of cultures should be furthermore approached from the standpoint of the great German "poet of freedom," Friedrich Schiller. In his 1789 lecture "What Is, and to What End Do We Study, Universal History?," Schiller says to the students seated before him:

Even that *we* found ourselves together here at this moment, found ourselves together with this degree of national culture, with this language, these manners, these civil benefits, this degree of freedom of conscience, is the result perhaps of all previous events in the world: The *entirety* of world history, at least, were

necessary to explain this single moment.

If one takes Schiller's approach, then it is clear that universal history is not the property of a single culture, but that, over the millennia, the torch of human progress has been passed from one culture to the next. Many cultures have had several high periods in their history, in which they represented the vanguard of mankind at the time. For example, the implications for universal history of the discovery of a 9,500-year-old city, 36 meters below sea level in India's Gulf of Cambay, 30 kilometers west of the state of Gujarat, have not yet been properly evalu-



NSIPS/P. Zlotofsky

Right and above:
Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter, tours rural villages during a December 1979 election campaign.



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ated. But, the discovery of that city confirms stories in the early *Rig Veda* hymns, about cities along the Sarasvati river, which were for a long time believed not to be in India at all. Given that this city is 5,000 years older than the previously known, equally large cities of Mesopotamia, what does it mean in respect to the role of Vedic culture in the history of civilization?

Then, another important contribution came from Egypt, which was the cradle of European civilization, and which had many high periods. In what is called the Old Kingdom, which laid the foundation, especially the Third Dynasty from 2660 to 2590 B.C., there was an early universal genius of the sort of a Leonardo da Vinci, whose name

was Djoser. He was, together with Snofru, the builder of the Great Pyramid. Other high periods were the Fourth, Twelfth, Nineteenth, and Twenty-Sixth Dynasties. When Alexander the Great could not conquer India, he created Alexandria in Egypt, which became the center for Greek-Egyptian education, where many famous thinkers who laid the foundation for the Greek Classics studied; among them was Solon, the first philosopher of statecraft, who stayed several times in Egypt.

After Greece collapsed owing to the imperial appetites described by Thucydides in his *Peloponnesian War*, the Roman Empire eventually brought about a dark age in Europe. But, at the same time, a new high point developed in India, with the Gupta period, in which beautiful dramas and poetry blossomed. Recent excavations in China have uncovered 320 Buddhist sculptures in the Temple of Hsing Tsu with extraordinarily beautiful facial expressions, reflecting some of the same Renaissance spirit as the Gupta period.

And, while Europe was still in a dark age, Haroun al-Rashid and other Caliphs of the Abbasid Dynasty organized a renaissance, by collecting knowledge from all the countries of the Mediterranean region. At that time, Baghdad was the center of world culture, and it was only through the contact of the Caliph of Baghdad with Charlemagne, that European civilization could discover its own roots. Later, the Andalusian culture in Spain, the Italian Renaissance, and the German Classical culture, all built upon and referenced the contributions of earlier periods. Many of the great universal thinkers, such as Plato, influenced other great universal minds centuries later, reaching into other civilizations, such as Islam's al-Kindi, al Farabi, and Ibn Sina, or Russia's V.I. Vernadsky, or the representatives of the Indian renaissance of the Nineteenth century.

Thus, without even trying to mention all the most important developments and thinkers of history, the point I wish to make is, that the dialogue of cultures is a fact of universal history. It did and it does take place, over the centuries, and from one great mind to all of his or her successors.

Principles of Hinduism

Whenever one focusses on this universal character, the dialogue is easy. Problems only arise, if one takes a narrow, fundamentalist, or chauvinist view. For instance, there was a very interesting argument developed in an article that appeared on Jan. 20, 2003, in the *Hindustan Times*, by Karan Singh. He was intervening in the ongo-

ing debate in India, concerning whether or not India should be based on *hindutva*. Should India become a more fundamentalist state, where religion and state are mixed, or should it remain secular? Singh pointed out, that there are certain primary principles of Hinduism, found in the *Upanishads*, which give the answer. He mentioned five particular ones, which deserve special mention. It is most interesting to explore how these principles find echoes in European and other cultures.

The first of these principles is the most basic concept, that of the all-pervasive *brahman*: the “*ishawaram idam sarvam jagat kincha jagatvam jagat*”—“whatever exists is permeated by the same divine power.” Now, one finds the same cosmic dimension of existence in the Platonic tradition of European philosophy and religion. For example, as already mentioned, Nicolaus of Cusa says: “*Quod libet in quo libet*,” that the One, the universe, as the most perfect in the order of nature, is *antecedent* to everything else, so that everything exists *in* everything else. The reason I can relate to another human being, is not because we exist as self-evident, independent, atomic beings or particles in the universe, but because we are both permeated by the One. You find the same concept in Leibniz, in the idea of the *monad*: that the entire lawfulness of the universe exists in each individual soul.

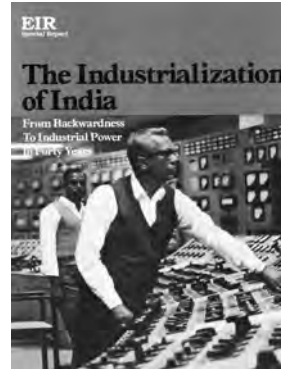
The second principle is, that the *brahman* exists within each individual consciousness, in the *atman*. The *atman* is the reflection of the all-pervasive *brahman*; it is individual consciousness, but it is not ultimately separate from the *brahman*. This is the concept of the “*ishwara sarvabhutanam idise tishtati*”—“the Lord resides within the heart of each individual.” The relationship between the *atman* and the *brahman* is the pivot upon which the whole Vedantic teaching revolves.

In Christianity, one finds a similar notion of man as *imago viva dei*, as the “living image of God.” It is the “living” image, because man is not just a static reflection of the divine principle, but he is himself capable of the creative principle. He is *capax dei*, capable of participation in God.

A third Vedantic concept is, that all human beings, because of their shared spirituality, are members of a single family. The *Upanishads* uses “*amritashya putra*”—“children of immortality”—for the idea of the human race. In Christianity, God, of whom man is the living image, has the characteristic of existing in the “simultaneity of eternity.” If, in his lifetime, man contributes a valid universal principle, which is based on necessary predecessors and which lays the basis for necessary successors, he provides new value, through his work, to the importance of the

past, and he enriches the future. Thus, he connects his mortal existence to the infinite chain of humanity.

The fourth concept of the *Upanishads* is the idea of the essential unity of all religions, of all spiritual paths, “*eko-ham svat vipra bahuda vadanti*”—“the truth is One, the sages call it by different names”—as it is said in the *Rig Veda*, and which we have already discussed in regard to Nicolaus of Cusa; namely, that the One is of a higher order than the Many. At their highest, Hinduism and Christianity are universalist religions, in which there is no contradiction between reason and faith—i.e., the opposite of fundamentalism.



A fifth Vedantic concept is that of the welfare of all beings, “*bahujana shukhaya bahujana hitaya cha*.” At its highest, Hindu philosophy seeks “the welfare of all human beings and all forms of life on the planet.” In European philosophy, there is the concept of eternal and natural law, which must guide all concrete, positive law. According to this, a government has legitimacy, only if it is committed to the common good and the welfare of all of its citizens. According to Nicolaus of Cusa, there can only be harmony—concord in the macrocosm of the universe at large—if all microcosms develop their potentialities to the fullest.

This idea, that there can be peace in the world only if all nations develop their potentialities in the best possible

way; this idea, which is deeply rooted in philosophy, must be the basis for a community of principle among perfectly sovereign nation-states. Peace is possible, only if each nation is permitted to develop to the full its own characteristics, its own potentialities, and regards it as its fundamental self-interest that all other nations similarly develop to their maximum.

The real purpose of the dialogue among cultures is not to establish new dogmas, of who is right and who is wrong, of who is more important, and who less. The real purpose of the dialogue, is to find the universal science of human possibilities. The goal is, that all human beings become students of Sarasvati, the goddess of knowledge, as



Lyndon LaRouche's 40-year program for the industrialization of India (above, far left), issued in 1980, was the subject of discussion with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during an April 1982 visit to India. Shown are meetings with Indian scientists (left) and the Indian Council of World Affairs (above). The LaRouches returned to India in August 1983 (above, left).

she is called in Indian philosophy, or the goddess Athena, as she is known in Greek mythology. And about Athena, Schiller says in his *Letters on the Aesthetical Education of Man*, that she must come to Earth fully armed, because she has to fight stupidity, and it takes courage to be wise.

The Beautiful Soul

I have found that many excellent Indian scholars have a very negative perception of the West. They observe, that the entirety of Western civilization is in trouble, because it is based totally on “*pavrtti*” (outward action), and that there is absolutely no “*nivrtti*” (inward contemplation). Unfortunately, one can not argue with the observation that, as a result, Western civilization has become inwardly poorer and poorer; essentially, one can add, over almost 200 years, and especially over approximately the last 40 years, in particular. The lust for money, power, and pleasure has become almost the only desire, and a far-reach-

ing erosion of values, an increase of violence, and ugliness, and enslavement to objects, has been the result.

While this view is completely correct concerning the present popular culture, it does not make the distinction, that the present desolate condition of the West is the result of a complete takeover by the tradition of the oligarchical point of view, the long line of Aristoteleanism, empiricism, positivism, the British and French Enlightenment, utilitarianism, and so forth. And today, unfortunately, Western culture seems completely dominated by ever new varieties of that mechanistic world outlook. So, these Indian scholars say: You see, the Western emphasis on natural science leads to this result; therefore, we need the Indian emphasis on “spirituality.”

But what many of these scholars seem to overlook, is that there is a whole other tradition, the long line of Platonic thinking, of Classical art in architecture, painting, drama, poetry, and music, which fulfills every demand of Indian spirituality. Maybe it is because of British colonialism, which hated that tradition as a threat to its rule, that its existence was somewhat suppressed in India.

Christianity, for example, has a notion of the development of *nivrtti* in the form of its saints. Admittedly, in present Western culture this concept seems a bit obsolete, but does it have to be? And the very idea of *nivrtti*, to go deeper into the inner nature of oneself, beyond the identity in the ego controlled by the senses, and to find one's identity in the larger Self—that concept absolutely exists in the form of the *Sublime*, especially as it is developed by Friedrich Schiller. It was he who even said, that all improvements in the political realm could come only from *nivrtti*—he called it “*Empfindungsvermögen*,” for which there is not even a word in English.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the goal of human development is from *tamas* to *rajas* to *sattva*, that every person should become a *sattvika* person. It says, that every person has the potential and task to become a *brahmana*, the highest form of sainthood. Friedrich Schiller formulates the same idea, that every human being must develop into a beautiful soul. This is a person, for whom freedom and necessity, passion and duty, are one. This is a person, who can blindly follow his or her instincts, because they are developed to the level of reason, and would never suggest something in contradiction to reason. The beautiful soul is the person for whom reason and spirituality are one.

The dialogue of cultures at this historical moment is a wonderful thing, because it will encourage the *brahmana* persons in Russia, America, China, India, Germany, and all other countries of the world, to come forward, and not abandon the world to the barbarians.